

## Your Start-Up as a Business Experiment



# Thinking of launching a new business?

Have a business idea but don't know where to start? This is how your idea meets it business.

## Online Course Synopsis

Entrepreneurship can be one of the most challenging and rewarding experiences you can do.

Most business failures are caused, not by poor execution as commonly believed, but by poor strategy implemented from the beginning.

Conventional wisdom of writing a business plan as the first step to starting a business is a mistake leading to a higher risk of business failure later on. In its place, this course begins by introducing the Concept Plan.

Where business plans are based on a lot of guesswork and pulling unsubstantiated numbers out of thin air, the Concept Plans serve as a concrete question and answer methodology to produce the answers you need.



Concept Plans:

- 1) Quickly answer the question of what you think you are going to do.
- 2) Encourage you to address the crucial unknowns.
- 3) Question your assumptions and ask how you're going to test them.
- 4) Identify the *what-if* or *only-if-this* scenarios that are the foundation of the plan.

The Concept Plan is followed by learning how to demonstrate that a business is viable because until proof of concept is shown, your business is just an experimental start-up.

Next, you'll learn how to design and conduct business experiments because until you validate the assumptions in the concept plan and turn all those unknown factors into known ones, your idea isn't workable.

This program takes the rigor and process of the scientific method and shows how to apply it to starting a new business – a process and system for you to discover and determine what your new business really is.

This course is over 2 hours of information on how to start a new business. The training covers: what is the concept plan, how to build business proof of concept, how to design and conduct business experiments, common mistakes made by entrepreneurs, the investors' perspective and what to do to get funded, and investor turn-offs. The course is 7 video lectures which are accompanied by audio, transcripts, worksheets, whitepapers, and an animation series to illustrate various scenarios and concepts. As a bonus, students can download the e-book, "*Your Start-Up Company as a Business Experiment – How to Apply the Scientific Method to the Problem of Creating a New Business*".



By Cynthia Kocialski

# Before Starting a New Business Consider ...

Every year in the U.S. more than **600,000 new businesses are started – 25% won't reach their 2<sup>nd</sup> anniversary and more than 50% will shut down within 5 years.** The start-up landscape resembles the cycle of forest fires – new trees sprout up where old flames destroyed the older trees, and it repeats endlessly.



One of the most common reasons blamed for the failures is undercapitalization. Is this myth or reality? Venture capitalists bought us Google, Amazon, and Facebook. **VCs funded more than 30,000 start-ups in the past 10 years.** Yet, **only 2% went IPO.** But wait ... venture capitalists control billions of dollars and funding isn't an issue for their portfolio companies. Collectively, this has been an industry-wide business experiment. Venture capitalists have debunked the biggest myth about capital. Lack of funding is the scapegoat for business failures!

... And in the past 10 years, **only 38% of all IPOs were ventured-backed.** So it appears that funding isn't even needed to go big either!

Imagine if start-ups were made on a production line and defect rates were this high, the line would be shut down until the problem identified and a solution mapped out. Clearly, conventional wisdom on how to create a new business isn't working. Yet, entrepreneurs continue to try and create new companies the traditional way. Why?

Isn't it time for a new approach? *Your Start-Up as a Business Experiment* is where science meets the business world and how entrepreneurs make the discoveries that lead to the right product and business model. Because every entrepreneur has the same goal when starting a new business ... a thriving and successful business.

## Course Reviews

This course is GREAT for anyone looking to launch a start-up! To say that I am happy with my purchase would be a complete understatement. Within this course you are not going to find the traditional textbook ideas that we have been taught over and over again in our Business 101 college classes. You will find cutting edge and new ways to launch an idea or concept into a functioning business model. –Christian Smith

GREAT course on a better way to start a business. The course can help you understand investors do's & don'ts. I like that you get an e-guide too. It's really a must-do course before you spend your time and money starting a new business. Highly recommend! --Lin Brad

Great resource and knowledge all business owners should know! A different approach to showing how entrepreneurs should be thinking when starting up a business. –Rosa McKeveny

# Meet the Author - CYNTHIA KOCIALSKI

**Cynthia Kocialski** is the founder of three companies – two fabless semiconductor and one software company. What makes her unique is that she has experienced many start-ups see them from the inside out, including the day-to-day trials and tribulations, not just the milestones and status presented to passive investors and outsiders. In the past 15 years, she has been involved in dozens of start-ups and has served on various advisory boards. These companies have collectively returned billions of dollars to investors. Many of these start-ups were stellar successes of the hi-tech industry and others were the failures that closed without any fanfare at all. After that many start-ups, Cynthia has seen what works, what doesn't work. Cynthia has worked with established companies to bring start-up techniques and technologies to corporations desiring to process improvement and efficiency.



