



Title: Patterns for potential exit decisions of Greek start-ups related to technology

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Abstract

The objective of this research is to examine strategies related to exit decisions of Greek start-ups in the field of technology. The cases of several start-ups in various fields such as services and social networking, as well as various stages, from early to more mature, are investigated and discussed. Entrepreneurship in Greece in the crisis era has emerged as a hot trend and a key lever for growth restoration and job creation. Research in terms of relation between a strategy design and the possible exit process start-ups are developing is discussed. To this end, the aim of this study is to record and interpret, as an initial study, processes, factors and patterns that strategies follow influencing exit decisions of start-ups within the Greek context.

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Introduction

Context

In this dissertation a research to record any possible patterns that affect relations to potential exit decision in terms of strategies employed to this direction by Greek start-ups, will be investigated, recorded and discussed. Various start-ups were researched with regard to their strategy and their intention to exit or not. Start-up Companies sampled and investigated were in various states of maturity, while they come from various industries.

Objectives

In recent years, the Greek start-up environment is blooming, and several start-ups are established and operate within the Greek environment according to several data collected from papers (Endeavor's Greece Report), publications, and organizations that are established in Greece the recent years and support entrepreneurship and start-up activity in the country such as MIT Greece, Corralia, Metavallon, Open Fund and others. Since start-ups are a recent trend for Greek entrepreneurship not many researches have recorded patterns for any potential exit procedures. Majority of start-ups have recently started their operation while only one start-up has already done an exit. Few are recorded in terms of procedures towards exit directions. This dissertation will try to depict any pattern, within the Greek context, that may affect exit intentions; any possible strategy start-ups follow towards this procedure. Planning an exit strategy can be considered as important as starting up a business. Many start-ups- find it quite hard to digest that even in the times, when everything is running well in the business, a need to sell the business may occur. Exits are important for founders, start-ups and investors and the way start-ups' strategies are leading towards this direction in Greece is important to be investigated and depicted.

In addition to the above mentioned, characteristics of founders or founding teams in terms of education, age or gender of the start-ups that either aim or not to exit, will be investigated. The way in which the entrepreneurial environment in Greece affects start-ups in their operation will be researched. Analysis of the terms and the relative literature concerning all

the above-mentioned will be presented including the methodology followed in order to acquire data.

Structure

In the first part of the dissertation the Greek environment concerning start-ups and entrepreneurship will be presented followed by an examination of several publications regarding start-up strategies related to exit decisions and characteristics of start-uppers. Moreover, The aim of this part of the research is to find the relative literature concerning exit strategies of start-ups related to technology and present the terms that this report will discuss.

With regard to the empirical section, the second part of the dissertation will present the data collected through the research questionnaire to several start-ups and interviews of selective start-ups in several states (exit, about to exit, recently established start-ups). Through this phase an observation to the Greek start-up ecosystem and how start-ups behave towards potentials exit will be depicted.

In the third part an effort to correlate the data collected with producers concerning strategies and various patterns for potentials exits will be discussed. The final part includes conclusions of the research and the whole procedure while it presents the limitations the researcher faced and recommendations.

Contribution of the study

This dissertation will try to present the current technology start-up environment in Greece, define the patterns concerning strategies for potential exits, depict characteristics of founders and start-ups themselves and become an initial research and guide for start-ups that are willing to follow an exit path in the future.

Literature Review

Entrepreneurship, start-up, exit

Entrepreneurship is a multi-dimensional concept that includes owning a small business, being innovative, acting as a leader, or starting up a new company. It includes spotting opportunities to drive the market toward

equilibrium or causing disequilibrium through “creative destruction”. It includes doing this on your own, in a team or inside a company. It involves starting without any resources and creating new values in the realm of business, social values, government or academia. (Gedeon, 2010). Entrepreneurship is the capacity and willingness to develop, organize and manage a business venture along with any of its risks in order to make a profit.

As Thierry-Janssen has mentioned in a white paper for Just in Time Management Group, there are seven stages of an entrepreneurship life cycle: the seed, the start-up, the growth, the establishment, the expansion, the maturity and finally the exit. At the start-up level the enterprise is born and exists legally. Products or services are in production and start-up has its first customers. In this stage it is likely for the start-up to have overestimated money needs and the time to market. The main challenge is not to waste the few cash. The profitable needs of the clients need to be discovered and a reality check to see if the enterprise is on the right track should be done. The start-up should focus on establishing a customer base and market presence along with tracking and conserving cash flow. At this stage the money sources are usually by personal funds, friends, family, suppliers, customers, grants, and banks.

Exit, according to Thierry-Janssen, is the final stage of an entrepreneurship and is considered the big opportunity to cash out on all the effort and years of hard work. On the other hand, it can also mean shutting down the company. To sell an enterprise requires a realistic valuation. It may have taken years of hard work to build the company, but what is its real value in the current market place is essential. At this stage a proper valuation on the company is essential and an insight at the enterprise operations, management and competitive barriers to make the company worth more to the buyer is important.

Entrepreneurship in Greece

In the years following the Greek economic crisis, entrepreneurship in Greece has emerged as a hot trend and a key lever for growth restoration and job creation (Endeavor Greece Report). The absence of career alternatives and the pursuit of national competitive advantages is outlined in a number of

reports by various local and international institutions, banks and consulting firms (for example the Endeavor Greece report, the GEM report 2012-2013) the growing need for new business opportunities and thus a shift towards entrepreneurship (Endeavor Greece Report). One of the most important sectors of the Greek start-up entrepreneurial landscape includes the ICT (Information & Communication Technology) sector, with high number of new ventures, geared towards mobile applications, demonstrating low revenues and a gradually growing number of new ventures in tourism and travel sectors, focused on digital travel services/experiences, hospitality management and online travel agencies. (Endeavor Greece Report)

According to the Washington-based Global Entrepreneurship and Development Institute (GEDI), Greece was placed 47th out of 130 countries, a jump of 12 positions - a 10% gain since 2013, which monitored 121 countries. In addition, Greece has 'reasonable strengths' in human capital, technology absorption but it lags in the general approach to entrepreneurship. It shows major bottlenecks in opportunity perception, risk acceptance, high growth aspirations and cultural support. However, the country's biggest problem, according to survey is its bureaucracy.

Bureaucracy and administrative hurdles, as Endeavor Greece's report mentions, had hindered businesses significantly and entrepreneurship had been associated with corruption and informality, resulting in young people to be encouraged to pursue either a salaried work or a 'high-profile' self-employment in law, medicine or engineering rather than high- impact entrepreneurship. Up to the point the economic crisis started, entrepreneurship was a rather unattractive career choice with bad connotations. During the crisis, the public perception of entrepreneurship changed and revealed or highlighted business opportunities. Despite the fact that some criticism and suspicion remained, especially for certain businesses and their occasional interdependency with the State, entrepreneurship has become a hot topic in Greece. (Endeavor Greece report)

Besides the focus on the country's past and the State's inability to effectively carry out reforms, international attention reinforced a positive inflow of international institutions related to entrepreneurship supplemented with multiple local organizations. A number of new local and international

institutions have been set-up to promote entrepreneurship and support entrepreneurs, whereas new local funds have been activated, while an increasing number of foreign funds are currently exploring opportunities to invest in capable Greek entrepreneurs. Several meetings, contests and awards were established bringing together start-uppers, introducing them to potential investors and provide funding. The new entrepreneurial landscape familiarized itself with terms like mentoring, networking and smart capital. The last years there is an increasing amount of start-ups working in the country and recruiting people from a range of professions (Endeavor Greece report).

Start-up strategy

The concept of strategy often used in business is dimly understood and large company strategy is not the same as start-up strategy. For large companies, the goal is to maximize return on shareholders' investment and arriving at that means making two fundamental strategic choices; choosing where to compete and deciding how to win the selected market. On the other hand a start-up has a different goal and therefore must make different strategic choices; new ventures face hurdles in trying to avoid perishing and they lack the cash to pay expenses and compensate their employees. Start-ups' fundamental strategic choices should take into account several decisions that can help boost a start-up's odds of success such as to pick goals, choose markets, select a team, obtain market share, respond to change. (Cohan, 2014).

Exit strategies

Exit strategies related to start-up funding are quite often misunderstood: The "exit" in exit strategy is for the money, not the start-up founders or small business owners. The company brings in money and the investors get money out. Start-ups looking for angel investors or venture capital (VC) need an exit strategy due to the fact investors require it. The exit is what gives them a return. The exit strategy related to start-up funding, is what happens when investors who had previously put money in a start-up get money back, usually years later, for a lot more money than they initially spent. (Berry). Given the limited literature on exit strategies, and the fact that there is no information concerning potential exit strategies for Greek start-ups (there is

only one exit example in Greece), the research took into consideration a more general category of entrepreneurial exit based on international literature and examples.

