



European
Commission

The Secret of Success

2014-2015

Europe's Digital Icons:
Transforming Our Economy

Enterprise
and Industry



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Foreword



Welcome to the 2014-15 edition of the 'Secret of Success'.

In the current economic situation, European companies must turn to **innovation, productivity, resource-efficiency and high value-added** if they want to stay competitive in global markets and to respond to the growth and job creation challenges. **Digital transition**, which is underway across the global economy, is at the heart of the transformation of European industry.

In the context of the Europe 2020 strategy, the EU is implementing several measures with the ambition of creating a **wide and strong industrial base** conducive to a positive environment for long term **investments**; accelerating increases in **productivity and job creation**; raising EU industrial **competitiveness**; and bringing the contribution of industry to a level of **20% of the GDP by 2020**.

Digital technologies are the single most important **driver of innovation and growth** today; they re-shape entire industries and open doors for a new generation of entrepreneurs and innovators.

However, Europe is only scratching the surface when it comes to reaping the benefits of digital growth, with only 2% of European enterprises currently taking full advantage of digital opportunities.

This is why the EU Digital Agenda and the EU Industrial Policy not only recognise transformative power of digital technologies and their growing impact across all sectors, but also call to integrate **new technological opportunities**, such as cloud computing, big data and data value chain developments, new industrial applications of internet, smart factories, robotics, or 3-D printing and design into all sectors of the economy. And it does not stop there.

We are helping entrepreneurs and SMEs to unleash the full potential of the digital revolution: together with the member states we are working to build the best **digital infrastructure** available and to strengthen the structure of the digital ecosystem by creating single copyright and e-commerce rules.

The European Commission intends to continue rolling out the implementation of this industrial policy counting on the co-operation of Member States and stakeholders.

The entrepreneurs in this brochure, although diverse in their gender, age, ethnicity and experiences, all have a common thread running through their stories. These should inspire policy-makers and would-be entrepreneurs and help draw conclusions on what it takes to build and grow a successful business powered by **advanced digital technologies**.

They are our **inspiration** and we hope that they will inspire millions of other entrepreneurs to transform their business and so transform the European economy.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Antonio Tajani". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Antonio Tajani
Vice-President of the European Commission*,
responsible for Industry & Entrepreneurship

*9 February 2010 - 15 July 2014

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Austria

Wolfgang Hafenscher

LineMetrics GmbH



At LineMetrics, we have developed a cloud-based platform that enables industrial manufacturing companies of all sizes to trace problems and optimise production in their factories (for example in energy efficiency or maintenance). Our 'pay as you grow' business model makes our service affordable for very small companies and brings results within days rather than months. We have benefited from many different local and national government programmes and services whether through financial investment, guidance or access to a wide customer base. Our goal now is to build a global network of partners and resellers.

I would like to see start ups exempt from taxation for the first five years; more programmes to allow start ups to benefit from new technologies; and European platforms to raise the profile of start ups.

Hero(es)	Those who demonstrate that the sky is no limit
Start up capital	Own and public start up funding
Growth rate p.a	300%
Mentor(s)	Hansi Hansmann, Alfred Luger, Florian Gschwandtner, Rene Giretzlehner, Christian Kaar
Can you code?	Yes
Employees	14
Education / Training	IT
Product / Service	Industrial analytics software



Entrepreneurs like me are important to society because we strive to improve the world, ignoring whatever obstacles we meet along the way.





Belgium

Rudi Cleymans

Syneton



After seeing my wife struggling with the administration of her accounting company, I started Syneton which provides better software tools for accountants who help entrepreneurs become more efficient. What really sets Syneton apart from its competitors is our knowledge of our customers, flexibility and our commitment to customer care. The cloud has allowed us to expand easily into new markets: our next targets are France and Brazil. We are also investigating providing our services to new industries. I believe ICT is a great career choice and we regularly host school groups and children who are keen to learn more about the sector and how to code.

If I were in charge of start ups, I would promote the benefits of entrepreneurship; I would lower their taxes and give them more support.

Hero(es)	Barack Obama and Nelson Mandela
Start up capital	Own
Growth rate p.a	20%
Mentor(s)	No
Can you code?	Yes
Employees	18
Education / Training	Military officer
Product / Service	Accountancy software



Entrepreneurs like me are important to society because we provide opportunities for employment for Europe's young people and set an example for future generations.





Bulgaria

Hristo Tenchev

XS Software JSC



I had the chance to convert my greatest hobby, computer games, into a business. With five friends, we created the first web browser based game in Bulgaria (Bulfleet) that rapidly became very popular and we grew very fast. Eight years later we have more than 35 million registered players in over 80 countries worldwide. We started lean but venture capital was key to helping us break into new markets and develop new platforms.

The best way to help start ups and SMEs like me grow would be to develop more incubator and accelerator funds and programmes; and to ensure that education is of highest quality for all, especially in IT.

