

Introduction

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Objects fly through the air,
Stars wheel
through the universe.
All fall eventually.

If we become obsessed
with definitively mastering
the decline, we are lost.

If we achieve peace
within the intervals
of rising and falling,
we find grace.

Arthur Chandler

Small businesses meet the daily needs of most people. From dry cleaning services to hair salons, from an ice cream shop to the corner market in community neighborhoods, small businesses allow us to create, risk, and contribute to others while doing what we enjoy. In the following pages, career development professionals discuss their efforts to create small businesses. In addition to potential career entrepreneurs, the discussions and lessons can be applied to most people from a variety of settings who desire to start a small business. Millions of people around the world have created successful small businesses and many millions dream about having their own business. This monograph is packed with ideas, reflections, techniques, advice, and encouragement for those who want to improve their businesses, and especially for those who want to make their dreams become reality.

Career professionals are joining the international trend of creating small businesses, either as a sole source of income, or in conjunction with other work roles. Like our clients, many of us see growing a career development business as a viable way to meet the increasing demand for career services and products. For the purposes of this monograph, career development business refers to entrepreneurial career-related choices and transitions made over one's lifespan. An entrepreneur is "*someone who establishes a new entity to offer a new or existing product or service into a new or existing market, whether for a profit or not-for-profit outcome*" (Wikipedia definition of "entrepreneur"). Entrepreneurs bring something new to the marketplace and/or identify a new client base.

To provide you with a comprehensive overview

of this topic, I invited successful career entrepreneurs to contribute their personal stories and business strategies. In addition to running private or group career counseling practices, the contributing entrepreneurs provide a range of services and products and target a variety of populations.

My personal goal for writing this monograph, *Starting and growing a business in the new economy: Successful career entrepreneurs share stories and strategies*, was to learn from contributors how to grow my own business into the best online job search strategies course available in the market today so workers in transition worldwide can find satisfying work. In addition, my intention was to provide guidelines, information, personal stories, experiential activities, feedback, and support so that you, an aspiring or current entrepreneur, could join with me to learn the secrets of successful career entrepreneurs. Together, we shall then be able to put into practice the lessons they learned and the business strategies that they generously are willing to share.

Just as I danced while my older and younger brothers played baseball, I encourage you to dance to your own music, picking and choosing what resonates with you from the wisdom of others who have danced to their own beat. In the 1960s, Bob Dillon was worshipped by the masses as a folk-singing idol until he added an electronic guitar and was booed off the stage at the Newport Folk Festival. Those who formerly denounced him now revere him. The famous 19th Century artist Vincent Van Gogh never earned a living through his art. Yet, Steve Jobs, Apple Computer CEO, has earned much more than most of us dream of attaining, doing what he loves.

Entrepreneurs are sometimes admired, but are often scorned by those who do not understand their vision. They build their reputations, not on the backs of established institutions or current forms of art or enterprise, but on their own visions, talents, and plentiful grit. To start and grow a business, read their stories.

You are welcome to travel with me to the "Home Depot" of career development – to build a business and a life (bricolage) that you can call your own. An entrepreneur, like a "bricoleur," is a person who creates things from scratch. "Bricoler" means "to tinker" or "to fiddle" or to "do-it-yourself" – building by trial and error rather than based on theory. An entrepreneur, like a "bricoleur," is creative and resourceful – "a person who collects information and things and then puts them together in

a way that they were not originally designed to do” (Wikipedia definition of “bricolage”).

Rationale

Start-up companies create most new jobs that fuel the economy. Who are the new entrepreneurs and why are they starting businesses? Entrepreneurs start an average of 550,000 new businesses monthly in the United States. Small businesses (independent businesses having fewer than 500 employees) represent 99.7 percent of all employer firms. Small businesses are the largest growing segment of the U.S. economy, creating 60% to 80% of new jobs. The majority of small businesses are entrepreneurs (without employees). Out of 25.8 million companies in the U.S., 18.6 million are entrepreneurs (SBA, 2006).

Leaders of the world’s industrialized nations are seeking to promote a “global innovation society to thrive in a rapidly changing world” (Novosti, 2006: February 9). In the first global study of high expectation entrepreneurship, Autio (2005) found that “just 9.8% of the world’s entrepreneurs expect to create almost 75% of the jobs generated by new business ventures.” In this report, high expectation entrepreneurship is defined as “all start-ups and newly formed businesses that expect to employ at least 20 employees within five years.” Because of their impact on job creation and innovation, these ventures will significantly influence the economies in which they operate.

Of the 25.8 million businesses in the United States, minority entrepreneurs are taking the lead in pace of growth, though Fairlie noted an increase in self-employment among nearly all U.S. demographic groups since 2000 (Kirk and Belovics, 2006, p. 51). Seventy-six percent of small businesses are owned by sole entrepreneurs with no employees. Women are the largest group of individuals who are launching their own businesses, and “immigrants have substantially higher rates of entrepreneurship than U.S.-born individuals.”

Most workers in the United States and Western European labor market are in the middle age range. Members of this major age group will soon reach the age of 60. Older workers have a more difficult time finding work in large organizations. After working for organizations for most of their working lives, many don’t choose to continue working for others. Corporations and government are cutting back on benefits. Therefore, financial necessity is forcing many older workers to set up their own businesses. The baby boomers are the largest age group in history who are retiring from public and private organizations. Since workers in this age group are just beginning to leave their organizational positions, and since many are

motivated to continue working, we have yet to discover what members of this upcoming population (including career and counseling related government and academic retirees) will do in their later years.