Exit strategies are defined in previous literature as a dichotomous outcome: founder exit and venture exit (Wennberg & Detienne, 2014). Founder exit consists on sale of his/her share on the venture. The decision to sell equity often consists on desiring to leave self-employment (Bates, 2005; Van Praag, 2003), willingness to pursue other developments (Toft-Kehler, Wennberg & Kim, 2014), passing of management to a family member (Cater & Justis, 2009) or retirement (Coad, 2013). A start-up may be sold to another firm, individual or in the public market through an Initial Public Offering. However, exit may also be involuntary as several start-ups turn to venture capitalists or business angels and are often subjected to structural management changes, which can push-out the founder (Wasserman, 2003). In this case, the start-up continues to exist after founder departure. Start-up exit consists on liquidation (Stam, Thurik & Zwan, 2007) or merger (Bayar & Chemmanur, 2011). Venture liquidation may be driven by financial distress leading to bankruptcy (Balcaen, Manigart & Ooghe, 2009) or by the founder exit and decision to liquidate the venture (McGrath, 2006) Founder exit doesn't necessarily mean start-up exit. Still, founder exit, at some point, is unavoidable. (Machado, 2014)

Researches employ large databases to distinguish between survival and different types of exits. In a large study of U.S. census information, Headd (2003) found that 50% of firms survived four years, 17% closed but were considered successful, and 33% closed and were considered unsuccessful. Wennberg et al. (2010) examined Swedish firms and found that both firms in financial distress and firms performing well exit from the market. Balcaen et al. (2012) examined 6118 distress-related exits in Belgium and found that 41% filed for bankruptcy, 44% liquidated voluntarily, and 14% were acquired. Other researchers have examined exit routes within venture capital (VC) investments. For example, Cumming (2008) examined 223 European VC investments and identified ongoing firms (16%), IPOs (14%), acquisitions (33%), buy-backs (8%), and write-offs (16%). (Dawn R. DeTienne, Alexander McKelvie, Gaylen N. Chandler, 2014)

At the table 1 (Dawn R. DeTienne, Alexander McKelvie, Gaylen N. Chandler, 2014) below the relative worldwide literature concerning the various types of exits the last 30 years is presented.

Authors	Sample	Exits/exit strategies examined	Findings
Ambrose (1983)	53 owners of business exits from 1976 to 1981 in Nebraska, USA	Family business succession liquidation	83% transferred to children/grandchildren 17% liquidated
Asterbo and Winter (2012)	376 distressed (Z-score less than .5) firms in 16 industries in the U.S.	Bankruptcy/liquidation Survival Acquisition	16% bankruptcy/liquidation 70% survived, 14% acquired
Balcaen et al. (2012)	6118 distress-related exits in Belgium	Bankruptcy Liquidation Merger & acquisition	41% bankruptcy, 44% voluntary liquidation, 14% M&A Bankruptcy, voluntary liquidation, and M&A are fundamentally distinct exit routes for distressed firms.
Bates (2005)	1425 firms entrants between 1989 and 1992 who had exited their business by 1996	Successful closures Unsuccessful closures	Among firms doing business in 1992, 36% had closed down by 1996; 38% of those were successful closures.
Birley and Westhead (1993)	10,348 business advertised for sale in the Financial Times between 1983 and 1989	5 exit routes: sale to a third, independent party; sale to another business; sale to management or emps, public quotations, and liquidation	Of those sold: private and advertised sales accounts for 72% of sales; 9% public listing; 5% merger; 14% MBO
Brown and Coverly (1999)	21 owners/managers in East Anglia, UK	Planning vs not planning for succession	38% have a succession plan (even an informal one). 62% do not have a succession plan.
Bruce and Picard (2006)	4311 Canadian Federation of	Exit and succession	41% intend to exit within 5 years, and 71% intend to exit within 10

<p>Cumming (2008)</p>	<p>Independent Business</p> <p>223 VC investments from 1996–2005 in 11 European countries</p>	<p>IPO Acquisition Buybacks Write-offs On-going entities</p>	<p>years. 28% have an informal exit strategy, and 7% have a formal exit strategy.</p> <p>32 IPOs, 74 acquisitions, 17 buybacks, 64 write-offs, 36 on-going</p> <p>Strong VC control rights (type of equity, right to replace CEO, majority board seats and voting, drag along rights, redemption, antidilution, % of ownership, lead investment value, prior rounds) associated with higher probability of acquisitions and lower probability of IPOs and write-offs</p> <p>IPO pos. related to education, acquisition pos. related to having an exit strategy, family succession neg. related to education, employee B/O pos. related to industry experience, independent sale neg. related to entrepreneur experience, liquidation neg. related to entrepreneur experience and pos. related to entrepreneur age</p>
<p>DeTienne and Cardon (2012)</p>	<p>189 U.S. firms in electronic measurements and surgical medical instruments</p>	<p>Exit strategy? Exit path—family member transfer, independent sale, acquisition, employee buyout, IPO, liquidation</p>	<p>Despairing perception of business (economic reasons) 38% Age of the manager 20% illness/injury 15% Diminished motivation 7% Bankruptcy 2%</p> <p>Total mortality: 10% of all firms. Insolvency 2.7% of all firms, Voluntary liquidation 7.4% of all firms For firms under 2 years old: Mortality 20.6% Insolvency 6.8%, voluntary liquidation 13.8%</p>
<p>Harada (2007)</p>	<p>1743 Japanese small business owners who had exited their firms in 2001 and 2002</p>	<p>Reasons for exits</p>	<p>Voluntary liquidation Insolvencies (forced liquidation)</p>
<p>Harhoff et al. (1998)</p>	<p>10,902 West German firms from all major sectors of the economy</p>	<p>Survived after 4 years Closed and successful</p>	<p>Survived after 4 years, 50%; closed and successful, 17%; closed and unsuccessful, 33%</p>
<p>Headd (2003)</p>	<p>Subset of 6 million new business starts from 1989 to 1992—Census</p>	<p>Survived after 4 years Closed and successful</p>	<p>Survived after 4 years, 50%; closed and successful, 17%; closed and unsuccessful, 33%</p>

		Closed and unsuccessful	
Hessels et al. (2011)	350,000 observations from 24 countries from 2004–2006 who participated in the GEM	Entrepreneurial exit and entrepreneurial engagement	Entrepreneurial exit increases the likelihood of engagement after the exit.
Kearney (2008)	Australian small business owners	Exit strategy	47% have an exit strategy. Of the 53% without a strategy, 22% plan to walk away. Firm characteristics contribute to decision of IPO vs acquisition.
Poulsen and Stegemoller (2008)	1074 IPOS and 735 acquisitions from 1995 to 2004	IPO / Acquisition	IPO tend to have higher growth, higher valuation ratios, face greater capital constraints, few intangible assets, and more likely to be headed by VC investors.
Ryan and Powers (2012)	236 owner–managers of small firms in Ireland and Scotland	Owner–manager exit strategy Family succession Sales (includes trade sales, other sales, management buy-out) and shutdown	Ireland (Scotland) Family succession 35% (22%) Sales 49% (66%) Shutdown 16% (12%)
Schary (1991)	The cotton textile industry, 1924–1940 61 firms	Merger Voluntary liquidation Bankruptcy	Of the 61 firms in operation in 1924, 43 exited by 1940. 14 (33%) acquired/merged; 16 (37%) exited voluntarily; 13 (30%) filed bankruptcy
Wennberg et al. (2010)	1735 new ventures and their founders	Entrepreneurial exit Liquidation and firm sale for both firms in financial distress and those performing well	Entrepreneurs exit from both firms in financial distress (distress liquidation, distress sale) and firms that are performing well (harvest liquidation, harvest sale).

**Zellweger and
Astrachan
(2008)**

Investigation of family
firms

Sale of
ownership stake

The likelihood of a sale of
ownership stake is negatively
related to emotional value—the
difference between financial payout
and the price the owner is willing to
accept.

Exit can have substantial financial implications. For example, in 2012, private worldwide middle-market exits (i.e., those between \$2 million and \$500 million) reached \$858 billion (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2013; Thomson Reuters, 2013). In addition, the development of an exit strategy is becoming more important for several economic reasons, including a latent supply of businesses coming into the market over the next several years (BizBuySell Insight Reports, 2013). In this competitive market, developing an exit strategy will be critical as it will allow founders to evaluate their personal goals and objectives and set a direction to achieve their desired exit. (Dawn R. DeTienne, Alexander McKelvie, Gaylen N. Chandler, 2014)

In terms of defining the exit, valuation of the business should be known and many factors go into a market valuation of it. Sales/income trends, industry dynamics, the overall market interest for business sales, the financing market interest, how can the business be grown, if the business even saleable. Many people are extremely good at building a business; but far less experienced in knowing how to maximize the value of what they have built. (Slovacek Marvin, 2014)

According to a white paper issued by Bank of America and Merrill Lynch in 2013 there are several factors that should be considered before exit no matter what type of exit strategy a business chooses. These include: Determining what type of buyer(s) will be best suited to purchase the business. Owners should consider whether it makes more financial sense to sell to a public company or a privately owned company, McBean (2012). They should also think about what qualities the buyer or successor would need to have in order to keep the business going forward. Getting input from other owners who have sold a business and determining whom else will need to consult (lawyers, accountants, etc.) to get advice on the buy-sell contract and tax issues. Determining how much money is needed or wanted to exit with,

then comparing that to how much profit the company needs to consistently generate, plus the outright value of its assets. Giving company enough time (years) to reach those profit goals. Careful consideration of what the business's "end game" will look like improves the odds of getting there, it is also important that owners ask themselves what their next step will be.

According to Peters (2012) timeline of an exit is important. There are several procedures before the exit but usually it may take 6 to 18 months. His diagrammatic time schedule includes several parts. The first part includes the period before talking to buyers with procedures such as building alignment around exit strategy, record the financial history of the start-up, creating sales collateral, cleaning up the corporate structure and preparing for due diligence. This usually takes 1 to 5 months. The second part includes building of the sales funnel, which takes 2 to 6 months by searching for prospects that match, developing tactics on strategic value, contacting and negotiating with potential buyers. At part three the bidding process takes place, which usually lasts from, 2 to 4 with negotiations and buyers selections and finally the negotiating and closing part lasting from 1 to 3 months with signed agreements and board – shareholders-regulators approvals.