Hero(es)	Computer games
Start up capital	Own
Growth rate p.a	10%
Mentor(s)	Yes, including my partner Svetlin Nakov
Can you code?	Yes
Employees	130
Education / Training	Computing
Product / Service	Gaming



Entrepreneurs are important to society because we kick-start new ideas, services, products and make our lives better.





Cyprus

Elena Tanou

Top Kinisis Travel Public Ltd



Top Kinisis was set up to meet the challenges and opportunities arising from the globalisation of online travel. My passion is to create dream holidays for all and to all destinations. Digitalisation is critical for us because it has increased usability, choice and reduced costs for customers. My chief aim is to provide value to our customers, protecting their interests with our prestigious retail history, integrity and a professional image.

I'd like to see more funding for economic and technological learning; improved access to EU funding; the removal of bureaucratic barriers; and a big push to encourage successful firms to rescue struggling ones.

Hero(es)	Nelson Mandela and Steve Jobs
Start up capital	Own
Growth rate p.a	10%
Mentor(s)	Yes
Can you code?	No
Employees	60
Education / Training	Travel and tourism
Product / Service	Online travel services



Entrepreneurs are important to us all because we strive harder than anybody else to develop the economy, to employ people and can be trusted more than politicians.





Czech Republic

Petr Čížek

ZalozFirmu.cz o.p.s.



Thanks to ZalozFirmu.cz, anyone wanting to form a business in the Czech Republic can now do so online for free, saving them considerable time and resources. Since we started in 2009, 5,000 businesses have been set up through our platform. Our ambition is to create a universal website which would allow SME entrepreneurs across the EU to form their new companies for free. I would have set up a business regardless of the internet, but its existence along with other digital technologies has made it relatively cheap to build and grow a successful business.

I would like to see a massive reduction in the administrative burden on small businesses and laws that are easily enforceable.

Hero(es)	My teachers and people who have inspired me
Start up capital	Own
Mentor(s)	No
Can you code?	No
Employees	6
Education / Training	IT and Law
Product / Service	Online legal services



Entrepreneurs are important to society because we identify business opportunities and realise them, thus creating value systems for the whole of society.





Germany

Swetlana Reiche

Lensspirit Contact Lenses GmbH



The original idea of Lensspirit was to sell contact lenses via a catalogue. A few months after the business was set up, a friend of mine programmed a very simple online shop and that (together with the aid of a KfW mittelstandsprogram loan to finance software development) gave birth to today's business. Our open-minded company culture forms the basis for creative ideas. Therefore, our customers benefit from outstanding support and innovative campaigns and they simply love our product line "GoodMorning!" because they know that they can rely on the quality and service.

I'd like to see a limit on subsidies; and greater simplification and a drive to unify taxes across the EU.

Hero(es)	My father and my son
Start up capital	Savings
Growth rate p.a	10%
Mentor(s)	My colleagues
Can you code?	No
Employees	40
Education / Training	Economics
Product / Service	Online eyewear marketplace



Entrepreneurs are important to society because we inspire, innovate, motivate and create ideas, new jobs and boost growth.





Denmark

Jon Schäffer

Conferize



We set up Conferize (with the help of funds from Accelerace, a Danish business development organisation) to build an event community and increase attendance at events, principally by engaging people in content, live streaming, and social networking. We have built an engine that automatically identifies and converts leads to attendees. We make it easily available for attendees and followers before, during and after the event, all for free.

I'd say that to increase start ups we should reduce their taxes; provide a safety net for the self-employed; and incentivise investment.

Hero(es)	Elon Musk
Start up capital	Friends; business angels; accelerator programmes
Growth rate p.a	500%
Mentor(s)	No
Can you code?	No
Employees	14
Education / Training	Business and technology
Product / Service	Events applications



Entrepreneurs are important to society because we are the backbone of the economy; and the key to Denmark's prosperity.





Estonia

Taavet Hinrikus

TransferWise Ltd



TransferWise was born out of my frustration with the high fees charged by banks to transfer money abroad. So Kristo Käärmann and I built a web platform that allows our customers to transfer money more quickly and cheaply than any of our competitors, particularly high street banks. In the three years we have been operating, we have already saved our customers £45million (€ 56.7million) in transaction fees. Digital technology is making financial services cheaper, more transparent and customer friendly.

I would like to see the bank payment infrastructure deregulated; more transparency in the marketing and advertising of financial products; and new rules to make it easier for us to recruit talent from anywhere in the world.

Hero(es)	Niklas Zennström
Start up capital	Own and seed funding
Growth rate p.a	10%
Mentor(s)	Yes
Can you code?	Yes
Employees	101
Education / Training	Web start ups
Product / Service	Online financial services



Entrepreneurs are important to society because we challenge the status quo: we use innovation to shake monopolies, boost the economy and make people's lives easier.





Spain

Karen Márquez

Infantium



We set up Infantium because we were sure that technology was ready to disrupt the very traditional sector that is education. Infantium uses brain-inspired computing to personalise learning for children and to deliver a tailored syllabus for every learner based on performance, learning style, level, preferences and motivation. This is education adapting to the child and not the other way round. We have had invaluable support from Telefonica at key stages in our journey, with which we hope to build the most valuable repository of the way children learn world wide, and ultimately give all children better learning opportunities, wherever they start from.

