

## CHAPTER 25

# Choosing Your Start-Up Team

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### Introduction

In this chapter, the author shares her start-up experience coupled with lessons learned from mentoring over 100 technology start-ups in the United States and around the world. The chapter was written from a lecture of the same title, which has been the most popular of the lectures given by the author. “Choosing Your Start-Up Team” is the most important task for the entrepreneur.

*“There is something rarer than ability. It is the ability to recognize ability.”*

*Elbert Hubbard*

### The Entrepreneurial Team

My motivation in preparing the original lecture and this subsequent chapter, was to share lessons learned from my own start-up experience and from over 100 start-ups that I have mentored. What did we do well and what did we do poorly? I wanted to be as candid as possible so that future entrepreneurs would not make the same mistakes; their start-ups would be even more successful. The responsibility of selecting Reticular’s start-up team is one for which I am most proud, though there were a few big mistakes.

I personally recruited everyone during Reticular’s start-up phase. Further, recruiting our initial technical staff was one of my top priorities. During our first few years, I attended every career fair selected, and personally held on-site interviews, after meeting candidates in our booth.

The table below provides a context for my comments. Entrepreneurs must consider all these positions, their responsibilities and general level of involvement in the start-up company. The shaded boxes mark those positions that are most likely to serve on the Board of Directors and/or Board of Advisors, our first area of consideration in this chapter.

**Table 1. The Entrepreneurial Team**

Team Leaders	Achievement Oriented Managers	Technology Team Leaders	Advisory Board (part time)
Chairman of the Board	COO	CT	Entrepreneurial team members
CEO	CFO	VP Engineering	Service providers
President	VP Marketing	Director of Technology	Providers of capital
	VP Sales	Chief Scientist	Industry experts & consultants
	VP Manufacturing		University professors

*Engineering your start-up, Michael Baird*

## **Board of Directors**

Board and Advisor members should fill in the experience and/or knowledge “holes” in the founding team. With regard to the board, you are hiring your bosses. Directors report to the shareholders, not to the CEO! They are chartered with running the company for the shareholders and they have ‘hired’ you to be their chief executive to do that work on their behalf. Be sure to select directors willing to work for your startup, attending meetings regularly and following through on their commitments. The Board should be comprised of individuals who add credibility to the company and the founders, especially if the founders have little business or professional experience.

### ***What skill set do you need?***

Reticular's founders developed a top-level design of our Board at founding. I generated short ‘position description’ statements and wrote them on the back of my business card. As I networked at various events and conferences, I handed out my card and pointed to the Board needs that we were seeking. Several board and advisor positions were filled via this method.

We set out to fill our Board with world-class experience and knowledge, with people that would impress customers, investors, employees and service providers. We sought Board members and Advisors that would make the founding team look more credible and impressive by association. Reticular’s original Board members included: VP, Engineering, IBM; Investment Banker (Northwestern MBA, Bank of London, Wells Fargo Bank); Sr. VP and Founder, QUALCOMM (inventor of CDMA with 50+ patents awarded); venture-backed software CEO. They are all with Reticular at this writing, as a director or advisor, and all have invested in one or more financings.

Reticular’s three founders each had 20+ years of technical, sales and marketing, finance and management experience with Fortune 50 USA companies. Two of Reticular founders had worked for the third founder in a previous New York Stock Exchange traded company. A key lesson: There can only be one boss in a startup. If the founding team cannot decide who will be the boss and be supportive and loyal, the startup will not be successful. Period. This principle is fundamental to the success of any startup and is the single biggest failure of start-up teams.

### ***How do you identify & retain directors?***

I looked around our industry and our targeted customers. I looked for industry leaders, successful CEOs, and for those who had specific skills and knowledge that our startup needed and that our founders did not bring to the company. I called all the best people who fit our needs. I learned not to be afraid to ask. Most desired directors said “yes” and only a few said “no”.