Factors for exit route and start-uppers characteristics

The optimal exit route for start-ups depends on multiple factors, such as the expected profitability of the venture, the level of uncertainty, the asymmetry of information between the insiders and outsiders (e.g., potential buyers and new investors), the possible conflicts of interest among insiders, the financial market conditions at the time of the exit, and the characteristics of the venture capitalists. Some of these factors are affected by the partners' investment and duration decisions. Understanding the main trade-offs faced by start-ups at the exit stage is crucial because this understanding not only allows one to determine how venture capitalists and entrepreneurs divest their companies but also affects the decisions taken at the onset of the venture. (Bing Guo, Yun Lou, and David Perez-Castrillo)

Founder characteristics also affect firm survival and exit strategies. Founders with more education and experience tend to be more successful because they are exposed to a greater amount of opportunities, conversely

amplifying their performance threshold and the costs of continuing at the current venture, as their opportunity cost is higher for the choice of continuing. Pre-entry knowledge of the business activity and pre-entry management experience are important determinants for survival (Dencker, Gruber & Shah, 2009). Likewise, the models of Jovanovic (1982); Lippman & Rumelt (1982) and Erickson, (1998) imply that entrepreneurs will only get knowledge on business creation, going through the process and they will analyse the performance as an indicator of success, subsequently deciding to stay or abandon the business (Stam, 2006). More specifically, small entrants face higher costs that are more likely to push them out (Lotti & Santarelli, 2004) and also experience a lower level of knowledge on their efficiency and cost structure. Personal characteristics such as lack of passion (Bird, 1988), optimism (Puri & Robinson, 2005) and a positive attitude towards work effort (Douglas & Shepherd, 2000) usually lead to firm failure. Founder characteristics such as gender, age and education along with start-up characteristics such as size of the venture (number of employees and establishments) and the size of the founding team significantly affect the exit strategy. (Machado, 2014)

It is believed that small acquisition targets are generally more successful than large targets (Ravenscraft and Scherer, 1987). This suggests that young, entrepreneurial firms may have more alternatives and greater discretion during an acquisition than do the larger targets that are often studied.

Summing up

Taking all the above into consideration, this dissertation will focus on potential exit strategies of start-ups in Greek environment. The types of exits Greek start-ups are considering and the time they are aiming to do that will be discussed. Furthermore, the importance of the start-up's value in the exit strategy and the procedures towards increasing it will be investigated including the importance of the role investors play in the exit procedure. Characteristics such as gender, education, age and size of teams will be discussed in terms of the effect they have in a potential exit strategy. Moreover, the research will try to point out the differences between start-ups

that are heading towards exits and the ones that are not interesting in any kind of exit.

This research is aiming to discover possible patterns and strategies developed by Greek start-ups in relation to potential exits. The research is trying to depict the Greek environment in terms of procedures towards potential exits of the start-ups and gather information since there are no developed researches on this field in Greece. The research is taking into account the worldwide literature and tries to recognize relative patterns within the Greek environment. It may be considered as an initial effort to depict the Greek start-up ecosystem and its relation with potential exits and may become an initial guide for entrepreneurs in Greece who are thinking of an exit in the future.

Methodology

The methodology followed in this research includes data collection from managers running start-ups in several states (exit, about to exit, recently established start-up). Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire and interviews to selected start-ups while secondary data were collected through personal research at start-ups (websites, articles written for the start-ups).

At the first part, a questionnaire that includes 28 questions was sent to several start-ups in Greece. The research is a multiple-case, inductive study involving results from 13 entrepreneurial start-ups firms.

The Questions were referring to several fields concerning various parts of start-ups' strategy and the direction they are working if exit was in their minds. The questions were referring to the fields below:

1. Strategy plan of start-ups
2. Exit strategy and implementation
3. Consistency to start-up's initial plan
4. Presentation of the key points of their initial and current strategy
5. Business plan
6. Hurdles that have faced concerning their strategy

7. Whether or not start-ups faced difficulties in starting their venture within the Greek environment
8. Personal and team's goals of start-uppers
9. Number of employees involved in the start-up and future plans of recruiting
10. Whether or not are considering alternatives to acquisition
11. Whether or not they have ever thought of potential buyers and investors
12. If they are taking part to entrepreneurial meeting in Greece or abroad and the reasons they are joining them
13. Where their funding is coming from
14. If they are financial sustainable
15. If they have any competitors in the market
16. Where the start-up is established
17. The start-ups' estimated value
18. The quality of services they offer

At the second part of the research, interviews with selective start-ups from early to more mature state took place. Due to the small size of the questionnaire's sample and in order to gain a more in depth overview of the start-ups, interviews were also included in the research. The interviews were taken from the CEOs or the CTOs of the companies. The discussion with the start-uppers concerned the key points of their general strategy, their time schedule, their collaboration strategy, their branding strategy, any patents they may have applied for, the start-up team, the recruitment strategy and process, the exit strategy, the fundraising strategy, the Marketing strategy and establishment in the Market, the Financial Strategy and their start-ups' Goals. The four start-ups interviewed have different approach in their strategy, although they faced same difficulties in establishing their companies in Greece, since they have different background and they are in different states.

Sample characteristics

17 start-ups, established the last 4 years, took part in the research from several industries: services, social media, fleet management, and tourism. Some of the start-ups are Greek, established abroad and operate in Greece

through their subsidiaries. These start-ups have entrepreneurial activity in Greece and abroad but they differ along key dimensions such as structure, sales, distribution channels and customer characteristics (such as age, educational background, nationality).

The research

During the research there was a significant difficulty in approaching start-ups. Start-ups that took part at the research were approached through their websites, personal relationships with start-uppers, or through organizations that support entrepreneurship such as Open Coffee Greece, Open Fund or Metavallon Connect. There was an effort for a variety of start-ups at various states to be found. The start-ups were approached via emails and phone calls. Interviews took place through Skype, while Qualtrics, an online survey software, was used to create the questionnaire that was sent via email to the start-uppers.

Unfortunately, the method followed in this report in order to acquire data has limitations. During the research part, there was a significant difficulty in collecting data. Start-uppers were not very keen in disclosing information. Moreover, some of them were unwilling to take part in this procedure due to their very busy schedule. Due to that, 13 out of 40 start-ups replied the questionnaire and four out of six start-ups were interested in taking part in the interviews. In addition, many start-ups claimed that they could not spend any time on questionnaires, while there was a big number of start-ups that never replied back to the emails.

The analysis and discussion of the report is limited to the answers of 13 start-ups and four interviews with start-uppers. The research would have been more complete if the sample was larger and the analysis of the questionnaire would have given more accurate conclusions for the potential exits strategies of start-ups, the start-up environment in Greece and start-uppers characteristics.

Data analysis

As far as the first part of the research is concerned, 13 start-ups took part in the questionnaire. The companies are presented below and they are

from various industries (such as tourism, social media and services) and various states (from early to more mature):

- Brainbox Technology - EasyBike.gr
- zoottle.com
- Incrediblue
- Rocketgraph
- Decopsis
- Wover
- Tutorizoncom
- Giftme
- Pinnatta
- Bugsence
- <http://www.brainbox.gr/>
- Two remained anonymous

Despite the fact that the majority of the start-ups (apart from one) had a strategic plan for their start-ups only six of them had taken into consideration an exit scenario. The rest of the start-ups did not take into consideration such scenario and some of them were unwilling to consider it in the future. Most of the start-ups have a business plan that was developed eventually and adapted according to circumstances. All start-ups have the intention of expanding around the world and grow out of the borders of Greece. The “think big” concept that affects their strategy was depicted in their answers given at the questionnaire. For example Easybike.gr is interested in developing the service in several Greek cities but also is looking for ways to develop in cities abroad.

To begin with, the majority of the start-uppers have graduated from universities, and in most cases they hold a masters degree from reputed universities around the world. Due to the fact that before sending the questionnaire there was a short phone discussion with them, it was very clear that all of them were very well informed of the market and what other Greek start-ups are currently working on.

An interesting information gathered from the survey concerns the places start-ups where established. Half of the start-ups where established

abroad and half established in Greece. Majority of the start-ups established abroad had chosen USA to start their ventures and have created a subsidiary company to operate in Greece. This trend is due to several reasons such as:

- USA has well established and friendly framework for start-ups
- Startups are seeking Venture Capitalists from USA due to the fact that they have bigger volumes of funds
- The main market that start-ups are about to exploit is in USA

The majority of the start-ups have shown adaptability through time as far as their general strategy is concerned. Since start-ups are live organizations illustrating adaptability is sign of progress. The alternations mainly concern their expansion strategy, collaborations and alterations of services from customer-oriented services to include services for businesses. In addition, some of the start-ups have attracted global investors, resulting in increasing start-ups' value and quality of services offered, and some of them have claimed that it was that moment that made them considering (pivot) a potential exit in the future.

Interesting information was gathered concerning the difficulty to start and operate a start-up within the Greek environment. All start-ups claimed difficulties in doing so and most of them are facing hurdles for proceeding to an acquired scenario. Most of the start-ups claimed the Political uncertainty that exists in the country and the unstable taxation system affect their start-ups operation. The greatest hurdle all start-ups faced was the bureaucracy. Other factors that affect start-up activity in Greece include the Greek mind-set and the general working environment while start-uppers tend to believe that less important role in their start-up's operation play the banking system, the corruption and the administrative hurdles.

While collecting data about the goals of the start-up as a team and the CEOs and founders goals, the research led to an interesting conclusion. Founders' goals and teams' goals where similar. This illustrates a good collaboration spirit within the start-ups. Some of the similar goals that were referred by CEOs include an exit and the team to work for the new owner, expand operations, and provide best service or product.

