

Entrepreneurial Marketing Applications: the Case of Apostrophys Group

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Abstract—This paper aims to pair the applications with entrepreneurial marketing concepts of an achieve entrepreneur case, Apostrophys Group. The applications were analyzed by case study analysis, qualitative method with theory triangulation to prove validity. Five concepts were explained, the case was illustrated and then case and concepts were compared and contrasted. The applications were found to pair to innovation orientation, expanding market from niche consumers of Stokes's concept. The applications were also matched with bird-in-hand, affordable loss and patchwork quilt of Saravasthy's concept, with opportunity focus, calculated risk taking, innovative oriented, customer intensity and resource leverage of Morris's concept, with that product brings customer, that positioning comes before targeting and creativity of Martin's concepts as well as with niche strategies, networking and innovation of Gilmore's concepts. The results value as the precedent for later entrepreneurs.

Keywords—Entrepreneurial Marketing, Case study, Entrepreneur, Entrepreneurial Applications.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Apostrophys Group, media and exhibition design, originally initiated by a sophomore student, entrepreneur, who had no investment but later was acceptable by several national brand companies. Because of high standard and prominent outputs, the national brand companies trusted to let this company serve them for their big exhibitions. How did this sophomore student make high standard and prominent output and become the trustable entrepreneur in the competitive business arena? To answer this question is the aim of this paper. The answer is expected to illustrate the applications to be the precedent for later entrepreneurs. To understand the application, this paper will use entrepreneurial marketing (EM) concept as the base for analysis.

Why EM concept is appropriated to be based for the analyzing in this paper? There are two reasons.

The first reason is in the definition of the term EM. EM is concerning the techniques in offering utilities to customers with novelty, proactive and daring action manner [1] under uncertain conditions and limited resources [2]. This company applied several interesting techniques to serve customers with limited money even though the founder did not know in the beginning whether business would come out well since customers can shift

to other competitors very easily. In this case study, limited money is the example of limited resources and customers' decision to switch brand is the example of uncertain condition. The situation was consistent with all aspects of the definition. Thus this concept is undoubtedly relevant to comprehend this specimen.

The second reason is that EM is found to enhance the success of entrepreneurs but the study of EM applications has need of. EM increased entrepreneurs' performance [3], enhance innovation operation [2], [4], boost business growth [5]. However, the study of EM application is rare. The available study of EM found is about the measurement of magnitude of EM [6] and the relationships of EM practices and growth and performance [2]-[3]. Since, theory cannot be easily understandable without example, thus this paper aims to illustrate the actions relating to EM concept to fill the lacking part.

From introduction part, objectives can be written as follow:

1. To present the case study of The Apostrophys Group
2. To conclude components of existing entrepreneurial concepts
3. To compare the case as the example of practical techniques with several existing entrepreneurial marketing concepts

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

There were several EM concepts adequately developed from the past until present. However, after 2011, the author found that several papers written about EM mostly related to apply the existing concepts more than to develop the new one. This is not cover about other context such as social media context. Thus here are five EM concepts developed since year 2000 until 2011.

A. Stokes's Concept

Stokes, D. [7] indicated four courses of action entrepreneurs inclined to perform. First, innovation of companies themselves is the orientation rather than customers' needs. Second, finding niche customer groups and serving then expanding to more of alike groups rather than traditional STP (Segmentation Targeting Positioning) strategies. Third, interconnection with customers and word-of-mouth (WOM) shape marketing activities rather than established marketing mix. Forth, networking is the source of information rather than formal marketing research. For entrepreneurial context with limited resource, the techniques are more suitable than traditional marketing techniques.

B. *Sarasvathy's Concept*

Another entrepreneurial marketing concept is called effectuation developed by Sarasvathy, S. D. [8]. The concept is appropriate especially in the introduction period of businesses. Five logic are concluded. First, bird-in-hand means that entrepreneurs tend to use what they have in hands including knowledge, expertise or any available resources to create businesses. Second, affordable loss means that entrepreneurs tend to make decision to perform activities at the level they can afford. Third, lemonade means that entrepreneurs tend to take opportunities even though the opportunities come with some risks. Forth, patchwork quilt means that entrepreneurs tend to merge their networks to help work on their jobs. Fifth, pilot-in-the-plane means that entrepreneurs tend to draw their own rule, not necessary to follow the existing rules in businesses.

