

Introduction

If you have picked up this book, you are probably either thinking about or already starting a business. And you want it to grow, fast.

Starting a business is one of the most exciting things you can do. But you may be unsure of a few things, a bit frightened even – that is where I come in. I am a colossal champion of entrepreneurs. I genuinely think you are all amazing, and with nearly four decades under my belt of founding and running small businesses, I understand a bit about what works and what doesn't too.

Entrepreneurship in the Pandemic

Along with most people, in the spring of 2019, I felt like the proverbial Alice. As a writer, an entrepreneur, and an individual, it was akin to falling down the rabbit hole – and emerging in some dystopian land where nothing was the same.

What gradually re-installed some optimism came from the entrepreneurs I spoke to. As always, extraordinary, innovative, adaptable, courageous... the majority were meeting the new challenges head on, and were determined to adapt and survive against new odds.

Over the course of several decades, I have been involved in campaigns to support entrepreneurs. I have always believed that if I can pass on a piece of knowledge, make a difference to one of you entrepreneurs out there, contribute a bit of wisdom to help you on your journey and some inspiration to help you keep trying... then that is indeed worthwhile.

Changes in the entrepreneurial world

Scale for Success, my first book, was going through its final edits as the pandemic hit. The contributing entrepreneurs shared invaluable wisdom, much of which is still relevant after the pandemic. But I was soon aware that a positive volcano of new trends was erupting. Tech is estimated to have advanced forty years within the first two years of the pandemic alone. While that leaves some entrepreneurs effervescent about the opportunities, others are floundering and out of their depth. Before the pandemic, only a few people had heard of the metaverse, NFTs or blockchain. For the non-techie entrepreneurs among you, that can be scary.

There is the great resignation, with more of you wanting to take control and start businesses, and the introduction of home working and hybrid working – which may or may not suit you. On top of that, there's uncertainty by the bucket load, supply-chain challenges abound, inflation is rocketing, and that is to say nothing of the impact on mental health! We are going to help with all of these.

Opportunities abound:

The situation is far from being all doom and gloom. Amongst the disruption, opportunity is there for your taking. We have learned to innovate on an unprecedented scale, and the world of entrepreneurship generally is booming, sometimes in areas we could not have predicted a few years ago.

Industries associated with hospitality, for example, were decimated during the first lockdowns. As a result, companies commonly lost between 70-100% of their business overnight. There must have been moments of panic, yet incredibly resourceful entrepreneurs regrouped and looked for new avenues and opportunities.

Many of them did even better than before. Some pivoted from B2B to direct to customer or set up home-delivery services. Others varied what they did. For example, I have talked to the ever-growing groups of non-alcohol drinks companies which, as a result of the escalation in focus on wellness, have hit a seam of unprecedented growth. I spoke to an events company who pivoted over a single weekend to become a successful furniture manufacturer, keeping their staff's skill sets in use (read how they did it later). How inspirational is that?

As burnout and stress have understandably rocketed, so have companies offering help in this space, from online workshops and counsellors to self-help apps. With medical services harder to access, new telemedical services have mushroomed. Teachers, tutors, and specialists met the demands of parents, individuals and companies by going online instead. Cleaning companies have increased their skill set to offer deep cleaning.

When the world shut down, we saw animals thrive, from Pumas in South America, wild boar in Barcelona and goats on the high streets of North Wales. Within a few weeks of lockdown, The Ganges, one of the world's most polluted rivers started to clear, and even become drinkable for the first time in two decades. While there might be some animals we don't want to meet when picking up a loaf of bread, more and more people are becoming aware of the damage we have done to the planet and want to change things for the better.

Entrepreneurs are leaders in this, adapting and embracing it. More and more businesses are committed to making the world a better place. Increasing numbers believe that the future holds fundamental economic changes, that growth is unsustainable for its own sake as the planet will simply run out of resources. They believe that businesses of the future will focus less on financial return and more on impact and its impact on the quality of our lives.

At long last, sustainability is at the front of the agenda.

Be a part of the entrepreneur tribe!

The lovely, positive feedback I got from my first book, *Scale for Success*, noted that it was a different type of business book. The stories, messages and points of learning came from real entrepreneurs who know from personal experiences all the struggles you are going through. I was over the moon to find it so well received.

I have always been a massive fan of peer learning, and that is what I aim to recreate when I write. For example, someone described reading the book as spending an "exceptionally good evening brainstorming with other entrepreneurs a bit further on the journey than I am." If you would find that of benefit, read on.

We will journey through most of the many aspects needed for early start-up for growth together, with stories from many brilliant and experienced global entrepreneurs. I hope you will feel immediately at home in this tribe, recognize the struggles and experiences that they share in their anecdotes, and know that you share a journey and belong.

It is a tough, challenging, nail-biting roller-coaster of a ride with too high a proportion of people falling off. I don't want you to be the one of those people that procrastinates or stumbles! I want you to start with impact, developing your life, your customers, perhaps the planet, whatever does it for you. I want you to succeed in launching and growing.

I want to flag up possible dangers, inspire you with stories, and take you on a journey through the new world of entrepreneurship. We will look at the reasons to do it, creating value, building a team, building a sustainable business - a massive range of things that will leave you a little bit wiser at the end, and with a better chance of succeeding.

And as a bonus, I hope to entertain you along the way, as some of the awesome entrepreneurs that appear in the book have certainly entertained and inspired me. You will learn how Bear Grylls helped one entrepreneur close down businesses that weren't working or how another had their business brainwave whilst struggling for breath at the top of a mountain. Listen to another pitching in a deckchair on the pavement outside his house; find

out how buzz marketing and homemade sandwich boards can bring thousands of downloads, how to pivot your business in a weekend, raise investment by asking people to drop their trousers or protect your team when a customer threatens to “Uzi them”!

These are true entrepreneurs’ stories, in every shape and size, from garage start-ups that have gone global, to some that are a little earlier on their journey. All are wonderfully honest about the experiences they went through and the mistakes they made.

The Future

The entrepreneurs in the book will bring the journey alive for you and share many ideas to inspire you to find new solutions as you move forward into your new and incredibly exciting future. Some chapters will inspire you; others will deliver a barrage of actionable tips that you can apply right now.

I genuinely believe entrepreneurs will lead the way forward, creating new jobs and a better future. If you are only just starting your high-growth journey or already a little way in, I applaud you. You are amazing.

(copywrite Jan Cavelle 2022)