As far as the employees of the start-ups are concerned, most of the start-ups are recruiting maximum 20-29 people. In the years of the recession start-ups played an important role against unemployment since several positions were created due to the fact that several start-ups started their operations in Greece and they needed staff for several positions. Most of the start-ups claimed that they are willing to recruit more people in the near future. Another point worth mentioning is that all of the founders are men. None of the founding teams include women.

As far as the exit process is concerned, only 5 out of 13 start-ups had clear vision of having an exit, probably an acquisition exit. While some have claimed that they will run the start-up themselves without any intention of collaborating with anyone and some others were more open to partnership to support their service/product when the start-up is unable to do it by itself. One start-up has shown interest in IPO exit in the future when the start-up reaches the goals the team has set. Goals usually include attracting investors and global expansion, which will increase the value of the company in terms of financial sustainability and recognition.

Funding was something that start-ups have been worried and worked a lot with. Half of the start-ups are looking for investors not only in Greece but also globally by attending events around the world. Most of start-ups are using various ways of funding from Venture Capital, to family and friends or self-funded especially in their early stages. Despite that, very few of them are financially sustainable at the moment and their expenses are covered by money raised through funding. Raising funding adds value to the company, since it gives the opportunity for further development, although start-ups usually have to give up part of their ownership to the investors who fund it. Not all of the questioned start-ups were willing to disclose information about their current value, since value is important when we are referring to exits according to the literature. 3 out of 13 start-ups claimed that their current valuation is below 100.000\$ while 6 claimed that it is above 1.000.001\$. 3 start-ups were unwilling to disclose information about their valuation.

All start-ups have shown great interest in taking part in meetings, contests and events in Greece and abroad. Several of the start-ups claimed that they have no interest in events taking place in Greece since they do not

provide same potentials as the meeting abroad while most of them have already attended several of them. There are several reasons for attending these events and contests (recognition, connections, approach potential investors) and start-uppers claimed that these meetings are a way to gain recognition and connections and also meet potential investors and raise funding.

After the questionnaire analysis, four interviews took place. CEOs and CTOs from Wover, Pinnatta, Giftme and Zeus were interviewed. According to them the following data were collected:

Wover (Health services application)

WOVER is a smartphone application that watches over your well being and helps you stay safe by informing via messages your contacts when you are in an emergency - for example involved in an accident. Wover is targeting a prototype exponential growth of users based data. The team's model to gain users is based on the fermium model (such as Evernote) and they assume that it will be able to succeed growth pattern by combining the network effects from the free users (getting their acquaintances to join in order to strengthen their safety network and get free usage time) and direct user acquisition (through targeted ads). Wover is in demo version at the moment. The start-up was established in Delaware in 2014, USA but it is operating in Greece through a subsidiary based in Athens. As the team has claimed, this is due to the fact that venture capitalists from USA are keener and feel more protective to invest in a company established in USA compared to other countries such as Greece.

The Key points of general strategy is to build a product that would fit to the market needs, select the best partners to leverage the product and expand into the market. There is a priority in Wover's strategy to select the initial target group of early adopters in order to spread the word and create product policies. According to Wover's timeline during the first 6 months (it is the current period) there will be a product establishment and then an effort to attract free users and turn them into premium in order for the start-up to have income (this is the main goal). There is an intention for collaboration with a partner that creates vital signs sensors and organizations that have a lot of volunteers that would be willing to be monitored in order to add features to the

product and increase its importance and its value. Important role for the Wover team played the branding strategy, with their main goal to create a recognizable and rememberable logo and brand. Moreover, the founding team has already applied for a patent from the United States Patent and Trademark Office to protect the product – add extra value to the product. The team is consisted of 4 male members and they are about to recruit a marketing person. Currently they are trying to raise money through funding by investors in order to start their operation and production of the application. They are approaching investors in USA, Greece and Switzerland and they take part in various events with a focus in the USA start-up events. The Wover team was one of the few start-ups that had a clear view towards exit and their intention is to succeed this through an IPO when the time comes. They believe that IPO is the exit they would like to follow in the future due to the fact that they feel they will have more profit-return than any other type of exit. Since they are in a very early stage yet they have not a clear idea of how this is going to happen although their initial strategy is evolved based on this concept as they have claimed; finding investors, gaining recognition, become popular and raise their value as much as they can and building the product based on USA market's standards.

Pinnatta (Social media application)

Pinnatta is the world's first interactive messenger that operates on smartphones. It is a way of exchanging unique interactive greeting cards and messages with friends. User can select the Pinnatta he/she likes, personalize it by adding his/her own text, voice or photo and send it through the application as a message. Pinnatta came from the American word Pinnatta the container often made of papier-mâché, pottery, or cloth that is decorated, and filled with small toys or candy, or both, and then broken as part of a ceremony or celebration. That describes the general concept of Pinnatta. Sending a message - a surprise as a gift. The name is easy spelled, and popular to USA and America where more of the start-up's customers are located.

"Pinnatta everywhere" is the name the team has given to the new strategy and it is a pivot to the initial strategy that was just a stand-alone applications. The start-up is aiming to incorporate the service in other

messengers (such as whatsapp, tango, Viber, Facebook etc) become global and increases its recognition around the world. Pinnatta has several investors from around the globe (from Russia, USA, Japan) and despite the few earning from the premium Pinnattas its main financial source is the investors. Since Pinnatta is aiming an exit through an acquisition by one of its current stakeholders, the next 18 months, as the team has claimed, this will give the start-up further recognition around the globe, make its current investors more satisfied and bring the exit goal closer. Pinnatta was established in USA but it operates in Greece through a subsidiary (Pinnatta Incorporation). The team is currently consisted of 25 people (18 male and 7 female) including the founders (all male), all in senior level, and the needs keep growing since the investors are tightening the schedule and are becoming more demanding as acquisition is approaching. There is a well-organized exit strategy at the moment; and investors are setting their own goals (updates of the application in order to further improve service, market expansions in countries such as Japan, and Saudi Arabia, succeed agreements with more providers) in order to increase the value of the company and ultimately their return after the exit. The team is willing to be acquired in the following 18 months at a price of 60 million dollars but before reaching that point they are about to enter a B series funding. Moreover in the end of 2014 Pinnatta announced 1.2 million dollars funding for 2015.

Zeus (Fleet Management System & Call)

The Wide SD has developed a set of specialized telematics applications for taxi in order to ensure effective fleet and call management, contact the center with vehicles, maximum safety to the driver, modern customer communication. Zeus is an innovative fleet management system and phones developed by Wide Company, using the latest technology. The leadership, reliability and friendliness of the system are the main axes of its development. Zeus ensures immediate customer service, efficient operation of the taxi, while contributing significantly to the increase in revenue.

Zeus is a two years old platform who is interested in expanding abroad. The Greek company is too small and there are no other potentials for further development in Greece as the team claimed due to the fact that Greece is a very small market. The target is to develop in European countries (such as

Germany, France, UK) in the following two years starting from Germany in the next six months. The start-up is considering collaboration with taxi's association in order to promote the service. There is already collaboration with Greek taxi's association and they are looking for similar associations abroad. The team is consisted of two people (male) and is not very keen in collaboration with other people in order to develop the product. Although, they are thinking of recruiting a part timer in marketing and social media due to the amount of work that needs to be done and their lack of knowledge in this sector. Despite their unwillingness to collaborate, they have started realizing the need to develop collaborations abroad in order to establish their product. Unfortunately there is no branding strategy and no plans for development in the future. No exit is included in the strategy at the moment, due to the fact that the team was established by a founder who is unwilling to let his own business. On the other hand, Zeus is in need of money due to the fact that it is currently self-funded and those funds are not able to provide financial sustainability to the start-up. They are currently looking for angel investors or Venture Capitalists to develop the service abroad without having a clear view of what these investors will ask in return and what they are able to give back.

Giftme (Services application)

Giftme is a recently established start-up, and it is the start-up that is in the earlier stage of all the start-ups that took part in the survey. It is a crowd-funding platform for personal gifts. Giftme's strategy is focused on expanding local and global and adding value to customers. During the first year the team is aiming to expand in several countries targeting UK, Australia, and USA, Germany. The team consists of 3 people (male), and every time a need occurs they recruit whoever is needed to complete the task. Giftme is trying to establish collaboration with services such as Amazon and other online services that will give customers the opportunity to select gifts from a big variety and use Facebook, Twitter and other social media to give the opportunity to customers publish their gift campaign through them. It is a newly established venture and there is no branding strategy. The start-up has no plan for an exit and it is operating for owners' benefit while its current value is very low. Despite that, Giftme is in need of money - it is currently self-

funded by the two founders- and takes part in start-up competitions in Greece in order to acquire recognition, connections and possibly investors.

Results

Few of the start-ups (both from questionnaire and interviews) have an exit process in their minds. Start-ups' value is either still developing or is not big enough, which makes the profit due to exit low or zero. An IPO is Wover's intention when the start-up is ready while Pinnatta is aiming for an acquisition exit after 18 months and after having the B series funding and expanding in several countries. Incrediblue is still developing its start-up trying to gain recognition and attract more investors and further develop the service to increase the value of the company, which leads to the conclusion that an exit may be in their minds if it happens but it is not the main goal of the start-up. The case of Bugsense on the other hand, a start-up acquired by Splunk (a company that provides software for real-time operational intelligence) a year ago, is the only case of exit in Greece at the moment. Not too much information has been disclosed by the start-up and less is known about the strategy before exit and the estimated price.

As far as the rest of the start-ups are concerned, start-ups that are not wishing an exit, they develop products or services based on the needs of local market. Usually they are self-funded, but even if they are funded, funds are low and coming from local investors, family and friends and local banks. Those start-ups have lower expectations as far as their future plans are concerned, their current value is not high and they usually consist of smaller teams.