C. *Morris et.al.'s Concept*

Morris, M. H., et. al. [9] suggested seven aspects in entrepreneurial marketing including proactiveness, opportunity-focused, calculated risk taking, innovation-oriented, customer intensity, resource leveraging, and value creation. Proactiveness means that the businesses adjust environment rather than adjust the business strategies to consistent with the environment. Opportunity focused means that the businesses keep embrace opportunities consisting to their resources. Calculated risk taking means that the businesses dare to take risks after evaluating that the magnitude is acceptable or manageable. Innovation-oriented means that the businesses keep invent new things such as target markets, products or processes. Customer intensity means that the businesses perform strategies including creating products, establishing competitive advantage according to customers' needs. Resource leveraging means that the businesses expand their limited resources including money or people by connection. Value creation means that the businesses always initiate processes to rise gains and/or lessen expenses. [9]-[11].

D. *Martin's Concept*

Martin, D.M.'s [12] offered four ideas for entrepreneurial marketing which differed from traditional marketing strategies. First, good products at hand initiate customers' needs rather than customers' needs initiate products. Second, positioning of good products help determined target markets and segmentation rather than segmentation and targeting help define positioning. Third, informal researches such as owners' observation or talking with friends help gain information to define short term goals rather than full scale marketing researches help for short to long goals. Fourth, creativity in person, process, purpose and practice is a tool for thinking in running businesses rather than four Ps: product, price, place and promotion.

E. *Gilmore's Concept*

Gilmore, A. [13] presented three ideas in entrepreneurial marketing. First is selecting appropriate strategies from traditional marketing theory, no need to create new one. There

are several strategies from four Ps. However, entrepreneurs had better use only niche strategies in all Ps: products, price, place and promotion. Second, setting up competence through networking. Third, innovation in every process is important key success factor.

III. METHODOLOGY

Theory triangulation or using several theories help test validity [14], [15]. These five entrepreneurial marketing concepts will be based for qualitative method, case study analysis. This methodology is the form of research which people tell stories about their live or event in their life then the researchers analyze to bridge theories with actions or examine topics [16]. As this paper expected to explain the applications of the entrepreneurial marketing concept, this methodology is fit.

The Apostrophys Group, the only one case, is purposive selected with several criteria. First, the business was found by entrepreneur because the owner started the business once seeing opportunities under risky condition according to definition from several dictionaries: Cambridge Dictionary and Merriam-Webster Dictionary. Second, the company is success. Maziriri, E. T., & Mapuranga, M. [5] defined entrepreneurs' success in terms of business growth. In this case, the company has grown upon more and more big name companies become customers.

Triangulation can be many ways: method triangulation, data source triangulation. This paper will conduct the latter one.

As data source triangulation helps test validity from cross checking the information [14], [15], there are two sources of data. Face to face interview and secondary data from the company social media are sources of information. The interview will be recorded to transcribe later to decrease human error. The interview questions will be that how the business begins and what challenges the businesses face. Laddering technique, keep asking why and/or how, will be used to ask for more extensive information. [17]. Transcription will be done by three processes: data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing [17]. The cases will be explained by entrepreneurial marketing concepts one by one.

IV. RESULTS

The product of Apostrophys Group is defined as media and event exhibition design. The company offers service of designing physical evidence for exhibition such as advertisement screen, structure of exhibition landmark as well as light and sound. Office is designed in colorful modern and exquisite style to arouse customers' need and customers will be able to imagine of the products they would get. Since being sophomore, the owner enhanced his skills by becoming intern in several state-of-the art design companies where his teachers took him in. Not only skills, but also connections he got. Once graduated, he had received opportunities from these customers. He had started offer services with his school friends. Later, he alone registered as a company and ask a lot of famous designers he had known to work with him. His customers later on were

