

## The Entrepreneur

*by Jon Craighead*

Entrepreneurism is defined as individuals or groups who organize, manage, and assume the risks of a business or an enterprise. They create and operate a business or businesses and take on greater than normal financial responsibility by doing so. These leaders of business, be it a small one-person enterprise or a multinational conglomerate, were originally conceived and formulated by an entrepreneurial mindset. Entrepreneurs are often described as out-of-the-box thinkers and optimistic goals setters. Their primary function is to successfully deliver excellent products and services to their customers. This is what a business is all about. Today's entrepreneurs bring this and more to the table.

These unique individuals are market movers who have a tenacious determination to achieve stimulating and challenging outcomes. They are highly motivated and are focused on delivering all legitimate market requests regardless of difficulty. They operate on the edge, without safety nets, in a dynamic market environment of frequent fluctuations and are unimpeded. These entrepreneurs realize and accept the fact that past successes have little to no impact on today's efficiency. This mandate requires marketers who adapt to demanding challenges without being tethered or limited to past experiences or successes.

The busy commercial world applauds these impresarios who forego the status quo for leading-edge originality, which enhances their products and services. There are three principal functional responsibilities in the entrepreneurial domain: management, leadership, and risk.

*Management:* Management's primary function is to proactively set a clear and formative direction for the organization. This is a significantly different activity than planning, although these two functions are often erroneously thought to be identical. Planning is a deductive management process designed to produce an intended outcome, as in planning to create a manageable or orderly process. Though different, both are essential components that a talented manager must master to be successful.

*Leadership:* The role of the leader is not limited to driving results but also directed to facilitating the organization's ability to build bridges and networks to connect people of diverse skills, outlooks, and identities. In all businesses, competent leadership is the most competitive advantage any organization possesses. Leaders' primary functions are to devise ways to creatively utilize the talents of their workforce, while simultaneously developing a pipeline of future skilled personnel. This requires an

effective developmental program of training and mentoring next generational workers to insure the organization's sustainability.

*Risk:* Risk is the exposure to injury, loss, or damage. Risk management is a fundamental responsibility of leadership. Entrepreneurs by nature are risk takers. Risk often occurs at unexpected or inopportune times and is an inherent disrupter. Its effect is to wreak havoc on the best laid plans and ideas. Yet, it is an unavoidable reality of life. The curtailment of such disruption inevitably requires a program to minimize its potential impact on the organization and its mission. Risk management is less about fearing the ever present and lurking potential of risk, but more about the development of remedies which prevent or at least minimize its impact. This awareness practice is facilitated by designed workforce training initiatives, such as situational awareness training, i.e. training personnel to be continuously and keenly aware of their environment, and peripheral development training, which trains employees to see around corners in anticipation of oncoming expectancies. Both practices require a professional, safety-driven approach for dealing with potential work disruptions.

Additionally, leaders must avoid certain entrepreneurial detriments and traps that jeopardize important objectives and have significant unintentional consequences such as:

- Setting unattainable goals which produce failure and demoralization.
- Lacking clear objectives, creating a state of rudderlessness.
- The assignment of unprepared or inexperienced personnel to critical areas of responsibility causing unwinnable experiences, potential injuries, costly delays and risk.

Such practices not only jeopardize strategic objectives, employee safety, organizational reliability, and production, more importantly they unintendedly represent the enterprise as unreliable, with poor leadership, lacking a state-of-the-art quality and too risky to engage. These are all avoidable and resolvable situations, yet hard to reverse. The skilled entrepreneur avoids such disorders which are against their very nature.

Ultimately, entrepreneurs are the drivers toward breakthrough, cutting-edge product design and originality and are fulfilled and replenished by their customers' satisfaction and their own market expansion and profitability.