Discussion

By observing the entrepreneurial environment in Greece, one can realize that there is a flourishing start-up environment in the country playing a key role for the economy. According to the findings of the research the start-ups are divided into two categories: The start-ups that have a strategy towards exit (any exit pattern) and the start-ups that are not aiming towards it, which is the majority of the start-ups. Most of the Greek start-ups are in early state either still seeding (initial face, as defined by Thierry-Janssen) or trying

to be established or expand. Exit seems either a very distant target for them or unnecessary since some of these start-ups are aiming to be kept by their owners forever.

Start-ups are established and operate according to strategies that differ from one to another. Several patterns affecting the potential exit strategy have been identified by the research and several characteristics of start-uppers have been identified for start-ups that are thinking potential exits and start-ups that not interested in any type of exit. Patterns concern the strategy those start-ups are developing, the funding they have gained through investors and their founders' and teams' characteristics.

Despite the differences of those two categories there are some common characteristics as far as teams and start-ups are concerned. All the founding members of the start-ups were men with higher education. No woman was found in any of the founding teams. Despite that, there is women's presence in start-ups in roles such as graphic designers, secretaries, accountants etc. All founders are young entrepreneurs and their age vary from 20 to 35 years. Another interesting finding about the characteristics is that founders founded the majority of the start-ups as a mean to fight their unemployment, which is a trend in the country according to researches for the start-up activity (Endeavor Greece or GEDI).

Start-up teams faced or still facing difficulties in dealing with the Greek state, and all of them stated that they are trying to adapt their strategies in the Greek environment. Both start-ups categories are affected by the current financial situation in Greece, and despite the difficulties they are all facing due to bureaucracy and the unfriendly environment they are all insisting in working in Greece. What they have all also claimed, is that they have taken part in start-up meetings in Greece, especially in their very early states in order to gain recognition, approach potential investors even if their targeting market was not in Greece.

As far as the start-ups that are not aiming towards an exit are concerned, the following patterns have been identified. To begin with, these start-ups would like to operate the start-ups themselves and usually they are recruiting people, usually as part-timers, only when a need occurs. They are not investing in developing core teams, in order to maximize quality of

services and increase income and value of the company. Usually, these start-ups are aiming to the local market while some of them are thinking of expanding abroad. These start-ups are not planning to create any subsidiary at the targeting market, but they are looking for possible partners in order to fulfil the “gaps” they cannot cover themselves. Those start-ups are not worried about branding strategies and start-up’s name-logo which in some cases is a random and unconnected to the character of the company’s services or products. Those start-ups are mainly self-funded. This means that the value of the company is not high and as conscience start-up is not a potential investment for investors anyway.

As far as their founders’ characteristics are concerned, they tend to believe that the start-up is their own “kid” and have no intention of considering an acquisition or any other kind of exit. Founders are usually not open to discussions or new ideas and they hardly believe that there maybe someone who can do something better than them. Usually those start-ups are consisted of one founder or very small teams (less than three people). While recruiting people they are demanding but their main interest is to cover the needs occur. The results of this strategy in the future are unclear at the moment since most of the start-ups are newly established (less than four years old). According to the Headd in USA a great percentage of companies did not survive after the fourth year (33% closed and were considered unsuccessful) but in Greece it is still very early to obtain conclusion about start-ups that are shutting down, at least there are not recorded data yet.

On the other hand, the start-ups that are aiming towards an exit in the future are following patterns that will help them increase start-up’s value not only in terms of economic growth but in terms of global recognition as well. Patterns such as:

- A very clear view of their strategy and the start-ups’ goals. A potential exit is included in the strategy even if start-ups are in an early stage and there is familiarity with potential buyers.
- The establishment of the companies’ abroad, mainly in USA, and operating their subsidiaries from Greece. This fact give’s the opportunity to the teams to expand globally and approach global

investors with more money in order to raise the start-ups' value and make the potential exit more profitable.

- Start-ups are attending several meetings both local (especially in the very early stage) and international with an emphasis at the international meetings giving them the opportunity to connect with global players (investors, partners).
- They are aiming to attract, or they have already attracted several investors around the globe (Americans, Russians, Japanese, Chinese, British) that provide them with capital.
- They were working towards the increase of the value of the company through funding consequently, and they are fully aware of the importance of increasing it as the white paper issued by Bank of America and Merrill Lynch mentions.
- Improving the services they offer, recruiting the best of the best people for providing the best and innovative quality of products or services and thus increasing start-ups value
- Establishing collaborations with several distributors-people-companies around the world aiming to have bigger recognition
- Access to bigger markets and investors give start-ups the opportunity to succeed in greater amount of inflows as far as sales and investments are concerned raising start-up's value.
- Building strategy and models based on global patterns such as freemium (Wover's development is based on this model)
- Carefully selected names and a big emphasis on their branding strategy
- International mentality of the team and its global investors play an important role that drives the strategy process following their time schedule
- Awareness of start-ups' value, and efforts to increase it. Knowing the value of the start-up is the starting point to work on the exit strategy. Since value is what investors are interested in, in order to have a return after an exit, start-ups are aware of it in every stage and aiming to increase it. Moreover a high value will

be beneficial for founders also since it will give them a higher profit in case of an exit since exit strategies are defined as a dichotomous outcome: founder exit and venture exit according to Wennberg and Detienne.

- Recruiting business consultants in order to have feedback of the procedures they need to follow in order to succeed their goals.

As far as founders' characteristics are concerned - since according to Machado they affect firm survival and exit strategies - they are engineer highly skilled extrovert young entrepreneurs and very informed about new technologies and market conditions. In most cases the core team (most of the times it is the founding team) has higher studies in engineering or business and holds master degrees from reputable universities around the world such as MIT, UCL, Stanford and others. Those start-ups founders are usually teams (4-7) from various backgrounds that work together towards their targets. As recruiting new people, international studies, global mentality and team player skills play important role for the potential candidates.

Two different strategy patterns are clearly identified that differ a lot from one to another. Despite the fact that all start-ups have different strategies several common patterns have been identified. Unfortunately it is very early for the Greek start-up environment to have a clear view for any kind of exit patterns, with only one company having been acquired by an International company and very few of the start-ups working towards an exit direction. It is very early to mention the bankruptcy, merge or liquidation type of exit since all start-ups are at a very early stage.

The interesting finding emerged by this research is that none of the start-ups have immediate exit strategy. According to the literature there is a specific amount of time needed for an exit to occur and this varies from 6-18 months since the decision is taken. Moreover there is a great possibility that start-ups are not valued as high as investors' aims for profit and that is why they need more time to increase value and recognition.

Conclusion, Limitations, Recommendation and Implications

Taking all the above into consideration, this research has provided findings concerning strategy patterns of the Greek start-ups and their founders' characteristics that they are heading towards various kind of exits and patterns of start-ups that are not planning exits. Common patterns for each category have emerged with start-ups planning an exit to have a more global development of their strategy in order to increase value and in a potential exit the returns while the rest focused in the local markets. Founders of those start-ups are usually teams of several well-educated individuals (males), open-minded with focus on what they are working and oriented towards global markets. In addition the exit intentions include specific exit categories as distinguished according to Machado such as acquisition or IPO.

This research method has several limitations. Despite the fact that the data gathered by the questionnaire and the interviews have provided the researcher with several information the number of the start-ups that took part in the research is small and therefore the view to the start-up environment is not overall. Because of the limitations of this research and the very early state of all the Greek start-ups, further research and investigation is needed to better understand the paths to exit. In the years following more information would be possible to be gathered for exit strategies and possibly a couple of exits may occur therefore a clearer view of how the Greek start-ups system organises its strategy towards this direction may be identified. The dissertation is depicting an initial view of some of the start-ups currently operating in Greece that are targeting exits and how those start-ups strategy differs from the start-ups that are not aiming towards it. Since the start-up environment, and especially the technology oriented start-up environment is still developing further research should take place in the near future with larger sample in order to gain more in depth knowledge of the Greek start-up ecosystem and its exit intentions.

Implications

Although there are few start-ups having or organising their strategy towards an exit, there are specific types of exit that start-uppers have in their minds. IPO type of exit, acquisition, partnership or affiliation are the types of

exists the exit oriented start-ups are targeting while there are no immediate exit (the following 6 months) at the moment since start-ups are growing and gaining value through fundraising, developing the provided service and expanding globally.

Despite all the limitation and the fact “Exits are the least understood part of investing and entrepreneurship” as Peters refers, this dissertation depicts the trends; the patterns and the characteristics of founders of the path exit-oriented start-ups are following. It may be considered as an initial effort to present the trends in the Greek start-up environment towards potential exits. Since there are not too many studies in Greece concerning this subject, due to the very early state most of the start-ups are and the fact that there are not many exit examples (only one happened in Greece) this research may play the initial guide for entrepreneurs towards an exit. This effort to find out, and record patterns that may lead to exit may be considered as an initial study of how exits work in Greece. The start-up environment in the country (not only the technology start-up environment) is constantly growing the last years and in the near future several exits may occur following some of the already recorded patterns and characteristics.