several well-known companies. At first he had no money resources therefore he borrowed money from other people to subcontract his work to contractors under his design and control. He expressed that he was confident to achieve very first projects since he had done many projects before the company was found. So he jumped to grab these controllable risky opportunities. And it appeared that his works made the opportunities gave return. Customers trusted. In 2014, his company provided services to more than 100 projects a year to national and international brands in various industries ranging from entertainment, construction material, media and telecommunication. Every projects the company had done also recorded in social media blog and some of them were sent to competition and won which made customers had more trust on. He has also founded a subsidiary company to focus especially on interactive media under parent company which takes charge in media and exhibition design. This subsidiary company created several product innovation to markets. Products of this company change the way people expose to media. In the past, people can only see, listen and read information, but new products enable people to interact. For example, they can wave hands and see themselves appeared in the advertisement screen they are looking which increasing awareness and recall of a brand information. Innovation products are launched continuously because of research and development in the company. He assigned a few people from the whole 20 staff to do only keeping develop new ideas. Prototypes were developed because the company would reserve some funds for prototype developing and testing. Customers could see and touch and use the prototypes before making decision. Then the price of innovative products were set from the value of the products more than depending on cost. As the company is in Thailand, the unique selling point of the design of this company was mixing Thai traditional materials with modern design. This good mixing made the design of this company was different from international competitors and harmonious with Thai culture. Because of this differentiation, human resources are rare. This company solve this problem by teaching new people just for doing this work specifically. Even there were a lot of projects a year with 20 staff, this company could handle because a lot of partner companies helped make the projects done. Some of these partners had started at the same time at the beginning and some of them had start after the company but grown together. From the past, the company had face some challenges. For example, some projects was so difficult that the design could not satisfy customers. The company sometimes had to invest more and more of time and money to let the projects pass. This made the company was trustable among customers in business arena.

The applications from the interview and other information as mention are concluded in table 1 to link the applications to dimensions of each concept

TABLE I: APPLICATIONS COMPARE TO DIMENSIONS OF EM CONCEPTS

Author(s)	Dimensions	Applications
Stokes, [7]	• Innovation orientation	Design new media to arouse customer need
	• Expand market from niche consumers	Find first consumer who like innovation and later ones alike follow
	• Interconnection and WOM are important	Not found
	• Gain information from networking	Not found
Sarasvathy, [8]	• Bird-in-hand	Use innovation expertise the owner good at to create business
	• Affordable loss	Invest only projects the owner is confident
	• Lemonade	Not found
	• Patchwork quilt	Networks or partners help create works
	• Pilot-in-the-plane	Not found
Morris, et.al. [9]	• Proactiveness	Not found
	• Opportunity-focused	Grab opportunity that consistent with expertise
	• Calculated risk taking	Risk of loss money is acceptable when invest for controllable projects
	• Innovation-oriented	Company keeps invent new products
	• Customer intensity	Company's competitive advantage is caused by the need of innovation from customers
	• Resource leveraging	The solution for lacking of human resources is ask acquaintances to join in company
	• Value creation	Not found
Martin, [12]	• Products brings customers	Customers' need occur when they see products
	• Positioning then targeting and segmenting	Position as innovation, then find targets that fit
	• Do informal researches	Not found
Gilmore, [13]	• Creativity is a key	Creativity in person and process keeps company growth
	• Apply niche strategies	Use niche strategies, choosing only customers who like innovation
	• Networking enhances competences	Networks help the business to run
	• Create innovation	Innovation is key success factor

V. CONCLUSION

A. Applications according to Stokes's Concept

According to innovation orientation dimension, the company designed new product. Businesses that like the products become customers, not the opposite way where usually customers' need initiate products. Also the company expanded market size but the characteristics of target customers did not change. This is according to the dimension of expanding market from niche

customers.

B. Applications according to Saravasthy's Concept

According to bird-in-hand, the owner has expertise in designing. This expertise is used in creating products. According to affordable loss, the owner borrowed money from other but he invested in the project that he was confident that he could achieve so the loss, if happen, will not be too much. According to patchwork quilt, he got his networks or partners to get job done. Sometimes partners was taught.

C. Applications according to Morris's Concept

According to the dimension of opportunity-focused, the owner chose the opportunities that consistent to his expertise. Risk of losing money is acceptable because the owner chose to invest in the project that he could control. This is according to calculated risk taking. According to innovation-orientated dimension, the company assigned staff just for research and development. According to customer intensity, innovation is the point customers satisfied. The company focused on this point. According to resource leveraging, human resources was taught or asked to join so the problem of this resource had solved.

D. Applications according to Martin's Concept

According to products brings customers, customers need product when they realize of innovation. According to positioning then targeting and segmenting, creative positioning is happen first then customers come to buy and become the target. According to creativity is a key, teaching his own staff or help partners to work together is creativity in person and process which make the company grew.

E. Applications according to Gilmore's Concept

According to apply niche strategies, this company has target to innovative kind of customers only. According to network enhances competences, this company can run because of networks from teachers, to friends in schools and to the acquaintances. Lastly, the company key success factor that make customers trust is innovation. This is according to create innovation.

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