Prior to her work in the start-up community, Cynthia has held a wide range of technical, marketing, and management positions at major corporations. At IBM, Cynthia began by developing financial software to facilitate the tracking of sales and inventory for international operations. She later moved into development and engineering management working of scientific workstations. Finally, Cynthia transitioned into technical marketing and strategic planning role for graphics and digital video components for personal computers. At Matrox Electronics, Cynthia was the general manager, overseeing the R&D area of digital video and image processing component and add-in board product lines. Cynthia was also COO for a personal medical technology and services start-up.

Cynthia was raised in Buffalo, N.Y. and her career has taken her to N.Y.C., Washington, D.C., Miami, and San Francisco. Cynthia graduated of the University of Rochester with bachelor's degrees in mathematics and applied statistics. She also has graduate degrees from the University of Virginia in both electrical engineering and systems engineering. Cynthia is the author of "startup From The Ground Up". She also writes the popular *Start-up Entrepreneurs' Blog* ([www.cynthiakocialski.com](http://www.cynthiakocialski.com)) - observations, lessons, and stories of life inside hi-tech start-ups, and has written many articles on emerging technologies.

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# Media Showcase

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SAVVY ENTREPRENEUR

## Build Startups Using An Investor's View

Cynthia Kocialski has three words of advice for tinkers who invent gadgets: Cool doesn't sell.

You can design gizmos or tech toys that capture your fancy. But even if you fall in love with your innovation and you're sure it will attract buyers, that's not enough.

"Silicon Valley investors view the product as only about 10% of a company's success," said Kocialski, business consultant in Palmdale, Calif. "Investors want to see management expertise, a well-rounded product and a clear path to profitability."

strengthening the firm's operation. Ironically, some of the most inventive, technically savvy entrepreneurs are most likely to stumble out of the gate, Kocialski warns. That's because they may grow enamored of what they do best—ignore everything else.

"If owners come up with a product or market, they often lack the business acumen to manage it properly," she says. "You'll need to hire people who can help you with the business side of things."

Entrepreneurs often assume that they can manage their own business by trial and error. But Kocialski says that's a trap because in a company, every person's job is important to the bottom line.

You need to hire the right person and ensure they're as productive as possible." Morey Stettner

business builders who think creatively and forge useful relationships. If you launch a commerce website, you may have a better chance of success if you can attract a few key influencers to your site. "You'll need to hire people who can help you with the business side of things."

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You need to hire the right person and ensure they're as productive as possible." Morey Stettner



Unreturned phone calls. Messages left to do in voicemail. Phone numbers changed with no official notice. It is common place among the newbies in the industry. Unfortunately this leaves many new artists including business companies out of the game. They are just unreliable. It doesn't seem like it's true trying to relay messages with someone who won't up to their name, or if they set out to do. "My clients have never been of starting a company," says Cynthia Kocialski, the Ground up. "They have done it in the focuses on the ev the company's life this doesn't cor needed to make Ever he

Eliminate the 'make you up plain lazy. I add more enough to smart en someone us new where, ideal. Can't feel ev try



Online Media Kit Available at [www.cynthiakocialski.com](http://www.cynthiakocialski.com)



# Press and Media Coverage



## **Can't Find A Job? Create Your Own**

AOL, Sept 27, 2011

<http://jobs.aol.com/articles/2011/09/27/can-t-find-a-new-job-create-your-own/>

## **Advice and Consent**

Entrepreneur Magazine, August 2011

## **How the Competition for Startup Cash Are Like Combo of American Idol and Crowd Funding**

Business insider, August 9, 2011

<http://www.businessinsider.com/how-competitions-for-startup-cash-are-like-a-combo-of-american-idol-and-crowd-funding-2011-8>

