Part-time and Home-Based Entrepreneurs

There are two approaches of entrepreneurship. Full-time or part-time entrepreneurship. Full-time entrepreneur has to bear time, cost and all the associated risk of the business only for a single business commitment. Part-time entrepreneurship is the one which is not the main source of income for an entrepreneur. An example of part time entrepreneurship might be of a person who is doing a job and is also doing a business in the additional time after office hours. Important considerations for part-time entrepreneurs are;

1. **The role of financial or non-financial motives:** Financial motive may be a lesser income in the job. Non-financial motive might be that the entrepreneur is developing the idea and once the business would develop, he would leave the job and will join the entrepreneurship as a full-time activity.
2. **Social pressure:** This is the second issue for which you want additional income to enhance living status. The problem is that due to extra efforts, an entrepreneur may get burnout in which stress increases and he may leave the business venture altogether.
3. **Over commitment:** Employment and business both demand time and social life and those may get effected simultaneously. You will have to manage both the risks with a good balance.

Home based entrepreneurship is more common in rural areas and it is also called micro or nano business. It is often a skill-based business at home. Mostly females are engaged in home-based business. Access to finance remains an issue as financial institutions don't see it as a mature business. Increased production / scale up becomes an issue for home businesses. Work life balance also becomes an issue.

Social Entrepreneurs

Social entrepreneurs solve community issues through novel business ideas. They are willing to take risk for positive change in society through their initiatives. So, they don't do their business only for profit. There are so many issues around us such as unemployment, poverty, minority association and disability etc. Then, why not that one should create a business that solves these problems and the one who solves these issues is a social entrepreneur. A social entrepreneur does business for social a cause. Often NGOs take such initiatives. But, business model of NGO stays only on donations or funds from local and international donors. To break that model which is not sustainable, a model of business and NGO was merged for social entrepreneurship.

Social entrepreneurship is actually a socio-economic business model. Whole profit gets re-invested in the same business. They often work with government and NGOs. Grameen bank is the best example of social entrepreneurship that was made for ultra-poor people who had no collateral. Grameen bank provided loans to such communities. Its recovery rate was highest and was 99 %.

Entrepreneurship MG502

In Pakistan, Akhuwat Foundation is also an example of social entrepreneurship like Grameen bank. It does not charge interest as it offers "Qarz-e-Hasna". In 2010, a restaurant was started where waiters were blind just to make the people realize about their disability and to give jobs to disadvantaged. Three major issues of social entrepreneurship are there. First is financial sustainability. Therefore, Akhuwat also takes donations. Operation self-sufficiency and business sustainability are the other two issues.

Who are Wantrepreneurs?

Wantrepreneurs are those potential entrepreneurs who make unrealistic desires for starting a new business. They are also often confused about business idea and rely on so many other people and hence get confused. They also find it difficult to make timely decisions. They are often complaining and not willing to fail. They are day dreamer and risk-averse persons. The main difference between entrepreneur and wantrepreneur is that entrepreneur converts idea into a startup while wantrepreneur keeps on planning for the business idea. You have to decide whether to become and entrepreneur or a wantrepreneur. It is always better to use your energies for becoming entrepreneur rather than entrepreneur.

Pitfalls in the Journey of Entrepreneurship
How to avoid pitfalls?

Pitfall means an area of uncertainty. Pitfalls in the entrepreneurial journey happen due to the mistakes of entrepreneurs. One of those mistakes is "lack of managerial skills". For example, if you can design a good product but cannot manage the people then it is an issue. Second is the lack of experience. So, never over rely on lack of experience in new business. Poor financial control is another issue that can cause a pitfall. It is mainly because entrepreneur starts spending on personal financing as well. There are often poor controls as well that might be a source of entrepreneurial pitfall. "Weak marketing effort" is another issue. "Failure to develop a strategic plan" is another issue. You need to have plan B as well being an entrepreneur. One should know which competition to avoid initially. "Uncontrollable growth issues" are also a problem. Unplanned diversification in business creates problems as well. Selection of poor location is also an issue. For example, transportation may become an issue for poor location. Similarly, "incorrect pricing" is also a big issue that can lead towards an entrepreneurial pitfall. One should avoid over pricing as well as underpricing. One should avoid inability to make transition in the entrepreneurial journey. Self-awareness and awareness of business is the key. Networking also helps in the industry. An entrepreneur must tune himself for new and better qualities as an entrepreneur.

Entrepreneurship MGT502

Characteristics of Successful Entrepreneurs (part a)

Learning about the characteristics of a successful entrepreneur can help a lot to the entrepreneurs for a better entrepreneurial experience. It also helps us in understanding the reasons that contribute to the success of entrepreneurs. Some of the major characteristics of a successful entrepreneur include;

- Passion for the business
- Tenacity despite failure
- Execution intelligence
- Discipline

If we study the autobiography of successful entrepreneurs of the world, then we would realize that all the successful entrepreneurs had a **passion for doing their own business** even from the start of their career. Without passion, a person can neither excel in the job nor in the business. So many aspects are associated with an entrepreneur when he starts a business. For example, financial risk gets attached to him. He has to manage a team for business. Time, energy and other resources are also utilized by an entrepreneur. Even while spending all these financial and non-financial resources, one cannot make an organization if the passion is not there. Many people realize that these are the non-commercial businesses such as NGOs that require passion. However, it is not true. All the big businesses in the world were established by passionate and visionary people.

Second aspect of a successful entrepreneur is **tenacity despite failure**. As an entrepreneur, one should not stop efforts even after failure. We often see the successful entrepreneurs while they enjoy their success stories in the final phase when their business is well established. Behind that, there happens to be a lot of struggles in their past and every entrepreneur has to face a lot of setbacks at the start of a business. Therefore, as an entrepreneur, one should remain prepared to face setbacks at the start of entrepreneurial journey.

Execution intelligence is also very important. People may have many other characteristics but an entrepreneur needs to have many characteristics. All the successful entrepreneurs have execution intelligence. They know when to use which resource and how to operate the business. They also know how to get the work done from their team. They should also know how to timely bring the idea in the market and to deal with the competitors. Hence, execution intelligence is an extremely important characteristic for an entrepreneur.

Discipline of entrepreneur is also very important for entrepreneur. There is this myth that entrepreneur does not have to follow the time like a job. But discipline is even more important in the business as well. You have to set priorities, be punctual and be better manager for being a role model of employees working in that venture.

Entrepreneurship MGT602

Characteristics of Successful Entrepreneurs (part b)

Some of the other characteristics of a successful entrepreneur include;

- Being self-starter
- Strong work ethics
- Open mindedness
- Self-assurance

Many people can guide an entrepreneur by providing self-motivation and talks but for success as an entrepreneur, **being self-starter** is a pre-requisite. There is a new term that is getting popularity and that is "motivational garbage". It means that even after listening so much motivational speakers, sometimes we cannot start a business. That means we are not motivated from the inside because we were not self-starters. A person has to adopt his own path.

Strong work ethics are also very important. Some people are of the view that everything in business is fair. But that is not true. All the successful businesses in the world have strong work ethics values. There is a viewpoint that corporate social responsibility is the responsibility of only the big businesses. But, irrespective of the size of the business, people prefer those values even in the small businesses that they see in the business owner.

Open mindedness is also very important. We listen to the people and can often get judgmental. People often lack tolerance as well in business affairs. However, tolerance for ambiguity is very important for successful entrepreneurs. It's important to keep personal biases aside.

Self-assurance means confidence on one's own personality. If entrepreneur does not have the confidence on his own product, then his product would not sell to others in the market. One also has to be ready to face the opinion of other for which being self-assured is important.

Characteristics of Successful Entrepreneurs (part c)

Empathy and tolerance are important factors. Being empathetic means listening people from their point of view. Entrepreneur has to listen the consumers. One has to be empathetic with the end users. Then, vision is also very important. Successful entrepreneur definitely has a vision. He should have foresightedness. Can you assess the future market demand? Such factors are key for a visionary leader. Self-investment is also important as entrepreneurs need to learn. They need to have trainings for business excellence. Export business owners often go abroad for such trainings and for meeting with the potential and actual clients. One has to be optimistic being an entrepreneur. Entrepreneur also has to be creative. Your approach must not be traditional and you should not use the same formula used by the whole market. Successful entrepreneurs are always creative.