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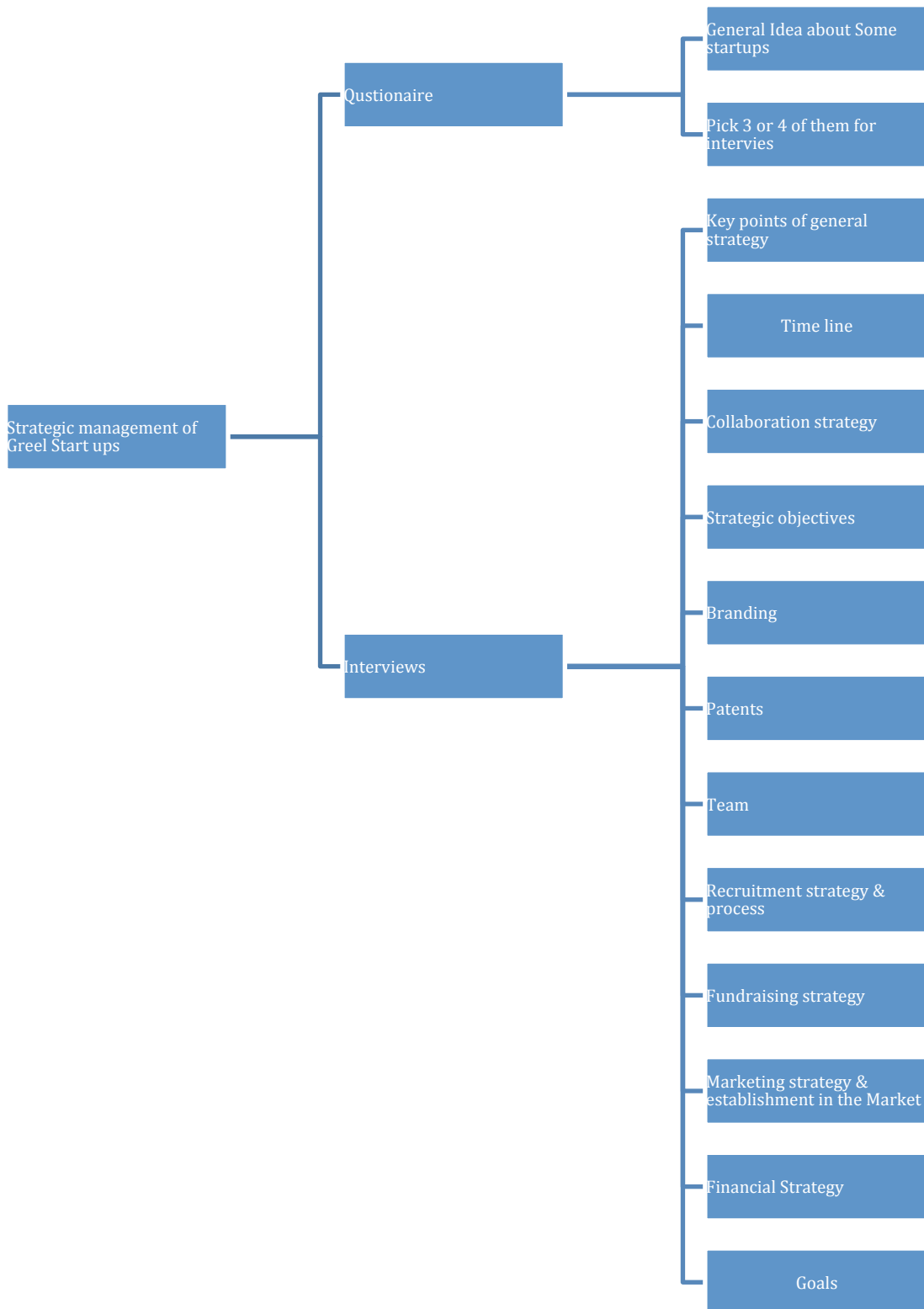
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Appendices

Diagrammatic approach of the research methodology



Questionnaire

09/03/2015

Qualtrics Survey Software

Default Question Block

Thank you for sharing your start-up's feedback. All information is private and confidential and will be used as part of an MBA dissertation taking place at International Hellenic University. The dissertation is supervised by Prof. Vangelis Soultaris.

Was there a strategic plan when your start-up started operating?

- Yes
- No

If yes, was there any "exit" scenario?

- Yes
- No
- Did not take it into consideration

How consistent to the initial strategic plan you remained?



Can you present the key points of your initial strategy?

Can you present the key points of your current strategy?

Is there a business plan at your start-up?

- Yes
- No

Where there any hurdles concerning your start-up that make the exit difficult?

- Definitely yes
- Probably yes
- Probably not

<https://az1.qualtrics.com/ControlPanel/Ajax.php?action=GetSurveyPrintPreview&T=1PTL0qYpCkHWYbbDL5yy2>

1/5

Definitely not

How hard you think it is to start you start-up and run your start-up in Greece?

- Very Difficult
 Difficult
 Somewhat Difficult
 Neutral
 Somewhat Easy
 Easy
 Very Easy

Can you validate how they affect your start-up's strategy the factors described below?

	None	Little	Some	A Lot
Bureaucracy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Taxing system	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Political situation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
General working environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mindset	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Administrative hurdles	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Corruption	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Banking system	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What are your personal goals concerning your start-up?

What are the team's goals concerning the start-up?

How many employees are currently working at your start-up?

- Less than 5
 5 - 9
 10 - 19
 20 - 29
 30 - 39
 40-49
 50 or more

Are you planning to recruit more people?

- Yes
 Maybe
 No

Are you aiming to be acquired?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

What alternatives to acquisition are you considering?

What potential buyers/targets did you consider, and what kind of interaction did you have with them?

Are you looking for an investor?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

Are you taking part in any of the entrepreneurship meetings/events happening in Greece?

- Yes
- Not interested in Greek meetings
- No
- If yes, please state which ones have/will attend

Are you taking part in any of the entrepreneurship meetings/events happening around the world?

- Yes
- If yes, please state which ones have/will attend
- No

If you attend any of the meetings/events taking place in Greece or abroad can you name the reasons you are doing so?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Always
Gain recognition	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Raise funding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Connections	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reach possible companies acquired my start-up	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Find collaborators	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Through which ways are you raising capital?

	multiple choice Answer
FAMILY & FRIENDS	<input type="checkbox"/>
ANGEL INVESTOR	<input type="checkbox"/>
VENTURE CAPITAL FUNDS	<input type="checkbox"/>
AFTER CONFERENCES ATTENDANCE AND RANDOMLY MEETINGS WITH FINANCIERS	<input type="checkbox"/>
SELF-FUNDED	<input type="checkbox"/>
OTHER	<input type="checkbox"/>

How financial sustainable is currently your start-up?

Not sustainable											Sustainable
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	

Do you think there are competitors that may be preferred by investors instead of you?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No
- If yes, explain their competitive advantage

Where is your start-up established?

What was your company's recent valuation?

- Not answering
- < \$100,000
- \$100,000 - \$199,999
- \$200,000 - \$299,999
- \$300,000 - \$399,999
- \$400,000 - 499,999
- \$500,000 - \$599,999
- \$600,000 - \$1,000,000
- \$1,000,001 or more

Please tell us about the quality of the services. Please use a scale of 1 to 9, where 9 represents outstanding or extraordinary, 5 represents quite acceptable, and 1 represents unacceptable or poor.

09/03/2015

Qualtrics Survey Software

1 Unacceptable Quality	2	3	4	5 Quite Acceptable Quality	6	7	8	9 Outstanding Extraordinary Quality
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Thank you for participating! Please leave your contact information.

Name	<input type="text"/>
Phone Number	<input type="text"/>
Email Address	<input type="text"/>
Start up	<input type="text"/>

Questionnaire's findings

Initial Report

Last Modified: 12/11/2014

1. Was there a strategic plan when your start-up started operating?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Yes	11	92%
2	No	1	8%
	Total	12	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	2
Mean	1.08
Variance	0.08
Standard Deviation	0.29
Total Responses	12

2. If yes, was there any "exit" scenario?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Yes	6	50%
2	No	3	25%
3	Did not take it into consideration	3	25%
	Total	12	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	3
Mean	1.75
Variance	0.75
Standard Deviation	0.87
Total Responses	12

3. How consistent to the initial strategic plan you remained?

#	Answer	Min Value	Max Value	Average Value	Standard Deviation	Responses
1	Consistent	29.00	88.00	65.64	16.08	11

4. Can you present the key points of your initial strategy?

Text Response

* Getting traction * Penetrating US

Growth, control the market

Support various and numerous events Expand in other cities and abroad Receive funding Get media exposure Reach a specific number of volunteer registrations

Exploit the niche market for technology solution in the emerging sustainable mobility sector. With products like: Fleet management Bike Sharing Sustainable mobility apps Social Media apps for the sharing economy

Boat rental marketplace (B2C) Go to market by paid advertising.

Building a product that would fit to the market needs. Select the best partners to leverage our product and expand into the market. Select the best initial target group of early adopters to spread the word. Create product policies that would incentivize the early adopters to spread the word around.

foundation, money, b2b market, b2c market, investors

Grow fast

To promote interior design via a 3d friendly environment. To set as a design parameter the users' budget to decorate a space.