## **The Benefits of Bringing in an Advisory Board**

Entrepreneur Online

<http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/219996>

## **Think Like An Investor To Build A Viable Business**, Investors Business Daily, May 20, 2011

<http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article/572843/201105201500/Build-Startups-Using-An-Investors-View.aspx>

## **Is It Your Time To Start A new Business?**, MSNBC, Jun 2, 2011

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/43257466>

## **Micro Venturing and Crowd Funding – Hot Alternative Funding Trends**

Startups Tips from Logan Lenz, Feb 15, 2011

<http://www.loganlenz.com/?s=cynthia+kocialski&x=0&y=0>

## **How To Lose An Investor Before You Finish Speaking**

<http://wisepreneur.com/entrepreneurship/how-to-lose-an-investor-before-you-finish-speaking>

## **Ideas To Riches: Revealing the Ecosystem of Silicon Valley**

<http://wisepreneur.com/entrepreneurship/ideas-to-riches-revealing-the-ecosystem-of-silicon-valley>

## **How To Build An Effective Team for a Start-Up Company**

eFinance, April 2010

<http://efinanceportal.com/efp/firstPageNewsDetails.do?orderId=32695&industryId=3&languageCode=en>

## **Where are the Women Entrepreneurs in Hi-Tech Start-Ups?**

<http://www.witi.com/wire/articles/169/Where-are-the-Women-Entrepreneurs-in-Hi-tech-Start-ups?/>

## **A Simple Start-Up Process for Creating a Viable Product**

<http://unystartups.com/2011/07/25/a-simple-start-up-process-for-creating-a-viable-product/>

## **Management Waste Minimized**

TOMI Magazine, June 2011

## **The Art of Attracting Investors**

Hearpreneur, Apr 22, 2011

<http://hearpreneur.com/2011/04/22/the-art-of-attracting-investors-to-your-start-up/>

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# Radio Interviews



How to Startup Your Own Business

The Best People We Know, Blog Talk Radio

<http://www.blogtalkradio.com/thebestpeoplewewknow/2011/10/03/cynthia-kocalski-how-to-startup-your-own-business>

Expert Access Radio Show, June 12, 2011

[http://radio.cincom.com/media/Cynthia\\_Kocalski.mp3](http://radio.cincom.com/media/Cynthia_Kocalski.mp3)

Startup Tip and Advice

Business book Review with Bob Garlick of Garlick Marketing

<http://businessbooktalk.com/>

Cynthia Kocalski, Author, "Startup from the Ground Up"

Professor Smedley, Blog Talk Radio

<http://www.blogtalkradio.com/professor-smedley/2011/09/20/cynthia-kocalski>

Sustaining Your Startup

The Power Connection, Blog Talk Radio

<http://www.blogtalkradio.com/the-power-connection/2011/09/27/sustaining-your-start-up>

A Book and a Chat with Cynthia Kocalski, Blog Talk Radio, Mar 24, 2011

<http://www.blogtalkradio.com/across-the-pond/2011/03/24/a-book-and-a-chat-with-cynthia-kocalski>

Wayne Hurlbert's Business World on Blog Talk Radio. Mar 18, 2011

Wayne interviews Cynthia Kocalski, author of of Startup from the Ground Up

<http://www.blogtalkradio.com/waynehurlbert/2011/03/18/cynthia-kocalski-startup-from-the-ground-up>

Connecting Women, Blog Talk Radio, Mar 10, 2011

Faten Abdallah interviews author Cynthia Kocalski author of Startup from the Ground Up

<http://recordings.talkshoe.com/rss91612.xml>

Finance for Startups: Empowering Entrepreneurs To Launch Successful Startups

iTunes Podcast by Fred Castaneda, January 24, 2011



# Online Presence

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Facebook
<a href="http://www.facebook.com/startupfromthegroundup">www.facebook.com/startupfromthegroundup</a>
LinkedIn
<a href="http://www.linkedin.com/pub/cynthia-kocialski/8/18a/702">http://www.linkedin.com/pub/cynthia-kocialski/8/18a/702</a>
Twitter
@ckocialski
Blog
<a href="http://www.cynthiakocialski.com/blog">www.cynthiakocialski.com/blog</a>
Regular Contributions
<a href="http://www.wisepreneur.com">www.wisepreneur.com</a>
<a href="http://www.business2communty.com">www.business2communty.com</a>
You Tube Channel
<a href="http://www.youtube.com/startupfromtheground">www.youtube.com/startupfromtheground</a>