Governments in Europe should make it easier for businesses like mine to attract international talent; should create one-stop-shops for start ups (where they can pay their taxes and complete necessary forms); and improve access to EU RTD funding.

Start up capital	Savings, bank lending and angel capital
Mentor(s)	Carles Grau; Bill Magill and Farly Duvall
Can you code?	Learning
Employees	8
Education / Training	Marketing
Product / Service	E-learning



Entrepreneurs are important to society because we bring innovation to the market and improve people's lives.





Finland

Samuli Tursas

Liana Technologies



Liana develops and supplies digital marketing and communication software. Our customers are digital marketing and PR professionals and our cloud-based software helps them perform better. Thanks to local and EU business support we have expanded into four other countries and our goal is to become #1 marketing cloud provider in Europe. We have also been able to employ 100 people let go by Nokia.

I would like to see a government sponsored account manager for each start up; bottom up business support programmes; and direct support for sales and marketing activities.

Hero(es)	My team
Start up capital	Own
Growth rate p.a	30%
Mentor(s)	My business partners
Can you code?	Yes
Employees	110
Education / Training	Computing and marketing
Product / Service	Marketing and communications software



Entrepreneurs are useful to society because we are the ones that turn innovation into reality; we are the people who get things done.





France

Benjamin Suchar

Yoopies



Yoopies started because I have 3 sisters, 2 of whom are mothers. When I realised that their only choice to find a babysitter was either to rely on poorly written classified ads in supermarkets or third party agencies that requested high fees, I saw a great opportunity to create an online childcare platform that parents could trust. So Yoopies is building a future for itself (helped by the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme) by providing that trust to its customers by leveraging the power of online social media recommendations.

Personally, I'd like to see a European Visa for Entrepreneurship to allow anyone to create a company in the EU; a single legal form for European companies; and a European incubator programme.

Hero(es)	My sisters
Start up capital	Venture capital
Growth rate p.a	300%
Mentor(s)	My investors
Can you code?	No
Employees	9
Education / Training	Business
Product / Service	Childcare website



Entrepreneurs are useful to society because we change the world! We improve the everyday life of millions of people.





The former
Yugoslav Republic
of Macedonia

Goce Armenski & Ljupcho Antovski

iVote d.o.o.



We set up iVote to provide specialist solutions for election modernisation technologies, e-learning systems and e-commerce solutions. Our most popular product, Demokra, is a state-of-the-art election management platform that has been used by electoral commissions in our country, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Kosovo and Ecuador and has processed a total of 107 million voters worldwide. The outstanding benefit of the platform is that it enables new democracies to have more efficient and more transparent elections (the proof being that iVote won the European Venture Contest 2013 ICT award).

I'd like to see the teaching of entrepreneurship at all levels; the establishment of more business support centres (incubators; science parks; clusters etc.); and the introduction of government guarantees for start up funding.

Hero(es)	Visionaries who follow their dreams
Start up capital	Own
Growth rate p.a	360%
Mentor(s)	No
Can you code?	Yes
Employees	12
Education / Training	IT
Product / Service	Voting management software



Entrepreneurs are key to society because we are the source of innovation, of products and services that create wealth and we improve the competitiveness of the economy.





Greece

Marco Veremis

Upstream



My partner Alex Vraskides and I had the vision to make mobile a mainstream marketing medium 12 years ago. MINT, our marketing technology platform delivers the highest conversion rates in the industry. We have advertised goods to over 700 million consumers with close to 100 million making a purchase. We are connected in 40 countries and 23 languages and we are increasingly focused on the emerging markets where we can offer services that have a huge impact on local communities such as English lessons or health alerts.

I would lower tax rates for start ups; modernise intellectual property rules; and develop partnerships between leading universities and start up communities across Europe.

Hero(es)	My father
Start up capital	Business angels
Growth rate p.a	28.4%
Mentor(s)	No
Can you code?	Yes
Employees	157
Education / Training	International and EU politics
Product / Service	Online marketing services



Entrepreneurs are important to society because we create jobs. The best of us fuel progress in people's everyday lives through truly innovative products and services.





Croatia

Vibor Cipan

UX Passion



Digital technology (and a grant from the Croatian Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Crafts) has enabled us to express ourselves in a very creative and meaningful way. Our most popular product is 'Wall of Tweets', a simple and engaging Twitter wall solution that enables people attending events to share their tweets in real time on a big wall. We have also developed a number of smaller helper apps for Twitter list management, search engine optimisation and data analytics, as well as a framework for dashboard-like data representation. We enable people to interact with each other, to share, to enjoy, to express themselves and realise their potential. For us, it's all about the people.

For entrepreneurs to succeed we need to lower taxes and social security contributions; reduce bureaucracy; and listen to entrepreneurs.

