

THE SECRET OF SUCCESS

Tips from European entrepreneurs



FOREWORD

Entrepreneurs take the initiative and turn ideas into action. They have a gift for identifying business opportunities and creating success from challenges and dreams. Entrepreneurs turn visions into reality, while taking risks along the way. By setting up and expanding their businesses, entrepreneurs create jobs and become drivers of the European economy.

However, Europe is short of entrepreneurs. Surveys show that almost half of the EU's citizens (47%) have never thought of starting a business. Why is this? Being an entrepreneur means having to overcome plenty of challenges. But being an entrepreneur is also rewarding: the freedom to determine your own destiny, to realise your dreams can be at least as valuable as the financial gain.

It is therefore important to encourage more people to become entrepreneurs, and who would be better placed than entrepreneurs to encourage others?

This brochure portrays entrepreneurs from 33 countries. With refreshing openness, these women and men give us insight into the obstacles, challenges and highlights of their profession. They let us know who and what inspired them and what drives them along the way. And – maybe the most important part – they convey the message that being an entrepreneur can be fun.

My wish is that this brochure will find its way into classrooms and libraries in universities and will trigger personal choices.

Günter Verheugen

Vice President of the European Commission, responsible for Enterprise and Industry

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Arta BAZOVSKA

LATVIA

*"Enjoy the process
itself, whatever you
do, and the results
will follow."*

VentEko Ltd.



HOW I GOT THE IDEA TO START UP A BUSINESS

Formerly working in a company with similar activity fields to VentEko, I came to the conclusion that I could do more and better, and I was ready to take the risk and responsibility. So at the age of 24, I founded the company VentEko. I started with a strong belief in my own success. Today, after eleven years in business, other companies as well as the country's environment are reaping the benefits.

MY ROLE MODEL FOR STARTING UP A BUSINESS

None.

WHAT HAS HELPED ME MOST

My maximalist nature – I always keep in mind that we can never have too much positive ambition if it is based on hard work and innovative ideas. I have built up my VentEko team with intelligent, positive thinking and talented individuals. We inspire each other to take up new challenges and enjoy everything we do together. My personal motive – always do what you have promised.

MY BIGGEST CHALLENGE SO FAR

My biggest challenge has always been keeping up the team spirit and passing on my belief in success to my colleagues. This is extremely important if you really want to move forward. A totally new and interesting stage of my life has also recently begun – entering the international market – which is also a Challenge with a capital 'C'.

THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR IS...

... looking back and seeing that your business idea has materialised successfully, that you have built it up from the very beginning following your own lead, motives and ethics. You are happy this is your work, lifestyle and attitude rolled into one, and you are doing something useful for society and the environment.

MY ADVICE FOR THOSE CONSIDERING STARTING A BUSINESS

The mere thought of starting a business is already a doorway into the business world. If you decide to act on it, follow your vision and standards, set your standards and believe in your own success story.

SURNAME	BAZOVSKA
FORENAME	Arta
MY EDUCATION	Business Administration, Environmental Science, Law
NAME OF MY COMPANY	VentEko Ltd.
BUSINESS CONTACT DETAILS	
Postal address	22 Rigas Street 2107 Pinki, Babīte District Latvia
E-mail	arta.bazovska@venteko.com
Website	www.venteko.com
SECTOR OF BUSINESS	Environment
PRODUCT/SERVICE	Environmental engineering services and consultation
YEAR OF START UP	1997
EMPLOYEES	58

Egidijus BIKNEVICIUS

LITHUANIA

*"Strive and results
will come."*

ETALINKAS UAB



HOW I GOT THE IDEA TO START UP A BUSINESS

I always believed that information technology can change the world. I have a visual disability, however information technology in particular is of real benefit to me. With important information, I can do as much as any person around me. I decided to start an information technology business because IT solutions solve a lot of management problems and make business more effective.

MY ROLE MODEL FOR STARTING UP A BUSINESS

EU foundation support and my own investment.

WHAT HAS HELPED ME MOST

Strength of purpose.

MY BIGGEST CHALLENGE SO FAR

Building a solid company.

THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR IS...

... to have the possibility of sharing my personal experience.

MY ADVICE FOR THOSE CONSIDERING STARTING A BUSINESS

You need to want to know, to know what you want and do whatever is necessary to achieve it.

SURNAME	BIKNEVICIUS
FORENAME	Egidijus
MY EDUCATION	Business Information Management
NAME OF MY COMPANY	ETALINKAS UAB
BUSINESS CONTACT DETAILS	
Postal address	Smolensko str. 10A, 2nd floor 3201 Vilnius Lithuania
E-mail	egidijus.biknevicus@etalink.lt
Website	www.etalink.lt
SECTOR OF BUSINESS	Information technology
PRODUCT/SERVICE	Business management systems, Internet solutions, web hosting, IT management
YEAR OF START UP	2005
EMPLOYEES	35

László BÓDI

HUNGARY

*"Smooth seas don't
make skilful sailors."*

Halbo mce Zrt.



HOW I GOT THE IDEA TO START UP A BUSINESS

The idea was born when I was 13 years and it later came true.

MY ROLE MODEL FOR STARTING UP A BUSINESS

Find people you like and who are capable, and things will work out.

WHAT HAS HELPED ME MOST

The fact that I'm a fighter and a great believer in luck. I also realised: the harder I work, the more I have of it.

MY BIGGEST CHALLENGE SO FAR

Re-establishing myself and my venture in terms of morality and materiality.

THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR IS...

... that you can try to turn your idea of a successful business into reality.

MY ADVICE FOR THOSE CONSIDERING STARTING A BUSINESS

Analysing the competition, building a unique strategy, being different, and not running out of cash. Prepare your oxygen bottle (cash flow) and keep checking it.

SURNAME	BÓDI
FORENAME	László
MY EDUCATION	Welding and Fitting, Mechanical Engineering, Welding Technology Engineering, and Business

NAME OF MY COMPANY	Halbo mce Zrt.
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BUSINESS CONTACT DETAILS

Postal address	Széchenyi u. 8 3530 Miskolc Hungary
E-mail	info@halbomce.hu
Website	www.halbomce.hu

SECTOR OF BUSINESS	Industry services and installation of plants and piping systems
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PRODUCT/SERVICE	Industrial equipment planning, manufacturing and assembly
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YEAR OF START UP	2006
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EMPLOYEES	195
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Dagmar BOLLIN-FLADE

GERMANY

*"Whatever happens
in your life, never lose
faith in yourself."*

Christian Bollin Armaturenfabrik GmbH



HOW I GOT THE IDEA TO START UP A BUSINESS

After finishing my studies (1982), I was looking for a way to combine family and professional life. I turned down a doctoral thesis because after returning from parental leave, I would have found myself virtually excluded from a suitable post. Taking over the family business was and is the ideal solution.

MY ROLE MODEL FOR STARTING UP A BUSINESS

My grandfather and father, who always followed the example of the 'respectable businessman' in their life and work.

WHAT HAS HELPED ME MOST

My consistency, strength of will and perseverance. At the same time, female characteristics such as empathy and the ability to communicate have helped me to be successful in a male-dominated professional sector.

MY BIGGEST CHALLENGE SO FAR

Implementing my firm's philosophy: no customer should account for more than 10% of our annual turnover. We discuss with the customer how we can achieve this. In agreement with the customer, we also turn down contracts.

THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR IS...

... turning your own ideas into reality and receiving feedback.

MY ADVICE FOR THOSE CONSIDERING STARTING A BUSINESS

Make your work your hobby and vocation; then you'll be good at it.