Some Key Skills of Successful Entrepreneurs (Part a)

An entrepreneur should have some good personal characteristics for the business success. There are many such characteristics that can be discussed; however, few are more important. First, "goal setting" is an important characteristic and a key skill. Entrepreneur must know the business goal as he / she is to invest the resources in a business for a specific time and purpose. Entrepreneur should know where the business would be after a year. In which market he wants to access and how much he wants to expand the business in coming time. Goals should be specific, measureable, accurate, and realistic and time bound (SMART).

Then, "information seeking" is a power and an ability for an entrepreneur. Everyone has digital existence. You should have customers' data for your business. This information helps in making the decisions. Industry information is also very important. It is a skill to access right information for your business. "Opportunity seeking" is also another skill for entrepreneur which is very important. Everyone has the opportunity but it is important to properly assess an opportunity and avail it in a right manner. It is also a skill that can be learnt. "Learning" is also another ability for which unlearning the existing mindset, business patterns and behaviors is sometime important, so that one can absorb the knowledge with open mind and open heart for improvement. "Persistence" is also another skill based upon which one quits or keeps on going for a business.

Some Key Skills of Successful Entrepreneurs (Part b)

"Planning and monitoring" is a characteristic of a successful entrepreneur. It is very important to plan and monitor your business. Software can also help an entrepreneur in planning and monitoring measures. For example, for accounting purpose in business, many software can help an entrepreneur. Availability of finances is also very critical. Financial strength is the lifeline of every business. Hence, "financial intelligence" is very important. Financial management is a key for a business. Entrepreneur should know about financial statements, balance sheets, ledgers and financial ratios etc. "Market intelligence" means market research for your business. You need to keep an eye on your competitors. "Persuasion and influence" is a very important skill as well. Some people are introvert and many people in the extrovert category think that they are good in marketing and sales as well. In fact, it's all about persuasion and convincing the consumers. As an entrepreneur, even you have to convince employees of your organization to keep doing the good work and this also requires persuasion. There are many trainings that are conducted that can help an entrepreneur in this regard for learning about the art of persuasion, convincing others and communication skills.

Entrepreneurship MGT602

Some Key Skills of Successful Entrepreneurs (Part c)

Quality assurance is an important business characteristic in the sense that an entrepreneur would want to convince customers on the basis of quality of his products and services. You should make sure that there should not be any defect in the products or services. “Efficiency” of resource is another skill for proper business. You have to use the resources smartly. “Reading financial statement” is also very essential for the entrepreneurs. Understanding balance sheets, cash flows etc., is necessary for an entrepreneur. Understanding different ratios such as liquidity ratio is also important to know the net worth of the business. Marketing skill is also important for an entrepreneur. One should know about the proper execution of marketing mix. “Place” for selling the product is also a critical decision. You should be able to design the supply chain of your product. In services industry “physical evidence” is also very important. Team of good individuals, communication skills, networking etc., all are important. There is a saying that your networking is your net worth. For example, you should have people who can help you in supplies, legal advice, financial advice and digital marketing etc. These characterizes are key for a sustainable business relationship but they would not like to spoil franchisee’s business and instead the business growth of franchiser also depends upon the business growth of franchisee.

----------The End----------

Entrepreneurship Vol 02

Technical Articles Theme 06

Title: Entrepreneurial Process

Videos: 56-69

Topics Covered

56. The entrepreneurial process (Orientation)
57. Group Discussion 1: Academicians and Practitioners View (part 1): Are entrepreneurs born or made?
58. Group Discussion 1: Academicians and Practitioners View (part 2): Are entrepreneurs born or made?
59. Group Discussion 2: Family Entrepreneur (Part 1): How they started and what challenges they face?
60. Group Discussion 2: Women (Part 2): How they started and what challenges they face?
61. Identifying and recognizing opportunities Part I
62. Identifying and recognizing opportunities Part II
63. The opportunity sources: Observing Trends
64. The opportunity sources: Demographics and Social Trends
65. The opportunity sources: Economic and technological forces
66. The opportunity sources: Social Innovation and market gaps
67. Techniques of idea generation: Brain storming and mind mapping
68. Techniques of idea generation: library, internet, and incubation centers
69. Techniques of idea generation: Friends, Experts, and intuitions

Entrepreneurship MGT602

Author: Marriyam Bukhari, Instructor Business Administration, Virtual University of Pakistan

The Entrepreneurial Process

The entrepreneurial process includes all the functions, actions and activities that are part of perceiving opportunities and creating organizations to pursue them. Entrepreneurship is a complete process which is not easy. An individual can get fascinated by the idea of being his/her own boss but if he/she opts for entrepreneurship, he has to go through the complete process. The entrepreneurial process has following steps:

1. Decision to become an entrepreneur (personal preference, desire behaviors, dream)
2. Developing business idea (business plan making for opportunity
3. Idea to venture establishment
4. Managing and growing firm

As we have already discussed the importance of entrepreneurial traits, we will now see how these traits help entrepreneurs in entrepreneurial process.

- An entrepreneur's traits of knowledge and inspiration help him in idea generation.
- An entrepreneur's traits of dream, desire, and creativity help him in venture development
- An entrepreneur's traits of determination, learning from trial and error, productivity and efficiency help him in production and operations
- An entrepreneur's traits of leadership and networking help him in sustainability and growth

The entrepreneurial process is alternatively defined as a set of stages and events that follow one another. According to this definition, the entrepreneurial process stages are: the idea or conception of the business, the event that triggers the operations, implementation and growth. An important factor that drives the development and growth of the business at each stage is human behavior or entrepreneurial characteristics. Entrepreneurial traits are shaped by personal attributes and environment.

Identifying and Recognizing Opportunities

A business opportunity is defined as "a favorable set of circumstances that creates a need for a new product, service, or business." In order to become successful, an entrepreneur must be consciously innovating and searching for new opportunities. Usually, ventures are started in two ways; ventures in which opportunity is externally stimulated and ventures where the opportunity is internally stimulated. In **externally stimulated ventures**, the entrepreneur decides to start a business, look for and recognizes the opportunity and starts the business. In **internally stimulated ventures**, an entrepreneur sees the problem or gap and an opportunity to create a business and fill the gap. Whether a venture is externally stimulated or internally stimulated, opportunities are tough to locate. A business opportunity represents a possibility for the entrepreneurs to successfully fill a large enough unsatisfied need that results in enough sales and profits.

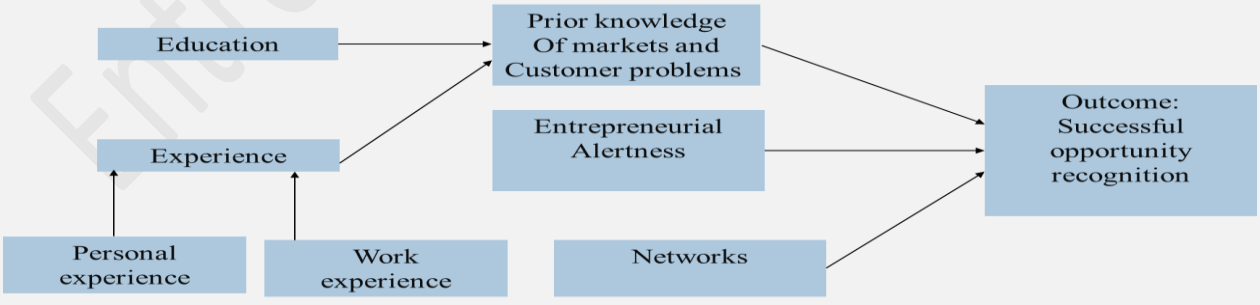
Entrepreneurship MGT602

The difficult task in opportunity recognition is to identify that the business or product idea is not merely a different version of something that already exists. A major mistake entrepreneurs usually make is to pick an existing product about which they are excited and passionate and build a business around that model or a slightly different version of it. The important thing to remember is to identify and recognize an opportunity and build a product which is the demand of customers. In other words, make a product that the customer is willing to buy rather than the one which entrepreneur wants to make and sell. A good opportunity should have four qualities which are: attractiveness (personal choice, preference, attractive with respect to market, financially viable), durability (not be short term, pop up opportunity, sustainable), timeliness (right time, develop product within time before others), and value proposition (product or service adds value for the buyer or end user, value for entrepreneur, overall environment, value anchored in product/service/business)

