

Preface

What motivated us to research and write yet another book about entrepreneurship? Probably our passion for the human side of venturing, in our opinion an underexposed subject both in terms of serious research as well as descriptive writing. Much has been contributed to entrepreneurship literature and research. Yet most of it with a primary focus on the processes of opportunity and resource management, the venture team and the uncertainty of the economic environment. Together, we had undertaken a number of interesting research projects where our diverse knowledge and skills (psychologist-economist-researcher and, business executive, three time entrepreneur and latter day academic) combined to provide an in-depth insight into the human aspects of the entrepreneur. In a way, we see this book itself as an entrepreneurial endeavor. Just like entrepreneurs, we took a venturing opportunity and used it to explore the nature, human side and performance of some 60 diverse cases of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial management. These cases were distributed in a wide geographical area, covering Europe and the United States as well as various life-cycle stages of the firms involved. In this qualitative and exploratory research project we aimed to uncover and document entrepreneurship with a special emphasis on the behavioral aspect. Again, like entrepreneurs, we took a rather risky road in targeting this study and the resultant book at a multiple of market segments such as entrepreneurs, business professionals, students and academics, university managers and communities. We thank our publisher, Martina Bihn at Springer for embracing this vision.

While attending a seminar during the process of writing our last pages of this book the statement by Jerry Engels and David Charron of UC Berkeley: “entrepreneurship is a team sport” appeared as a fitting one. In the seminar they discussed how entrepreneurial success is enhanced by a team endeavor.

We are grateful to people we were able to work with in writing this book and thank all 60 research participants documented in Chapters 8 to 16 for their willingness to share their personal stories and venturing experiences with us. Many entrepreneurs and executives from Nyenrode have evolved to prestigious positions in society which would have made it easy to select participants for our book. We sidestepped that approach to find a balanced group of participants which could be seen as a representative group of the great variety of types of entrepreneurship represented in society.

We thank The Nyenrode Foundation (SNF), especially Jan de Graaff, Herman Bruggink and Erik Wuite, for their confidence, their feedback and material support.

Arie van der Giessen, Frank Tebbe and Job van Harmelen, were all involved from the start in our process of envisioning this study about entrepreneurs. Because of our interaction with them our imagination took concrete forms.

We thank Wim Keizer for sharing his insight and experiences with the Mental Fitness Tracker and Gun Semin also for his insight and experiences with the action and state and promotion-prevention questionnaires. Thanks to Larissa van Woudenberg who helped us to manage the logistic processes of approaching, contacting the participants all with very busy schedules. Thanks to Pipsa Ylänkö for the information she provided on the alumni database. Caroline Knulst and Metty Willemsen for their care and flexibility in letting us use their offices for the research interviews.

We are grateful to the following people who took us back into the history of Nyenrode the business school: Hanna Emmering, Rene Verhulst, Michael Moore, Gert Immerzeel, No Knubben, Thonie Wattel, Arie van der Giessen, Roberto Flören, and Johan de Voogd.

Dr. Albert Heijn honored us by writing the foreword to this book and we want to thank him. Thanks to Bert Twaalfhoven, a serial international entrepreneur and Ben Cohen, a triple bottom line entrepreneur, for their inspiring opinions and experiences on entrepreneurship. Thanks to Cynthia Foster, Job van Harmelen and Frank Tebbe for their tireless advice and proofreading of our drafts. Jacky van Marle gave her valuable input by reading the manuscript in the final stage and her support in our first alumni study. Finally, thanks to the people who have made this book look so good, Eric Fecken for all the photos, John Waller for the cover photo, Mei Li Han for editing and layout, Jason Howard for designing the figures and Onno Frank van Bekkum for the final layout.

Breukelen, July 2006

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The Spirit of Entrepreneurship

Exploring the Essence of Entrepreneurship Through
Personal Stories

Nandram, S.S.; Samsom, K.J.

2006, XV, 371 p., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-3-540-34760-6