SURNAME	BOLLIN-FLADE
FORENAME	Dagmar
MY EDUCATION	Engineering
NAME OF MY COMPANY	Christian Bollin Armaturenfabrik GmbH
BUSINESS CONTACT DETAILS	
Postal address	Westerbachstr. 290-294 65936 Frankfurt am Main Germany
E-mail	dagmar.bollin-flade@bollin.de
Website	www.bollin.de
SECTOR OF BUSINESS	Valve manufacturing
PRODUCT/SERVICE	Valves
YEAR OF START UP	1924
EMPLOYEES	28

Ivo BOSCAROL

SLOVENIA

*"To be different,
always set the
goals too high."*

PIPISTREL d.o.o. Ajdovščina



HOW I GOT THE IDEA TO START UP A BUSINESS

It started from a hobby and the wish to make a meaningful contribution to the world of aviation.

MY ROLE MODEL FOR STARTING UP A BUSINESS

None. Instead of a role model, the biggest driving force was the challenge to show that you can succeed with a high-tech product even in an unfavourable business environment.

WHAT HAS HELPED ME MOST

Understanding of my co-workers, unconventional thinking, the basics of economics from college and manners inherited from my parents.

MY BIGGEST CHALLENGE SO FAR

Setting new aviation standards with my own products and creating new categories of aviation activity in an environment that is rigid and has outdated standards.

THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR IS...

... independence, being responsible only for yourself as a business entity, and the fact that there are no limitations imposed upon you – the only limitation is your own thinking.

MY ADVICE FOR THOSE CONSIDERING STARTING A BUSINESS

Never fear those who are larger and more powerful than you. Instead, set your goals too high and do not forget to be confident in achieving them! The real obstacles exist only in your own mind. If you are self-confident, the obstacles become solutions.

SURNAME	BOSCAROL
FORENAME	Ivo
MY EDUCATION	Economic Sciences
NAME OF MY COMPANY	PIPISTREL d.o.o. Ajdovščina
BUSINESS CONTACT DETAILS	
Postal address	Goriška cesta 50a 5270 Ajdovščina Slovenia
E-mail	info@pipistrel.si
Website	www.pipistrel.eu
SECTOR OF BUSINESS	Aircraft and spacecraft
PRODUCT/SERVICE	Experimental aircraft
YEAR OF START UP	1987
EMPLOYEES	47

Antonio CAMARA

PORTUGAL

*"True artists ship
products."*

(Steve Jobs)

YDREAMS



HOW I GOT THE IDEA TO START UP A BUSINESS

During my sabbatical leave at MIT (1998-99) I understood that our research at the New University of Lisbon could be useful in the business world.

MY ROLE MODEL FOR STARTING UP A BUSINESS

Bill Hewlett and David Packard, the founders of HP.

WHAT HAS HELPED ME MOST

Vodafone, which selected YDreams to develop maps for mobile phones. This was our first project. Since then, our investment in research has been the deciding factor.

MY BIGGEST CHALLENGE SO FAR

Transforming a Portuguese company into a global player.

THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR IS...

... the sense of adventure and the social relevance of our work.

MY ADVICE FOR THOSE CONSIDERING STARTING A BUSINESS

Be careful with finances so you can survive. Take risks so you can grow.

SURNAME	CAMARA
FORENAME	Antonio
MY EDUCATION	Civil Engineering
NAME OF MY COMPANY	YDREAMS
BUSINESS CONTACT DETAILS	
Postal address	Edificio Ydreams Madan Parque-Sul 2825-149 Caparica Portugal
E-mail	antonio.camara@ydreams.com
Website	www.ydreams.com
SECTOR OF BUSINESS	IT
PRODUCT/SERVICE	Direct interaction information systems
YEAR OF START UP	2000
EMPLOYEES	150

Richard CULLEN

IRELAND

*"Think, Plan, Execute:
follow your instincts
and don't give up!"*

The Jelly Bean Factory



HOW I GOT THE IDEA TO START UP A BUSINESS

I decided to start my own business with my father after years spent in the sugar confectionary business. We explored the market for opportunities to develop new brands and had identified an exciting niche for a high quality sugar confectionery product. We recognised there was very little premium quality sugar confectionery for those who wanted an alternative.

MY ROLE MODEL FOR STARTING UP A BUSINESS

Richard Branson, the founder of Virgin. He was driven by determination, ambition and energy. He has developed a global brand in many sectors of industry, from music to consumer goods, aviation/transport to mobile phones – all in a single lifetime. His story shows that if you truly believe in what you are doing you should pursue it with grit and enthusiasm. Hard times hit everyone, but it's how you get through them that counts.

WHAT HAS HELPED ME MOST

The desire to succeed in a business I believed in. I've been lucky in that I've been surrounded by positive, energetic and challenging individuals who have supported me through it all: from my fellow Board members, to my brand guardian Pat Kinsley of Newworld Design, a true visionary, and of course my father Peter Cullen for his drive and tenacity, my father-in-law Liam Flynn for his wisdom and eloquence, and not least my wife Carol Flynn whose expertise and support are invaluable.

MY BIGGEST CHALLENGE SO FAR

Raising finance in the early days was the toughest job; now it's managing the rapid growth of the business – time constraints, opening new markets, battling with currencies.

THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR IS...

... that you really can mastermind your own destiny. You can do things that you wouldn't get the opportunity to in an organisation where your role is clearly defined. If you believe in what you are doing you can take action, put your own stamp on how the product looks, where it is sold and how it is manufactured. It's really about enjoying what you do.

MY ADVICE FOR THOSE CONSIDERING STARTING A BUSINESS

Go for it. You really must have the passion and drive to make it happen. Be honest with yourself and get advice.

SURNAME	CULLEN
FORENAME	Richard
MY EDUCATION	Marketing and Design
NAME OF MY COMPANY	The Jelly Bean Factory
BUSINESS CONTACT DETAILS	
Postal address	Aran Candy Ltd IDA Technology Park Snugborough Road, Blanchardstown Dublin 15 Ireland
E-mail	richard.cullen@ jellybeanfactory.com
Website	www.jellybeanfactory.com
SECTOR OF BUSINESS	Confectionery manufacturing
PRODUCT/SERVICE	Gourmet jelly beans
YEAR OF START UP	1998
EMPLOYEES	49

Olivier DESURMONT

FRANCE

*"It is not because it
is difficult that we
are not making it, it
is because we are not
making it that it
is difficult."*

SINEO



HOW I GOT THE IDEA TO START UP A BUSINESS

I've always wanted to create my own company. In 2003, I was an IT Project Manager in a large company in Paris. During the heat wave of summer 2003, I came up with the idea of washing cars without water. Despite my enthusiasm for the concept, I was disappointed with the result. While not wasting water, the products used were in fact toxic and polluting. This gave me the impetus to decide to set up my own company.

MY ROLE MODEL FOR STARTING UP A BUSINESS

I've never had only one model. I've taken good ideas from different people everywhere to make my own business model.

WHAT HAS HELPED ME MOST

When I decided to set up SINEO, I resigned from my job in Paris, sold my car and came back to my parents' home. At first, my mother was in panic, but my family were quick to help me during the first few months. I also met some entrepreneurs at the right time, which helped me a lot. Today, my father, mother, two sisters, uncle, cousin and brother-in-law are working with me at SINEO.

MY BIGGEST CHALLENGE SO FAR

Creating a company built on strong values I believed in, namely respect for the environment, social responsibility and a continuous search for product and service innovation. SINEO continues evolving along these lines.

THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR IS...

... that I can develop projects I believe in and defend strong values.

MY ADVICE FOR THOSE CONSIDERING STARTING A BUSINESS

You have to believe in your project, take some risks and be audacious.