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	9

5. Can you present the key points of your current strategy?

Text Response

Same as above but also * Penetrating Japan * Providing Pinnatta to mobile operators (b2b) *

More app stores

expand

Support various and numerous events Expand in other cities and abroad Receive funding Organize volunteer actions Long term partnerships GloVo.4all

Focusing only to the bike sharing technology and sustainable mobility solution and discarding the "by side products"

Curated travel company (B2C and B2B). Go to market by Content, paid advertising and partnerships

The key points remain the same

Find consumers to use our service, take participation to events-trade shows, promotion and advertising, collaboration with manufacturers, investors

Learn fast

Design it yourself

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	9

6. Is there a business plan at your start-up?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Yes		11	92%
2	No		1	8%
	Total		12	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	2
Mean	1.08
Variance	0.08
Standard Deviation	0.29
Total Responses	12

7. Where there any hurdles concerning your start-up that make the exit difficult?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Definitely yes		5	45%
2	Probably yes		6	55%
3	Probably not		0	0%
4	Definitely not		0	0%
	Total		11	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	2
Mean	1.55
Variance	0.27
Standard Deviation	0.52
Total Responses	11

8. How hard you think it is to start you start-up and run your start-up in Greece?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Very Difficult		2	17%
2	Difficult		5	42%
3	Somewhat Difficult		5	42%
4	Neutral		0	0%
5	Somewhat Easy		0	0%
6	Easy		0	0%
7	Very Easy		0	0%
	Total		12	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	3
Mean	2.25
Variance	0.57
Standard Deviation	0.75
Total Responses	12

9. Can you validate how they affect your start-up's strategy the factors described below?

#	Question	None	Little	Some	A Lot	Total Responses	Mean
1	Bureaucracy	0	0	3	9	12	3.75
2	Taxing system	1	0	4	7	12	3.42
3	Political situation	0	4	2	6	12	3.17
4	General working environment	1	3	5	3	12	2.83
5	Mindset	1	2	4	4	11	3.00
6	Lack of opportunities	4	2	4	2	12	2.33
7	Administrative hurdles	0	3	6	3	12	3.00
8	Corruption	1	4	5	2	12	2.67
9	Banking system	0	3	8	1	12	2.83

Statistic	Bureaucracy	Taxing system	Political situation	General working environment	Mindset	Lack of opportunities	Administrative hurdles	Corruption	Banking system
Min Value	3	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	2
Max Value	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Mean	3.75	3.42	3.17	2.83	3.00	2.33	3.00	2.67	2.83
Variance	0.20	0.81	0.88	0.88	1.00	1.33	0.55	0.79	0.33
Standard Deviation	0.45	0.90	0.94	0.94	1.00	1.15	0.74	0.89	0.58
Total Responses	12	12	12	12	11	12	12	12	12

10. What are your personal goals concerning your start-up?

Text Response

A great exit (and the team to work for the new owner)

Exit

Expand professional network and gain experience

Global growth

make a valuable product

Creating a sustainable and scalable business

become the leader in our market

To build a strong team that can deliver the vision

Find investors to continue our progress

Provide great service and value

To create a world-wide self-design & furniture order web-based platform.

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	11

11. What are the team's goals concerning the start-up?

Text Response

A great exit (and the team to work for the new owner)

exit

See it grow bigger and become successfull.

growing and cultivating a sustainable culture

expand our footprint

Offering the best vacation time for the people that matter to you!

build something that makes people's lives easier

To build the best possible product in the space

continued progress in integration of different smart devices, competing technology, market developments and other factors

Expand our possibilities

To create a platform of furniture & equipment producers and well-known brands that will make possible to users to design their own budgeted space real time without the needs of specialists.

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	11

12. How many employees are currently working at your start-up?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Less than 5		5	42%
2	5 - 9		3	25%
3	10 - 19		2	17%
4	20 - 29		2	17%
5	30 - 39		0	0%
6	40-49		0	0%
7	50 or more		0	0%
	Total		12	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	4
Mean	2.08
Variance	1.36
Standard Deviation	1.16
Total Responses	12

13. Are you planning to recruit more people?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Yes		11	92%
2	Maybe		1	8%
3	No		0	0%
	Total		12	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	2
Mean	1.08
Variance	0.08
Standard Deviation	0.29
Total Responses	12

14. Are you aiming to be acquired?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Yes	5	42%
2	Maybe	5	42%
3	No	2	17%
	Total	12	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	3
Mean	1.75
Variance	0.57
Standard Deviation	0.75
Total Responses	12

15. What alternatives to acquisition are you considering?

Text Response

Partnership, affiliation

Series C

Running the company as a successful going concern

-

IPO when we are ready

-

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	6

16. What potential buyers/targets did you consider, and what kind of interaction did you have with them?

Text Response

Messengers, Content Providers

Sponsors, with whom we would make partnerships

None yet.

Various companies in areas related to our business. So far we have not engaged into any interaction

-

None

All potential internet users who need to design a space as users of the platform. World-wide known furniture & equipment brands as hosts of the platform.

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	7

17. Are you looking for an investor?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Yes		7	58%
2	Maybe		2	17%
3	No		3	25%
	Total		12	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	3
Mean	1.67
Variance	0.79
Standard Deviation	0.89
Total Responses	12

18. Are you taking part in any of the entrepreneurship meetings/events happening in Greece?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Yes		4	33%
2	Not interested in Greek meetings		3	25%
3	No		0	0%
4	If yes, please state which ones have/will attend		5	42%
	Total		12	100%

If yes, please state which ones have/will attend

OpenCoffee Endeavor Entrepreneurs

opencoffee, startup weekend

Open Coffee

MITEF Greece, Open Coffee

MIT, OpenCoffee, OpenFund

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	4
Mean	2.50
Variance	1.91
Standard Deviation	1.38
Total Responses	12

19. Are you taking part in any of the entrepreneurship meetings/events happening around the world?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Yes	4	33%
2	If yes, please state which ones have/will attend	4	33%
3	No	4	33%
	Total	12	100%

If yes, please state which ones have/will attend

TechCrunch / LeWeb

How to Web, Pirate Summit, The Newt Web

SXSW Digital

Planning to attend in the future

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	3
Mean	2.00
Variance	0.73
Standard Deviation	0.85
Total Responses	12

20. If you attend any of the meetings/events taking place in Greece or abroad can you name the reasons you are doing so?

#	Question	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Always	Total Responses	Mean
1	Gain recognition	1	0	4	1	4	10	3.70
2	Raise funding	1	3	2	1	3	10	3.20
3	Connections	1	0	0	3	6	10	4.30
4	Reach possible companies acquired my start-up	3	2	2	1	2	10	2.70
5	Find collaborators	3	0	2	1	1	7	2.57







Statistic	Gain recognition	Raise funding	Connections	Reach possible companies acquired my start-up	Find collaborators
Min Value	1	1	1	1	1
Max Value	5	5	5	5	5
Mean	3.70	3.20	4.30	2.70	2.57
Variance	1.79	2.18	1.57	2.46	2.62
Standard Deviation	1.34	1.48	1.25	1.57	1.62
Total Responses	10	10	10	10	7

21. multiple choice

#	Question	Answer	Total Responses
1	FAMILY & FRIENDS	3	3
2	ANGEL INVESTOR	7	7
3	VENTURE CAPITAL FUNDS	6	6
4	AFTER CONFERENCES ATTENDANCE AND RANDOMLY MEETINGS WITH FINANCIERS	1	1
5	SELF-FUNDED	6	6
6	OTHER	1	1




Statistic	FAMILY & FRIENDS	ANGEL INVESTOR	VENTURE CAPITAL FUNDS	AFTER CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE AND RANDOMLY MEETINGS WITH FINANCIERS	SELF-FUNDED	OTHER
Min Value	1	1	1	1	1	1
Max Value	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total Responses	3	7	6	1	6	1

22. How financial sustainable is currently your start-up?

#	Answer		Response	%
0	0		0	0%
1	1		1	8%
2	2		0	0%
3	3		2	17%
4	4		0	0%
5	5		1	8%
6	6		3	25%
7	7		2	17%
8	8		0	0%
9	9		0	0%
10	10		3	25%
	Total		12	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	10
Mean	6.17
Variance	8.52
Standard Deviation	2.92
Total Responses	12

23. Do you think there are competitors that may be preferred by investors instead of you?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Yes		1	8%
2	Maybe		8	67%
3	No		3	25%
4	If yes, explain their competitive advantage		0	0%
	Total		12	100%

If yes, explain their competitive advantage

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	3
Mean	2.17
Variance	0.33
Standard Deviation	0.58
Total Responses	12

24. Where is your start-up established?

Text Response

US and Greece

Netherlands

California

Greece

2013

Volos, Greece

athens

Boston USA and Athens Greece

Greece

Greece

Greece

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	11

25. What was your company's recent valuation?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Not answering	3	25%
2	< \$100,000	3	25%
3	\$100,000 - \$199,999	0	0%
4	\$200,000 - \$299,999	0	0%
5	\$300,000 - \$399,999	0	0%
6	\$400,000 - 499,999	0	0%
7	\$500,000 - \$599,999	0	0%
8	\$600,000 - \$1.000.000	0	0%
9	\$1.000.001 or more	6	50%
	Total	12	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	9
Mean	5.25
Variance	15.48
Standard Deviation	3.93
Total Responses	12

26. Please tell us about the quality of the services. Please use a scale of 1 to 9, where 9 represents outstanding or extraordinary, 5 represents quite acceptable, and 1 represents unacceptable or poor.

#	Answer	Response	%
1	1 Unacceptable Quality	0	0%
2	2	0	0%
3	3	0	0%
4	4	0	0%
5	5 Quite Acceptable Quality	1	10%
6	6	0	0%
7	7	7	70%
8	8	1	10%
9	9 Outstanding Extraordinary Quality	1	10%
	Total	10	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	5
Max Value	9
Mean	7.10
Variance	0.99
Standard Deviation	0.99
Total Responses	10

Interviews

Wover (Health services application)

WOVER, smartphone application that watch over your well being and helps you stay safe. Wover is targeting a prototype exponential growth of users based data from the early days of Evernote. They assume that they will

be able to much the same growth pattern by combining the network effects from the free users (getting their acquaintances to join in order to strengthen their safety network and get free usage time) and direct user acquisition (through targeted ads). Wover is in demo version at the moment. The start-up is established in Delaware, USA and will be operating in Greece through a subsidiary based in Athens.