Most entrepreneurial start-ups are not forced into starting their own businesses by a lack of job opportunities. According to GEM’s 2004 national summaries, “people with some post-graduate education and between 25 and 34 years of age are the most likely to start a new business.” People who work full-time may also explore self-employment outside of their full-time work.

Corporations are adding to the potential entrepreneurial pool by laying off workers at a steady pace. Those who remain employed are more dissatisfied with their job during periods of high unemployment. As a result of outsourcing, technological advances, natural and man-made disasters, and corporate scandals, many young people, who are disillusioned with corporate ethics and goals and employer treatment of employees, also prefer to create their own way to earn a living and contribute to the world.

Career professionals are no exception. If you have been serving as a career counselor, career advisor, or career educator in an academic institution or government office, if you have worked in human resources, social work, or other service professions, or if you have worked in other capacities for public or private institutions for many years, you may be thinking about going out on your own. You may already be a career coach or counselor immersed in growing a business and would like to read others’ perspectives on business development. The articles in this monograph are applicable to persons desiring to start and grow businesses in a wide variety of settings, from large cities to small towns to villages, nationally and throughout the world. Rather than leave you in a vacuum, trying to figure out the entrepreneurial process by yourself, I have compiled the collective wisdom of successful career entrepreneurs to support you in this process.

Special features

Since individuals learn in different ways, the book is organized in a format that allows you to progress at your own rate and in the way that is best for you. Some readers may choose to explore specific chapter topics. Others may prefer to progress from the first to the last chapter in a sequential order. Some may choose to perform all the activities and view all the Internet links. Others may prefer to jump directly to the topics that are of most interesting to them at the time.

This book was written in the focused, topic-specific format of a monograph so that you can begin to discover, through the eyes of experienced career

entrepreneurs, how to create and build a career business. Each chapter is built around a question, answered by these experts. Woven within each chapter are the following elements:

- Personal reflections by contributors on their entrepreneurial process
- Stories about overcoming challenges with clients or work associates
- Mentors and models
- Suggested print and online resources for further exploration

(Resources and References for Exercises are located at the end of each author's contribution within the corresponding chapter.)

In the concluding chapter, I summarize what the contributing career entrepreneurs have shared in the monograph, and provide suggestions of what you can do after reading the monograph to build your business.

Appendix A contains exercises developed by contributors to help you apply their concepts and models. To further assist you in implementing your business, I suggest a way to organize your entrepreneurial process on your computer and describe an open-source Internet-based entrepreneur community that gives you an opportunity to communicate with other entrepreneurs about the concepts described in this monograph (see Appendix A, Exercises 1 and 2).

You probably won't read all the contributors' stories word by word or perform all the exercises in this book. That is understandable, since each contributor has a different perspective on what worked for him or her in building a business, and you bring your own perspective to the entrepreneurial process.

Delve into what you need, not necessarily what you desire. When you have learned all that you need to learn from this monograph, then you will have enough knowledge to write about your own entrepreneurial experiences and to create exercises that could be helpful to other potential entrepreneurs. The concluding chapter provides a way for you to share your entrepreneurial experiences.

In Appendix A, you will find 19 exercises. Perform Gail Liebhaber's "Gap Analysis" to discover what you need to know about building a business. If you need to increase risk-taking, perform Jack Chapman's exercise on overcoming barriers. If you need to explore ways to offer your counseling services, view Robert Chope's long list of consulting contracts or read about how Carolyn Kalil developed the True Colors business. Do you need to identify your values and prioritize the values that you bring to a business? Then immerse yourself in Jennifer Kahnweiler's Values Clarification Exercise. You may end up creating a business that no

one else every thought of, such as Donna Christner-Lile's vision for elders to age in their homes, near family and services. Jack Chapman guides you gently, but firmly, to the bottom line – how to make your business a financial success. Randy Miller adds a personal story about turning a challenge into a business opportunity.

I encourage you to examine, not only the content of what you need, but also the best way that you digest information. For example, if you would benefit most from a reflective approach to decision-making, read Ron Elsdon's, Gail Liebhaber's, and Edward Colozzi's stories and perform their exercises. Ed's chapter also includes a group feedback component. Do you prefer a methodical step-by-step approach? If so, read Dan Geller's theory and apply his exercise to your own business planning or follow Marcia Bench's instructions. Susan Whitcomb addresses both sides of your brain in a "two-track" approach that involves both inspiration and action. Lynn Joseph takes you on a guided imagery, Martha Russell guides you through an annual business check-up, and Michael Shahnasarian starts you thinking about exiting your business. In his straightforward fashion, Richard Knowdell suggests a quick and easy card sort to get you moving and takes you on a guided tour of his entire career. You may be intrigued by Marcia Bench's approach, which includes a spiritual component, especially since her educational background is in the legal field, and Ed Colozzi's multi-intelligence musings on internal and external sources of support.

If you are thinking about becoming a career entrepreneur, or if you are in the midst of growing a business, I invite you to "play ball" in the entrepreneurial playing field (as in the movie *Fields of Dreams*). You are welcome to join in this competitive, but exhilarating ballpark, where dreams become reality through long shots, foul balls, frequent strikeouts, far-reaching catches, dust and grime, trial and error, and an occasional home run. As the quintessential "Job Juggler," I invite you to throw your balls in the air and practice the entrepreneurial juggling act under the tutelage of experts. May you find peace and purpose between the rising and falling.

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