## Blog Headlines

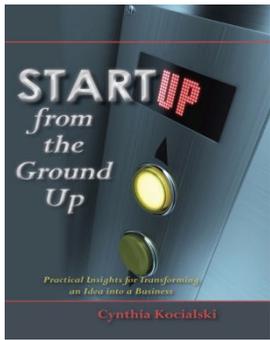
How to Effectively Use a Free Product to Threaten Your Competitors  
 Find Writing a Start-Up Business Plan Tedious? Start with a Concept Plan  
 Why Dumb Start-Up Ideas Work  
 Part Time Workers: Headache or Relief?  
 Tips for Getting Customers to Speak With You  
 Why Entrepreneurs Should Sweat the Little Decisions

## Tweets

Rule of Thumb #8 – For patents to have value, infringement must be easy and obvious to prove.  
 Gwinnett Innovation Park (Atlanta, Ga) is offering \$25,000 to each of 12 start-ups plus free office space, no equity stake taken.  
 The hardest part about failure is knowing what to do next. There's often sometime between the failure and the beginning of the next attempt.  
 Customer question #5 - what do you think about our competitors and is there something we should learn from them?

## Videos

Product Comparison Flubs	<a href="http://youtu.be/sBzXMLQVOHc">http://youtu.be/sBzXMLQVOHc</a>
Price Increase Mishaps	<a href="http://youtu.be/HizU1VGapM8">http://youtu.be/HizU1VGapM8</a>
WOW Marketing: How Not To Bore Your Customers	<a href="http://youtu.be/vHsq0RJvww">http://youtu.be/vHsq0RJvww</a>
When to Seek Investor Funding	<a href="http://youtu.be/TwGwnqPdNyo">http://youtu.be/TwGwnqPdNyo</a>
Entrepreneurs Should Ditch the Business Plan	<a href="http://youtu.be/6loS9StU9Js">http://youtu.be/6loS9StU9Js</a>



# Startup from the Ground Up

by Cynthia Kocialski



Start-ups don't fail because companies are unable to build a product; they fail because the business factors needed to bring that product into the market are either neglected or ignored. **Practical, insightful and actionable**, *Startup from the Ground Up* gets budding entrepreneurs moving down the right path and thinking in the right direction with tips, strategies, and techniques on **how to launch a start-up**.

## Book Reviews

*"Cynthia describes a start-up as not being an end point, but a creative process. In effect, **for the author, a start-up business is even more than a journey. It's an organic, living entity. The author makes it clear that entrepreneurial start-ups fail from a poor strategy, rather than from weak execution. As a result, the author provides a book to guide the would be business person through those critical early stages of this organic process."***

**-Wayne Hurlbert**, Blog Business World

*"In Startup From The Ground Up, there are gems that will pop up and surprise you. Two of the biggest – at least to me – are the concept plan and marketing starts on day 1. The book is chockful of good advice, but I'm afraid you'll have to get it to find out the rest. I'll just leave you with some of Cynthia's tips for anyone considering launching or financing a start-up company."*

**-Daniel Goh**, Young Upstarts



*"Startup From the Ground Up is a realistic, real-life book about taking your idea out of your head and into the marketplace. Startup From the Ground Up gives aspiring entrepreneurs the framework that they will need to use to get help in areas where they feel less comfortable. Before you quit your day job, take the time to quickly go through this book, and when you find yourself flinching at any of the chapters, bookmark that one for further review."*

**-Ivana Taylor**, Business Insider

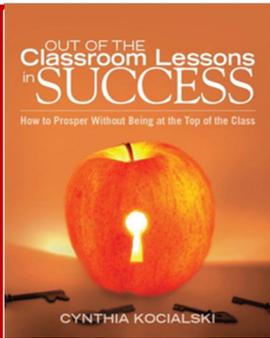


*"An amazing book geared toward start-ups. There's a wealth of knowledge in the book that entrepreneurs can benefit from. Walks through that very early stage, are you even an entrepreneur, determining if you have what it takes to see this through, how investors perceive entrepreneurs, and then it gets in to the actual planning – what is your concept, how do you go about finding customers, how do you know who the customers are, how do you market it, what is your revenue model. Some of the later chapters really ring true. "*