For an entrepreneur, to take advantage of an opportunity, the window of opportunity must be opened. Window of opportunity means the time duration during which a company can enter into a new market. The window of opportunity for a new product opens when the market for that new product is established. When the market established and grows, a firm may enter and establish a profitable position. When the saturation point comes and market matures, the window of opportunity closes. For example in 1995, the first search engine Yahoo appeared in the market. After that the market grew and Excite, Lycos, AltaVista and others came in the market. In 1998, Google entered the market with advanced search technology after which the search engine market matured and window for opportunity closed or is less prominent unless some company comes with very advanced technology.

Difference between an Idea and an Opportunity

We define idea as "Something imagined or pictured in the mind". Idea is in your mind (it's a thought, an impression, or a notion). It may or may not meet the criteria of opportunity. On the other hand, an opportunity must possess all four qualities i.e. attractiveness, durability, timely and value addition.



Model of opportunity recognition process

Source: adopted from Entrepreneurship by Dean A. Shepherd, Michael P. Peters, and Robert D. Hisrich

Entrepreneurship 102

The Opportunity Sources

An entrepreneur **observes the recent trends** and tries to find the opportunity in order to get maximum benefit. Though there are unlimited trends, following are the few of those recent trends where an opportunity can be spotted these days.

- Green trend (sustainable fashion, recycling, zero-waste practices, eating a plant-based diet, and reducing the use of plastics)
- Clean energy trend and global warming (clean energy technologies like solar, geothermal, wind, biofuels, and fuel cells)
- Organic orientation trend (organic vegetables with no fertilizers and pesticides used, chemical free food products, home grown vegetables and fruits,, organic cosmetics with ingredients that are human friendly, organic farming)
- Fitness and health trend (connection of mind and body, at-home workouts, outdoor fitness, yoga, meditation)
- Social networking trend (you can be an opinion maker, you can launch business idea on social media, marketing on social media)
- Traveling and adventure (small traveling and tourist firms)
- Bloggers, vloggers and virtual communicates

Entrepreneur can see the opportunity in any problem of the society. Sometimes, a problem exists in the market which entrepreneur visualizes as an opportunity. He thinks of **solving that problem** with creative and innovative product or service.

Demography means the statistical structure of populations. It includes the age, gender, income, ethnicity, religion, profession and level of education of a population. Age is a very important factor for an entrepreneur with marketing perspective as people with different age brackets have different demands, needs and wants. The age of humans is usually divided in the following groups: baby boomers (born 1946-1964), generation x (1965-1980), millennial (1980-2000 or 1978-1999), post millennial (people born after 2000). Millennial are also known as generation y (or gen y). some of the traits of millennial or generation y are: buying power and influence on older generation, support cause, global shared values, social media lovers, part of virtual communities, early adopter of technology, travel and adventure, adopt new trends. Other important demographics to be considered by entrepreneurs are: working couples, single parents, region and ethnic groups, and the diversity of workforce.

Your presence on social media is your **digital identity**. In this technological era, the business must have its digital presence and identity where consumers can always reach it. The social media platforms where an entrepreneur can create its digital presence are: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Whatsapp, Pinterest, Snapchat, and LinkedIn. Digital identity at social media helps entrepreneur in networking and sharing.

Entrepreneurship MGT602

Economic forces play an important role in identification of a good opportunity. It is important for an entrepreneur to understand the types of economies in which he/she might have to start and operate his/her business. One of the types of an economic system is *Command Economic System* or planned economic system. Command economic system is a system controlled and directed by a central authority which is usually the government of the relative country. The central authority or government decides on the organization and distribution of resources and sets prices. This system is rarely followed by countries in the current era. Another type of economic systems is *Market Economic System* or Free market. In free market system, demand and supply regulates the market instead of the government. Market forces (supply and demand) decide what to produce, at what price and quantity. Resources are owned by private individuals who are free to do business with each other which makes the market more competitive. This competition to acquire resources and give the quality product in market, leads towards the most effective and efficient use of scarce resources. There is a little intervention of government in free market economy. Market economic system is the extreme opposite of command economic system. While countries rarely employ any of these economic systems, another type of economic system was introduced that has been widely employed by countries. *Mixed economic system* (mix of command and market economy) is a combination of other economic systems. In mixed economy, although market is free but the government is still involved in certain regulations. The intervention of government is minimal except for a few key areas where government may intervene. It is also called modern economic system. Most of the economies are based on the mechanism of mixed economic system. Characteristics of mixed economy are: co-existence of public and private sector, existence of economic planning, role of price system and government directives, government regulation and control over private sector, reduction of economic inequalities, government protection of labor and protection of consumer sovereignty.

The economic indicators which an entrepreneur must have information about are: GDP annual growth rate, GDP per capita, GDP per capita PPP, unemployment rate, inflation rate, consumer price index CPI, food inflation, foreign exchange reserves, balance of trade, corporate tax rate, personal income tax rate, and sales tax rate. These indicators tell entrepreneur about the economic situation and help him to make timely decisions. For example, an entrepreneur will not offer a luxury product in a region where the purchasing power of consumers is very low.

Technological forces also play an important role in identification of a good opportunity. Key technology areas of which an entrepreneur must have knowledge these days are: big data (ways to analyze big volumes of data sets which cannot be analyzed with traditional analysis software. This data can be used by companies to know customers' preferences), cloud computing, artificial intelligence, machine learning, robotic process automation (using robots and automation technologies to reduce the labor work), 5g & 6g, blockchain, digital privacy, e-governance, virtual space and networking.

World Economic Forum defines **social innovation** as "the application of innovative, practical, sustainable, market-based approaches to benefit society in general, and low-income or underserved

populations in particular". In general, NGOs are responsible for the welfare of society and businesses are established to make profit. As NGOs run on donations of big organizations, the idea of social innovation emerged. It illustrates that businesses instead of giving donations to NGOs, should come up with a business idea which can solve a societal problem and also generate profit for the firm. For example, medicine to cure a disease can be a profit making business for a pharmaceutical company but also solves a societal issue i-e to cure that disease. Features of social innovation are: tangible business with profit is established in result of a societal issue, part of firm's business strategy and innovation agenda, managed from company's core operations, sustainable development of society and business, enhancing long-term competitiveness and business growth, and new product development with environmental concerns.

With the emergence of social innovation, social entrepreneurship has been becoming popular. *Social entrepreneurs* are defined as "individuals who recognize a social problem and use their entrepreneurial skills to create a program, business or process to find a solution." Another definition states that "a social entrepreneur is a person who pursues novel applications that have the potential to solve community-based problems. These individuals are willing to take on the risk and effort to create positive changes in society through their initiatives." For example, the development of a mobile application which serves the needs of deaf and dumb through which they would be able to communicate with people is social entrepreneurship.

Gap is important to bring new product in market. A 'gap in the market' idea can have one or more of three attributes which are: it is something new and original, it improves on something that already exists, and it takes something that exists and finds it a new market. To find a gap in market, it is important for an entrepreneur to conduct market research. To conduct a *market research* and measure the characteristics of the market and its size, a specific market is identified. Market research also involved market intelligence and industry analysis. The integral part of doing any business is to keep track of the competitors and the industry which is termed as *market intelligence.* Companies get valuable insight into how to expand and grow their firms by collecting and analyzing the data of their target market. *Industry analysis* is related to reviewing the political, economic and market factors that influence the industry and the way it develops. It is a market assessment tool which gives firms an idea of how a particular industry works and how complex it is. According to Porter, five forces that impact the industry are: the condition of competition, the power of suppliers, the likelihood of new entrants, threat of substitute products and power of customers.

