

Introduction

SMART entrepreneurship: Managing the uncertainties and risks associated with starting up a new venture

The thing most start-uppers have in common is that they are venturing into new territory. Most often the venture team has no experience in launching and running a business of the same type they are involved in and they rarely know precisely how the market will react to their products and services. On top, sometimes, the market, the buyers, don't what to think of the offering either, because they have never seen it before.

The lack of experience on the one hand and market uncertainty on the other creates an extreme form of uncertainty that is a stable condition for entrepreneurs, no matter the context they operate in. The uncertainty applies to traditional business start-ups, to social entrepreneurial ventures and also to corporate entrepreneurs (intrapreneurs) engaged in what we refer to as radical innovation projects.

Entrepreneurial management, therefore, is best understood as the management of the uncertainty and risk associated with these types of projects. This book is no exception. The ambition is to provide an introduction to entrepreneurial management theories and techniques and illustrate them using practical examples in order to enhance what they can teach us.

The book contains nine chapters: eight are short and crisp and one is a bit longer and more theoretical. Impatient readers can jump right to Chapter 2. In Chapter 1, the “big hairy” academic one, an overview of entrepreneurial management theory is given. In Chapter 2 the SMART entrepreneurial approach is introduced and in the successive chapters each step in the process will be analysed. Chapter 3 is about opportunity identification,

Chapter 4 about conceptualization and idea evaluation, Chapter 5 about validation, Chapter 6 deals with resource co-optation and bootstrapping and Chapter 7 deals with business planning and third-party funding of the venture. Chapter 8 deals with managing the growing venture and Chapter 9 discusses some of the practical arrangements that usually need to be undertaken by the entrepreneurs at each stage of the project.