Hero(es)	My team and best friend
Start up capital	Own
Growth rate p.a	65%
Mentor(s)	No
Can you code?	Yes
Employees	12
Education / Training	Astrophysics
Product / Service	Social media analytics



Entrepreneurs have a positive impact on everyone's life: we have the potential to contribute, grow, develop and inspire people.





Hungary

Tivadar Limbacher

Ma este Színház! (Theatre Tonight!)



At first I was simply curious whether my idea of selling last minute affordable tickets for theatre performances would really make hundreds of thousands of people happier. It turned out that the answer was yes! Nowadays (and with the support of the European Entrepreneurship Foundation) Theatre Tonight! operates in eight different Hungarian cities and we sell more than 150,000 tickets annually. Also, we recently expanded to last minute concert tickets with the launch of Ma este Koncert! For me, the key benefit of digital technology is that it allows you to start up with limited funds.

European governments, please make it easier to set up and run a company; create a one-stop-shop for aspiring entrepreneurs; and give tax breaks for entrepreneurs rather than complex government funding arrangements! This will help Europe in reaching its 2020 targets.

Hero(es)	My grandmother
Start up capital	Own
Growth rate p.a	327%
Mentor(s)	Zsolt Kalocsai and Peter B. Zaboji
Can you code?	No
Employees	4
Education / Training	Sociology
Product / Service	Entertainment applications

“ Entrepreneurs are important to society because we dare to innovate, drive change, create employment and generally create new wealth. ”



Ireland

Pat Phelan

Trustev Ltd



My last business was badly hit by fraud; when I couldn't find any security solutions to fit my needs, my co-founder Chris Kennedy and I decided to build our own system. We now offer businesses a modern, robust solution to online fraud that saves them money and allows them to concentrate on building their own business. Digital technology allows us to solve real problems for real people, on an unprecedented scale.

I am grateful for the help we have had (and continue to have) from Enterprise Ireland both in terms of funding and access to new markets – in fact I have just moved to New York to lead our US expansion.

Hero(es)	Liam Casey
Start up capital	Own; Wayra– Telefonica's Global startup accelerator; Enterprise Ireland
Mentor(s)	Yes
Can you code?	No
Employees	20
Product / Service	Digital security



Entrepreneurs are important to society because we shape it; we are disruptors, we change the world, solving real problems for real people.





Israel

Shai Newman

Compedia Ltd



We have built Compedia up (using grants and R&D co-operation including the FP7 and Intel programmes) to be the leader in supplying products for the global market of education, serious games, e-learning and e-health, so that we give our customers advanced, cost effective and differentiated solutions. I'm especially excited by our new product developments that help children with autism and diabetes.

If you ask me what is needed to expand enterprise, I would say more resources for R&D, IP protection and international marketing; plus the creation of an environment (for example, more open markets and better access to finance) that truly supports SMEs like ours.

Hero(es)	Winston Churchill
Start up capital	Own
Growth rate p.a	58%
Mentor(s)	Advisers rather than mentors
Can you code?	Yes
Employees	55
Education / Training	IT
Product / Service	E-learning



Entrepreneurs are important to society because we have drive and energy to motivate, to create ideas and solutions in a way it is difficult to do in larger companies.





Iceland

Georg Ludviksson

Meniga



Meniga was started to help people manage their personal finances better so that they could make the most of their money. I also hope it inspires them to think about their finances and improve their financial literacy. Digital technology (plus a local R&D grant and R&D tax credits) made it easier for us to expand onto a global stage.

As for helping other entrepreneurs like me, I would recommend tax incentives for early stage start ups; fast track immigration permits so that start ups can compete for global talent; and the creation of a really 'great' business environment through flexible labour markets and light touch regulation.

Hero(es)	Humble and generous people
Start up capital	Savings
Growth rate p.a	266%
Mentor(s)	Advisers rather than mentors
Can you code?	Yes
Employees	80
Product / Service	Online financial services



Entrepreneurs are great role models because we work hard to improve the world though innovation; taking risks to have a positive impact on society.





Italy

Gianpiero Oddone

Officine CST S.p.A.



I started Officine because I saw an overlooked market opportunity, the lack of specialised IT platforms and skills to manage credit. Today, the company is a one-stop credit management solution that increases our clients' liquidity by simplifying the reconciliation and recovery process. We then identify investors interested in buying the credit.

As for policies that would increase European enterprise: the keys are simplification and reduction of red tape; lower corporate tax rates and employee contributions for the first 3 to 5 years of a start up's life; and better value borrowing through government guarantees.

Hero(es)	Larry Page and Sergey Brin
Start up capital	Family and associates
Growth rate p.a	68%
Mentor(s)	No
Can you code?	No
Employees	60
Education / Training	Legal and banking
Product / Service	Financial services software



Entrepreneurs are important to society because they introduce innovation in products and processes, create wealth and employment and improve the balance of trade.