Techniques of Idea Generation

As we have already discussed that an idea is a thought, an impression, or a notion. Idea generation is a fundamental or basic part of a business venture. There are certain techniques of idea generation which are: brain storming, problem inventory analysis, and mind mapping. **Brainstorming** is a group technique to generate ideas or solve a problem. Usually one facilitator or moderator controls the discussion. Participants are typically asked to discuss about a product or a problem (or

anything) in detail and from every angle. The more the ideas are generated in brainstorming, the more the discussion is considered healthy. The members of the discussion can be the heads of the organization, consumers or industry experts. Sometimes there are some rules to be followed while doing brainstorming that are: no criticism or no negative comments in the beginning, all types of wild ideas are welcome, quantity of ideas is desired, think out of the box, and combination of ideas brings improvement and may produce new ideas. Sometimes reverse brainstorming is done in which every participant is provided with a paper where they can write all the generated ideas and then give their opinion on each idea, called brain writing. In brain writing, the members can also criticize the ideas so that a refined version of best ideas can come on the table. Another technique of idea generation is **problem inventory analysis** is "a method for obtaining new ideas and solutions by focusing on existing problems". In this method, a list of problems related to market, product or service is provided to the participant in the beginning of the discussion. **Mind mapping** is another approach that can be used to generate ideas. In this technique, a central idea is written and then participants are asked to come up with associated ideas that branch out from the central idea. It's a graphical/visual representation for organization of ideas and concepts.

Libraries are the most underutilized resource. Ideas can also be generated in libraries using industry specific magazines, trade journals, industry reports, databases, and market research reports. Such reports and magazines are also available online but it is quite a task to ensure their authenticity. As unauthentic information can lead the entrepreneur to make wrong decisions, he/she must go for authentic sources of information even if he/she uses internet. Government reports (which are usually paid) can also be found in libraries and you can get information by using them free of cost. **Internet** is also a rich and most used source of information. There are pages and official accounts of thousands of businesses on social networking sites (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn) where an entrepreneur can see them. It can also help him find the gap, generate new idea and mature it. One thing must be kept in mind while using internet to get information is checking the source of that information. Most of the information on internet is unauthentic. Entrepreneur must ensure the authenticity of the source. Entrepreneurs also use **search engines** to get new ideas. He/she can find the authentic magazines and journals and get their subscription. Subscription allows these websites to send email alerts to the subscriber about every new publication and events. **Incubation centers** can also be a good source of new idea generation. Potential entrepreneurs must visit all local incubation centers and also visit the websites of all international incubation centers. This can give them an idea of: the industry trends, which ideas are popular these days, and which product or service is in demand. Potential entrepreneurs must also keep an eye on the business plan competitions and see which business plan ideas are winning these competitions internationally and locally.

Friends and family can also be a source of generating and maturing an idea. If you have identified an opportunity, have an idea in mind and you are sure that you can design a product on that idea; the first thing that comes in mind is to discuss it with your friends and family. Friends and family members are good listeners and honest advisers. Moreover, if they are senior, they can give you

an honest advice based on their experience. Another benefit of sharing your business idea with friends and family is that they may invest in your business if they really like your idea. They may be interested in becoming your partner too. Friends and family are the people who are close enough to know your capacity. They can tell you that though the idea is good but you might not have capacity to mature it. Potential entrepreneurs must listen to this kind of advises as a number of business startups fail because of inconsistency and incapacity/incapability of the entrepreneur. Potential entrepreneurs can get most benefit from family or friends if they have business/entrepreneurial background. They can give him/her advice based on their experience of business and market dynamics. On the other hand, family can discourage potential entrepreneurs too. They might influence him/her to do job instead of business as in case of loss, they will be the major financial sufferers.

Another source of good idea is experts of the industry potential entrepreneurs are interested in. **Expert opinion** can help an entrepreneur take the right decision at right time. Potential entrepreneurs must attend the live sessions and leaders' talk shows where industry leaders share their life stories and experiences. Entrepreneurs should try to make networks with these experts to get benefit from their lifetime experience. Potential entrepreneurs can share their business idea with these experts to get a feedback on how realistic and workable the business idea is.

Intuition is defined as "the ability to understand something instinctively, without the need for conscious reasoning." It's an ability to know something without any information or proof. Some people rely more on their intuition or gut feeling while others rely more on strategic reasoning and thinking over things before making any decision. As far as entrepreneurs are concerned, they are more of the intuitive type of people. Although they make decisions based on strategic thinking and reasoning, they also make decisions solely based on their gut feeling. Interviews with different entrepreneurs showed that the decision they took based on the gut feeling or intuition were right most of the times. It doesn't mean that intuition is never wrong as some of the decisions were found to be wrong too, which were taken intuitively according to the expert entrepreneurs. Taking decision based on intuition alone is a risk for business venture. Although entrepreneurs are risk takers but taking blind risk can affect the business venture. Entrepreneurs should consider the gut feeling or intuition but also collect information and do market research before taking any decision.

----------The End----------

Entrepreneurship MGT602

Technical Articles Theme 07

Title: Entrepreneurship and Creativity

Videos: 70-86

Topics Covered

70. What is innovation?
71. What is creativity?
72. Barriers to innovation and creativity
73. Creativity, innovation, opportunity and entrepreneurship: the link
74. Protecting your business idea: what is Intellectual property (IP) and what is intellectual property rights (IPRs)?
75. Protecting your business idea (Patent, Trademarks, and Copyrights etc.)
76. The interview with an entrepreneur: How to open third eye for opportunity hunting?
77. What makes entrepreneurs entrepreneurial?
78. The effectual reasoning: (The problem, The process)
79. Effectual reasoning: the principles
80. Bird-in-hand
81. The affordable loss principle
82. The crazy quilt principle
83. The lemonade principle
84. Pilot-in-the-plane
85. Effectuation: The workshop activity
86. The interview with an entrepreneur: How entrepreneurs can use their available resources for quick start?

Entrepreneurship MGT602

Author: Marriyam Bukhari, Instructor Business Administration, Virtual University of Pakistan

What is innovation?

Innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship are closely related. Innovation is defined as "the process of translating an idea or invention into a good or service that creates value for which customer will pay." In large organizations, it is a complex process to bring innovation because of certain limitations. On the other hand, small firms are more prone to innovation and every small startup is thought to be innovative. The reason is; less complex structure of small firms, quick decision making, easy resource pulling, and easier product testing.

Innovation is also defined as: "Making a product or service better, faster, cheaper, greater satisfaction and/or greater value." Another comprehensive definition of innovation is "the company's capability to implement a range of coordinated actions and strategies for the purpose of developing and delivering new products and/or new services to the new or existing market in a manner that outperforms competitors." Two critical components of innovation are: invention and commercialization. Commercialization adds social and economic value to the invention through the creation of a business, or/and licensing/intellectual property protection. You need to commercialize the new idea to solve the society's problem. Without commercialization, no matter how unique the idea is, it won't be converted into a product and offered in the market. The most common types of innovation are: incremental innovation, disruptive innovation, architectural innovation and radical innovation.

Most of the firms go for **incremental innovation** with existing market and existing technology. Incremental innovation is referred to the series of improvements a company make in its existing products and services with time. For example, Apple or Samsung mobile companies launch a new model of their smartphones every year with a slight improvement in certain features. Incremental innovation is not risky. **Disruptive Innovation** is related with implementing new processes, technologies (disruptive business models) in existing markets. In the beginning, new models look inferior as compared to the current solutions, but with the passage of time, they surpass the old technology due to their efficiency and efficacy. Amazon was the first online book store which disrupted the old business model of conventional book stores. There was an existing market of books and they changed the way books are sold. **Architectural innovation** is what the giant companies like Google and Amazon do. They take their domain related technology, expertise and skills and then implement it to a different market. This is the way they increase their customer base by expanding the market. **Radical innovation** is the type of innovation which people actually think as innovation stereotypically. It is the rarest type of innovation. It involves innovating new technologies, business models or services which create new markets. The examples of radical innovations are invention of microwave, airplane etc.

