

# Innovation & Entrepreneurship Basics 2018/2019

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# Chapter 1

## Entrepreneurship

The first lesson about Entrepreneurship is structured with question and answers. It includes contributions of the students that were present during the lecture.

### **Question 1.1. *What do we mean by Entrepreneurship?***

Some ideas and models of an entrepreneur came out from the initial discussion:

1. our parents may be entrepreneur for us since they support us for our education;
2. Jack Ma, founder of Alibaba Group, may be considered an entrepreneur since he failed multiple times, he learned through his failures;
3. Kevin Systrom, co-founder of Instagram, succeed in earning money by selling Instagram and he discovered new opportunities on the market;
4. Jeff Bezos, founder of Amazon, may also be considered an entrepreneur since he applied constant changes to create value through a process of innovation.

To summarize, an entrepreneur is someone who:

- explores different ideas and has the courage to apply them in the real world;
- understands the customers' needs;
- finds someone who is interested in those ideas and it is ready to invest in order to apply them;
- appreciates the feedback and and stays close to the customers.

### **Question 1.2. *Which is the definition of imprenditore?***

The Italian definition of imprenditore is slightly different from the concept of entrepreneur: imprenditore is usually related to concepts such as making money, managing business, learning about the economy and the markets.

### **Question 1.3. *Who are the archetypes of entrepreneurship?***

The Industrial Age Role Models are:

- farmers;

- Mr. Ford: invented the concept of transportation, production chain and started producing cars for everyone;
- Mr. Ikea: empowers his customer by selling them furniture in way such that everyone can build his/her own home;
- Mr. Edison;
- Mr. Walt Disney;
- Mr. Walmart;
- Mr. FedEx;
- Mr. Olivetti: gave attention to industrial design;

### Inspiring quotations

“ *The entrepreneur always searches for change, responds to it and exploits it as an opportunity.* ”

---

Peter Drucker,

“ *I am always doing that which I cannot do, in order that we may learn how to do it.* ”

---

Pablo Picasso,

### Technology Entrepreneurship

Technology encompasses all new methods, processes, artifacts, tools, and devices that can be used in commercial and industrial use. New technologies form the basis for technology firms where entrepreneurs **create** innovations by combining their technological **know-how** with **business** practices. This technology firms create new commercialized solutions, i.e., **innovations**. Radical innovations are at the basis of the progress for the development of the society.

The **Big Shift** from the Industrial Age Models to the Entrepreneurial Age happened thanks to the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution. The jobs of the Industrial Age (and before) were based on physical labour, and knowledge was a plus. The post WWII Era was dominated by knowledge with skills as a plus, while the "old" physical labour was taken as granted. In the Digital Era, knowledge and skills become the mainstream and the distinguisher is the entrepreneurial approach: new jobs will be based on human abilities and non-repetitiveness. The focus will be towards an improvement of non-algorithmic type of skills, such as creativity, imagination, communication, critical thinking, collaboration, team work, etc.

## Chapter 2

# Tech Battles

A battle is essentially made of two elements:

- an analysis of real life examples, called **case study**. It is a widespread methodology used in the real world for education in business. Case studies combine two different types of thinking:
  - *induction* (learning from examples): the idea is to apply a case study to others through a process of generalization.
  - *deduction* (learning from theory): the idea is to apply a general theory to a particular use case.
- British Parliament model: debate without moderators, self-arbitrative, crowd participate to the discussion, multiple people speaking and facing on a particular topic.

### Question 2.1. *Why do we use battles in I&E?*

There are two main reasons:

1. *innovation*: talking and debating may create innovation and the debate structure shows how innovation is the composition of many "soft factors"; the most innovative ideas came out from cooperation. Moreover, multiple points of view allow the exploration of flaws and good points.
2. *entrepreneurship*: the soft skills required to debate are the same that compose an entrepreneur's toolkit; soft skills help you during the management process and allow you to learn how to be persuasive.

### Question 2.2. *How do we do tech battles in I&E?*

In our tech battles, we will use open and closed debates; the difference between them is that in closed debates we already know who won the discussion, while open debates are matters that the society has not yet settled upon. We will use both retrospective reasoning (given the state of the world, how did we get there?) and prospective reasoning (given a beginning, how could we end?). The goal of the retrospective reasoning is to retrospectively find answers and its structure looks like the following:

State of the world → Analysis → Explanation

Instead, the goal of the prospective reasoning is to create questions and affect the final result; its structure looks like the following:

Alternative beginning → Controversy → Reconciliation

The winner of the battle is decided at the end of the debate by the crowd; the winner is the most plausible, not the most right. Each battle has three main levels:

1. Horizontal content: a social/economic content that can be applied to any battle; it goes across battles and provide a coherent context throughout the course;
2. Vertical content: the domain-specific content of the battle which gives the "core matter of fact" to each debate;
3. Scenario: an abstraction that allows to explore more freely and open a debate on the content.