Lithuania

Milda Mitkute

Vinted



Vinted was born when I tried to solve my own wardrobe problem: a closet full of clothes, but still nothing to wear. My vision was to bring everyone together so we could share our treasures with each other. We aimed to bring technology to the pre-loved fashion industry and solve the customer's problems of discovery and transaction. Using Vinted, women can buy and sell their pre-loved clothing and find great clothes that others have for sale. By integrating shipping, payments and instant messaging services, we connect sellers and buyers, offering them a very smooth and friendly trading experience.

The best way to grow more entrepreneurs like me would be to create a network of successful entrepreneurs to share their knowledge.

Hero(es)	My team and my friends
Start up capital	Own
Growth rate p.a	117%
Mentor(s)	No
Can you code?	No
Employees	117
Education / Training	PR
Product / Service	Online fashion marketplace



Entrepreneurs are important to society because our "out of the box" thinking changes the world.





Luxembourg

Thibaut Britz

Trendiction S.A.



I started Trendiction because I am passionate about social media and I love building things. My co-founder and I have developed a series of powerful and user-friendly tools (with some help from business angels, private equity and Luxinnovation, a local government programme), that give our customers unique insight into their internet presence; which in turn allows them to react faster, better and more accurately to consumer feedback, resulting in better products. Our most popular product, Talkwalker, was rated one of the top five best social media monitoring tools and online reputation management tools globally in 2013.

If I were in charge of enterprise policy, I would select a handful of entrepreneurs and support them for a year while they develop their ideas.

Hero(es)	Mark Zuckerberg
Start up capital	Own
Mentor(s)	Yes
Can you code?	Yes
Employees	42
Education / Training	Computing
Product / Service	Social media analytics



Entrepreneurs are important to society because we bring new ideas, hope, vision and change.





Latvia

Uldis Leiterts

Infogr.am

infogr.am



My co-founder, Raimonds Kaze, and I had the idea to set up Infogr.am after we made customised data visualisations for the European Commission, the weekly analytical magazine Iq, and the Latvian Institute. With a rising demand for interactive infographics, we developed data visualisation software for non-designers. It is used by millions of journalists, activists, teachers and students around the world, including The Huffington Post, Al Jazeera, and Amnesty International. Our goal is to empower people to tell stories with data. If the internet had not existed, I would have had to invent it – but I would have given it a different name.

As Minister in charge of SMEs and start ups, I would make Latvia a digital hub for start ups by reducing tax rates, cutting red tape and co-financing participation in accelerator programmes.

Hero(es)	Family, friends, history
Start up capital	Venture Capital
Mentor(s)	Yes
Can you code?	Yes
Employees	25
Education / Training	Graphic design
Product / Service	Data visualisation software



Entrepreneurs are important to society because we create growth, innovation and success stories; we are driven to try again even if success is not immediate.





Montenegro

Anton Jurovicki

Montepass D.O.O.



We started Montepass because we are passionate about digital innovation and what it can offer businesses and consumers alike. Our flagship platform, Zaposli, is a job seeking website that brings employers and jobseekers in Montenegro together in one convenient place. Our vision is that Zaposli becomes an employment hub for the whole region.

If I were in charge of enterprise policy, I would sponsor business incubators; organise competitions to encourage digital innovation; and make sure entrepreneurship is taught in all schools at the earliest opportunity.

Hero(es)	Steve Jobs
Start up capital	Own
Mentor(s)	Yes
Can you code?	Yes
Employees	7
Education / Training	IT
Product / Service	Online jobs marketplace



Entrepreneurs are important to society because we bring positive change and help people become more independent and free in their thinking.





Malta

Claudine Cassar

Alert Group



We created the Alert Group (benefiting along the way from the Business Promotion incentives in Malta that gave tax breaks to investors) to offer customers a range of ICT and marketing services which help our clients transform themselves; improve their workflows; and grow their customer base. We stand out from our competitors because we leverage the business experience and marketing know-how of our workforce to maximise the benefits of technology for the client. I have built my business around the internet and I am profoundly grateful that I was around at the right time but if it had not existed I would have found something else to do.

The single most effective thing that would encourage European entrepreneurs would be to improve access to finance. That's the real key to growth.

Start up capital	Bank
Growth rate p.a	20%
Mentor(s)	More of a sounding board
Can you code?	Yes
Employees	50
Education / Training	ICT and marketing
Product / Service	ICT and marketing services



Entrepreneurs are important to society because we foster innovation and create jobs.





Netherlands

Petra van Schayik

Compumatica Secure Networks BV



I joined Compumatica because I want the IT world to be secure; a world where government, businesses and citizens can operate with confidence and safety. Compumatica stands out in cybersecurity because of our personal touch: our high level IT security solutions ensure that nobody but the customer has access to the key material. My immediate goal is to find new investment (we have already received funding from Dutch R&D programmes) to develop new products and ultimately to create more user awareness of IT applications and IT security.

If I were Minister for SMEs, I would make sure they got a bigger share of the public procurement markets; and I would make it cheaper for them to employ people.