### ***Do I need Inside and Outside Directors?***

I felt Reticular needed a mix of inside and outside directors. And, all companies for whom I have mentored also needed a mix of inside and outside directors. It is not necessary or even the best practice for all founders to serve on the board. Reticular's board usually contained two inside directors and 3 or more outside directors. This worked quite well.

***“The best-utilized boards will provide objectivity and sound judgment. Directors will question your assumptions, contribute to the resolution of specific problems, and bring new ideas to the table. Expect the board to review financial performance, marketing plans, key hiring decisions, and any other major development affecting the business.”***  
*Engineering Your Start-Up, Michael L. Baird*

### ***How can I mitigate the legal liability for Directors?***

To attract the best candidates for directors, you must provide some form of liability protection for them. This can be done using competent legal counsel who will establish indemnification protection for the directors as part of the company's start-up paperwork. As soon as possible, purchase Directors and Officers (D&O) Insurance, an expensive but essential part of doing business and attracting the best people.

### ***What are some of the typical deals?***

Reticular holds quarterly meetings and no director is paid for these meetings. Most would not permit the company to reimburse them for their travel expenses to attend the meetings. The founders planned for stock options for directors and advisors, and these options were typically granted every year for directors, in the amount of 1,000 to 2,000 shares of common stock. Reticular's directors have invested in one or more rounds of private placement funding rounds.

*“The American Electronics Association’s 1991 Executive Compensation in the Electronics Industry survey publication reports that of its 423 reporting private companies, 379 (90%) provided no compensation for inside directors. Fifty-two percent provided no compensation for outside directors, the average annual retainer was only \$5,430. Twenty-seven percent provided stock benefits.”*

*Engineering Your Start-Up, Michael L. Baird*

### **Advisory Boards**

Advisors bring credibility to your organization and fill in holes in your knowledge or expertise. We originally designed Reticular's Advisory Board to include primarily technical experts. We quickly realized that an Advisory Board is an excellent overall business extension to the Board, with essentially no liability compared to that of company directors. Advisory Boards are an inexpensive way to get expert advice at little or no cost in any needed business area. Since Advisory Boards have no formal liability with regard to their duties compared to a formal directorship position, really impressive and important people are much more willing to serve startups.

I have discovered, to my delight and surprise, that most successful business people want to serve on boards and advisory boards. I now encourage my clients to think 'big' and select carefully since they may find more excellent candidates will want to serve on their Advisory Board than they need. I also counsel clients to be very open with candidate Advisors as to what is expected from them (generate a 'position description' for them to review, including number of meetings per year and locations, as well as the kinds of issues you expect them to assist with). Get their commitment to support this effort consistently; otherwise, they may be 'collecting' titles for their own benefit.

### ***What needs can they fill?***

We used Reticular's Advisors, along with our Board, for annual strategic planning meetings. Further, we sought Advisors who had: specific industry knowledge and experience; technical expertise that complemented and extended our own; legal and financial expertise, such as due diligence in preparation for funding; contract negotiations and security programs with government agencies; and human resources issues.

### ***How to identify and retain Advisors?***

I suggest that entrepreneurs ask themselves the question “Who is THE dream advisor (or director, for that matter) for our company, who will most impress our investors, bankers and customers?” If they cannot think of a candidate name, I suggest that one can characterize THE dream advisor’s background, experience, and/or positions in a pro forma description and share the description with one’s network of friends, peers, professionals and service providers. Ask for introductions to those dream advisors and directors.

Once an entrepreneur can characterize their needs, they can start networking. Ask directors, banker, investors, service providers, customers, college professors and other CEOs to introduce any who might fit the requirements. Read trade journals then call the cited analysts or editors, asking them for recommendations and introductions. Although these folks are extremely busy and difficult to reach, once I have their attention, I have found them to be extremely helpful and happy to do so. They very much enjoy getting insight into what might be coming ‘down the line.’