In Harvard business review, the types of innovation are defined in terms of how well the problem is defined and how well the domain is identified and defined. Innovation types are (according to HBR): sustaining innovation, breakthrough innovation, disruptive innovation, and basic research. **Sustaining innovation** involves improving the existing capabilities. Organization tries to get better

Entrepreneurship MGT02

at what it has. Entrepreneur has a clear idea of what problems will come and which skill domains are needed to solve them. On the other hand, **breakthrough innovation** involves getting into a well-defined problem for which it is hard to get the solution. In this case, entrepreneur has to explore the skill domains which will be able to solve the problem. Researchers have discovered that with the changes in competition and shifts in technology and marketplace, companies improve and become better and better at the things (product/services) which customers want less. At this point, innovation in products or services won't help rather the companies have to innovate their business models. This type of innovation is called **disruptive innovation**. **Basic research** involves doing research on something you don't know. Every invention must have had a background research when the inventor did not even know what he is exploring.

Other most common types of innovation are: product innovation, business model innovation, process/technology innovation, social innovation, market-pull innovation and technology-push innovation. **Product innovation** involves innovation in products and intangible services such as services that meet customer needs. The business model is the way a company functions and earns money. **The business model innovation** encompasses innovations in strategy, marketing, supply chains, value creation, pricing or cost structures. The major examples of business model innovation are Food panda Uber, Careem, and Foodpanda. **Process and technology innovation** involves creating the process efficient or cost effective in order to improve quality or production. **Social innovations** are innovations where the benefit lies with society and the purpose is not primarily profit. Examples include innovation in education, poverty reduction, equal opportunities, health, pollution reduction, plastic use reduction, and green trends. **Market pull innovation** originates from the market and initiates by a specific customer request. Lastly, **technology-push innovation** is the result of new technologies for which suitable application possibilities are sought and implemented.

What is creativity?

As we know, creativity is what distinguishes humans from other creatures. Business managers and entrepreneurs are more interested in creativity as they think it as a linkage to innovation which ultimately leads to new product, process, firm growth, or stronger competitive advantage (Ko & Butler, 2007). Different academics define creativity as a process which results in novel or new products or ideas which are appropriate and valuable to the society as a whole. The traditional approach to creativity was person-centered which assumed that creativity is innate in individuals. Contrary to the traditional approach, the contemporary approach to creativity believes that all humans having normal capabilities can produce at least moderate creative work, for some time, and in some domain. Research showed that creativity is not only innate quality of an individual, but it is also the function of environmental factors and individual characteristics which can be developed (Amabile, 1996; Sternburg, 2006). Creativity is about seeing the things same as everyone else is seeing but making the connections between them which no one else has made. It's an ability to produce or use original, unusual and unique ideas. Business dictionary defines creativity as "mental

characteristics that allows a person to think outside of the box, which results in innovative or different approaches to particular task. There are the five stages of an Individual's creative process. Each stage of creative process flows logically into the next stage. The stages of creative process are: preparation, incubation, insight, evaluation, and elaboration.

As an individual starts the creative journey, the first phase involves **preparation** work and generation of idea. It's the stage when individual conducts the research work and gathers information and materials that could ignite a unique idea. In this first stage of the creative process, the brain is using its memory to get knowledge and information on past experiences to generate the novel idea. When an individual is done with actively thinking about the creative idea giving it upfront time, it is the stage when he/she must let it go for a while. This stage is called **incubation**. It is the part of creative thinking to get yourself away from your idea before sitting down again to add more details to it. At this stage an entrepreneur might start working on other project or take a break from creative thinking altogether in a sense that he/she is not actively or consciously working on his/her creative idea. Throughout this stage, the idea is incubating in the back of the mind. After incubation, entrepreneur enters into the **insight** stage which is sometimes called illumination stage, a stage when "aha" moment happens, and individual gets eureka experience (feeling of joy and satisfaction). It is when he is able to form new connections and gather all the material he has collected to present the solution to the problem. It is the stage when the real unique idea is emerged. At this stage, entrepreneur is sure about the target market, customers, the product, the sources of finance and resources. Once the idea is emerged, it enters in **evaluation** stage. It is the stage to validate the idea and weighing it against the alternatives. An individual can go back and see if the current version of his idea is what he initially imagined. Another important thing at this stage is testing the viability of the idea. The entrepreneur will have to scrutinize the idea (whether it is viable or not) and conduct market assessment. An important thing at this stage is to check the financial viability of the idea. **Elaboration** is the final stage of creative process, and is sometimes called verification stage. It is the stage when hard work is needed to transform your idea into a physical product or service. At this stage an entrepreneur finalizes the design, transform the idea into a physical product or service and share it with the world. Entrepreneur at this stage will launch the marketing campaigns, keep the financial records, take the customers' feedback and will try to improve based on the suggestions of the customers.

Barriers to Creativity and Innovation

Why an entrepreneur cannot innovate or bring creative product ideas into the market. There are certain barriers to innovation and creativity.

Personal barriers involves personality and behavior barriers, social pressure, lack of passion, lack of direction, fear of failure and making prior assumptions. *Personality and behavior* can be a major barrier to creativity and innovation. Some people are not the risk takers and want to enter in a market

with a casual or simple (already existed) product. They might not have the capability to think out of the box. Thinking creatively or wanting to innovate is a personality trait too so the people who do not have that trait of doing something different, do not go for creativity. *Social pressure* is another barrier to a creative idea. An entrepreneur comes under the social pressure when he/she tells his/her idea to someone (family or friends) and gets a negative response (when they call your idea weird and strange). This is normal for friends, family and even customers to have innovation barriers in their minds which form a wall against creative things. Our brain spontaneously prefers the known things as compared to the unknown things. This is the reason why society first rejects your idea. Under this social pressure, even if the entrepreneur is creative, he/she will curtail his/her creativity and try to build a simple product which will have market acceptance. *Lack of passion* is a personal barrier which comes from demotivation. May be in the beginning, entrepreneur is excited about the new idea but after getting discouraged by the family and friends, he becomes less passionate about his creative idea. *Lack of direction* can also hinder an entrepreneur's creativity and innovation. If an entrepreneur's personality is inconsistent and he doesn't have a proper direction, it will lead him to astray. Only a focused person can think creatively. *Fear of failure* is the foremost barrier to innovation and creativity in entrepreneurship. It happens when an entrepreneur is already under the social pressure and people around him have already rejected his idea. It makes entrepreneur feel demotivated thinking that his product/service model will not work or be rejected by the customers too. This fear also disturbs the entrepreneur at market testing stage which can lead him/her to take wrong decisions. This fear of failure leads the entrepreneur to *make prior assumptions* about the product acceptability in the market. He assumes that he will not get the investment, resources, customers, or the team to work on the idea.

Cultural barriers involve lack of training, misguiding instructions, lack of motivation, lack of basic ability, and access to resources. Culture is defined as "the shared values, beliefs, and practices of the people". Some organizations do not have a creative culture. May be the business of the firm doesn't need creativity and innovation. Leg pulling and politics in organizations can also hinder creativity. In other firms (for example, advertising agencies or IT firms) creativity and innovation is the essential part of firm's culture. Such organizations (like Google) give upfront time to their employees to think creatively encouraging creative ideas and promoting innovation. An organization which needs creative ideas should train its employees to think creatively. *Lack of training* can be a barrier to creativity as the individual would not know what to think and what actually the organization needs him/her to think. Instructions on which type of idea is needed would be communicated clearly as *misguided instructions* can result in a totally different idea and wastage of time. Another barrier to creativity is *lack of motivation*. Even if the entrepreneur himself is creative but if he is unable to motivate others in the team, it will curb the creativity. If an entrepreneur doesn't have the *basic ability to think creatively* he/she won't be able to produce any unique ideas. Moreover, in order to execute a creative idea, entrepreneur needs resources. If he/she doesn't have *access to resources*, the creative idea will remain in the mind of the entrepreneur but will never be executed and offered in the market.