## Chapter 3

# Innovation Theory

In this lecture we have seen how innovation can be traced and placed in our world and environment. The way we relate innovation to our world is affected by how we perceive our world and how we act in the reality that we perceive. If we want to do innovation, we want to understand how it will change the world and how we want to change the world. To do so, we need to have a clear view about what our reality is today. We will deal with innovation theory and with epistemology, which is the branch of philosophy concerned with the theory of knowledge. Epistemology has to do with how knowledge is created and managed, and how we can make something with knowledge.

**Question 3.1.** *Why do you think this is relevant to innovation?*

- maybe knowledge allows us to see something that is going on in the world, to capture opportunities, and to find the way to improve;
- knowledge give us lens to see the opportunities.

**Question 3.2.** *Why do we care about how we acquire knowledge?*

- maybe because we can find a better and faster way to acquire knowledge

Before we were looking at opportunity in the world through the knowledge, but if we have ways in which we can acquire knowledge and we observe how we acquire knowledge, we can look for ways in which we can have opportunities for knowledge, which then generate opportunities for practical innovations.

### Historical perspective

We will start with some historical perspective about how in the past we looked at knowledge, how we looked at knowledge acquisition, and how we managed that knowledge in order to create innovation. When we talk about historical perspectives, some elements can come to our mind:

- Objectivism: least effort and minimum path. It is what everyone agrees with the meaning and independent of the people. Where we put laws and facts. There is the evidence that something is true. Objective is something that is independent from the subject.
- Determinism: Believe something is going to happen based on some laws. How we predict the world. Still there is something external that is independent from the subject.
- Modernism: we tried to create perfect a model that suits the worlds since the last three centuries. It is the approach to predict and explain and it is related to formula and models to find realities. Science proves to work well in lots of fields to create knowledge.

- Romanticism
- Rationalism

In the historical period we have three different perspectives:

**certainty** : something that is always true or false, or, at least, it is extremely difficult to change. Certainty may block a possible process of innovation. The probability of a certain event is 1; it is fixed and known a priori.

**risk** : may be an opportunity (either positive or negative), a possibility; managing trade-offs is the way of dealing with risky situations. In a risky situation, the probability is fixed and known a priori but it is less than 1.

**uncertainty** : probabilities are not known a priori and they may change; you have to keep studying the situation and to react to possible changes.

All of these perspectives have something in common: the **probability**; there is always the chance of achieving something and the probability is fixed and known a priori (but you can be not aware of that probability, as in an uncertain situation).

### Question 3.3. *How does innovation happen?*

Innovation happens in different ways depending on the particular perspective:

**certainty** : innovation happens through the impact of large scale events (example: wars)

**risk** : innovation happens through the study and application of a better strategy (example: winning millions with blackjack using martingala)

**uncertainty** : innovation happens through the improvement of our searches.

### Question 3.4. *Who is the entrepreneur?*

An entrepreneur may be seen in different ways depending on the particular perspective:

**certainty** : an entrepreneur is someone who disrupt the way of living;

**risk** : an entrepreneur is someone who is able to find a new and better strategy and to apply that strategy in the real world

**uncertainty** : an entrepreneur is someone who is able to streamline the process in order to improve the researches.

## Contemporary perspectives

When we talk about contemporary perspectives, some elements can come to our mind; those elements partially in contrast with those that were present during the historical period:

**Post-truth** : We take emotions more important than the reality and the truth may constantly change. Political and social media debate. Combining the facts to invoke emotion response to get popularity. The social media works as sort of amplifier to exponential the effect. Social media allows to create isolation of messages and echo;

**Post-modernism** : Particular setting or environment could be seen in different ways. Generally it has 2 meanings: too complex and safe forward, disaster happen but to survive;



**Subjectivism** : every one has a personal truth; there are still some rules, but those serve only as a common ground for debating; the topic of the debate is not objective as it was during the historical period.