Reticular’s Advisory Board consisted of: VP/ Engineering and business attorney (government and commercial businesses); VP/Sales and Marketing (Sun and Perkin-Elmer); VP/Finance and Administration (SAIC and Titan Corporation); VP/Product Sector (Cubic, Titan Corporation); Ad/PR agency owner and principal (The Sterling Group). In some capacity as Advisors and/or Directors, they are all still with Reticular at this writing.

### ***Flexible use of Advisors***

Reticular typically held annual strategic planning sessions, which included our advisors with our board members (important people like to network too!). Most often, we used them individually on a tactical basis, seeking their help and advice in their particular area of expertise. Many have given ‘lunch-time seminars’ to our employees, for the cost of their meal. It is a great way for the employees to ‘rub elbows’ with important people and allowed our important people to see what great employees we had (important people like to brag too!).

### ***Key Executives***

We have identified and recruited key executives without the use of professional search firms. This has been done primarily through networking in a systematic way, as described for Directors and Advisors. Hiring decisions for key executives were made with complete consensus by Reticular’s decision-makers. If any early uneasiness is ignored, there will be, almost always, serious consequences later.

We recruited Reticular's second President/CEO from our Board of Directors. He first served the company on the Advisory Board; later, he was moved into a Directorship. Five years later, he took over as the chief executive of Reticular. He was a proven contributor, understood our business, and had earned the trust and respect of the team.

### ***Service Providers***

***Legal:*** Based on my experience, I believe all attorneys cost the same, regardless of their billing rates. The expensive ones will not usually make costly mistakes for the entrepreneur; but if they should, they have the size and financial wherewithal to fix the mistakes. Inexpensive attorneys are, well, inexpensive. But sometimes, they cannot fix their mistakes. Simple mistakes during various fund-raising offerings resulted in very expensive corporate issues for Reticular Systems and for the major shareholders. My advice to clients now is to find and retain the best legal firm. Most top law firms will work with start-up companies in negotiating affordable payment plans and limitation of

expenses. If they will not, you are certain to find other excellent firms who will work with you. It is very competitive for law firms now, particularly in high technology areas.

My approach in working with any service provider, and especially attorneys, is as follows, to paraphrase Guy Kawasaki of Garage.com, “this is the business deal I want to do, now keep me out of jail.” In the early days, I negotiated legal costs on a fixed-price, project basis. I also negotiated, during the interview and selection phase, monthly minimum payment schedules and caps for services, to limit mutual exposure of unpaid balances.

Reticular Systems needed several different kinds of legal services: corporate and securities, taxes and finance, real estate and lease transactions, government contracts, human resources, and intellectual property. Our approach was to have several different firms, with the corporate and securities law firm being the lead counsel, as necessary. Regardless of their advertising, most law firms cannot cover all legal areas well, so we chose to go to specialist law firms for those infrequent but important needs; for instance, government contract specialists.

In the case of intellectual property (IP) counsel, several reputable firms were interviewed based on networking results and reference checks (reference checks are important for service providers and **essential** for **all** other positions, such as employees, directors and advisors). Retainer details were negotiated; then, the Chief Technical Officer made the final decision, as they must be able to communicate and get along well with the IP counsel. Many of my clients have used this approach in selecting IP counsel with great satisfaction. It is the most economical approach for a small business. If the technical staff and IP counsel communicate well, that saves lots of money.

**Accounting:** Reticular’s accounting firms were selected in a similar way to legal services, through networking, several interviews and reference checks. Once we settled on a relationship with a large accounting firm, we realized that most of their services were not needed in the early stages of our development. To keep the costs down, we asked the large firm to recommend a “boutique” small firm that they were very comfortable working with. We sought a small accounting firm that specialized in government cost accounting and reporting. This was critical during Reticular’s early years as our technologies were developed partially using government research and development funding. With such funding, we did not have to seek large sums of investment, thus keeping our ownership dilution down.

