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A Written Report on my Entrepreneurial Potential

When I first attended class, I had an idealistic dream about what it would take to become a successful Canadian entrepreneur, as “it is the age of the entrepreneur, small business owners are the fuel of our private enterprise system” (Knowles & Castillo 2017, p.25). Conversely, the course introduced me to the hardships, challenges and obstacles one has when pursuing their career as an entrepreneur. Throughout the semester, I have examined both the core positive and negative aspects of entrepreneurship. I learned about my entrepreneurial quotient and worked during the classes to improve my mindset and goals as an entrepreneur. The work exhibited throughout the course allowed me to develop the ability to observe and seek opportunities for innovation. I was trained to critically analyze the different factors that one may encounter when creating a business of their own. Such factors include distribution channels, location, pricing, financial/legal and product life cycle. Over time, I have realized that my core values align with the social entrepreneur’s need to positively change the world with their innovative products and services. Through this course, I believe that I have all the essential skills, knowledge and passion necessary to work as a small-business Canadian Social Entrepreneur. This report will draw upon observing and examining trends; Generating Ideas; Conducting Research; Making your Business Model; Financial and Legal Concerns and what areas of entrepreneurship personally interests me.

Entrepreneurs need to be capable of clearly seeing the big picture and the feasibility of their ideas. An important skill I learned in this course is the ability to critically look at business and social trends and decide if my business offers a viable and modern solution. The ability to perceive concrete opportunities is crucial to a successful business. As taught in the course, these trends compile into the following six major environmental classifications: Social/Cultural, Economic, Demographic, Technology, International (Legal/Political) and Competition (Knowles & Castillo 2017, p.49).” The ability to examine and understand these classifications can allow you to brainstorm sustainable ideas. For example, in my final project, my group decided to focus on making lower-cost accessibility controllers support lower-income individuals. This addressed the economic status of Canada as just 59 percent of Canadian millennials — born from 1983 to 2002 made it into the middle-class sector this year (Blackwell 2019). As the housing prices and the need for essential living expenses rise, millennials are financially incapable of affording high-priced video game accessories. This project allowed our group to address both the technological and financial environmental changes in Canada. These categories allowed us to focus on specific issues based on trends and help us narrow our business vision for the company.

When completing the design phase, businesses can use several distinct strategies to identify their definitive line of products or services. I learned all these methods and gradually introduced them to my group members. The most prominent method of organizing ideas I used was mind maps, which allowed me to visually showcase my thought process to my teammates and evaluate the potential for different ideas. Another technique is using a matrix grid, which is a structure for decision making. It allows for different ideas to pass through it in order to find solutions (Knowles & Castillo 2017, p.79). This method would help one to establish their business mission statement and analyze different possible ideas for products or services. Lastly, another method of recording and identifying potential ideas is keeping a 24/7 Adventure Notebook. When using a book to record specific thoughts, one can fortify and dispose of certain ideas based on the thoughts one has throughout the day. A 24/7 Adventure Notebook allows you to think organically by letting one stay active. All these methods are essential to the design phase of one’s business and will help one create a finite idea for a business.

Businesses should continually be conducting new-eyes, primary and secondary research to identify whether a solution is viable to your target audience. Using their intuition and powers of observation to learn about the marketplace is referred to as new-eyes research (Knowles & Castillo 2017, p.20). Utilizing new-eyes research, one can analyze successful business and its value to their target customers. This expertise can be applied to one’s business model and increase one’s business value proposition. The act of studying pre-existing data is called secondary research (Bhat, 2018). Using the internet to look at information, magazines, studying books, and publications are an example of secondary research. Interacting with the world directly by talking to people is defined as primary research. Networking with other people and interacting with the world is an example of primary research. All types of research are essential to making informed decisions on the practicability of ideas and your business.

Entrepreneurs need a unified focus for the growth of their business and to implement their business vision efficiently, without wasting valuable time. This need has led to the creation of the business strategy, a program that allows entrepreneurs to organize a comprehensive set of steps to achieve their core objectives. With each iteration of change, a business plan and the business mission statement are modified to accommodate the new situation. This allows the business to be in a constant state of growth and improvement. When revising their business strategy, a standard method is to use the SWOT method, which is an analysis of the internal strengths and weaknesses of the business and the external opportunities and threats (Knowles & Castillo 2017, p.82). Since their business strategy is used to implement new decisions for your business, these factors profoundly impact the next available actions for business and determine its value proposition. For example, if an entrepreneur was running a small clothing retailer, an internal strength might be the entrepreneur’s experience with clothing and understanding fashion trends. Conversely, if the location for their retailer reduces their number of customers, this would be an internal weakness.

Examining both factors could lead the entrepreneur to create a business strategy by innovating on their products. The entrepreneur could also reach out to popular fashion media outlets to review their products. In examining external opportunities and threats, the entrepreneur may see the lack of interest in certain types of clothing. They may also see that more customers are prepared to pay more to support small businesses. These factors represent the external opportunities and threats of the business, which are not in the entrepreneur’s control. Both factors allow the entrepreneur to decide on their business strategy.

Thriving businesses have several distinct parts, like distribution and customer relationships, which collectively enable your business to function. As an entrepreneur, one must be able to manage and record all those aspects of your business efficiently. A method discussed during the course to achieve this task is the business model. The business model is defined as a framework of how all the different interrelated parts of a business work together to create value in the marketplace (Knowles & Castillo 2017, p.84). Since the business model is a representation of their entire business, creating a visual representation (defined as the business model canvas) will easily allow one to show their business to potential partners and investors. The business model canvas has nine building blocks, which allow one to fully represent each aspect of their business model. These sections are outlined as Customer segments, Channels, Value Propositions, Customer Relationships, Revenue streams, Key resources, Key activities, Key partners and Cost structure (Knowles & Castillo 2017, p.84). Understanding and building on these segments will allow one to create their business model and business model canvas, while simultaneously allowing one to have a better idea of what value and functions allow their business to be successful.