Start up capital	Family
Growth rate p.a	10%
Mentor(s)	Yes
Can you code?	No
Employees	45
Education / Training	Technical business administration
Product / Service	Digital security



Entrepreneurs are important to society because we power the economy, create interesting jobs, develop new products and take risks.





Norway

Kim Daniel Arthur

Superplus

Superplus



We started Superplus (with the help of the government start up fund “Innovation Norway”) because we wanted to use our experience from gaming, teaching and research to improve the lives of children with special needs. Our products were designed using the “child first” principle; focusing on creating engaging, motivating and playful experiences that can be customised to the child’s needs. Superplus enables children with special needs to communicate and interact with the world around them; to express themselves and share their emotions; build relationships and get a sense of mastery over their lives.

It would help entrepreneurs if funding programmes were easier to understand and to apply for; and were more readily available. Keep removing those barriers!

Hero(es)	Kristian Segerståle
Start up capital	Own and investment from Innovation Norway
Mentor(s)	Yes
Can you code?	Yes
Employees	3
Education / Training	Gaming industry
Product / Service	E-learning



Entrepreneurs are important because we can go and challenge the status quo, we can truly make the world a better place; more open, more tolerant and more connected.





Poland

Patryk Strzelewicz

Game Technologies



© Vitālijs Stīrnieks, "Dienas Bizness"

At Game Technologies, we strive to invent and create products that do not exist in the market. In the last few years, we have achieved this twice. Our lead product is the most technologically advanced game controller in the world called DICE+. The dice is used to play interactive board games on a tablet or computer. The dice itself is a tiny device (only 25 grams in weight) packed with 60 individual components, all of which are produced in the European Union. We are one of a few hundred companies that will receive an R&D grant this year from the EU.

If I were Minister for SMEs and start ups, I would consistently promote the gaming industry, especially at international trade fairs.

Hero(es)	My father
Start up capital	Own and private investor
Mentor(s)	Yes
Can you code?	No
Employees	120
Education / Training	Engineering
Product / Service	Gaming



Entrepreneurs are important to society because we create the most jobs, design numerous innovative products and inspire new businesses to develop more companies.





Portugal

Nuno Da Cruz Sebastiao

Feedzai



We develop and supply software that detects fraud up to 30% earlier than traditional methods. Fraud prevention is an increasing challenge in an age of big data and we make a difference by using the latest technology and data sources. We started with EU funding and were able to raise considerably more venture capital, but not as much as our US competitors where the availability and scale of venture capital dwarfs what we have in Europe.

If I were in charge of start up and SME policy, I would scrap the bureaucracy around access to funding; and I would do a better job of marketing European high-tech companies to the rest of the world.

Hero(es)	Thomas Edison
Start up capital	EU funding
Growth rate p.a	67%
Mentor(s)	Many
Can you code?	Yes
Employees	43
Education / Training	Computing
Product / Service	Fraud prevention software



Entrepreneurs are important to society because we create new markets, disrupt old ones and create jobs.





Romania

Bogdan Padiu

Ymens



I want to transform society through technology so I set up Romania's first and only cloud broker. We offer business solutions in the cloud via a platform that acts like a one-stop-shop for both businesses and public bodies. Our platform stands out because our customers can choose from a wide range of cloud applications and business services, whether IT outsourcing, security or maintenance support, according to their needs. Our challenge is to continue to educate the SME market on the benefits of cloud technology because the potential is huge.

If I were in charge of SME growth, I would make it easier and cheaper for them to pay their taxes; I would increase European funding for developing cloud solutions and make it easier to access that funding; and I would ensure that SMEs have equal access to government procurement markets.

Hero(es)	People are my greatest inspiration
Start up capital	Own and bank loan
Growth rate p.a	40%
Mentor(s)	Yes
Can you code?	Yes
Employees	60
Education / Training	IT and business development
Product / Service	Cloud computing



Entrepreneurs are important to society because we have the determination and the creativity to transform it through innovation and drive the economy forward.