We tasked the large accounting firm for annual reports and more formal accounting reporting, and tasked the small firm for more routine assignments. This turned out to be one of the best decisions we made in our early development. We received great service, kept our costs low, and had the prestige and credibility that a relationship with a large firm brings.

Later, we used the same approach for routine legal matters by asking our legal service providers to recommend small law firms they were comfortable working with in order to outsource routine work and keep our costs down. One should not be afraid to ask.

**Marketing/Advertising/PR:** We sought to establish a professional corporate image by professionals right away. We used the same technique in locating and selecting a firm in this area as we used for legal and accounting services. This selection turned out to be a critical decision for later fund-raising efforts. We appeared serious and professional to potential investors. And, the firm we selected, having done a splendid job working on our corporate image while keeping the costs down, also raised more money for Reticular Systems than anyone other than the author.

**Other (Bankers, Benefits Agents):** A relationship with a banker is much like a marriage. One must work at it all the time but the benefits are worth it. Reticular Systems has followed its banker

through several bank changes. He is worth following, given the relationship and service. Candor is the most important feature in this relationship. He knows we keep him informed and he can trust us. He has been a real asset in fundraising since investors know that he has banked us the entire life of the company.

Our Benefits Agent has also invested in Reticular Systems in several rounds of funding. He has worked with many successful technology start-ups; thus, he brought great experience to the benefits planning process.

## ***Investors***

The marriage analogy is an excellent way to characterize how one should 'select' investors. This is a **long-term** relationship; so one must **select** an investor carefully. Do not take money from just anyone!! This discussion is obviously the subject of many books. However, the kind of investor one seeks is primarily driven by the targeted market size, market pace (adoption cycle), and company stage of development. These will dictate what kind of money and investors one seeks.

Reticular Systems raised funds from individuals, angel investors and small investment partnerships. These funds were coupled with significant government research and development contracts in the first years of product development. This resulted in low dilution while company value increased. We also received development contracts with large corporations, negotiating rights to intellectual property and/or market segments.

There are many kinds of investors, depending upon one's business model. However, one does CHOOSE one's investors, so the process remains the same. Formally identify what one's requirements are, network to select candidates, and check references!

***“Friends and Family,” and Angels:*** There are legal requirements to qualify (check references) of potential investors for private placements. While I was responsible for fundraising at Reticular, I made it my mission to ‘look into their eyes’ and ask them the qualifying questions personally. I wanted to be sure they understood the nature of a start-up investment: long term and high risk. One must take the 'high moral ground' in dealing with other people's money and be able to ‘look them in the eye’ even if you lose their money.

Friends and Family invested in Reticular because they believed in the people. Angel investors, on the other hand, appreciated the business vision and, in many cases, felt they could add value beyond pure investments through their experiences and contacts. We chose Angel investors based on those contributions **as well as their money**.

***Institutions (venture capitalists):*** One must realize that there is a selection involved for both parties. The entrepreneur selects a professional investor as much as they select the start-up opportunity. Institutional investors bring so much more value than just money, but at considerable time, energy and dilution cost to the entrepreneur. One must go into this ‘marriage’ with one's eyes wide open. References are essential before making a decision to add institutional investor(s) to one's team.

***Corporations:*** In the course of serving as a judge during the San Diego State Entrepreneurial Management Center's Annual Student Business Plan Competition, I discussed entrepreneurial interests with several of the program's sponsors, in particular, Motorola Ventures. They are serious about seeking early-stage investments and desire to be ‘chosen’ by entrepreneurs as a potential investor partner. Their sponsorship of such events gives them the opportunity to ‘kick the tires’ of many start-

ups. Their 'tires' should be 'kicked' as well, once one decides that the business plan would benefit from such an investor partner.

***Surprise!! Service providers!!*** Reticular's choice of service providers who closely matched our needs brought another benefit; most invested in one or more rounds of funding. Our selection process, performed in an open and business-like manner, inspired confidence in us; they invested corporate and personal funds in Reticular Systems.