- Key points of general strategy
 - Building a product that would fit to the market needs
 - Select the best partners to leverage our product and expand into the market. Select the best initial target group of early adopters to spread the word
 - Create product policies that would incentivize the early adopters to spread the word around.
- Time line
 - Two years time line. First 6 months product establishment and then attract users and turn free users to premium users
- Collaboration strategy
 - Consideration of collaboration with a partner that creates vital signs sensors
 - Collaboration with organizations that have a lot of volunteers and they are willing to be monitored
- Branding strategy
 - Logo → Use red color that refers to emergency, logo is an abstract form of a dog
 - Name → Wover comes from the phrase watch over
- Patents
 - Patent pending from the United States Patent and Trademark Office to protect the product
- Team
 - 4-member core team at the moment.
- Recruitment strategy & process

- About to recruit a marketing person. There is no specific recruiting strategy at the moment since they are about to raise funding through an investor and they are unable to pay for salaries at the moment.
- Exit strategy
 - Acquisition in core team mind but due to the fact that there is no established product yet it is a future milestone. Moreover an IPO when the time comes will be taken into consideration.
- Fund raising strategy

The Wover team is trying to raise funding through investors in order to start their operation and production of the application, since at the moment is in a demo version. They are approaching investors in USA, Greece and Switzerland and they take part in various events with a focus in the USA start-up events.

- Financial strategy

It is assumed the acquisition cost per user to be different depending if the target is to get free users or convert free users to paying users as shown below. It is expected that the user growth to lag the launch for several weeks and the conversion of free to paying users to delay for several more weeks. It is expected that responsiveness of the infrastructure compare to the user demand to be lower at the beginning and grow too much the demand in 12-18 months.

- Marketing strategy & establishment in the Market

The marketing campaign is assumed to have two distinct components (i) getting users to join the free service and (ii) converting free users to paying users.

 - Mean: Facebook
 - Segments: gadget fun users, people who like - follow sensor related pages, focus on specific age group (personas)
 - Business travellers
 - Extreme sports fanatics- teenagers

- Join a marathon event to promote the app to athletes and participants.
- Goals
 - Establish product, acquire as many as possible users and convert them into premium users at a fixed ratio

Pinnatta (Social media application)

Pinnatta is the world's first interactive messenger operates on smartphones. It is a way of exchanging unique interactive greeting cards and messages with friends. With Pinnatta user can blow, tap, swipe, drag, rub or even shake his/her device to experience a message! Hundreds of customizable messages are available for every occasion such as birthdays, holidays and anniversaries to everyday "hellos" and "mornings". User can select the Pinnatta he/she likes, personalize it by adding his/her own text, voice or photo and send.

- Key points of general strategy
 - "Pinnatta everywhere" is the name of the strategy Pinnatta
 - It will be either a stand-alone application or it is incorporated in other messengers (such as whatsapp, tango etc)
- Time line
 - Next month Pinnatta will be live with the first messenger that will introduce the start-up in 12 countries
 - In one month and a half months the another messenger will follow that will introduce Pinnatta in 17 countries
 - In two months another messenger will introduce Pinnatta in 11 countries
- Collaboration strategy
 - Collaboration with several messengers around the world. Those collaborators are playing the role of distributors through their application they will distribute Pinnatta's context.

- Effort to establish content creators. Design offices or professionals and companies that they would like to produce a content on behalf of Pinnatta
- Partnership with brands that will sponsor their brand's Pinnattas. For example Starbucks Pinnattas or Disney Pinnattas. In app advertisement.
- Branding strategy
 - Pinnatta came from the American word Pinnatta the container often made of [papier-mâché](#), [pottery](#), or [cloth](#) that is decorated, and filled with small toys or candy, or both, and then broken as part of a ceremony or celebration. That describes the general concept of Pinnatta. Send a message and a surprise with a gift.
 - They were looking for an easy spelled name, and popular to USA and America in general where more customers are located.
 - The application had its own color in order to be special. At the moment they are currently rebranding the logo.
- Patents
 - Pinnatta is about to apply for patents in order to protect the product. At the moment they are currently investigating ways of applying in USA.
- Team
 - The team is currently consisted of 21 people and the need are keep growing since the investors are tightening the schedule and are becoming more demanding as acquisition in approaching.
 - All staff is in a senior level due to the quality of service Pinnatta need to produce.
- Recruitment strategy & process
 - Pinnatta at the moment is expanding and they managing group is investigating the new needs of the company

- The mentality of a start-upper is the employee to fit in Pinnatta
- Exit strategy
 - There is a well organized exit strategy at the moment
 - The team is willing to be acquired by one of its stakeholders.
 - In the following 18 months Pinnatta is estimating to be acquired
 - 60 million dollars is the estimation of the acquisition price
- Fund raising strategy
 - Pinnatta has recently announced (End of December 2014) that there is 1.2 million dollars funding for 2015.
 - B series funding that will be raised in the following three months
- Financial strategy
 - Budget is spread around the best employees in the market to succeed best result and proceed to the exit
- Marketing strategy & establishment in the Market
 - Use of social media to expand and collaborators
 - Penetration in Saudi Arabia, Europe and Japan
 - 88% of customers are in USA
- Goals
 - Exit is the main goal at the moment

Zeus (Fleet Management System & Call)

The Wide SD has developed a set of specialized telematics applications for taxi in order to ensure:

- Effective fleet and call management
- Contact the center with vehicles
- Maximum safety to the driver
- Modern customer communication with the PBX via IVR * and SMS

"Zeus" is an innovative fleet management system and phones developed by Wide Company, using the latest technology (Mac OS X - Apple,

POSIX © Unix servers). The leadership, reliability and friendliness of the system are the main axes on which we moved to its development. To "Zeus" ensure immediate customer service, efficient operation of the taxi, while contributing significantly to the increase in revenue.

The capabilities of the system fully meet the needs of a modern taxi, while the dynamic nature allows developing new solutions to possible needs arising and adapting the system specifically to each taxi.

- Key points of general strategy
 - Fleet management in Greece and abroad
- Time line
 - Zeus is a two years old platform. Unfortunately it is not developed yet. The Greek company is too small and there are no other potentials to develop in Greece. The target is to develop to European countries (such as Germany, France, UK) in the following two year starting from Germany in the following six months.
- Collaboration strategy
 - Zeus is collaborating with taxi's association in order to promote the service. There is already a collaboration with Greek taxi's association and they are looking for similar associations abroad
 - Team in not interested in collaboration with other people in order to develop the product.
- Branding strategy
 - The name was developer's inspiration and logo designed without too much thinking. The developer believes that due to the fact it is not affecting anything he just picked a name and a logo
- Patents
 - Since there are similar products in the global market the company has no patents or the ability to apply for any.
- Team

- There are 2 people in development. The developer and founder and an economist – business developer who is recently involved
- Recruitment strategy & process
 - Zeus is looking for collaborators due to the intention of expanding abroad. Recruitment process will include a part timer in marketing, and social media. Moreover team is looking for collaborations in Germany at the moment since it is the first European Country
- Exit strategy
 - There is no exit strategy. The team is not planning to be acquired. Team was established by a founder who is unwilling to let his own business.
- Fund raising strategy
 - There is no fundraising strategy at the moment. The team is in need of money and it is currently self-funded by the two founders. At the moment they are investigating angel investors or VC to develop the service abroad
- Financial strategy
 - At the moment there is a need for capital in order to invest for the expansion in Europe but there is an unclear financial strategy. VC and angel investors have been approached
- Marketing strategy & establishment in the Market
 - It is two years old application and unfortunately the team just realized the importance of marketing strategy.
 - There is an intention of establishing a marketing strategy and take part in exhibitions abroad to advertise the service
- Goals
 - The main goal is to expand worldwide starting from Europe
 - Move slowly and stable

Giftme (Services application)

Gift is a recently established start-up. It is a crowd funding platform for personal gifts.

- Key points of general strategy:
 - Expand
 - Add value to customer
 - Growth fast
 - Go global
- Time line
 - Giftme Team have divided their time schedule into terms
 - 1st term (the one currently running): checking their demo for bugs
 - 2nd term -->target Greece. Greece is not the market but the testing ground fro Giftme Team.
 - During the first year the team in aiming to expand in several countries targeting UK, Australia, USA, Germany
- Collaboration strategy
 - Establish collaboration with services such as Amazon and other online services that will give customers the opportunity to select gifts from a big variety
 - Use Facebook, Twitter and other social media to give the opportunity to customers publish their gift campaign through them
- Branding strategy
 - Giftme is a newly established venture and there is no branding strategy at the moment. The team is currently working on their logo.
 - The name implies what the service offers
- Patents
 - There is no intention for patents application and there are several similar companies that are providing similar services.

- Team
 - There are currently three people in development and two economists
- Recruitment strategy & process
 - Giftme has no specific strategy. Every time a need occurs the team recruits whoever needed to complete the task. The team is in a very early stage. There will be a need for social media manager.
- Exit strategy
 - Giftme is not planning to have an exit strategy. The team is starting operating the start-up for owners' benefit.
- Fund raising strategy
 - There is no fundraising strategy at the moment. The team is in need of money and it is currently self-funded by the two founders. At the moment Gift is taking part in start-up competitions in Greece trying to acquire recognition and connections.
- Financial strategy
 - There is not a specific plan. All money is spent on developers to create the demo.
 - After the demo completion, budget will be spent on advertisement (online)
- Marketing strategy & establishment in the Market
 - Gift me has no specific marketing strategy at the moment
- Goals
 - Earn money (the result of the team's success) not the target
 - Create a service that will be popular
 - Go global to cover all markets
 - Concept can be spread around the world
 - Be a company like Groupon.