Feasibility barriers involve blur ideas, financial feasibility, and business model feasibility. Idea should be clear as the *blur idea* will not result in creative product or service. It should be practical and can be converted into a physical product or service. *Financial viability* is an important factor. The road from idea generation to a physical product/successful innovation is really expensive. An entrepreneur faces the situations like "we don't have the right staff", "too expensive", "this is practically impossible" etc. Most of the creative ideas die because the entrepreneur fails to meet the finances of the journey from idea generation to innovative product development.

The knowledge and experience barrier involves lack of prior knowledge, lack of prior experience, and lack of access to information. Prior knowledge of the domain and experience in the domain can enhance the creativity. According to Amabile (1996), one of the components of creativity is domain related experience. *Lack of prior knowledge and experience* of the domain can hinder the creativity. The more you have knowledge of the field, the more you think creatively. An entrepreneur should have updated information on new trends and business models. Inability to *access the right information* can curb the innovativeness and creativity.

The regulatory and procedural barrier involves laws and policies, registration process, access to raw materials and government policies. An entrepreneur has to execute his/her idea according to the rules, regulations, *laws and policies* of the country. He/she has to register the business as per the *registration process* of the relative country. Another major barrier can be the *access to raw material*. May be the idea is so unique that it needs raw materials which are hard to access or need governmental approval to access them. An entrepreneur also needs to get the patents for the creative idea and see the government policies regarding that. The idea must be acceptable in terms of *government laws and policies*. The product should not be something which is not allowed in a country where you want to offer it.

What makes entrepreneurs entrepreneurial? Another perspective on entrepreneurship

Effectuation: The problem

In entrepreneurship, the general question which comes in mind while thinking of starting a business startup is "How should we start a business?" Entrepreneurship experts state that the more important question is "How does a business start?" instead of "How should a business be started?" Another most discussed question in entrepreneurship is "**What makes entrepreneurs entrepreneurial?**" This debate led the researchers to give the concepts of causation and effectuation approach to entrepreneurship. Sara Sarasvathy is a researcher and expert in the field of entrepreneurship who gave the theory of effectuation in 2001. Before discussing theory of effectuation, it is important to understand the difference between causation approach to entrepreneurship and effectuation approach to entrepreneurship. A **causation approach** infers that "entrepreneurs focus on a predefined goal and then aim to find the means to reach this goal". Causal rationality arises when a pre-defined goals is set by the entrepreneur with a given set of means or resources. Entrepreneur

seeks to find the fastest, ideal, efficient and cheap means/alternatives to achieve that goal. The examples of causal reasoning are: choosing a high return market or choosing to serve the niche market. On the other hand, **an effectuation approach** infers that "entrepreneurs focus on the means at hand, which they aim to materialize into one or more goals that were not necessarily predefined." It does not start with a specific goal. Instead, effectuation starts with the given means that entrepreneur has at the moment. It allows goals to develop over time with the aspirations and imagination of the entrepreneur.

Difference between causation and effectuation process

Categories of differentiation	Causation process	Effectuation process
Practice	Start with goals	Start with their means: Who I am, what I know, whom I know
Logic	Predictive	Control
Money	Expected return	Affordable loss
Strategy	Competition	Partnerships
Perception	Exploitation of preexisting knowledge	Leveraging of contingencies

Source: Based on Sarasvathy (2001a, 2001b, 2003).

Effectuation: The Process

As we know, effectuation does not start with a specific goal. Instead, effectuation starts with the given means that entrepreneur has at the moment. All entrepreneurs begin with three categories of means:

(1) **Who they are** – their traits, tastes and abilities; (some people have certain special skills or qualities, natural skills and abilities which are actually the resources. Resources are not only the financial resources rather a special skill or ability can also be a resource).

(2) **What they know** – their education, training, expertise, and experience; (for example, if you have education in data sciences, you can start your own IT firm based on your education and expertise as this education and expertise are your resources/means)

(3) **Whom they know** – their social and professional networks (networking with resourceful and useful people can also be a resource/mean for an entrepreneur)

These three things are the core of an entrepreneur as entrepreneurs use these things (traits, education, skills, expertise and experience) to generate business ideas and start their businesses.

Effectuation: The Principles

There are five principles of effectuation given by Dr. Sarasvathy which are:

1. Bird in hand principle (create solutions to the problem with the means/resources available at the moment)
2. Lemonade principle (surprises and mistakes are unavoidable. An entrepreneur should use the mistakes and surprises to find new opportunities.)
3. Crazy quilt principle (focus on co-creation and partnership instead of competition. It can bring new directions and funds for your project.)
4. Affordable loss principle (you should see how to cover the negative side. The best approach is to invest only the amount which you can afford to lose.)
5. Pilot-in-the-plane principle (you are yourself responsible for everything. Your future can be influenced by your own actions.)

Bird in Hand Principle

When successful entrepreneurs start a new business, they first start with the available resources or means. The bird in hand principle infers that the business should be started with the means/resources currently available. These resources are categorized as follows:

- Who I am- what skills, abilities and tastes an entrepreneurs has
- What I know- his/her education, experience and expertise
- Who I know- his/her professional and social network

Using the mixture of these means, an entrepreneur can start imagining the new possibilities. Usually, he/she starts a business at a small scale with closest available resources or means and directly implements it without any detailed planning. With each decision, possible results are re-aligned. Ultimately, certain emerging things result in clearly achievable goals. The end goals are the result of aspirations, abilities, skills, and imagination of the entrepreneur and the people he/she has interacted with.

Affordable Loss Principle

In business world, the general practice is to choose the market with highest return. It is a natural impulse which comes from the years long training which we get in business schools and business world. Business world tells us to maximize the returns by choosing optimal strategy and high return market segment. As far as effectual entrepreneurs are concerned, they go for affordable loss instead of maximizing profits. They make decisions on what they can afford to lose not what they can expect to make. This is what affordable principle infers. Instead of calculating what money is needed upfront and investing his/her time, energy and effort in raising that money, an expert entrepreneur tries to assess the negative side or downside and examines what he/she is willing to lose. The entrepreneur then starts the process of building the venture and brings other partners or stakeholders on board in order to estimate what they can afford to lose. An estimation of affordable

Entrepreneurship MGT602

loss does not depend on what type of venture an entrepreneur is going to start rather it depends on the entrepreneur himself. It varies from one person to the other and even across the life stage of the entrepreneur and circumstances he/she is in. By estimating affordable loss and making decision which business to start (based on estimation of affordable loss), entrepreneurs stop relying on prediction. As an alternative, they cultivate the opportunities that have a low cost of failure.

Crazy Quilt Principle

While causation relies on detailed competitive analysis, effectuation focuses on co-creation and partnership. The crazy quilt principle focuses on building partnerships instead of beating competition. Since effectual entrepreneurs start their business without a predetermined target market, the detailed competitors' analysis becomes less useful for them as they do not have an idea of who will be their competitors. Instead, they take their product to nearest possible potential customers. Some of the individuals or firms they interact with make commitments with the entrepreneurs by investing their means/resources in terms of time, efforts and money. This partnership principle or crazy quilt principle merges best with affordable loss principle to bring entrepreneur's product into the market with little expenditure. In the initial stages of venture development, these partnerships with suppliers, customers and other stakeholders help reduce the uncertainty and fear of failure. Lastly, since in the beginning entrepreneur doesn't not know which market to serve, these strategic partnerships and network, to a great extent, determine which market/markets the entrepreneur will eventually target.