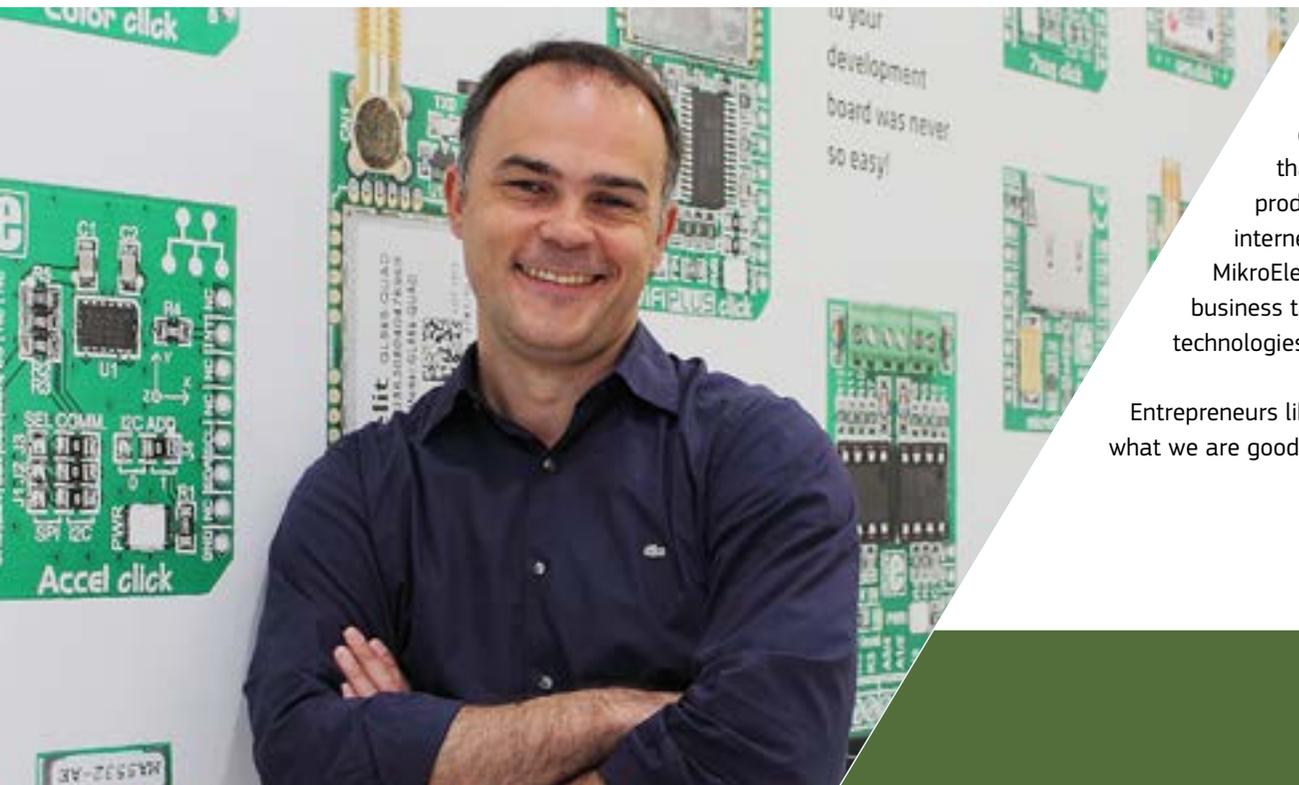




Serbia

Nebojsa Matic

MikroElektronika



I founded MikroElektronika ten years ago because I wanted to provide software and hardware tools that would save engineers time. We offer entire development tool chains for all major microcontroller architectures that are easy to use and offer complete solutions, unlike many other products on the market today. Even though electronics predated the internet, it would have been much harder for me to set up and grow MikroElektronika without it. In fact, I believe that starting and growing a business takes just 5% of the effort required before the web and digital technologies were available.

Entrepreneurs like me should be left alone by government to get on with what we are good at.

Start up capital	Savings
Growth rate p.a	30%
Mentor(s)	No but wish I had
Can you code?	Yes
Employees	60
Education / Training	Electronics
Product / Service	Engineering hardware and software



Entrepreneurs are important to society because we prove that it can be done.





Sweden

Anna Gullstrand

Fröjd Interactive

Fröjd



I set up Fröjd because I felt strongly that there was a better way of conducting business – a way that would benefit both clients and employees. Fröjd creates e-commerce solutions, websites, campaign sites and mobile applications that support our customers in achieving their objectives. Our vision is to be “The Web Agency of the Future”, an ongoing challenge that means we must stay curious, alert and ahead of market trends. This gives us valuable insights and new business areas to explore, and keeps us on our toes. I believe I am an entrepreneur at heart, regardless of what the digital era has given us, but I believe the dynamics of the industry have helped me grow faster.

My shopping list for further improvements in enterprise promotion would be: subsidise broadband and computers to minimise socio-economic gaps; add programming to the school curriculum; establish more accelerator programmes; and free Wi-Fi in public areas.

Hero(es)	Astrid Lindgren
Mentor(s)	No
Can you code?	No
Employees	14
Education / Training	Digital communications
Product / Service	Digital communications



Entrepreneurs like me are important to society because we are driven by change and progress, to find solutions to everyday problems and long-term challenges.





Slovakia

Andrej Glézl

Datamolino s.r.o.



I started Datamolino because I wanted small businesses to have the same access to technology as large ones. Datamolino is a platform for accountants, that processes invoices and receipts sent in any format and exports the extracted data into any accounting software thereby saving time and money. The growth potential for our platform is huge with some 16 billion 'unstructured' invoices in Europe alone. We benefited hugely from being part of Telefonica's Wayra acceleration programme that helped us get to market quickly and gave us access to a large customer base.

That ecosystem of entrepreneurs, a skilled workforce and investors are essential to the growth of the economy and government needs to ensure that all the conditions are in place for such ecosystems to thrive.

Hero(es)	Nelson Mandela
Start up capital	Investors and acceleration programme (Wayra)
Mentor(s)	Yes
Can you code?	No
Employees	19
Education / Training	Lawyer
Product / Service	Accountancy software



Entrepreneurs are important to society because we drive innovation, creating products that add value through material benefits, savings or unique experiences.