### ***How do I attract the best employees?***

Reticular made a conscious decision to be competitive with regard to salary and benefits for all employees. We wanted to hire the best candidates. To compete for them, we had to offer traditional and innovative, creative and even funny new attractions:

***Salary:*** we stay competitive by calling key universities' career services departments and solicit recent graduate salary offerings. This costs only phone time.

***Benefits:***

***Health and well being:*** competitive. We wanted employees to concentrate all their work-time energies on Reticular's business and not be concerned about their family's well being and health care.

***Wealth building:*** qualified stock options, 401(k) retirement plans with Reticular match for employee savings.

***Fringes*** (computers, space, child care, other): cheap with furniture, generous with computers, nice facilities, tailored benefits against family needs, other accommodations as required.

***Emotional, Social:*** cash and gift spot awards, holiday and birthday parties, recognitions in newsletters, fishing trips, picnics, rubber-band gunfights, etc.

***Career Building:*** tuition reimbursement, conference participation and publishing, professional associations (not publications), public speaking and lecturing.

***Moving, Teleconferencing, No Moves:*** flexible office hours, flexible telecommuting approaches, moving costs covered for long distances.

***Transportation:*** car-pool arrangements, telecommuting and flexible hours in high-traffic routes, other needs as required.

### ***How to identify, interview, and select the best candidates?***

For our initial start-up team, the founders established position requirements, then networked in our peer groups for potential candidates. This proved to be quite successful because the founders were all experienced in industry.

We established early on a formal interview process that included a writing assignment, a technical assignment and group interviews by peer teams. A 'chalk talk' was also required of the candidate where they had to explain a complex subject to the 'person on the street.' The ability to communicate was essential to receiving an offer of employment from Reticular. While recruiting at career and university job fairs, a verbal and a written assignment was given as part of the application and pre-interview process.

After successful interviews, candidate selection was done by consensus if all references were verified and checked. Offers were made and negotiated hard, since we did not go through such a rigorous process unless we were certain we wanted the candidate.

A candidate is identified, interviewed and selected. Then, there is a problem. **Make the hard decision early otherwise you will be sorry!** At the first sign of a mismatch, do everyone a favor: cover your heart with a steel cage and ask them to move on, in a generous and kind way. This was a

very difficult lesson for Reticular Systems. We knew of a problem with a new employee but continued to delay facing the fact that the team was not working well, designs were not coming together well, and the program was behind schedule. In the end, the problem person left and we were unable to complete a project without significant further investments. We were patient with the problem person and hurt all other stakeholders: employees, investors and customers.

### ***Long-term strategy: grow your own!***

Although our founding team and initial technical staff were drawn from the ranks of peers we whom we had work experience, we also took a long-term approach to obtaining top talent. We established immediately upon founding a program of formal internships through local universities and colleges. Reticular's internship program has been so successful, it was formally recognized by the University of California System. The award cites our considerable successes in giving a large number of their graduates fabulous work experience resulting in great career opportunities for them, either with Reticular or other employers. An example of our early successes included our ability to retain 4 full-time #1 engineering, computer engineering and physics graduates from UCSD while we were still less than 20 employees in size.

During my presidency, Reticular had about 60 interns. We were able to have our 'pick of the litter' from this great talent pool. We were able to test their skills during their internship and part-time employment and bond with them. When they graduated, we encouraged them to interview elsewhere, asking that we be allowed to compete for their favor as well. When they joined Reticular full time, they were confident they had chosen the right career position.

We also recruited mature graduates and advanced degree talent from a half a dozen key universities. It was amazing to learn that most little companies did not recruit at universities or participate in campus job fairs. We were extremely successful at campus career fairs; the students really liked Reticular; we were cutting edge and cool. We have routinely been very successfully recruiting at these schools (trade secret!) against the likes of Hewlett-Packard, Qualcomm, Microsoft, Texas Instruments, Intel, Oracle, Sun, etc.