As an entrepreneur, one must have a clear concept of their business’s financial circumstances to create a stable business, especially for small businesses. When establishing their business, one may initially choose one style of pricing and modify its pricing strategy over-time. However, radically changing the pricing strategy of their business in any capacity is not only unpleasant for their customers but also to their investors and employees. Therefore, it is essential to be educated and think carefully about the business sector that one is entering, and which pricing strategy will be most viable. For small businesses, there are four conventional methods of pricing: Competitor-based pricing, profit-based pricing, keystone pricing and premium pricing (Knowles & Castillo 2017, p.146-148). Each pricing method is based on a specific factor, whether it be the competition’s price range, on making back more money, the industry-standard or on the highest price to offer. Based on the cost of production, labour and their marketing strategy, one may choose any of these strategies. The point to this is to pick a strategy that suits your business and your brand. For example: If an entrepreneur decided to run a small bakery with an emphasis on various baked goods and a small community customer base. They should not use premium pricing or competitor-based pricing. Trying to compete with their local Tim Horton’s mass-produced goods or asking their customers to pay $15 for a donut is not a solid pricing strategy. Instead, you should be going for the industry-standard or profit-based pricing. This will allow you to make a profit but also allow you to maintain your market strategy of a small local bakery with a range of affordable baked goods.

An essential lesson taught in this course was the legal concerns that could affect my future businesses. As an entrepreneur, I know to become involved in any legal structure for a business. This includes sole proprietorships, partnerships, corporations and cooperatives. With a sole proprietorship, you have absolute control over your business but also personally liable for any financial instability. While it is relatively easy to start a sole proprietorship, you have less available capital to work with, contrary to working in a team or with a partner.

Partnerships are defined as two or more individuals that work together in order to do a profitable business (Knowles & Castillo 2017, p.202). Incorporating a partner into one’s business alleviates the process of the initial start-up and divides the responsibility for the business evenly. However, maintaining a partnership can be difficult as the partners do not allow for efficiently or to the dissolution of their business. To prevent any legal ramifications, it is important to establish a partnership agreement with independent legal advice (Knowles & Castillo 2017, p.203).

This difficulty of decision-making is only exemplified by corporations, where your business is represented as “a legal entity with authority to act and to have liability separate from the owner. (Knowles & Castillo 2017 p.204). Becoming a corporation allows any entrepreneur to minimize their liability and enjoy tax advantages. However, with becoming a corporation, there is higher-start-ups cost and is arduous when making decisions in the company. The company no longer belongs to a single and a pair of individuals but rather exists as a single legal entity of its own. All the decisions made in the company has determined by the majority shareholders which is referred to as the board of directors. With the divided responsibility and lack of liability, corporation operate under strict governmental regulation and the shareholders agreement. This document allows every shareholder to have a legally binding documents that state their responsibility and role in the corporation as well as the board of directors and upper management.

Lastly, a cooperative is owned by its members who uses its services (Knowles & Castillo 2017, p.212). A cooperative act like a corporate democracy, where the decisions and policies are made by the users. A cooperative allows for a large source of start-up capital as well as the cooperative has a statute of limited liability towards its members. Members also are motivated to network and build the cooperative. However, the cooperative is the hardest to make consensus and conflict resolution is often a major issue. Management is also the shared responsibility of the entire cooperative, leading to confusion over differing goals and business strategies.

The area that I am interested in is Marketing: specifically, the promotion of products and services. Applying for universities, I applied for a few different majors, two with a game development focus and two with a business/comp sci focus. When I had to specialize in a field, I chose marketing because I love learning about how the psychology of advertising, how promotions are ever-present in society and the incredible things people have done in the advertising field. In some respect, I view certain ads with the respect of a great short film, where visuals, audio and narrative create some fantastic marketing. So, when we reviewed the idea of marketing in the course, I was fascinated by the marketing and promotional mix. I particularly love the definition of promotion in the textbook, “Promotion is the art and science of moving the image of your business to the forefront of a customer’s mind” (Knowles & Castillo 2017, p.149).

All the topics that are presented in Chapter 6 with creating logos, packaging products and catalogues are very important when conditioning your target audience to associate one’s brand with positive emotions. For brands like McDonald’s and Disney, the reason behind their recogniz­­able brand is that they have a fantastic promotional and marketing mix. When eating fast food at McDonald’s, getting a to­­y and playing in the “playpen” allows your ­­­childhood brain to associate McDonald’s as a reward. As for Disney, Disney created the golden age of animation and the company’s branding was made to be geared towards the whole family. Disney specially targeted the attention of children; Disney used the children to bring families into the movie theatres, to buy their products and to go to Disneyland. That is the mindset of these companies, to covertly gear your daily spending behaviours to include their products and service. To make you, the consumer believes that buying their products is an essential factor in your life.

This course has educated me on all aspects of entrepreneurship, giving me the ability to run my own successful small business. Through the lectures and textbook, I have learned how to generate new ideas, conduct research and know-how to build a stable foundation for my company and my future endeavours. To meet my goal of being a successful entrepreneur, I attended all the classes, participate in class and engaged heavily in my business group. I grew more confident speaking to the class and showcased my ability to present myself professionally. I went out and did primary research by talking to passers-by on their way through the UA building. I will utilize every skill, knowledge and experience to better myself and my entrepreneurial potential. In conclusion, I have grown as an entrepreneur and a person, and I will always have an available set of skills and knowledge that I can incorporate into my future job ventures.

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