SURNAME	DESURMONT
FORENAME	Olivier
MY EDUCATION	Family, sport and friends
NAME OF MY COMPANY	SINEO
BUSINESS CONTACT DETAILS	
Postal address	679, avenue de la République 59000 Lille France
E-mail	contact@sineo.fr
Website	www.sineo.com
SECTOR OF BUSINESS	Repairs and maintenance of light vehicles
PRODUCT/SERVICE	Waterless Eco car-washing using biodegradable products
YEAR OF START UP	2004
EMPLOYEES	200

Maria FERMANELLI

ITALY

*"Nihil difficile volenti –
Nothing is difficult for
those who want it."*

Cose dell'altro pane S.r.l.





HOW I GOT THE IDEA TO START UP A BUSINESS

The idea emerged from the realisation that I could fill a gap in the market: to combine the ideas of 'homemade' and 'gourmet' to make dietary preparations for people with celiac disease.

MY ROLE MODEL FOR STARTING UP A BUSINESS

The idea for the business stems from my experience as a designer. I've always been fascinated by the idea of achieving new things, following new paths, checking the feasibility of everything.

WHAT HAS HELPED ME MOST

My passion for cooking, the conviction that I was pursuing a good idea, the funding made available by the Bersani law, the uniqueness of the location we work in (former kitchen of a Benedictine monastery), the creation of a female work team which always believed in its task, the support of the CNA (the National Confederation of Crafts and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises) in creating opportunities for publicity and new relations, and finally, determination.

MY BIGGEST CHALLENGE SO FAR

After creating a 'model' firm, the next big challenge is to make it work and to show that it can be solid and long-lasting.

THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR IS...

... the freedom to consider new ideas and new horizons even when the going gets tough.

MY ADVICE FOR THOSE CONSIDERING STARTING A BUSINESS

Never be afraid of your own ideas and dreams.

SURNAME	FERMANELLI
FORENAME	Maria
MY EDUCATION	Architecture
NAME OF MY COMPANY	Cose dell'altro pane S.r.l.
BUSINESS CONTACT DETAILS	
Postal address	Via Casale di S. Michele, 13 00135 Rome Italy
E-mail	maria.fermanelli@ cosedellaltropane.com
Website	www.cosedellaltropane.com
SECTOR OF BUSINESS	Small food industry
PRODUCT/SERVICE	Fresh food with certified gluten-free flours, using biological and high-quality raw materials
YEAR OF START UP	2003
EMPLOYEES	12

Angele GIULIANO

MALTA

*"Live when I'm alive
and sleep when
I'm dead!"*

AcrossLimits Ltd.



HOW I GOT THE IDEA TO START UP A BUSINESS

I was still studying at university for my first degree when I started to notice that several companies in Malta still needed simple, inexpensive IT software solutions (SMEs don't have large budgets). This started me on a journey where I got together with some other individuals and began offering basic database programmes and similar productivity tools. The rest is history!

MY ROLE MODEL FOR STARTING UP A BUSINESS

During business studies at university we had to read several case studies of foreign companies, many of which had been started by young individuals. I thought, if they can do it, so can I!

WHAT HAS HELPED ME MOST

Initially it was good not having to invest heavily in assets. Instead, I was running the operation from home. This lowered my risk and allowed me to invest in creating better products and services. My sunny and humorous nature has allowed me to create a large network of business contacts all over Europe in just a few years. They have helped me grow my business and opened up new avenues.

MY BIGGEST CHALLENGE SO FAR

Knowing which projects/clients to turn down, since we can't always accept everything. Instead, we need to focus on one area and excel in that. Of course we all make the wrong decision every now and then. What's important is to move on and learn from it for the future.

THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR IS...

... feeling that you can put your talents and abilities to good use whilst pursuing projects and ideas close to your heart. I also get a lot of satisfaction knowing I am generating jobs for others and contributing to the economy.

MY ADVICE FOR THOSE CONSIDERING STARTING A BUSINESS

Don't be afraid of starting out and following your gut instinct. However, do this only with a background of sound knowledge and excellent skills, otherwise you're just being naïve. Don't give up at the first hurdle – challenges should be taken head on and seen as learning opportunities.

SURNAME	GIULIANO
FORENAME	Angele
MY EDUCATION	Business and Computing, Creativity and Innovation
NAME OF MY COMPANY	AcrossLimits Ltd.
BUSINESS CONTACT DETAILS	
Postal address	Gateway Centre Kappillan Mifsud Street HMR 1856 Hamrun Malta
E-mail	angele@acrosslimits.com
Website	www.acrosslimits.com
SECTOR OF BUSINESS	IT
PRODUCT/SERVICE	Services relating to information technology, EU project consultation and training
YEAR OF START UP	2001
EMPLOYEES	25 including external consultants

Ronen GOLAN

ISRAEL

*"Provide services
to cost-efficient
empowering carrier
networks."*

Ortec Technologies & Communication Ltd.



HOW I GOT THE IDEA TO START UP A BUSINESS

Due to rapid technological changes, carriers find themselves facing huge challenges when it comes to upgrading and maintaining their networks, while at the same time minimising their use of resources. This is where I see the opportunity to provide them with cost-efficient services for a limited period of time.

MY ROLE MODEL FOR STARTING UP A BUSINESS

Building a flexible organisation that has the ability to adapt itself quickly in line with rapid changes in the environment.

WHAT HAS HELPED ME MOST

Low cost overheads.

MY BIGGEST CHALLENGE SO FAR

Keeping resources busy, regardless of the dynamics of projects requirements.

THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR IS...

... the ability to initiate processes that eventually result in a new organisation.

MY ADVICE FOR THOSE CONSIDERING STARTING A BUSINESS

Put together a clear business model with careful cost control.

SURNAME	GOLAN
FORENAME	Ronen
MY EDUCATION	Practical Engineering
NAME OF MY COMPANY	Ortec Technologies & Communication Ltd.
BUSINESS CONTACT DETAILS	
Postal address	Poleg Industrial zone Giborey Israel 13 St. P.O. Box 8720 42504 Netanya Israel
E-mail	Ronen@ortec-com.co.il
Website	www.ortec-com.com
SECTOR OF BUSINESS	Telecoms
PRODUCT/SERVICE	Solutions and services provider
YEAR OF START UP	2005
EMPLOYEES	65

Heather GORRINGE

UNITED KINGDOM

*"Success is going
from failure to
failure without
losing enthusiasm."*

(Winston Churchill)

Wiggly Wigglers



HOW I GOT THE IDEA TO START UP A BUSINESS

I always wanted my own business – my father had started his before me. My idea came from a pile of sheep manure on our smallholding which I decided to compost down. Using worms reduced the heap by 80% and I decided that this natural resource could be used in homes and gardens. I made a prototype of a wormery for kitchen waste and started Wiggly Wigglers.

MY ROLE MODEL FOR STARTING UP A BUSINESS

Anita Roddick (who I managed to interview a couple of years ago on my podcast) and Richard Branson.

WHAT HAS HELPED ME MOST

I've been helped by so many people through Business Link, Young Enterprise, my colleagues, etc. But the one person who has helped me more than anyone else has been my husband who is my mentor and best friend – Phil.

MY BIGGEST CHALLENGE SO FAR

I think the coming years will probably be my greatest challenge, as so many influences of the current economic situation are outside my control. But apart from that, the business has been through its ups and downs; there has been illness, years where we have lost money, foot-and-mouth disease nearby, etc. Personally I have overcome serious public speaking nerves, but now enjoy it!

THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR IS...

... encouraging and motivating other people to realise their strengths and work towards improving them. Often it's within the team, but sometimes it's with suppliers and customers too. Also, having the influence to take an idea forward quickly and enthusiastically.

MY ADVICE FOR THOSE CONSIDERING STARTING A BUSINESS

Aim to start a business that is sustainable. To do that, you need to address three key aspects: social, environmental, economic – People, Planet, Profit. Choose something you will really enjoy, and surround yourself with people possessing different strengths. Enjoy yourself and be brave.

