

Generating business

Keen to keep alive the social buzz of LSE, master's student **Lindsey Hall** went in search of a new business that helps young graduates stay in touch.



Above: Alex George with Lindsey Hall outside LSE Garrick; and inset: Arthur Krebbers, who is currently honing his entrepreneurial skills at the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business

With graduation fast approaching, I decided to find out more about an LSE-inspired fledgling business called Generation 2 Generation (G2G), which 'offers exclusive speaker and networking events for UK graduates and young professionals'. As a pending graduate I do not want to lose the social network I've built up at LSE. As a perennial foreigner, I'll take all the advice I can get about surviving the cut throat London professional world.

I meet Alex George, one of the two founders of G2G, first. Seated in Costa this blustery Friday morning, I'm greeted by a confident 23 year old who comes breezing in, copy of *The Economist* in hand. Alex graduated from LSE in 2007 with a degree in history and now studies at the London College of Law. He spent his time at LSE involved in the student debate and writing for *The Beaver*, and over coffee he confides easily that his three main interests are law, entrepreneurship and writing. 'I've tried debate, I've tried journalism, and now I'd like to try business.' He's already made impressive achievements in each of these fields, and it's easy to imagine G2G going far with his ambition.

When I meet the other half of G2G in the Garrick later that same day, it becomes clear why the

two business partners complement one another. While Alex is enthusiastic and persuasive, Arthur Krebbers is quiet and contemplative. It comes as no surprise when he tells me he read philosophy as an LSE undergraduate. He also graduated in 2007, and now pursues a postgraduate degree in management. He continues his involvement in the Students' Union and works as a senior steward for the LSE Events Office.

While Alex is a native of Lancashire, Arthur only arrived in London in 2004 from his home town, the Hague. The two met through the Students' Union, where both enjoyed rubbing shoulders with high profile speakers at SU events, and found themselves asking why the experience has to end with graduation. 'It's quite a jump for people, from university to their first job,' Arthur explains. When I ask him how his background led him to establish G2G, he says that philosophy teaches analytical skills, which contribute to the entrepreneurial mindset. 'It makes you question why people do things.'

Although they haven't found the sponsors they hope will eventually finance G2G, Hobsons has signed on as a strategic partner and the English Speaking Union provides venues for their events. The business's official launch on 4 February 2008, entitled 'Passing the torch:

challenges for 21st century leaders', attracted about 50 people – a number the founders hope to boost to around 200, ultimately expanding their events to other European cities.

G2G's future plans include introducing a hub strategy this summer, which will involve seminars focused on specific careers like media or politics. Hub events will be more intimate

and personalised, providing participants with tips on how to get into the chosen industry.

So far the feedback has been positive, with a variety of public figures including Baroness Sally Hamwee, chair of the London Assembly; David Willetts MP; and Sir Geoffrey Owen, former editor of the *Financial Times*, voicing their support. Howard Davies, School director, has also endorsed their endeavour, contributing to what Arthur describes

as an overall feeling of goodwill between G2G and LSE; the Careers Centre provides Alex and Arthur each with a personal business coach; they've been made honorary members of the Students' Union; and departments are spreading the word to their students.

When I ask Arthur about the biggest obstacles to G2G's success, he replies in philosophical fashion that he sees them 'more as challenges', explaining that he believes his organisation is unique because it targets professionals aged 20 to 30. 'There's nothing specifically out there for them, not just on an academic level, but on a personal and professional one.' For Alex and Arthur, the ultimate aim of G2G is to get those without career contacts into the professional milieu, and also to prevent young professionals in London from being pigeon-holed into conversation with the person in the adjacent cubicle for the next 30 years. 'Our vision is to link today's youth. We want to help you grow, and to continue to grow after university,' Arthur explains.

Like many other students about to strike out from the shores of academia, I'm in need of guidance. G2G acts as something of a lifeboat, keeping newcomers to the real world afloat until they learn how to swim. ■



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Students, recent graduates and young professionals are invited to attend Generation 2 Generation events, which cost £5-10. You can join their mailing list for free at www.g2gnetwork.co.uk