

Foreword

For me, entrepreneurship is a religion, a way of life, a passion. I think I have always been an entrepreneur at heart, even before I knew what it really meant or had heard the word used in business. In my corporate life, many of my bosses probably thought I was just a pain, the squeaky wheel who was always trying to break, bend, or change the rules. In retrospect, I now realize those are the very same qualities that have helped me succeed as an entrepreneur: the scrappiness, resourcefulness, healthy dose of skepticism, ability to question authority without backing down, persistence, sense of humor, and humility. It takes some of each, I think, to see the world differently, discover new ways to solve old dilemmas, or redefine problems and solutions altogether.

What makes these entrepreneurs tick? Why do they keep picking themselves up when they get knocked down? What causes them to try again? In *Entrepreneurship Strategy: Changing Patterns in New Venture Creation, Growth, and Reinvention*, you will get to see a range of entrepreneurs in action. Each has a unique style, his or her own journey but there are many traits that are shared. Some entrepreneurs started their companies when another door closed; others had a burning idea that needed a home; all set out to change the world in some important way.

I took one entrepreneurial management class in business school, and we reviewed case studies of entrepreneurs in all shapes and sizes. There was no textbook for the class, only their personal journeys and stories of their successes and failures from which to draw lessons. Some entrepreneurs were self-trained; others had degrees; all were passionate about what they were doing. Whether you are an entrepreneur yourself, have one in your family, or just wondered what all the hype was about, it is reassuring to see that there is some science behind the art of entrepreneurship. Although it may seem very “seat of the pants” at times, there are stages and common themes most entrepreneurs address as they are taking their vision from concept to reality. Drs. Gundry and Kickul’s book shows many entrepreneurial paths, starting from very different places. There is no single way to be an entrepreneur; lots of roads can get you there.

Each entrepreneur had to validate his or her idea with the target audience, whether through formal market research or not. All had a defining moment when they knew their business was “real” or had to course-correct to survive. Once the market is validated, competitors start to pay attention so entrepreneurs have to stay