SURNAME	GORRINGE
FORENAME	Heather
MY EDUCATION	General Vocation Design
NAME OF MY COMPANY	Wiggly Wigglers
BUSINESS CONTACT DETAILS	
Postal address	Lower Blakemere Farm Blakemere HR2 9PX Herefordshire United Kingdom
E-mail	heather@wigglywigglers.co.uk
Website	www.wigglywigglers.co.uk
SECTOR OF BUSINESS	Retail – mail order
PRODUCT/SERVICE	Wiggly Wigglers is a Really Rural Lifestyle Store
YEAR OF START UP	1991
EMPLOYEES	17

Maria GRAPINI

ROMANIA

*"Professionalism,
respect, equity,
faith, justice."*

PASMATEX S.A.



HOW I GOT THE IDEA TO START UP A BUSINESS

I worked for 10 years in a textile company before 1990. I eventually realised that I liked the job I had chosen, but I needed the freedom to make my own decisions. This is why I chose to start up my own business in a field I knew well, even though I had to leave my job as general manager of a state company.

MY ROLE MODEL FOR STARTING UP A BUSINESS

I created this business, starting as a leader. I've built myself up as a leader through my voluntary work in different organisations. I raised my credibility and made people who wanted to conduct business with my company feel safe. This was necessary given that the company was small and new on the market and that it initially had difficulty attracting attention.

WHAT HAS HELPED ME MOST

The ability to convince people and the ability to form a professional team. It isn't enough simply to want to be an entrepreneur; you also have to be able to be one. In my opinion, an entrepreneur has to have natural qualities in addition to those he or she develops. I have a lot of flair, energy and ambition, and also the desire to make something as good as possible.

MY BIGGEST CHALLENGE SO FAR

Deciding to quit my job as general manager of a state company and start a business, investing all I had and borrowing large amounts to develop the business.

THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR IS...

... that you can improve all your qualities, such as education, professionalism, innovation and forecasting, and you can choose the people you want to work with.

MY ADVICE FOR THOSE CONSIDERING STARTING A BUSINESS

It isn't enough to simply want something; you also have to be able to do it. This profession requires a lot of hard work, devotion, effort and involvement.

SURNAME	GRAPINI
FORENAME	Maria
MY EDUCATION	Engineering
NAME OF MY COMPANY	PASMATEX S.A.
BUSINESS CONTACT DETAILS	
Postal address	2 Jiul St. 300159, Timisoara Timis District Romania
E-mail	grapini@pasmatex.ro
Website	www.pasmatex.ro
SECTOR OF BUSINESS	Textile, haberdashery and narrow fabric manufacturing
PRODUCT/SERVICE	Ribbons, textile bands, woven and knitted elastic bands, rigid and elastic girths, woven and printed labels
YEAR OF START UP	1991
EMPLOYEES	118

Peter HARTZBECH Jakob DE LEMOS

DENMARK

"Keep hammering."

iMotions® – Emotion Technology A/S



HOW I GOT THE IDEA TO START UP A BUSINESS

We wanted to change the world and have an impact in order to make it a better place!

MY ROLE MODEL FOR STARTING UP A BUSINESS

None.

WHAT HAS HELPED ME MOST

Great people with beliefs and understanding in areas where we are weaker.

MY BIGGEST CHALLENGE SO FAR

Raising the money needed to bring a true disruptive technology into the mass market and to let go of our perfectionism.

THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR IS...

... the freedom and the possibility to have an impact on the world and people's lives.

MY ADVICE FOR THOSE CONSIDERING STARTING A BUSINESS

Hammer on! Be true to yourself and the people around you; be 100% dedicated to what you do and make sure that you know what sacrifices you MUST make in order to succeed, even in your private life! Get going and keep hammering!

SURNAME	HARTZBECH DE LEMOS
FORENAME	Peter Jakob
MY EDUCATION	Constantly ongoing!
NAME OF MY COMPANY	iMotions® – Emotion Technology A/S
BUSINESS CONTACT DETAILS	
Postal address	Vestergade 18 E 1456 København K Denmark
E-mail	info@imotionsglobal.com
Website	www.imotionsglobal.com
SECTOR OF BUSINESS	Software
PRODUCT/SERVICE	Emotion Tool® (non-intrusive software to measure human emotional response and visual attention to stimuli) and Attention Tool (eye tracking for moving images)
YEAR OF START UP	2005
EMPLOYEES	40

Veronica HEDENMARK

SWEDEN

*"It's only in a
headwind that
a kite can fly high
into the sky."*

VH Assistans



HOW I GOT THE IDEA TO START UP A BUSINESS

Following school, the world seemed to be opening up for all young people except me. There was simply no place for me in the labour market. At home in my own kitchen in Falun, with only paper, a pen and a folder, and my mum to help, I started my own business. Today, 11 years later, we employ 400 people.

MY ROLE MODEL FOR STARTING UP A BUSINESS

It is not difficult to start your own company if you have a vision or a dream and if you are willing to work hard for it.

WHAT HAS HELPED ME MOST

Personal drive, and the dream of being able to help people with disabilities to enjoy the same rights as everyone else, as well as my desire to enhance the professional status of personal caregivers.

MY BIGGEST CHALLENGE SO FAR

People's prejudices and an inaccessible society. Also, feeling exposed because there are so few disabled people running businesses today.

THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR IS...

... learning new things every day. Having the opportunity to work with kind and inspiring people in a team that shares the same fundamental values.

MY ADVICE FOR THOSE CONSIDERING STARTING A BUSINESS

Believe in your idea. You just need to believe in your idea in order to make it happen. Be tenacious and work hard. Remember: only dead salmon follow the stream.

SURNAME	HEDENMARK
FORENAME	Veronica
MY EDUCATION	IT and Teaching, as well as direct experience of personal care as someone with a disability from birth
NAME OF MY COMPANY	VH Assistans
BUSINESS CONTACT DETAILS	
Postal address	Åsgatan 12 79171 Falun Sweden
E-mail	veronica@vhassistans.se
Website	www.vhassistans.se
SECTOR OF BUSINESS	Personal assistance
PRODUCT/SERVICE	Coordination, education and supervision of personal assistants. Group trips and legal advice for families
YEAR OF START UP	1997
EMPLOYEES	400

Mária HOŠALOVÁ

SLOVAKIA

*"We can do
everything if
we really want to."*

Gukotex – privat spol. s r.o.



HOW I GOT THE IDEA TO START UP A BUSINESS

After the political change in 1989, I took a chance at self-realisation.

MY ROLE MODEL FOR STARTING UP A BUSINESS

You must have an idea, courage and discipline towards yourself as well as towards your employees and your business partners.

WHAT HAS HELPED ME MOST

My family.

MY BIGGEST CHALLENGE SO FAR

Building up a company that offers security to employees, opportunities for professional and individual development, and confidentiality to business partners.

THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR IS...

... independence – each entrepreneur defines his or her own goals (in terms of success and failure).

MY ADVICE FOR THOSE CONSIDERING STARTING A BUSINESS

The most important thing is to have a vision and objectives, together with positive thinking.

SURNAME	HOŠALOVÁ
FORENAME	Mária
MY EDUCATION	Textiles
NAME OF MY COMPANY	Gukotex - privat spol. s r.o.
BUSINESS CONTACT DETAILS	
Postal address	Družby 35 97404 Banská Bystrica Slovakia
E-mail	hosalova@gukotex.sk
Website	www.gukotex.sk
SECTOR OF BUSINESS	Textiles
PRODUCT/SERVICE	Manufacturing of clothing items
YEAR OF START UP	1994
EMPLOYEES	50

Ülo JAKSOO

ESTONIA

*"The key to success is
in change – change
into a new self, not
into anyone else."*

Cybernetica AS



HOW I GOT THE IDEA TO START UP A BUSINESS

It was during the process of Estonia's economic and scientific reform that one had to make up one's mind about how to move forward. The question was whether to pursue an academic research career or use new opportunities available in high tech business. As a risk-taker, I took up the latter challenge.