In the contemporary period we have lots of different perspectives:

**ambiguity weak** : use democracy and even technology to find a solution. The process used to find a solution is a caothic process and involves participants, problems, solutions, and decisions. Participants contribute to the choice of opportunity, which is a moment in which a decision could be taken. Making a decision in a caothic environment may lead to improvements. The process of finding a solution may be linear (we find participants and elicit problems; then we propose solutions and we take a decision) but it is not always the case.

**ambiguity strong** : in other words, sense making; it is the idea that apply when a crisis happens but someone is able to propose an interpretation that causes reactions. Since the situation is complex, you have to make sense of it and try to find a way to adapt. Make sense of the environment and have your decision.

**black swans** : before the discovery of black swans, people think there only exists white swans in this world. It is an example of how the scientific method works, which is the following:

theory  $\rightarrow$  hypothesis  $\rightarrow$  experiment  $\rightarrow$  falsification/conclusion

There are circumstances when something unexpected happens; we have to find a way to navigate and make plans.

**the fallacy of Induction** : Induction cannot predict what is going to happen tomorrow; it only says what has happened until now. For instance: a farmer always feeds a turkey at 9 am; the turkey may erroneously think to be fed every morning at 9 am. People are sometimes misled by empiricism.

**Enrolment & Translation** : there are some elements in our world that shape our interaction; the enrolment of the environment creates an idea on our mind and affect the way in which we interact with others.

**Actor network theory** : our world is a mesh of actors; they can be human or non-human (like feelings, beliefs). A non-human actor either substitute a human one or represents the human that designed it. During a human to human interaction, there may be a non-human actors in the middle (example: headphones, payment system).

**anti-fragility** : in logical sense, it means robustness or durable, resilient, hard. And even better, when stressed, it becomes stronger.

**post-truth** : the emotional value of something becomes more important than its real value; appeal to emotions rather than reality.

**Question 3.5.** *What do these perspectives have in common?*

1. complexity;
2. unpredictability, never one way straight;
3. uncertainty;
4. action/reaction.

**Question 3.6. *How do we innovate?***

We can innovate by learning how the system works and by leveraging the asymmetry of information to generate value.

**Question 3.7. *Who is an entrepreneur?***

An entrepreneur is someone who is able to disrupt, to modify the status-quo.

## Chapter 4

# Creativity and Storytelling

### Question 4.1. *Why do we chose the topic of creativity?*

Because imagination and creativity will become probably more and more the differentiators to help people to find a job, to find more opportunities in the future, and to distinguish themselves from machines.

This one is a guest lecture taken by Maurizio Mantero. **Creativity** is a slippery word and open to many interpretations. Strictly speaking, it is the process of creating from nothing. Therefore, no human being would be capable of creativity if not in a relative sense, What Maurizio offered us is a very practical perspective of someone that has worked in many creative jobs in his life. In fact, Maurizio's personal experience is the following:

- writer;
- painter and sculptor;
- illustrator;
- collaborator in the process of building an airplane;
- collaborator in the creation of a video game.

### Question session

### Question 4.2. *Where do you take your ideas for comics?*

Ideas are everywhere. Thinking ideas is something of good point. Remember the core of story is that you cannot invent too much but make variations in. The meaning of life is to catch butterflies, but in the end is what you have discovered.

### Question 4.3. *How does your opinion about work change through the life?*

Not much. I also took similar approach even in video game.

### Question 4.4. *How to keep innovative during your career?*

Stay ahead of the technologies and in this sense it keeps you innovative. Furthermore,

### Question 4.5. *What will replace comic in the future?*

Video games I guess.

**Question 4.6. *Is using drugs some kind of cheating?***

No, the only warning is that drugs have artifacts that need be negotiated. If I used drags, my drawings would be better. Why not? Hope more than effect.

**Question 4.7. *Do you think creativity is mandatory in a contemporary business?***

Yes, creativity for sure will be something that will put you in an advantage position.

Creativity is not a one time thing; instead, it is a process. It happens over time and the more you dig into, the more creative things you can come up with. Furthermore, creativity has a structure and a system!

## Chapter 5

# Digital Transformation

Digital transformation is a topic that can be both interesting and challenging. Definitions of digital transformations that arose during the lecture are:

- a period when industries are striving to create innovation more than before;
- changes in the modern businesses in order to be competitive;
- technology entering in business and changing how organizations work.

