Karl H. Vesper, *New Venture Strategies*, revised edition. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990. ISBN: 0-13-615907-9.

Entrepreneurship and the launching of new business is the theme of Karl Vesper's 10-chapter, 350 page book. First published in 1980, this 1990 revised edition is long overdue. In the interim period there has been an explosion of interest in and courses about entrepreneurship. For this revised edition, I would have advised him to save the exciting presentation flavor of the first edition, discard all the dated material and incorporate the best stories and research from the subsequent period. Happily, Vesper nearly accomplishes all of this.

Vesper's reputation and the earlier edition of this book stand tall among academics who teach in the entrepreneurship arena. One reason is his unswerving focus on starting new ventures; another is his theme that would-be entrepreneurs can be taught and jump started.

But the arena as an academic discipline resembles an orphanage. Entrepreneurship is seldom taught in economics departments. No functional area in business schools owns it completely. In the early stages of developing a core theory and defining its boundaries, Vesper's book exemplified this melting-pot. The book reflected this eclectic field, applying psychology, management theory, marketing, economics and other disciplines. For example, the "economics of entrepreneurship" is discussed on one page! Of course, through the back door, important areas of applied economics are covered.

In the first part of the book, Vesper develops an excellent road map and shows how to build your entrepreneurial human capital in the years prior to inaugurating a new start-up. It then moves into an analysis of how to screen venture ideas and find feasible ones. This discussion blends marketing and financial analysis. Strategies for wedging into new markets and his discussion of techniques for acquisition dealing round out the book.

His writing summarizes research, presents data, tells start-up stories and (essentially) offers his personal opinions. His Chapter 2 on success and failure factors, with 69 footnotes, shows his strengths with the former; his Chapter 10 on acquisition dealing, with 8 footnotes and much more his own views, illustrates his strengths with the latter. In each chapter there are many tables and/or lists of numbered steps or points taken from his literature reviews.

In my entrepreneurship course, Vesper's original and now revised book has been a required supplemental text to a more formal book. I have also used the Vesper book to anchor a course built on journal articles. The strength of the book is that it does not discuss how to run a small business. Also, the book shows no particular bent towards marketing, accounting or economics. The many capsulated stories remain a favorite for energizing students and lay people. There are over 50 of these one paragraph case studies, describing a person's background, idea for the venture, start-up strategy and subsequent results. Reading in two lines the genesis for "Q Tips" is efficient, effective and enlightening. For those out of school and hungry to start their own firm, the first 100 pages could be dispensed with.

The revised edition already sorely needs an update. An insufficient amount of pre-1980 research, tables, lists, stories and dollar values has been culled for his 1990 edition. And much more has been written and occurred in the nearly four years since his latest citations. For example, savings banks turned out to be the least likely to survive and grow (p. 31), list of causes of business failures in 1970 are dated (p. 55), expected financial ratios in different industries could be fresher than the 1978 RMA data used (p. 164–5), and the capital requirements and annual sales of stable small firms need not be based on 1975 data (p. 177).

If there were an overall model or theme that underpins his book, it is his list of five key ingredients for a start-up: (1) technical know-how, (2) prooduct of service idea, (3) personal contacts, (4) physical resources and (5) customer orders. Three main hurdles for an idea to become a venture are stressed too: (1) sufficient margin, (2) a sales generation scheme and (3) operational financing. In addition to digging much further into the theory of entrepreneurship, Vesper's expected 3rd revised edition should mainstream his two excellent Appendices on corporate ventures and, chemistry and the cultivation of entrepreneurship.

A chapter on international entrepreneurship should be included as well.

Academics interested in "poking around" in the entrepreneurship field should start with Vesper. That so many research articles cite it and my economics students give it a positive evaluation, is evidence of its success.

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