MY ROLE MODEL FOR STARTING UP A BUSINESS

The locomotive.

WHAT HAS HELPED ME MOST

My associates who shared the same values.

MY BIGGEST CHALLENGE SO FAR

Setting up the Information Security Research Institute as a unit within the company structure.

THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR IS...

... a chance to take risks, and see the gains and losses.

MY ADVICE FOR THOSE CONSIDERING STARTING A BUSINESS

A brave beginning is half the battle.

SURNAME	JAAKSOO
FORENAME	Ülo
MY EDUCATION	Technology
NAME OF MY COMPANY	Cybernetica AS
BUSINESS CONTACT DETAILS	
Postal address	Akadeemia tee 21 12618 Tallinn Estonia
E-mail	ulo.jaaksoo@cyber.ee
Website	www.cyber.ee
SECTOR OF BUSINESS	Research and development, manufacturing, and ICT solutions
PRODUCT/SERVICE	Information security systems, customs software, monitoring and telematics systems, LED-based light signalling equipment, secure marine communication systems
YEAR OF START UP	1997
EMPLOYEES	106

Manolis KOUTLIS

GREECE

*"By designing new
tools, we design
new ways of being."*

Talent Information Systems S.A.



HOW I GOT THE IDEA TO START UP A BUSINESS

I wanted to express creativity-with-no-limits and to translate ideas into tangible, marketable products which could eventually make a difference in the world.

MY ROLE MODEL FOR STARTING UP A BUSINESS

There was no particular 'outside' influence or push for starting the business (on the contrary, there were many prohibiting voices). Studying some .com / start-up stories in the US and elsewhere provided valuable hints and encouraging signs.

WHAT HAS HELPED ME MOST

The deep and long-lasting commitment of the whole team of partners and shareholders. This was (and still is) the determinant for overcoming the tough challenges faced every day: technical, financial and marketing.

MY BIGGEST CHALLENGE SO FAR

Keeping a clear vision, steady course of action and a commitment to success, amongst the distraction of everyday duties, fierce competition and financial activities.

THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR IS...

... the freedom to choose, and the vast array of opportunities ahead. You're the driver, not the passenger.

MY ADVICE FOR THOSE CONSIDERING STARTING A BUSINESS

Go for it! But a) be sure that you are really passionate about the plan and your partners and b) be prepared for tough days and challenging situations which may take you to your limits. Also, the journey has much to teach, even if the outcome is failure. Go for it!

SURNAME	KOUTLIS
FORENAME	Manolis
MY EDUCATION	Computer Engineering, Educational Technologies (focus on Geography)
NAME OF MY COMPANY	Talent Information Systems S.A.
BUSINESS CONTACT DETAILS	
Postal address	4A Karytsi sq 10561 Athens Greece
E-mail	koutlis@talent.gr
Website	www.talent.gr
SECTOR OF BUSINESS	Geo-information platforms and applications
YEAR OF START UP	2003
EMPLOYEES	14

Trees LONCKE

BELGIUM

"The power of positive thought is immeasurable and vital when running a business."

AGRO2000



HOW I GOT THE IDEA TO START UP A BUSINESS

It's the only thing I've ever wanted to do. Perhaps it's in the genes?

MY ROLE MODEL FOR STARTING UP A BUSINESS

I've never thought about it. I don't really look up to role models.

WHAT HAS HELPED ME MOST

My broad training as a veterinarian, the support of my family in my busy work, both practical (child care) and moral (feedback).

MY BIGGEST CHALLENGE SO FAR

Continuing to grow my business in a rapidly shrinking market.

THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR IS...

... the satisfaction you get when decisions you make turn out to be right, getting results and seeing my employees participating enthusiastically in the development of our business.

MY ADVICE FOR THOSE CONSIDERING STARTING A BUSINESS

Think hard, weigh up the pros and cons, but take the plunge. It's a fantastic life experience which brings about a great deal of satisfaction.

SURNAME	LONCKE
FORENAME	Trees
MY EDUCATION	Veterinary Sciences
NAME OF MY COMPANY	AGRO2000
BUSINESS CONTACT DETAILS	
Postal address	Hondekensmolenstraat 56 8870 Izegem Belgium
E-mail	trees.loncke@agro2000.be
Website	www.agro2000.be
SECTOR OF BUSINESS	Agrobusiness
PRODUCT/SERVICE	1200 different products for agrobusiness (mostly for disinfecting and hygienic purposes)
YEAR OF START UP	1988
EMPLOYEES	13

Ante MANDIĆ

CROATIA

*"Success is the
child of audacity."*

IN2 d.o.o.



HOW I GOT THE IDEA TO START UP A BUSINESS

It wasn't so much an idea as a necessity. When Yugoslavia split up and the war started, I lost my job and fell on hard times. Other than my military and technical background, the only thing I had going for me was my IT experience, which I picked up while I was working in the army. So I turned my hobby into a full-time job and started my business.

MY ROLE MODEL FOR STARTING UP A BUSINESS

I really didn't have one. It was a time of war, and many things in Croatia weren't functioning normally. So I had to find my own path and make things up as I went along. Throughout that time, IN2 grew totally organically, which was extremely difficult.

WHAT HAS HELPED ME MOST

Choosing the right people and the right technology at the right time. We have always been at the cutting edge of technology, partnering with leading global IT partners and offering IT services, the needs of which were only just emerging. With my previous experience, I was also well versed in dealing with organisational and HR problems.

MY BIGGEST CHALLENGE SO FAR

Dealing with issues that come with rapid growth, especially after exceeding 100 employees. A fast changing environment is typical for all countries in transition, so managing the company was more like rafting than yachting.

THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR IS...

... it never gets outdated, boring or repetitive. Seeing your business thrive is almost like raising a child. The sense of creation and accomplishment is immense.

MY ADVICE FOR THOSE CONSIDERING STARTING A BUSINESS

Just do it. If you have the willpower and audacity, you can overcome incredible odds. You just need to remember that failure is not the end, and to outlast bad times.

SURNAME	MANDIĆ
FORENAME	Ante
MY EDUCATION	Computer Science and the Military Technical Academy
NAME OF MY COMPANY	IN2 d.o.o.
BUSINESS CONTACT DETAILS	
Postal address	Marohniceva1/1 10000 Zagreb Croatia
E-mail	ante.mandic@in2.hr
Website	www.in2.hr
SECTOR OF BUSINESS	IT
PRODUCT/SERVICE	Software development and services
YEAR OF START UP	1992
EMPLOYEES	297

Branka RADOVANOVIĆ

SERBIA

*"The future is more
exciting than
the past."*

PSTech



HOW I GOT THE IDEA TO START UP A BUSINESS

I got the idea when I lost my job due to a difference in opinion between myself and the management on how to organise an IT business. I decided to put my ideas into action.

MY ROLE MODEL FOR STARTING UP A BUSINESS

The many 'small' entrepreneurs from Serbia who managed to create and be persistent with a 'step-by-step' approach towards success, as opposed to 'overnight' success which is so typical for transition economies.

WHAT HAS HELPED ME MOST

My family, my business partners, and my great, young, educated, highly professional and ambitious team.

MY BIGGEST CHALLENGE SO FAR

Leading and expanding my company in a country in transition with constant law and regulation changes, offering IT services of the highest quality in a global market, and gaining and keeping clients who are among the biggest IT companies in the world.

THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR IS...

... that everything is in your hands. There are no excuses for failure, but the satisfaction in success is huge.

MY ADVICE FOR THOSE CONSIDERING STARTING A BUSINESS

You have to overcome fear of failure; if one project fails the next will succeed.

SURNAME	RADOVANOVIĆ
FORENAME	Branka
MY EDUCATION	Electrical Engineering
NAME OF MY COMPANY	PSTech
BUSINESS CONTACT DETAILS	
Postal address	Milutina Milankovica 11 b 11070 Belgrade Serbia
E-mail	branka.radovanovic@pstech.rs
Website	www.pstech.rs
SECTOR OF BUSINESS	IT
PRODUCT/SERVICE	Software development, software engineering
YEAR OF START UP	1996
EMPLOYEES	70

Anne-Marie RAKHORST

NETHERLANDS

*"The environment
inspires..."*

Search Engineering



HOW I GOT THE IDEA TO START UP A BUSINESS

My parents and grandparents were entrepreneurs, so even as a child I wanted to become one. This dedication, in combination with my ambitions for a better environment, shaped my upbringing. As an entrepreneur, I want to make a difference. By setting up my own business, I've created the opportunity to pursue even more arduously my ideals for a sustainable world.

MY ROLE MODEL FOR STARTING UP A BUSINESS

Entrepreneurship has run through my veins ever since I was young. I've been greatly inspired by my grandparents, my parents, their friends and my friends at the European University in Antwerp. All of them are successful entrepreneurs in their own line of business, because they all believe in their goals.

WHAT HAS HELPED ME MOST

My conviction that we can help create a sustainable world. I don't believe in inconvenient truths or change inspired by fear. We will all find more motivation in trust in the future. All products and buildings should be made in such a fashion that, from one generation to the next, they will make a real contribution.

MY BIGGEST CHALLENGE SO FAR

Starting up a business was an inspiring, yet time-consuming challenge that drained me of the energy I needed to develop new ideas. Since then, I've learned to reserve more time for contemplation. These years have taught me that reflecting regularly on the company's achievements and reserving enough time for rest have brought on the best ideas and contributed to the success.

THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR IS...

... that I can really try to make a difference. Entrepreneurship means I can grab any chance I see to convince more and more people of the dire need for corporate social responsibility.

MY ADVICE FOR THOSE CONSIDERING STARTING A BUSINESS

Always have faith in yourself. Don't waste energy on people who tell you why something can't be achieved, without losing grip on reality.

SURNAME	RAKHORST
FORENAME	Anne-Marie
MY EDUCATION	Business Administration

NAME OF MY COMPANY	Search Engineering
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BUSINESS CONTACT DETAILS

Postal address	P.O. Box 83 5473 ZH Heeswijk (N.Br.) The Netherlands
E-mail	info@annemarietakhorst.com
Website	www.annemarietakhorst.com

SECTOR OF BUSINESS	Engineering consultancy, laboratory and training services
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PRODUCT/SERVICE	Building management, demolition and decontamination projects. Soil, asbestos and air quality studies. Courses on working with asbestos, environmental aspects, safety and in-house emergency services
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YEAR OF START UP	1994
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EMPLOYEES	200
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Shahzad RANA

NORWAY

*"No one will ever
come and create the
future for you – make
your own!"*

Questpoint/IntelliSearch



HOW I GOT THE IDEA TO START UP A BUSINESS

Since 1993 I've had the pleasure of starting eight different companies within the ICT business sector. My last company was based on the hypothesis that it's all about people. So I selected two other people whom I wanted to work with. Together we decided to start a business. We allowed ourselves three months to find out what to do. This hypothesis has so far resulted in a business of 21 people.

MY ROLE MODEL FOR STARTING UP A BUSINESS

None.

WHAT HAS HELPED ME MOST

Challenges.

MY BIGGEST CHALLENGE SO FAR

Making decisions even when they are negative.

THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR IS...

... it's all up to you and your team!

MY ADVICE FOR THOSE CONSIDERING STARTING A BUSINESS

Be humble, create clear business value for your customers, get the right people you feel comfortable with, plan long-term, take care of your customers, don't give up, overperform for your customers, give credit to those who deserve it, make decisions!

SURNAME	RANA
FORENAME	Shahzad
MY EDUCATION	Computer Science and Linguistics
NAME OF MY COMPANY	Questpoint/IntelliSearch
BUSINESS CONTACT DETAILS	
Postal address	Gjerdrums vei 12 0484 Oslo Norway
E-mail	rana@questpoint.no
Website	www.questpoint.no
SECTOR OF BUSINESS	IT
PRODUCT/SERVICE	Software engineering and IT strategies
YEAR OF START UP	2003
EMPLOYEES	21

Wiesław RASZEWSKI

POLAND

*"Help people,
and meet their
requirements!"*

RAVIMED Sp. z o.o.



HOW I GOT THE IDEA TO START UP A BUSINESS

I have always been interested in scientific research and putting results into practice. Due to the political and economic crisis in Poland in 1989, science stopped developing and opportunities for introducing new scientific research decreased. I was very familiar with the needs of the Polish Health Service and was already a specialist in toxicology and pharmacology. I started my business from scratch. I chose the area of PVC blood collection bags, mainly because they were offered only by Japanese and US companies.

MY ROLE MODEL FOR STARTING UP A BUSINESS

I had no particular role model. I was strongly convinced that my inner nature, patience, ability to relate to other people and knowledge, combined with the support of all my family, would help me at the beginning of this business, which itself was also a natural extension of my previous medical and pharmaceutical interests.

WHAT HAS HELPED ME MOST

Goodwill, support and tolerance of my family.

MY BIGGEST CHALLENGE SO FAR

Fighting with red tape and continually developing new products and services. We started with one medical device product: the PVC blood collection bag. Today we have five main fields of activity: medical devices, medicinal products, military auto injectors and decontamination kits, laboratory services, and research and development. All our products are developed and manufactured at RAVIMED.

THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR IS...

... mobilising responsibility, having the feeling of independence, and the opportunities available for self-development without limits.

MY ADVICE FOR THOSE CONSIDERING STARTING A BUSINESS

Be patient and aware of the consequences in your work. Treat people with respect and be transparent in all activities. Don't give up if you fail, don't fall into the trap of self-satisfaction, invest in development, and count every cent.

SURNAME	RASZEWSKI
FORENAME	Wiesław
MY EDUCATION	Military Medical Academy

NAME OF MY COMPANY	RAVIMED Sp. z o.o.
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BUSINESS CONTACT DETAILS

Postal address	ul. Polna 54 05-119 Łajski Poland
E-mail	ravimed@ravimed.com.pl
Website	www.ravimed.com.pl

SECTOR OF BUSINESS	Pharmaceutical production
PRODUCT/SERVICE	Medical disposables and laboratory services

YEAR OF START UP	1991
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EMPLOYEES	120
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Soheil SARMA

LUXEMBOURG

"No pain, no gain."

COGECO



HOW I GOT THE IDEA TO START UP A BUSINESS

The passion to create something that will be around long after I am gone.

MY ROLE MODEL FOR STARTING UP A BUSINESS

No one.

WHAT HAS HELPED ME MOST

The success and mistakes of others.

MY BIGGEST CHALLENGE SO FAR

Trying to be a good father.

THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR IS...

... doing things my own way and being responsible for my own experience.

MY ADVICE FOR THOSE CONSIDERING STARTING A BUSINESS

Dream big, work hard, don't be afraid and be fair.

