

Introduction to Entrepreneurship (EM3020)

Write-Ups

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Are You Suited for a Startup?

by Jeffery Busgang

First the author of the article introduced himself and described how he decided to enter the Startup industry. He gave the details of his experience like he studied in business school, worked in three startups and later became a Venture Capitalist and invested in more than hundred startups. From the above work experiences, he understood how startups work and grow. In this article he explained how to be an employee in a startup should be and how to choose a growing startup and how to present yourself.

Qualities to develop to work at Startup

The following three qualities are essential to work in a startup:

- 1) **Manage uncertainty:** Startup works on a trial and error basis. Work is not certain, everyone has to be able to do and share their roles and jobs working as one inventing, creating and moving forward. Employee has to be ready to face any unpredictable situation and manage to solve the problem.
- 2) **Push the limits:** If you face any problem in a startup you need to find an efficient solution make it easily repeatable. Always question actively rather than settling passively. Push your limits to find a proper efficient solution for the problem
- 3) **Think like an owner:** You should be emotionally bonded with startup and think about all aspects of your company. You can see your efforts leading to success of startup. You should think as an owner of your startup and do whatever you can for its growth.

Picking right company

The following are the four steps to choose a right startup:

- 1) Pick a domain: You need to find a field you are passionate about. Asking yourself questions helps you to choose your domain of interest. Author suggests to limit three areas you prefer and start working on them or else search becomes too broad.
- 2) Pick a city: If you have flexibility to choose place choosing an entrepreneurial hub would be the best. Since job safety in a startup is uncertain employee should be ready to change company anytime. Select the city which is an entrepreneurial hub to the field you have selected. Build relationships with people in all domains related to your field.

- 3) Pick a stage: There are three stages in any startup jungle stage, dirt road stage, highway stage. Jungle stage is for risktakers and problem solvers (preproduct/marketfit) you encounter many challenges and success is uncertain. Dirt road stage is for developer where your goal is certain, have funds you just need to solve the problems. Highway stage is for improver, there are not much problems but you need keep improving and optimizing your solutions company is stable and salary is high in this stage.
- 4) Pick a winner: To choose a company which is going to be successful in future you need to enquire the insiders. Enquire top three venture capitalists, startup lawyers, angels, head hunters in your domain and ask about the top upcoming companies. Use your own diligence by studying about the company's team, market and business model. Ask advisors and people who have experience on startups. You may also talk to the founder about his company. Develop your opinion on the company and choose carefully.

Introducing yourself to the company

For introducing yourself to the startup to hire you need to follow the two steps:

- 1) Arrange a warm Introduction: Meet the key executives or VCs, angels in the company and ask their support by showing your interest, experience and enthusiasm. Contact them through internet and meet at least 10 people personally. These relationships not only help you in this job but also in your future career.
- 2) Articulate how you can contribute: Study about the company carefully before the interview and present them with what improvements can be made in their product. Show them that with your contribution company can go even further. Try to add value to yourself by offering your help whenever needed.

Making the leap

To make your debut in startups in a strategic way develop the qualities required for a startup employee, pick the right startup and present yourself perfectly you will find a personal and professional fulfillment in your career.

Making the Leap to Entrepreneurship

by Jamie Schmidt

The Author of this paper is an entrepreneur established Schmidt's Naturals providing natural personal care products. According to her though in the COVID time there is a shortage of funds it is important to take the leap or challenge to become an entrepreneur, we need to build our entrepreneurship spirits now more than ever. Even if there is a great business idea or the founder is determined many startups fail. Author discussed some primary principles and how she followed them in her life to have a successful startup.

Make your commitment: first to yourself and to the business

Entrepreneurship requires a great dedication towards your work and company, have an honest talk with yourself and decide whether this idea works out or can you dedicate your efforts for this business in a long run. Once you have decided to be an entrepreneur find the work where you are passionate and can be passionate about it eventually.

Pursue your abilities: develop skills and authority

Having decided your business idea you need to gain knowledge over that subject or area of field. Research the industry you want to get into, understand the competition. Take help and opinion from your friends and family to revise your idea. Volunteer in related organization and dedicate yourself to get a handful experience. Write and publish papers as thought leader. Have proficient leadership skills, build networks, navigating the complicated landscape of financing.

Fund your business: balance the bottom line

Find an appropriate financial source for your startup to get to profitability. In early days for any startup there should be cash flow otherwise the startup cannot grow any further. You can decide how to get a financial support like through debt, revenue – based financing, through a partner or cofounder. Find stable financial source which can support your business until it reaches its success point. Try taking risks by asking yourself whether it is worth of risk taking, can you guarantee yourself that your risk would be successful.

Integrate your life: structure for sustainability

In early days for your startup, you can dedicate yourself to work but in later stages do not take too much stress. Dedicate your time for your family build bonds with family and friends. Relax yourself once a while having meals, bedtime, trips with family and friends. Try involving others in the entertaining aspects of your business. In an isolated world of entrepreneurship bringing others into your world brings you joy and happiness in your work.

