VENTURE INCUBATION PROGRAM | FALL 2026



TheThroughLine.AI

FEATURING THEDIRECTLINE

Elite AI, business, and policy insight. Open to every young person.

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THE PROBLEM

Young people meet an AI job market without a guide

5.7%

Unemployment for recent grads ages 22 to 27, vs. 4.1% for all workers

54%

Of U.S. teens ages 13 to 17 use AI chatbots for schoolwork

3 in 10

U.S. teens use AI chatbots every day

They already use AI. Few are taught how to use it well, or what it means for their careers.

Sources: Federal Reserve Bank of New York, via NPR, Aug. 18, 2026. Pew Research Center, “How Teens Use and View AI,” Feb. 24, 2026.

THE ACCESS GAP

Good AI goes to whoever can pay for it

11.4%

Of student AI users at Middlebury pay for any AI service. 88% use the free ChatGPT tier.

No. 1

Cost is the top barrier colleges cite for not giving students AI access. About half give none.

2M+

Texas households without high-speed internet

Schools and companies buy AI licenses in bulk. Individual students fall through.

Sources: arXiv 2508.00717 (Middlebury). Inside Higher Ed, Apr. 21, 2025. Texas Comptroller, “Texas’ Digital Divide.”

SEGMENTATION

Two user segments, one buyer segment

PRIMARY | USERS

Students 16 to 22 at under-resourced schools

Need: free AI practice and plain explanations

SECONDARY | PAID

Early-career professionals 22 to 27

Need: career moves in an AI market

BUYERS | SEATS

Schools, youth groups, sponsors

Need: AI literacy for students without licenses

BEACHHEAD Texas, where we ran discovery and where the broadband and price gaps overlap.

Audience data: TikTok Studio, Weeks 1 to 4. Discovery: ThroughLine field work in Texas.

CUSTOMER DISCOVERY

What we found in Texas

5 interviews at 2 Dallas-area high schools: 3 students and 2 administrators. Wifi speed and latency tests at both schools.

Price blocks access

Premium LLM plans cost too much. Education and enterprise accounts go to institutions, not individuals.

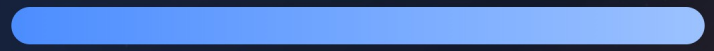
5 **Interviews**

3 students, 2 administrators, 2 high schools

CAMPUS WIFI SPEED

A 2.7x gap between two schools 30 miles apart

Southlake Carroll



1,100 Mbps

Woodrow Wilson, Dallas ISD



415 Mbps

Next test: home connections, where 2M+ Texas households lack high-speed internet.

Source: ThroughLine customer discovery, Texas, Jan. to Feb. 2026. Average download speed, one test per school.

THE SOLUTION

Media brings them in. DirectLine keeps them learning.

TheThroughLine

FREE MEDIA | LIVE TODAY

- Daily video on TikTok, Instagram, YouTube
- Substack articles with named sources
- A hands-on AI exercise in every piece

TheDirectLine

AI ANSWER ENGINE | IN DEVELOPMENT

- Answers only from our 73-piece library
- A citation on every claim
- Built light for slow connections
- Modes: Ask Us Anything, AI Exercises, Alpha

Stack: Next.js, Vercel AI SDK, Claude API, Supabase pgvector. Source: DirectLine build log, Oct. 1, 2026.

USER JOURNEY

From a 60-second video to a paid seat

01 ThroughLine
Discover
Short video on TikTok or Instagram

Views, watch time

→

02 ThroughLine
Read
Sourced Substack article

Clicks, subscribers

→

03 DirectLine
Ask
Free cited answers

Questions per user

→

04 DirectLine
Practice
Guided AI exercises

Exercises done

→

05 DirectLine
Return, pay
Alpha mode, solo or school plan

Return rate, paid seats

Every step has one number. The weak link today is the return: about 3% of viewers come back.

TRACTION TO DATE

Four weeks of content. Reach is working.

7,400
TikTok views in 7 days, up 1,328%

130 → 830
Average views per video, Week 1 to Week 3

95.4%
Of views from the For You page

73
Pieces, about 38,500 words, in the DirectLine library

6
Tuck faculty confirmed for podcast Season One

2,044
Views on our top video, a student loan deadline

Sources: TikTok Studio, 31 posts, pulled Oct. 4, 2026. DirectLine build log, Oct. 1, 2026. NH LLC formed. Substack live.

MEASURING SUCCESS

One number per step, eight weeks out

Step	Metric	Today	Week 8 goal
Discover	Weekly TikTok views	7,400	20,000
Return	Returning viewers	About 3%	15%
Engage	Comments per week	17	150
Read	New Substack subscribers per week	Tracking	50
Ask	DirectLine prototype: correct citations on a 75-question test	Not built	90%
Pay	Students and schools on a priced waitlist	0	20

Baselines: TikTok Studio, Week 4 pull, Oct. 4, 2026. Goals: ThroughLine Week 5 to 8 growth plan.

FOUNDER

Built by a Texan who works where AI, business, and policy meet

AI go-to-market

MBA PMM intern, ServiceNow Enterprise AI Agents. Builds DirectLine with Claude Code.

Finance and operations

KKR: led fund-onboarding automation and a $350M+ asset transfer. Goldman Sachs analyst.

AI policy

HKS MPA ’28. Cross-registered at MIT Technology and Policy Program.

WHY TEXAS Raised in Dallas-Fort Worth. TCU graduate. Tuck MBA ’27. Consortium Fellow.

NEXT 8 WEEKS

Three bets to test, and where VIP helps

01 **Viewers will return**

Test: named series and a comment funnel. Goal: 3% to 15% returning.

02 **Students prefer cited answers**

Test: Ask Us Anything with 25 to 50 Texas students on their own wifi.

03 **Someone will pay**

Test: 15 to 20 student and 5 school interviews, plus a priced waitlist.

OUR ASK

- Intros to Texas schools and youth groups for pilots
- Technical review of retrieval, citations, and slow-wifi speed
- Pricing advice: student plan vs. school plan
- Legal review of guest consent

APPENDIX

Sources

- Federal Reserve Bank of New York recent-graduate data, via NPR, “Many recent grads say AI is making it harder to get a job,” Aug. 18, 2026: wyomingpublicmedia.org
- Pew Research Center, “How Teens Use and View AI,” Feb. 24, 2026: pewresearch.org
- “Generative AI in Higher Education: Evidence from an Elite College” (Middlebury): arxiv.org/pdf/2508.00717
- Inside Higher Ed, “Half of colleges don’t grant students access to gen AI tools,” Apr. 21, 2025: insidehighered.com
- Texas Comptroller, “Texas’ Digital Divide”: comptroller.texas.gov
- TikTok Studio analytics, 31 posts, pulled Oct. 4, 2026 (ThroughLine Week 4 and Week 5 content kits)
- TheDirectLine build log and product spec, Oct. 1, 2026
- ThroughLine customer discovery, Woodrow Wilson High School (Dallas) and Southlake Carroll High School (Southlake), Jan. to Feb. 2026