During the lecture we divided in groups to summarize what we understood from watching the videos and we presented the main point to the other groups. The following is a brief bullet list that contains the highlighted concepts:

### 5.1 Tech Perspective

- companies are nowadays making a lot of experiments; in the past, there were lots of failures, whereas today there are less;
- there is the need of racing against the others in the process of creating new technologies, so timing is very important;
- B2B and B2C business model are disappearing;
- there is a significant switch towards user-centered models;

**Question 5.1.** *Is technology the triggering thing for digital transformation to happen?*

Yes, since technology provides the ground and the foundation to change.

### 5.2 General Perspective

Moore's Law is getting exhausted due to physical limits and the computational power is slowing down its evolution.

**Question 5.2.** *Can this slow down affect the Digital Transformation?*

No, because customers do not need this huge amount of computational power.

**Question 5.3. *Is our an evolution era or a revolution era?***

Our era is really an evolution era. It is not a revolution that disrupt things; instead, it is a very fast evolution era.

**Question 5.4. *Does a better technology always win over the others?***

No, not always. Instead, the one that wins is the nearest to the customers' needs.

**Question 5.5. *Do we have ways to predict where Digital Transformation is taking us?***

We can predict something, but the most important thing to do is to go ahead and to overtakes the state of the art. Try to follow the Digital Transformation thread and try to be forward-oriented. Not taking the right decision can be very dangerous in a fast evolution era and even if you are one of the best, you must keep the pace in order to avoid losing positions.

## 5.3 Macro Perspective

- accept changes and face the changing market while trying to be always ahead of customers needs (Netflix);
- changes start from thinking; two different ways of thinking are the European and the US ones: the first is "take as little risk as possible", whereas the second is "take more risk and if you fail, try again";
- leaders and managers are two different figures: leaders are overcoming managers since they are emotionally connected in the process improvement. The task of a leader is to show the way and to encourage employees to reach a goal.

**Question 5.6. *Can we apply Digital Transformation to small companies?***

It depends on the company since there might be places where Digital Transformation cannot work because of the people.

## 5.4 Company Perspective

- digital transformation affects all the business models but at different speeds.
- Depending on the company structure, **change** and **zero** are two different ways to do digital transformation. Change means performing an evolution, while zero means starting from zero.
- through digital transformation, people's need changed and new need arose.
- there is a lack of regulation at the moment. As it was 200 years ago for doctors and teachers, nowadays the problem is to get a certification.
- there are different cybersecurity problems involved in the Digital Transformation process.

## Chapter 6

# From Close to Open Innovation

Often, most innovations fail. To innovate, you need to experiment and to try/fail multiple times; it is not a rule, but usually it works like that. Often, when a company innovates and another does not, the first one is faster, or produces a better product; thus, the second company will be in difficult. Again, it is not a rule and it depends on the company, the market, and the environment in which you are taking your innovation.

“ *The development of science and the accumulation of knowledge took us to a paradigm shift.* ”

---

Thomas Kuhn,

Nowadays, we are going through a paradigm shift in innovation and in the way we do it: from close to open innovation. Beyond open and close innovation, there is also "disruptive" innovation, which is used in lot of different places.

### 6.1 Close Innovation

Close innovation happens within the firm and the logic is the one of "buy" knowledge and develop it internally. Innovation is not happening throughout the whole organization; instead, it is developed in a particular department and then extended to the others. It follows a linear model that can be either production push (you innovate and push the innovation on the marker) market pull (the market itself gives you the need for an innovation). Close innovation is completely done internally.

We can identify this internalization with the verb **MAKE**: a company is in control of everything.

### 6.2 Open Innovation

On the opposite side, there is the **BUY** paradigm: as an organization, you recognize you cannot do everything on your own and you start collaborating with others (for instance, universities or research centers).

## 6.3 Close vs Open Innovation

If there is a scarce knowledge, you are more biased toward close innovation, whereas, when knowledge is abundant, you shift toward open innovation. The advance of close innovation is the minimization of dependencies from external organizations, but, as a drawback, it lacks in flexibility. The advantage of open innovation is the total flexibility, but, as a disadvantage there is total instability.



# Chapter 7

## Organizations

This lecture will be focused mainly on

- organization structure and value chains
- models of organizations

**Question 7.1.** *Why should we organize instead of doing things on our own?*

- to deal with big projects;
- because there are different minds to support the job;
- to try to integrate different skills to achieve better results in less time.

**Question 7.2.** *How are organizations related to innovation?*

- an organization probably wants to produce something innovative;
- an organization wants to be aligned with the time and might need to innovate.

**Question 7.3.** *Have you ever heard about intrapreneurship?*

It is the process of innovation placed inside a company and the structure that a company uses to innovate in the business.

### 7.1 Organizational structure