

Chapter 9

The Role of Creativity (and Creative Behaviour) in Identifying Entrepreneurs

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ABSTRACT

As the importance of creativity and in turn innovation for individuals, organizations, nations and the global community as a whole becomes recognized, so too does the value of identifying those individuals with the potential to become entrepreneurs. The nature of creative knowledge is such that it draws typically upon both codified and tacit forms of knowledge, to which end an instrument is presented based on workplace scenarios combined with a number of psychometric tests. With opportunities for innovation afforded by the internet, the identification and development of a new breed of individuals known as e-entrepreneurs seems particularly worthwhile. Thus in this study we have focused on scenarios within the field of information and communication technology. Results indicate innovators may present multiple personality styles which offer strengths to entrepreneurial activities. Finally through identification of creative personnel our approach offers a way for organizations to cultivate promising entrepreneurs.

INTRODUCTION

The Internet is providing new opportunities for individuals and businesses to be creative and explore Information and Communication Technology (ICT) ventures in ways not previously possible. As Amit

and Zott (2001) note, “business conducted over the Internet (which we refer to as ‘e-business’), with its dynamic, rapidly growing, and highly competitive characteristics, promises new avenues for the creation of wealth” (p. 493). This provides incentives for the emergence of a new breed of business people known as e-entrepreneurs.

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Entrepreneurship is closely associated with innovation (Baumol, 1993). Similarly creativity plays an important role in the success of an innovation particularly because it enables individuals to overcome obstacles (Amabile, 1996; 1993) that might have prevented the success. Creativity is a characteristic of particular relevance to e-entrepreneurs as they will need to be able to respond rapidly and in novel ways to an environment in which the only constant is change (Brown, & Eisenhardt, 1998). These changes are “largely driven by new technology and globalization” [resulting in] a competitive landscape with substantial uncertainty (Hitt et al., 2001 pp. 479-480). The importance of innovation for competitive advantage and even survival has been generally recognized (Porter, 1985). In highly competitive and uncertain environments, it logically follows that the success of an ICT venture by an e-Entrepreneur will largely depend on the innovation associated with the venture and ability of the entrepreneur to creatively respond to opportunities and threats.

Many courses, often at the postgraduate level, have emerged over the last decade seeking to develop entrepreneurs and equip students to understand and manage innovation. Interestingly, the study by Zampetakis and Moustakis (2006) found that the study of business courses at university including those intended to promote innovative and entrepreneurial behaviour tended to dampen motivation to pursue this path. Instead, desire to become an entrepreneur was related to a student’s self-perception of creativity, in turn largely the product of being exposed to a culture of self-employment within their home environment. Entrepreneurs by definition need to be highly motivated and self-driven individuals. Thus motivation, desire and determination play important roles in achieving success. Innovation is often driven and enabled by technology. ICT ventures provide strong extrinsic motivators to entrepreneurs who are intrinsically motivated to identify and exploit business opportunities.

Given the difficulty of producing entrepreneurs via education and training, this paper is particularly interested in offering a method by which potential e-entrepreneurs can be identified as measured by their creativity and responses to innovation relevant scenarios. As an extension the method can also be used to identify compatible business partners in a joint venture and to identify areas of difference or weakness. In the next section, we review the current psychology-based literature on creativity and present a framework for investigating creative and innovative individuals. We present our methodology followed by data analysis and discussions. The paper concludes with future work and final remarks.

BACKGROUND

The work reported in this paper follows on from our work on ICT innovation and entrepreneurship (Richard, & Busch, 2008). We argue ICT innovation is really just a subset of innovation. We focus here on what it means to be a creative or innovative individual, for creative individuals will tend to be creative regardless of the discipline, just as exemplary tacit knowledge users will be regardless of their domain (Sternberg et al., 1995); and this ‘finding’ in turn explains why psychometric instruments exist testing for creativity, the ability to innovate and in the case of Sternberg et al. (1995), the ability to maximize use of tacit knowledge. In short, the outcome of the work reported here is a means by which organizations including e-businesses, may either establish the likelihood of innovative ability and entrepreneurialism in individuals, or alternatively provide an opportunity for individuals themselves to determine if they have an ‘inventive streak’ or possess more general entrepreneurial qualities. The authors are in the ICT domain and their testing to date has largely been with ICT aligned personnel. Of course as Sternberg et al. (1995) implies, much of the testing for knowledge we discuss in this chapter

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