**-Chris Benjamin**, Rogue CFO

*"One of the reasons that the failure rate of start-ups is so high is that new management teams keep having to learn the same lessons over and over again. If you're in start-up mode, stop whatever you're doing and read Cynthia's book - you'll be glad you did. Cynthia covers all the stumbling blocks and surprises you're liable to encounter, and the book will help smooth your path. It's an easy read and you get to take advantage of Cynthia's wide experience in founding, running, and advising start-ups."*

**-Andy Blackstone**, Blackstone Associates



# Out of the Classroom Lessons in Success

*How to Prosper Without Being at the  
Top of the Class*



No surprise, parents want their children to be **happy** and **healthy**. The jobs parents want their kids to be when they grow up are physician, lawyer, accountant, engineer, architect, and computer scientist. But a funny thing happened on the way to growing up ... two-third of American adults are overweight or obese, only 39% of Americans say they are very happy, and only 12% of workers are extremely satisfied with their jobs. What happened? In our grade-focused school years, the rules of success seemed as simple as making all As. However, in the working world, success is far more complex. In today's global, hypercompetitive marketplace, the rules for success have changed dramatically. On page after page of this slim, insightful roadmap to success, this book serves up a host of "aha!" moments that will forever change the way young hopefuls view the world ahead of them.

## Book Reviews

*"If you're inspired to make a great living by doing what you love - then this is the book for you. It packed with insights about discovering your passion, nurturing your talents, developing valuable life skills, achieving your goals and most importantly **actually** living your dreams. Cynthia Kocialski shares her many years of experience in the corporate world as well as her own personal achievements to reveal the 'keys' to life success. You don't have to be a grade A student - but you do have to read and apply the ideas in this book - if you want to create a life you love! "*

**-Dr Rosina McAlpine, Director Inspired Children**



*"We are trained to believe that success in life is entirely rooted in how successful we are in school. The reality, according to Kocialski, is that success in school has little to do with success in life. I guess that's why I lived this book. I could relate. I did really well in school with little or no effort. I worked at a series of painful jobs that I knew would never translate into a career. Reading this book, however, gave me a sense of hope for the first time."*

**-Nicole Andrews, Amazon Review**



*"What do some children and young adults succeed and some don't? Cynthia Kocialski has pulled together observations and intuition and the result is a book so practical that it provides that 'AHA' moment. How to prosper without being at the top of the class has the bravery to address our current education system as well as providing a different outlook on the question of what is success. Kocialski couples her writing with some meaningful and entertaining illustrations."*

**--Grady Harp, Amazon Review**

*"I wish I had access to this book in high school, or even in my twenties as it is a wonderful resource and full of information."*

**-Zohar, Blogger at Man of la Book**





# Interview Questions and Answers

## **Why did you create the training course?**

There are far too many new businesses that fail unnecessarily, mostly from the mindset and perspective of the entrepreneur. The problems start at the very beginning. This course addresses that initial effort. No one starts a business so it will fail, but most new businesses do. Yet, entrepreneurs continue to follow the same old method that brings about these failures. Why? Isn't it time for a new approach? The goal of every entrepreneur is the same – a successful and thriving business. Every book or course I offer is based upon my personal experiences or upon those of entrepreneurs that I've dealt with over the years. It's based upon real world situations, not academic theories. This course is centered on the concept that start-ups shouldn't be series A, seed start-ups, or early stage start-ups. They are experimental start-ups!

## **You speak of replacing the business plan. Why?**

Many entrepreneurs believe they must have all the answers before they get started. That's the traditional approach behind writing a business plan, then treating the plan as if it's a proven set of instructions, with the key to success simply being executing the plan. The problem is most entrepreneurs don't have the knowledge or first-hand experience with the business, and so they write a business plan that's really a fairy tale. It's based upon guesses, estimates, and wishful thinking. Executing such a plan leads to disaster. My course teaches entrepreneurs that there is a step required before writing the business plan, a step that allows them to eventually create the business plan.