Lemonade Principle

There is a famous proverb "If life deals you lemons, make lemonade!" The lemonade principle (leverage contingences) of effectuation infers that an entrepreneur should embrace surprises that arise from uncertain circumstances by being flexible instead of being tied to the set goals. This principle is at the heart of entrepreneurial expertise that is the ability to turn the surprises or unexpected things into profitable opportunities. Effectual entrepreneurs learn to work with uncertainties and take advantage from them. In most businesses, the contingency plans are prepared where surprises are considered worst case scenarios. On the contrary, because effectual entrepreneurs do not bind their idea to any preconceived or specific market, so everything and anything is a surprise for them which can be turned into a valuable opportunity.

Pilot-in-the-Plane Principle

The desire of self-control is as old as human itself is. Research shows that humans have been struggling to control everything in their lives ever since the history began. In today's world, the mechanism, processes and instruments for control-striving are different than they were in the past but the issue remains the same. Psychological research studies show that human behavior of control-striving is directly related to his/her functioning/performance. For example, if a person has self-control or control over things around him, he or she will be less stressed. On the other hand, loss of control is linked with helplessness and depression. Effectual entrepreneurs consider the desire of control as healthy and normal. Entrepreneurs usually chose entrepreneurship to become their own boss and control his/her business. Control makes them able to work independently, and on their own schedule. Effectual entrepreneurs take right actions, at the right time to control the things. They focus on the things in their own control and know that their decisions will result in the outcome they want. Though every entrepreneur has the desire to control but the intensity of it varies among people and also depends on the life stage of the entrepreneur. This principle suggests that entrepreneur is similar to a pilot who is responsible for the plane and passengers just like the entrepreneur is responsible for his venture.

----------The End----------

Entrepreneurship MGT602

Technical Articles Theme 08

Title: Strategic Management in Entrepreneurship and E-Commerce

Videos: 87-104

Topics Covered

87. Strategic management in entrepreneurship
88. Strategic Management Process
89. Clear Vision and mission of business venture
90. Assessment of strength and weakness of yourself and venture
91. Scan environment for potential opportunities and threats
92. Create short term and long term long
93. Select appropriate strategies
94. Building competitive advantage for new venture
95. analysis competition
96. Strategy review, evaluation and control
97. Innovation logic: the blue ocean strategy (Part 1)
98. Innovation logic: the blue ocean strategy (Part 2)
99. Innovation logic: the blue ocean strategy (Part 3)
100. The interview with an entrepreneur 1: How to lead the competition or making competition irrelevant?
101. E-commerce and the entrepreneur
102. Myths of E-commerce and challenges
103. Tech entrepreneurship and academia linkage
104. The interview with an entrepreneur 2: What are the challenges of online businesses?

Entrepreneurship MGT602

Author: Sara Hussain, Lecturer Business Administration, Virtual University of Pakistan

Strategic Management and its Role in Entrepreneurship

Strategic management and entrepreneurship are somehow related to each other. **Strategy** is an action plan that synchronizes the tangible and intangible resources and for achieving a set target for superior performance. A person might have a unique business idea but he cannot grow properly if he is unable to execute it with proper strategy. **Strategic management** is a branch of management. It is essential for managing organizational tangible and intangible resources to achieve its long term and short term goals and objective for sustainable competitive advantage in industry. There are three main phases of strategic management namely *Strategy formulation, strategy implementation, Strategy evaluation and control.* The main areas covered under strategic management are business vision and mission, internal and external environmental scanning, strategies formulation, analyzing the multiple strategies, sustainable competitive advantage for sustainable growth, implementation and operational execution of strategies, Strategies review, measures and control.

Strategic management can be divided in three broad categories i.e. strategy formulation, implementation and evaluation. Vision, mission, long term and short term goals and objectives, environmental scanning, strategies analysis and choices, business models and competitive advantage are all part of strategy formulation. Structures, designs and polices development, managing and allocating resources, functional areas e.g. marketing, finance, R&D and HR along with putting strategies into real time operations are part of strategy implementation. Strategy review, quality and control, corrective measures and revisiting strategies are all part of strategy evaluation. Creation and growth, diversification, performance of firms, industry dynamics, competitive advantage Mergers, acquisitions, alliances innovation and product ecosystems are some overlapping areas of strategic management and entrepreneurship.

Strategic management process is a method by which entrepreneurs assess their idea's viability and implement an appropriate strategy that can ensure to a sustainable competitive advantage of venture. This process starts with initial assessment which includes vision and mission. Next comes situation analysis which includes SWOT analysis i.e. analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. When it comes to strategy formulation there is need to have a look at objectives, business level, corporate level, and global strategy selection. At the phase of strategy implementation policies, resource allocation, change management, organizational chart and structure are designed and redesigned. After design and implementation strategic monitoring comes in action through which performance is measured.

Vision statement defines the anticipated future orientation of the business venture whereas ***mission statement*** outlines the company's business, objectives and its approach to reach those objectives.

A good mission and vision statement must have a philosophy. Vision and mission statement must be aligned with each other. These must be customer and market oriented. Technology must be reflected. Competitive advantage, concern for society, concern for employees and future

Entrepreneurship MGT 102

orientation must also be reflected in vision or mission statement. Main questions to be asked while planning for a business are:

- *What is your general business description?*
- *What is your business model?*
- *Is it sustainable viable business idea?*

There are a lot of benefits of defining vision and mission statement. Clear vision and mission statement brings unanimity of purpose and direction among strategic partners. It provides standards and procedures for execution plan. Brings focus in allocation of resources. Establish a culture and tone of your venture. Serve as a direction and quality standard. Set rule to deter those strategic partners who cannot from participate for further growth. Facilitate in translating the long-term and short-term goals and objectives into a work structure. It also motivates for future growth.

For starting a new venture **SWOT analysis** of the business and individual himself must be done. SWOT stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Strengths are the positive internal factors that a business venture can use to achieve its vision, mission, goals and objectives. **Weaknesses** are the negative internal factors that inhibit the business venture's capability to achieve its vision, mission, goals and objectives. It adversely affect the sustainable competitive advantage of a venture. Following is the checklist of own/individual assessment:

- ✓ *Am I clear about my destination?*
- ✓ *Are my skills sufficient for kick start or growth?*
- ✓ *What are my limitations?*
- ✓ *In which area I am lacking that could adversely/positively affect my venture establishment or growth?*
- ✓ *Is my network worthy for establishment/growth?*
- ✓ *What level of commitment I can bring in my venture?*

Following is the checklist of venture assessment:

- ✓ *Is venture's objectives and goals measurable?*
- ✓ *Is venture's objectives and goals well communicated to strategic partners?*
- ✓ *Is product/service design competitive?*
- ✓ *Is selected target market is well thought and planned?*
- ✓ *Is my pricing strategy competitive?*
- ✓ *Are my unique selling proposition well communicated to target market?*
- ✓ *Is customer orientation well crafted?*
- ✓ *Is the venture's structure appropriate?*
- ✓ *Are jobs and requirements clear to all strategic partners?*
- ✓ *Is strategic partners' morale high?*
- ✓ *Are employee's absenteeism and/or turnover low?*

Entrepreneurship MGT 502

- ✓ *Are reward and control mechanisms effective*?

There are several tools that can be used to assess strengths and weaknesses. These are usually cost benefit analysis, financial ratios, and production and operation assessment. Business operates under an ecosystem that affects its activities. Internal factors like its customers, organizational environment and suppliers might be affecting the business. Similarly competitors, technological change, political environment, economy, social factors and several other factors also positively and negatively affect the business. So, **Opportunities** are potential options available in the external environment that a venture/entrepreneur can exploit to achieve its vision, mission, goals and objectives. **Threats** are negative forces available in the external environment that inhibit the business venture's capability to achieve its vision, mission, goals and objectives. Economic forces, social cultural and demographic forces, natural environment forces, political and governmental forces, legal forces, technological forces and competitive forces all can be considered as broad categories of external forces. Marketing intelligence, scenario planning, PEST Analysis (political, economic, social and technological analysis), Porter's five forces model (Competition in the industry, new entrants, Power of suppliers, Power of customers, substitute products) are several tools for external environment audit.