Entrepreneurship is worth trying even if you fail sometimes by learning from those experiences you can pursuit a great career in entrepreneurship. Author encourages us to take the leap because we can never know until we try.

We need to expand our definition of Entrepreneurship

by John Hagel III

The Author of this paper explains why entrepreneurship is important and what is its definition. In earlier century many great entrepreneurs have established huge companies around a model of scalable efficiency. The employees in that companies have a specific set of work and perform them in a reliable and predictable way. Employee society was formed the companies gained but employees remained as employees only. In the contemporary world the model of organising business has become difficult and challenging. It is called Big Shift it is due to increase in digital technology. To succeed in period of big shift we need create an entrepreneurial society, we must all strive to become entrepreneurs.

General Definition: Most of the people generally think entrepreneurship is a task of young people who create big company and get a billion-dollar turnover. Author mentioned such startups as fabled unicorns.

Authors Definition: An entrepreneur is the one who seeks opportunity to create value and is willing to take the risk to capitalise on that opportunity like finding the opportunity, taking the risk and value of creation.

With increasing technology not only the opportunities for entrepreneurship have increased but also the risk and uncertainty in success has increased. We need to develop and entrepreneurship qualities such that we can take those risks and pursue the opportunity. We should not only focus on unicorn businesses but also a small business can get a good profit. Older businesses are fragmenting and newer businesses are formed, unicorns are rare in a business. Young entrepreneurs forming a team can start small startups which can have a great value. For growth of developing countries like India and under developed countries entrepreneurship is the key to accelerate their country.

Employee mindset having a specific set of tasks and not doing any other works until the leader tells will not work in the present world. We need entrepreneurs in every part of society to create an opportunity and more value. We should move from scalable efficiency to scalable learning. Starting from scratch rarely work in entrepreneurship. More powerful method is scaling in the edge gaining experiences in the larger companies and establish a company on our own. The world gets dynamic with more entrepreneurs. the society is accelerating from employee society to entrepreneurial society. The employee has to suffer in such society. The force of big shift is too big and we cannot turn back.

Keeping Your Business Plan Flexible

by Amy Gallo

Business moves quickly from one stage to another new competitors emerge and there will be change in economic situations. Due to these changes many businesses fail in the starting stage, for a business to be successful the business plan should evolve with the conditions and face uncertainty. Most businessmen do not have a formal business plan. Though every entrepreneur wants to design a business plan it is not enough to create a definite business plan. We need to create a dynamic business plan thinking about all unknown factors. The methods to design a fluid business plan are discussed in this paper.

Focus on your largest asset

For businesses in bud stage people are important. The decisions people make changes the flow of the business. Feature the target audience prominently in your strategy. Articulate exactly why they are qualified to see your product. For large businesses new discoveries makes the business larger. Focus on your most valued product.

Describe the experiments

Business plan is a trail and error process. Your plan should describe how you will evaluate the best way to produce and sell the product. Show your plan to readers show the experiments you have made to get to the best way refer the people who are involved in this and how well experienced they are. Explain what will you do with experimental data.

Include risk assessments and contingencies

The plan gets more dynamic if you include risk factor as well. Your plan should demonstrate the possible risks in the business and counter measures you are going to take. It is not practical to think of all risks focus on your ability to face a challenge and find a solution.

Explore alternative formats

Choose the format of presenting the plan wisely. Sometimes you need materials template to show your plan but most of the times PowerPoint presentation or a simple dash board helps to keep the plan on track. Use more dynamic method to elaborate your plan so that it can be extended further. Expanding on small plan is effective than condensing large one.

Revise the plan often

It is important to reassess the plan frequently scheduling time to review the plan is one of the best ways. Rewrite the plan update it regularly if you are the head, you can assign various parts of the plan to different people all build it together. Regular updates are opportunities to assess the evolution of your business plan with respect to original one.

Dos and Don'ts in a plan

Feature your greatest asset prominently and show experiments how can you test the value of the product or service. Show that you understand risks and show your possible solutions. Try not to describe every possible scenario or risk. Don't bound yourself to traditional methods of planning do not keep plan untouched update it regularly.

Conclusion from Case study 1

First Recce one of the co-founder of homefield used traditional method of planning without considering the future events. He failed using the regular methods. Later he used dynamic business planning which includes their costumers reviews and how they handled the risks the investors got interested in the dynamic plan and thus his business got successful. Here we can understand that dynamic business planning and doing the experiments are key factors in their business plan.

Conclusion from Case study 2

Jenny, Chief business officer of Sevident initially had a rough dynamic business plan. Once they got funders, they started making formal business plan by foregrounding their technology and showing only various applications of it. Their plan considers several possible options how their business develops with low probability of contingency plans. They made a compelling story how they are capable to face their risks and get a solution.