SURNAME	SARMAD
FORENAME	Soheil
MY EDUCATION	Serious, hard, revolutionary
NAME OF MY COMPANY	COGECO
BUSINESS CONTACT DETAILS	
Postal address	43, rue de Bettembourg 5810 Hesperange Luxembourg
E-mail	info@cogeco.lu
Website	www.cogeco.lu
SECTOR OF BUSINESS	Construction
PRODUCT/SERVICE	Renovation and construction of buildings (private and business)
YEAR OF START UP	2004
EMPLOYEES	40

Magnus SCHEVING

ICELAND

*"Love like you've
never been hurt and
work like you don't
need the money."*

LazyTown



HOW I GOT THE IDEA TO START UP A BUSINESS

I realised 18 years ago that there was no role model in health for kids. My challenge was: how can education about healthy lifestyles be entertaining? LazyTown was the answer – an entertaining TV show that inspired kids to live healthier lives.

MY ROLE MODEL FOR STARTING UP A BUSINESS

Richard Branson, Warren Buffet and Steve Jobs.

WHAT HAS HELPED ME MOST

My parents who gave me freedom to be myself. Also, behind every good entrepreneur is a strong wife/husband/partner. Finally, endless belief, strong vision and a great team.

MY BIGGEST CHALLENGE SO FAR

Focus, focus, focus – practise, practise, practise... and more focus. Entrepreneurs do not have armies of people around them, so they need to be able to step into all roles in the company.

THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR IS...

... that one small idea like LazyTown can motivate millions.

MY ADVICE FOR THOSE CONSIDERING STARTING A BUSINESS

Don't be afraid of a little opposition. Remember that the kite of success generally rises against the wind of adversity, not with it.

SURNAME	SCHEVING
FORENAME	Magnus
MY EDUCATION	Carpentry and Sports Instructing, although education never ends
NAME OF MY COMPANY	LazyTown
BUSINESS CONTACT DETAILS	
Postal address	Miðhraun 4 210 Gardabaer Iceland
E-mail	magnus@lazytown.com
Website	www.lazytown.com
SECTOR OF BUSINESS	Entertainment
PRODUCT/SERVICE	Motivating children to adopt a healthier lifestyle
YEAR OF START UP	1994
EMPLOYEES	From 43-161, depending on production periods

Costas SISAMOS

CYPRUS

*"Keep your head in
the clouds and your
feet on the ground."*

Engino.net Ltd.



HOW I GOT THE IDEA TO START UP A BUSINESS

Some years ago I was assigned by the Ministry of Education as a Design and Technology coordinator. In schools pupils learnt by building technological models but had great difficulties creating 3D joints with the materials available. This problem gave me the idea to design a system of modular connectors. After some research, it seemed there was a gap in the market for a technical construction toy suitable for younger children.

MY ROLE MODEL FOR STARTING UP A BUSINESS

I have always been fascinated by the inventions of Leonardo da Vinci and the much earlier Greek Archimedes! A role model has also been Thomas Edison who, through persistent work, managed to turn ideas into products.

WHAT HAS HELPED ME MOST

My degrees and experience in engineering and education have helped a lot. In R&D projects however, financing is crucial. Funding grants from the Cyprus Government and the EU have helped commercialise ENGINO.

MY BIGGEST CHALLENGE SO FAR

A small island like Cyprus does not have the critical mass to sustain a specialised product. This means my company has to rely mostly on exports and my biggest challenge so far has been the set-up of the international sales channels that would achieve them. A parallel challenge of equal importance has been the design and production of the ENGINO parts with as little investment as possible, taking into account the many iterations needed before optimisation could be achieved.

THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR IS...

... that you create your own destiny! You have the opportunity to be creative while also pushing yourself to the limits.

MY ADVICE FOR THOSE CONSIDERING STARTING A BUSINESS

Only do what you love and fulfils your inner self. You can only draw the strength to overcome problems by believing in what you do.

SURNAME	SISAMOS
FORENAME	Costas
MY EDUCATION	Mechanical Engineering and Education Science
NAME OF MY COMPANY	Engino.net Ltd.
BUSINESS CONTACT DETAILS	
Postal address	P.O.Box 71040 3840 Limassol Cyprus
E-mail	info@engino.net
Website	www.engino.com
SECTOR OF BUSINESS	Innovative Toy Design and Manufacture
PRODUCT/SERVICE	Educational construction toys
YEAR OF START UP	2004
EMPLOYEES	4

Eva ŠTĚPÁNKOVÁ

CZECH REPUBLIC

*"Cosmetics is
my destiny..."*

Ryor a.s.



HOW I GOT THE IDEA TO START UP A BUSINESS

I'd had eighteen years of experience in cosmetics working for the Institute of Medical Cosmetics before I came up with the idea. After maternity leave, I was creating new products and the Institute was given an award and a grant. That was the moment I learned how it all worked. I began offering my own products to professionals. Later on, I created products for every day users that were marketed through specialised shops.

MY ROLE MODEL FOR STARTING UP A BUSINESS

At the very beginning I knew very little, virtually nothing about business, how to run such a company, or what it involved. But I always hoped it would work because I didn't want to sell my ideas to others anymore and I was very eager to succeed.

WHAT HAS HELPED ME MOST

My colleagues who were with me from the very beginning, most of whom are still working with me in Ryor.

MY BIGGEST CHALLENGE SO FAR

Whenever I am coming up with something new.

THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR IS...

... that you don't have to sell your ideas to others.

MY ADVICE FOR THOSE CONSIDERING STARTING A BUSINESS

All it takes is to be realistic and keep your aims achievable. Of course you must work hard.

SURNAME	ŠTĚPÁNKOVÁ
FORENAME	Eva
MY EDUCATION	Chemical Technology
NAME OF MY COMPANY	Ryor a.s.
BUSINESS CONTACT DETAILS	
Postal address	Pod Spiritkou 4 150 00 Prague 5 Czech Republic
E-mail	stepankova@ryor.cz
Website	www.ryor.cz
SECTOR OF BUSINESS	Cosmetics manufacturing
PRODUCT/SERVICE	Skin treatment, skin care and beauty products for professional use in beauty salons
YEAR OF START UP	1991
EMPLOYEES	75

Nejdet TISKAOĞLU

TURKEY

"Why not?"

ELCAB KABLO VE PROFİL SAN. TIC. LTD. ŞTİ



HOW I GOT THE IDEA TO START UP A BUSINESS

I started as a quality control technician with a leading manufacturer of silicone cables in 1998. Thanks to my hard working nature and love of my job, I was promoted to head of quality management and then production manager in a very short space of time. My aim was to be more successful and to be a leader. To achieve this, I set up our business together with my present partner.

MY ROLE MODEL FOR STARTING UP A BUSINESS

My philosophy is to do my best in my business and also in my private life. I prefer not to take people as role models, but instead to follow achievements and success stories.

WHAT HAS HELPED ME MOST

First of all, my ambitious desire to reach my targets and my high level of expectations to succeed. And of course, working very hard towards this, and staying positive in spite of any difficulties and disappointments in life and the business environment.

MY BIGGEST CHALLENGE SO FAR

Spending our energy fighting technical and economic barriers which are typical of a developing country. We have to work much harder due to the lack of industrial infrastructure and qualified staff, combined with very high financial and investment costs, and high taxes.

THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR IS...

... being helpful to society and people I work with and generating value in the spiritual and material sense – success here creates an immense feeling of satisfaction. Looking back and seeing what you have generated is a beautiful feeling. Nevertheless we look ahead, and keep on working hard.

MY ADVICE FOR THOSE CONSIDERING STARTING A BUSINESS

The most important point is to love your job and what you intend to do. Having targets is important, but you have to be ready to work hard to achieve them. Look forward and believe in your success, despite any negative influences that might occur. This belief is half of your success.