Keeping in view the SWOT analysis businesses define their goals and objectives. **Goals** are the broad long-range attributes that a business seeks to accomplish; Goals tend to be general and sometimes even abstract. **Objectives** are more specific, precise and quantifiable plan of performance addressing areas such as profitability, productivity, growth and other key aspects of a business. Objectives are defined on the basis of areas like product design, innovation, market development/diversification/penetration, productivity, cost efficiency, profitability, financial resources, growth, physical infrastructure development, team/venture restructuring and venture/employees performance. Objectives should be specific, measurable, assignable, realistic, attainable, time bound, written. These same characteristics are also defined by **SMART** model. Short term objectives suggest yearly plan of action whereas long term objectives are defined to be achieved within time frame of 5 to 10 years.

Strategy is an action plan that synchronizes the tangible and intangible resources and for achieving a set target for superior performance. It is road of action an entrepreneur draws up to attain the venture vision, mission, goals and objectives. It must be based on entrepreneur and company's core competencies while considering strengths and weaknesses. A successful strategy must be comprehensive, well thought and well integrated ensuring the key success factors to win the market share. Cost leadership strategy, differentiation strategy and focus strategy are three possible strategy options.

According to Porter Generic strategic positioning model, ***Cost leadership strategy*** is a strategy in which an entrepreneur strives to be low-cost producer relative to its competitors in the industry. It involves mass production, quality compromise, or technological breakthrough. It may trigger price war in the industry. Cost leadership strategy is applied if owner is selling similar product/services

Entrepreneurship Mentor

and customers are not brand conscious. If customers are price conscious and ready to compromise on quality and the industry is price focused.

Differentiation strategy is strategy in which the entrepreneur seeks to build customer base by positioning its product or service in a unique or different fashion and where the customers also value its differentiation. Differentiation strategy is applied if customers value and demand for differentiation. They are brand conscious not price conscious and are not ready to compromise on quality.

Focus strategy is where an entrepreneur selects one or more narrow (niche) market segment to serve. He/she identifies the market segment's special need, wants, interest and approaches them with customized product or service. In focus strategy itself an entrepreneur can be low cost or he/she can differentiate.

Competitive advantage is defined as unique advantage over the competitors an entrepreneur gained by offering consumers greater value either in terms of cost or differentiation of product or services. By competitive advantage an entrepreneur is offering superior cost/production efficiency, superior good and/or service quality, superior innovation and up-gradation and/or superior customers' engagement. According to competitive advantage model, resources and core competencies lead to competitive advantage that gives cost or differentiation advantage which ultimately leads to value creation. Companies can achieve global competitive advantage through Local market adaptation, economies of scale, common global culture, tapping the optimal location for activities and resources, knowledge management and sharing, technology transfer, cost efficiency and technological efficiency. Competitive positions can be achieved being market leader, market follower, market challenger and market nicher. Market leader is the one having larger portion of market share. Market challengers are those who are innovating through technology cost efficiency or any other way. Market followers are those are always following market trends. Market nicher are those who are dealing in highly competitive market which is smaller in size. Competitive advantage should be valuable, rare, inimitable, non-substitutable and sustainable.

Competition is analyzed through many tools one of which is Porter's five forces model. Industry rivalry has to be analyzed. Threats of entry, bargaining power of suppliers, bargaining power of customers and threats of substitutes are remaining forces. Number of competitors, rate of industry growth, and intermittent industry overcapacity, and exit barriers, diversity of competitors, informational complexity, brand equity and level of advertising expense are some of the indicators of industry rivalry. Barriers to entry, economies of scales, brand equity, switching costs, access to distribution, absolute cost advantages, learning curve advantages and government policies are indicators to be analyzed while looking for threats of new entrants. Supplier switching costs relative to firm switching costs, degree of differentiation of inputs, price of inputs, uninterrupted supplies of input are to be analyzed to check supplier power. To check buyer power, bargaining leverage and volume, buyer switching costs, trends and preferences and buyer information

Entrepreneurship MGT602

availability are to be analyzed. Buyer propensity to substitute and relative performance of substitutes are the indicators for analyzing substitutes.

Strategies once made must be continuously evaluated. A strategy should be ***consistent*** with goals and policies. ***Consonance*** refers to the need for strategists to examine sets of trends adaptive response to the external environment. Strategies must be ***feasible*** i.e. one must have all resources i.e. physical, human and financial resources. Must have ***competitive advantage***. Checklist for evaluation of strategies includes the following:

- ✓ *Competitors reaction to strategies*
- ✓ *Competitors' strategies change*
- ✓ *Competitors' strengths and weaknesses change*
- ✓ *Competitors strategic changes and success*
- ✓ *Competitors satisfaction with their present market positions and profitability*

When entrepreneurs want to do financial review, they must have know how about financial review tools like return on investment (ROI), return on equity (ROE), profit margin, market share, debt to equity, earnings per share, sales and asset growth. Balanced scorecard is a document through which areas of objectives can be measured according to set targets and timelines and responsibilities. Similarly for review and evaluation *policy audit*, *human audit* are done. Along with that *corporate social responsibility and ethical responsibility* are also analyzed.

Blue Ocean Strategy suggests how to create uncontested market space and make the competition irrelevant. The book regarding the strategy was written by W. Chan Kim and Renée Mauborgne. According to this strategy, market is an ocean and the ocean is divided into two parts one with more sharks means high competition with limited capacity and other with less competition and survival is not that difficult. Earlier is considered as Red Ocean and later being considered as Blue Ocean. In Red Ocean strategy competitors have to compete in existing market, they have to beat the competition and exploit existing demand. After that value cost tradeoff is done and whole system of a strategic firm's activities are aligned with its choice *of* differentiation or low cost. According to blue ocean strategy uncontested market space is created. Competition is to be made irrelevant, new demand is captured. After which there would be no need to tradeoff between value and cost rather value innovation can be created. According to Blue ocean theory, supply exceeds demand, more options are available as customers globally, and price war has increased. Profit margins are shrinking. Brands are becoming more similar and selection is based on price. 3 core **principles** of BOS are:

1. Reconstruct Market Boundaries
2. Reach beyond existing Demand
3. Get the strategic sequence right

Entrepreneurship MGT602

1. Reconstruct market boundaries

Following table suggests boundaries of competition relevant to market where head to head competition is there.

Industry	Looks across alternative industries
Strategic Group	Looks across strategic groups within its industry
Buyer Group	Redefines the buyer group of the industry
Scope of Product and Service Offerings	Looks across to complementary product and service offerings that go beyond the bounds of its industry
Functional-emotional Orientation of an Industry	Rethinks the functional-emotional orientation of its industry
Time/Trends	Participation in shaping external trends over time

Industry	Focuses on rivals within its industry
Strategic Group	Focuses on competitive position within strategic group
Buyer Group	Focuses on better serving the buyer group
Scope of Product and Service Offerings	Focuses on maximizing the value of product and service offerings within the bounds of its industry
Functional-emotional Orientation of an Industry	Focuses on improving price-performance with the functional or emotional orientation of this industry
Time/Trends	Focuses on adapting to external trends as they occur

Entrepreneurship MGT502

As compared to the above table following table suggests boundaries of competition relevant to Blue ocean strategies.

2. Reach Beyond Existing Demand

Through this logic two basic conventional strategies are challenged i.e. focus is not limited to existing customers only. In addition to that, these strategies drive for finer segmentation to accommodate buyer differences. Mobile phone applications are perfect example of this new demand creation. Non customers are to be targeted.

3. Get the Strategic Sequence right

If the supplier/ buyer utility for the business is going right there is a need to check whether price is easily accessible to mass of buyers. After that, there is need to assess whether you need to attain cost target to profit at strategic price. If yes, there is need to have knowledge about adoption hurdles for the business idea.

Strategy canvas can be used in Blue Ocean Strategy where multiple factors that the industry competes in are to be kept in mind and performance is measured. Through this strategy one has to operate beyond the usual industry performers/operators. Four actions are there to create Blue Ocean strategies which are *Reduce, Create, Raise, and Eliminate.*

----------The End----------

Entrepreneurship MGT502