### ***Academic fellowships and Sabbaticals***

Professors love to come to technologically innovative small companies during their breaks. They are always looking for some kind of sponsorship during their Summer breaks or sabbaticals. In addition to their technical or design projects, we would task them with lunch-time seminars and lectures in which all employees could attend. Through these programs, they brought freshness, excitement, and new ideas to the technical staff as well as our other employees. Directors and Advisors, shareholders and service providers were invited and often attended these seminars too.

This kind of program for a little company is not that expensive. Reticular wrote several proposals for each chosen professor so that their expenses might be covered. Many actually helped write proposals for their fellowships and sabbaticals. We discovered another advantage of this program. Professors sent us their best students during our on-campus recruiting efforts.

### ***Training Incentives***

Similar to the United States military and many countries' government policies, training incentives have been a great long-term strategy for growing top talent. The idea is to trade advanced degree time for time served at the company. Many clients use this approach to recruit and grow their technical staff. They sponsor an exciting or new employee in pursuit of an advanced degree, with the agreement that a certain amount of time was obligated back to the company upon completion. During



breaks and summers, the employee works for the company on short-term projects or long-term research.

### ***What happens when a key employee leaves?***

I made it a policy to stay in touch with them. I kept them on our mailing lists for press releases and newsletters, and invited them to annual holiday parties and other social events. Those former employees have been great recruiters for Reticular. When new positions became available at Reticular, we often targeted former employees and ask them to recommend us to any they know who might fill our needs. Many have expressed a desire to return to Reticular.

### ***How Important is the Start-Up Team?***

This area of my start-up work is one for which I am most proud. Reticular's founders recognized that we could not do all the work needed to be successful. We needed to choose great people to execute our vision. We needed to establish the business structure and give the best team the best possible tools to accomplish that vision. Building a great team is worth the effort.

I have mentored and counseled over 100 technology entrepreneurs and teams. I have seen extremely talented individuals who could not work together as a team. Some of these individuals were Nobel Prize recipients. I've seen fabulous products with great market potential with all the right people and yet, they have failed. What happened? For the most part, they could not work as a team. The teams and/or key individuals could not be led or the leaders could not lead. People were greedy, prideful, dishonest, unrealistic, lazy, unprofessional, naïve, stubborn, unfocused, undisciplined, mismanaged and/or insecure. They could not communicate or they could not listen or they had both faults.

How does this happen? Most consistently, I see founding teams trying to work as a group of friends, as if playing a game. All successful start-ups are run professionally with some form of hierarchical structure. There must be an organization with leaders and led. The style of leadership can be different amongst businesses but there cannot be a democracy. There must be a place where differences of opinion are resolved and then respected and honored by the rest of the team. There must be great leadership, respected by those led, combined with hard work, great communication and mutual cooperation.

If you want a great team, be a great leader. To be a great leader, lead by designing your start-up team, lead them by setting an example, lead by rewarding performance, lead by listening, lead by providing all that is necessary for their success, lead by making the tough decisions after gathering to inputs. A leader doesn't have all the answers or makes decisions that please everyone. But a great start-up team leader does have everyone's respect.

***“In the world today, there’s plenty of technology, plenty of entrepreneurs, plenty of venture capital. What’s in short supply is great teams. Your biggest challenge will be building a great team.”***

**John Doerr, Partner, Kleiner Perkins, Caulfield & Byers, Fast Company, Feb-March, 1997. About the author (updated)**

Mrs. Ballard is the founding President/CEO of EnableVentures, Inc. (2005). She is the former President/CEO, and one of 3 founders of Reticular Systems, Inc., a privately held California corporation (1989). Reticular Systems developed intelligent agent-based patented computer hardware and software products that aid customers in solving complex, time-critical problems. Under her leadership, the company won over 30 Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Program awards (Phase I, Phase II and Phase III commercialization efforts). The company spun out new start-up corporations that were quickly purchased by venture-backed companies. Reticular Systems' core products have been sold to thousands of customers globally (<http://www.agentbuilder.com>).