SURNAME	TISKAOĞLU
FORENAME	Nejdet
MY EDUCATION	Electrical Technician

NAME OF MY COMPANY	ELCAB KABLO VE PROFİL SAN. TIC. LTD. ŞTİ
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BUSINESS CONTACT DETAILS

Postal address	Atatürk Mahallesi Yıldırım Beyazıt Caddesi Hayat Sokak No:5 Boğazköy Arnavutköy G.O. Paşa İstanbul Turkey
E-mail	nejdet@elcabkablo.com
Website	www.elcabkablo.com

SECTOR OF BUSINESS	White goods related industry
PRODUCT/SERVICE	Silicone cable, fiberglass cable, cable harnesses, silicone profiles, silicone tubes, signal lamps, special cables

YEAR OF START UP	1998
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EMPLOYEES	75
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Nikolay TODOROV

BULGARIA

*"Never be
satisfied with your
achievements."*

"N.I.K. 2006" EOOD



HOW I GOT THE IDEA TO START UP A BUSINESS

It all started with a hobby of mine – Bulgarian rock music, rock bands and concerts. The idea was to offer the fans accessories and other goods to go with their look. Later I started creating fashion and things slowly progressed, until today, where that bond – music and fashion – is still unbreakable.

MY ROLE MODEL FOR STARTING UP A BUSINESS

In the times when I got started it was difficult to find any decent role models in Bulgaria. I was guided by business literature and academics – all that environment that I was part of. My brightest guiding star was my motivation to express myself through new non-traditional ideas.

WHAT HAS HELPED ME MOST

What really helped me and the engine of my business was my faith in everything I was doing. I had the state of mind that everything was 'doomed to success'. That was pushing me forward and was helping me to develop new ideas and a suitable environment for growing them.

MY BIGGEST CHALLENGE SO FAR

I've always strived to be number one! Always one step ahead of the competitors with information, ideas, opportunities and capabilities. I'm fond of 'fair play' using the available business instruments like creative marketing and skilful management.

THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR IS...

... that feeling of immensity, of unlimited boundaries. The feeling that I can realise every idea charges me with more energy. I kind of impose this on the people I work with. Nothing is impossible.

MY ADVICE FOR THOSE CONSIDERING STARTING A BUSINESS

The first and most important thing is your decision regarding what exactly you are going to do and how far you do want to go! If this is not clear enough for you, you should better never get started.

SURNAME	TODOROV
FORENAME	Nikolay
MY EDUCATION	Marketing and Management
NAME OF MY COMPANY	"N.I.K. 2006" EOOD
BUSINESS CONTACT DETAILS	
Postal address	Briz 1869 B 9010 Varna Bulgaria
E-mail	nick@natamno.com; natamno@yahoo.com
Website	www.natamno.com www.darkmoon.bg www.mish-mash.bg
SECTOR OF BUSINESS	Manufacturing, retail and services
PRODUCT/SERVICE	Teenage apparel, personal accessories, jewellery, sports and leisure goods, tattoos, body piercing, etc.
YEAR OF START UP	1994
EMPLOYEES	60

Einari VIDGRÉN

FINLAND

*"After rain there will
always be sun."*

Ponsse Oyj





HOW I GOT THE IDEA TO START UP A BUSINESS

As a small farmer's son, I used to work on logging sites during winters. At 14 years of age, I went logging with my father and horse for the first time. When the first farm tractors appeared in the 1960s, I already had some solid experience of logging behind me. The only problem was that forest machines were breaking all the time – so I decided to build my own.

MY ROLE MODEL FOR STARTING UP A BUSINESS

At that time in the countryside, there were no role models for business.

WHAT HAS HELPED ME MOST

Belief in the future and my own talents.

MY BIGGEST CHALLENGE SO FAR

Selling the company in 1988 and buying it back in 1993. That period taught me a lot.

THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR IS...

... seeing the results of your work.

MY ADVICE FOR THOSE CONSIDERING STARTING A BUSINESS

You should have a clear business vision with simple products and operating models. Stable growth is also important. Furthermore, to get the right employees to work for you, you should share responsibilities.

SURNAME	VIDGRÉN
FORENAME	Einari
MY EDUCATION	Elementary School
NAME OF MY COMPANY	Ponsse Oyj
BUSINESS CONTACT DETAILS	
Postal address	Ponssentie 22 74200 Vieremä Finland
E-mail	juha.vidgren@ponsse.com
Website	www.ponsse.com
SECTOR OF BUSINESS	Engineering
PRODUCT/SERVICE	Forest machines, information systems, and services
YEAR OF START UP	1970
EMPLOYEES	900

Carmen YORNO

SPAIN

"Delight the client."

CYO Proyectos S.L.



HOW I GOT THE IDEA TO START UP A BUSINESS

It was a matter of necessity. I was a 43 year-old unemployed woman with no possibility of finding a new job.

MY ROLE MODEL FOR STARTING UP A BUSINESS

None. Just surviving.

WHAT HAS HELPED ME MOST

Receiving the 'Emprender en femenino' award in February 2000 from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

MY BIGGEST CHALLENGE SO FAR

Being able to continue through this world economic crisis with the same enthusiasm and honesty.

THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR IS...

... the possibility of being creative and able to share the leadership role with our area managers in my work.

MY ADVICE FOR THOSE CONSIDERING STARTING A BUSINESS

Believe in yourself and the fact that 'you can', with enthusiasm and perseverance.

SURNAME	YORNO
FORENAME	Carmen
MY EDUCATION	Industrial Studies
NAME OF MY COMPANY	CYO Projectos S.L.
BUSINESS CONTACT DETAILS	
Postal address	C/ Celso Emilio Ferreiro, 5 Local 50017 Zaragoza Spain
E-mail	c.yorno@ingenieriacyo.com
Website	www.ingenieriacyo.com
SECTOR OF BUSINESS	Project engineering and programming
PRODUCT/SERVICE	Structures, tooling and machinery Robotics and A.I. in aeronautical, automotive, cosmetics and pharmaceutical areas
YEAR OF START UP	1997
EMPLOYEES	20

Josef ZOTTER

AUSTRIA

*"A sustainable future
– we use only certified
organic ingredients;
in addition, anything
from the southern
hemisphere is Fair
Trade- or IMO-certified."*

Zotter Schokoladen Manufaktur GmbH



HOW I GOT THE IDEA TO START UP A BUSINESS

I've been self-employed since 1987, always driven by the thought of turning my visions and imagination into reality without compromise. The idea of making chocolate arose from my love of the product (cocoa) and the almost limitless possibilities for developing the range of savoury opportunities.

MY ROLE MODEL FOR STARTING UP A BUSINESS

I have no role model as such. Only the drive to make the best possible chocolates in terms of taste, aesthetics, and ecological and social concerns.

WHAT HAS HELPED ME MOST

The large amount of positive feedback from Zotter chocolate lovers and the support of my family.

MY BIGGEST CHALLENGE SO FAR

Keeping our extensive range on the market. Obtaining the prices necessary in order to compete sustainably.

THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR IS...

... that I can turn my ideas and imagination into reality quickly, without compromising.

MY ADVICE FOR THOSE CONSIDERING STARTING A BUSINESS

You don't need to start out with business plans, but try to realise your own vision with all your strength.

SURNAME	ZOTTER
FORENAME	Josef
MY EDUCATION	Traineeship as waiter and cook Pâtissier and confectioner
NAME OF MY COMPANY	Zotter Schokoladen Manufaktur GmbH
BUSINESS CONTACT DETAILS	
Postal address	Bergl 56 8333 Kornberg bei Riegersburg Austria
E-mail	schokolade@zotter.at
Website	www.zotter.at
SECTOR OF BUSINESS	Food production
PRODUCT/SERVICE	Chocolate delights from bean to bar
YEAR OF START UP	1999
EMPLOYEES	100

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