## **Why is the concept of business experiments so important and powerful?**

First, it creates the right mindset for the entrepreneur. Experimentation is part of the method of scientific discovery. It is based upon proposing a theory, testing it, and reviewing the results. Every business experiment produces more knowledge, even if the experiment fails miserably. Thinking about the new product and business model as theories to be proven, allows the entrepreneur to give himself permission to fail his way to success. And knowing that one is to conducting a series of experiments in a systematic manner with the goal of discovering the true product and business model means the entrepreneur isn't following the perceived proven recipe of a business plan to a certain result. This is a huge change in perspective for entrepreneurs, who feel they have to have 95% of the answers before getting started.

## **Your course talks about using a concept plan to replace the conventional business plan. What is it?**

A concept plan outlines what the product and proposed business models are. It also identifies and outlines the assumptions and missing information. With a business plan approach, entrepreneurs don't want to admit what they don't know. With the concept plan coupled with a business experiment strategy, entrepreneurs set out to close all those holes. Once they gain enough experience knowledge and insight into the business, the market, and customers, only then is it time to write the business plan. This course teaches entrepreneurs how to create this discovery process through an organized process.



# Interview Questions and Answers

## **Your course includes modules on investors. Is this course meant for start-up seeking funding?**

No, it's targeted at self-funded and bootstrapped start-ups. The reason is almost all new businesses aren't funded at the beginning. The investors come later. These modules are intended for those thinking about funding. These lectures teach entrepreneurs about how to view investors as just another type of customers, and like any other customer, they need to give the customer what they want to buy. This section of the course includes an animated video series based upon real examples of how entrepreneurs have approached investors, leading to these start-ups not being funded. There is also a list of actual questions investors have asked entrepreneurs seeking their first round of funding, and not your typical questions either. For example, I've seen angels ask "If this project is as promising as you say it is then why you aren't asking me for more money?"

## **This course also includes a lecture on common mistakes. What can you tell us about this?**

On a general level, most entrepreneurs focus too heavily on the product and the business that's needed to surround the product is an afterthought – even considered to be the easy and straightforward part of the equation for success by many entrepreneurs. That's a big problem. Entrepreneurs need to focus on building business proof of concept, and that's a simply equation of product plus customers plus revenue. Which brings me to a second point; entrepreneurs need to focus on revenue, how they entice customers to buy their new wonderful product or service. An example of a common mistake is entrepreneurs focus on the unhappy customers and try to make them satisfied customers. They don't bother with the happy ones. It's the old adage of don't fix what's already working. Instead, they should focus on their happiest ones. They should identify their best 5 or 6 customers, get to know them, build a relationship with them. Discover why they bought the product. Prioritize their desired changes ahead of others. Listen to their issues and problems with the product. In the early stages, start-ups are really looking for more customers just like the happiest ones.

## **Is this video training program just for start-ups? Would this video benefit someone who's been in business for 5 years already?**

It depends. If they are still struggling with their business or creating a new product line, then it would apply. If they've already figured out the business, it's not about taking a mostly proven business model and growing it to the next level. This course is about your new business as an experimental start-up.

## **How is this video training series different from your book Startup from the Ground Up?**

It's a companion to the book. The book goes more in depth into start-up marketing and sales, building a team, customer development, and other related issues. All of those things don't matter until you have a vision, purpose and strategy for using them. This course is about designing this strategy.



# Interview Questions and Answers

## **Who is your intended audience?**

First time, would-be, or struggling entrepreneurs

## **Would this video training program make an ideal college or university course?**

It's not really long or in-depth enough to be a university course. Those are usually quarter or semester long. This course is much shorter, more for the entrepreneur who wants to get moving forward with their concept. But it could be part of a larger course on new businesses. When I took M.B.A. courses in colleges, they were much more about theory. University courses don't often deal with the reality and practicality of starting a new business.

## **You wrote an e-book to go with the course. How does the e-book complement the training course?**

This eBook is how the scientific method can be applied when starting a new business – a process and system for discovering what the new business really must be. The first phase of the start-up should be to identify the assumptions and hypotheses about the product and business, devise business experiments to prove out the theories, and iterate until the entrepreneur has a good understanding of market and customers. Then it becomes possible to really build a viable business and if desired, attract investors. Many entrepreneurs want funding from the get-go, but almost none will get it – only 1% of business proposals are funded. The funded ones are those that have completed the experimental start-up phase. Yet, many entrepreneurs believe the key to success is funding. It's not. It's resourcefulness.