Prior to founding Reticular Systems, Mrs. Ballard was Director of Business Development for Titan Corporation, a NYSE company, where she was responsible for marketing and sales of advanced satellite communications systems such as Mini-DAMA, a \$350 million award for UHF satellite communications systems. Previous to Titan, she served as Business Development Manager with Motorola where she was responsible for technology and systems sales for the satellite communications business unit, a \$100M division with 60 engineers. Mrs. Ballard served as an Engineering Manager then Sales Manager with LINKABIT Corporation, establishing the sales efforts for new lines of digital communications systems, including the first Internet modems. The founders of LINKABIT later founded QUALCOMM Inc. When she left LINKABIT to join Motorola eight years later, LINKABIT had grown to over 600 employees.

Mrs. Ballard was the first Management Fellow for the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) CONNECT Springboard Program. She served as entrepreneurial coach to over 60 early-stage high-technology companies (about half had technologies and products in life sciences). The San Diego Technology Incubator retained her as an entrepreneurial coach to their high-technology tenants. Since 2000, she has served annual fellowships with Hunter Centre for Entrepreneurship at the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow; since 2001, as instructor/coach for the Jyväskylä Science Park-sponsored, and University of Jyväskylä Supercoach® Entrepreneurial Training training and the establishment of their Launch Pad Program, modeled after Technopolis Launch Pad and CONNECT Springboard Programs. She served the launch of the Center for Enterprise Management at the University of Dundee, Scotland. She was a frequent judge for San Diego State University Entrepreneurial Management Center's annual student business plan competition; more recently she has coached University of Arkansas's Walton School of Management's MBA student business plans. Mrs. Ballard mentored presenters for San Diego Software and Internet Council's annual investment conferences. Her Supercoach® Entrepreneurial Training content has been the key training for development of over 60 volunteer coaches in 2004 and 2005 for the University of Kentucky's Entrepreneurial Coaches Institute, with more classes planned for 2008. In 2006, she was selected in a competitive evaluation to pilot one of two 4-day Advanced Invention to Venture Workshops for the National Collegiate Inventors and Innovators Alliance (NCIIA). Three workshops will be offered in 2007 and four more are scheduled for 2008.

In 2003, she partnered with Tech Continuum Ventures to deliver education, coaching and networking programs for Arizona State University's Technopolis Program, a high technology entrepreneurial assistance program modeled after UCSD CONNECT. From 2003 to the present, she has been a consultant of choice with the Arizona Department of Commerce and assisted scores of clients with high risk/high payoff research and development proposals to the U.S. government's Small Business Innovation Research Program. In 2006, Mrs. Ballard was selected as a delegate to Syracuse University's Experiential Classroom VII, an annual program designed to demonstrate best practice innovations for entrepreneurship educators, including a variety of experiential and application-oriented pedagogical tools. Delegates are chosen competitively based on their roles in and contributions to entrepreneurship education.

She is currently co-writing a book with Jonathan Levie, Ph.D., and director of the Hunter Centre for Entrepreneurship, Glasgow. Entitled Launching Technology Startups: Practical Tools and Techniques for First-Time Entrepreneurs and is based on her coaching tools and techniques developed into a course, under partial sponsorship from Hunter Centre for Entrepreneurship.

Mrs. Ballard travels extensively both globally and nationally. When she is home, she is either in Alma, Arkansas and Scottsdale, Arizona. Prior to her move to Arizona in 2000, Mrs. Ballard was studying theoretical physics at Point Loma Nazarene University, San Diego. She can be reached at [sharon@sharonballard.com](mailto:sharon@sharonballard.com) or [sharon.ballard@enableventures.com](mailto:sharon.ballard@enableventures.com).