Slovenia

Renata Kišek

Retro d.o.o.



We originally set up RETTRO to provide complex IT services to large companies. With the help of ESF and JAPTI research funding, we have since diversified into developing web-based products and services applicable for mobile devices. RETTRO's latest product is a mobile application called Notify. Notify is a revolutionary new system of conveying content through sound code, undetectable by a human ear. FLY messages are broadcast by TV and radio stations, event and concert managers, organisations, restaurants, shops etc. to consumers who want additional information related to the programme they are watching; the shows they are attending; the shops they are visiting. Looking ahead, the challenges for RETTRO are to continue to create new innovative products and access new markets.

Start ups and small firms in general would most benefit from a tax regime that encourages investment in R&D and from more flexible employment rules.

Hero(es)	Honest and fair people
Start up capital	Savings and ESF/JAPTI investment
Growth rate p.a	33%
Mentor(s)	No
Can you code?	Yes
Employees	11
Education / Training	Mathematics
Product / Service	Marketing/retail applications



Entrepreneurs are important to society because we create jobs, develop the economy, bring new ideas, discover new businesses and boost the local community.





Turkey

Atilla Altay

Ekapici İnternet Hizmetleri Sanayi Ve Ticaret Ltd. ŞTi.



I started Ekapici because I love e-commerce. We are currently the only online takeaway ordering service in Turkey that delivers orders in 30 minutes and that has low minimum delivery costs. We save people time and money. We have just secured investment to expand in İzmir, and we hope to set up franchises in Ankara and Istanbul within the next three years.

If I were in charge of start ups and SMEs, I would ensure that they had access to decent investment so they could make their dreams happen.

Hero(es)	Hakan Bas
Start up capital	Family and bank
Growth rate p.a	100%
Mentor(s)	No
Can you code?	No
Employees	9
Education / Training	Mechanical Engineering
Product / Service	Online takeaway services



Entrepreneurs like me are important to society because we innovate; we help construct the national economy and create a broad vision for our country.





United Kingdom

Polly Gowers

Everyclick



I wanted to create a company whose product was money for charity. With help from family and friends, and then later angel investment and local government funding, we built a website and search engine that allows people to donate whilst shopping on line. With 'Give as you Live' you can shop with over 3500 retailers and raise funds for the charity of your choice. The products don't cost any more as the retailer makes the donation. Close to £5million has been given to the charity sector. The internet is a delivery channel that provides an opportunity to scale much faster and aim much higher.

I would make Seed Funding and incubator space more readily available to start ups; I would link all funding to a Mentor Network; and I would reduce red tape.

Hero(es)	Margaret Thatcher
Start up capital	Family and friends
Growth rate p.a	104%
Mentor(s)	No
Can you code?	No
Employees	20
Education / Training	Business
Product / Service	Online fundraising



Entrepreneurs like me are important to society because we create the businesses of tomorrow that will change the world and ensure a healthy and attractive jobs market.





Educating the Entrepreneurs of Tomorrow

Lesson Plan



Educating the Entrepreneurs of Tomorrow

The digital economy has the potential to grow and create jobs at unprecedented levels. According to recent research*, start up rates can be increased by as much as 20% by providing more entrepreneurship education at school. We need the younger generation to learn to create value in the digital economy and embrace the opportunities that abound in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Closer, real-world co-operation between education and business /industry is key to helping young people develop entrepreneurial competences and 'switch on' to innovation.

The Entrepreneurial School

The Entrepreneurial School is a project co-financed by the EU's Competitiveness & Innovation Programme with a consortium of 15 international partners. The lead partner is JA-YE Europe. The Entrepreneurial School project aims to give teachers a diverse range of tools and methods that support entrepreneurial learning. We have 4,000 teachers involved, in 18 different countries, who have access to best practice that has been developed over many years. "The Virtual Guide to Entrepreneurial Learning" – www.tesguide.eu – is a database of shared materials and tools to speed up the implementation of entrepreneurship in schools.

The following pages show you ways this Secrets of Success brochure can be used as part of your entrepreneurship lesson planning.

Helpful hint:

You are encouraged to look at The Entrepreneurial School TES website and explore the Virtual Guide with more than 100 different tools and methods to encourage entrepreneurial learning.

www.tesguide.eu

*The Effects of Education and Training in Entrepreneurship

- A long-term study of JA Sweden Alumni labour potential and business enterprise.

Karl Wennberg and Niklas Elert.

Sample lesson plan for students aged 14-18

“Mini Innovation Camp”

How well do your students understand the innovation processes that are propelling modern technologies? Do they know what skills they need in order to participate in and contribute to the 21st century fast-pace and high-tech economy?

Try to introduce your students to the concept of being an entrepreneur – and in particular, the kind of entrepreneur who cares about technology and understands what it takes to build and grow a successful web-based business.

The inspirational entrepreneurs in this ‘Secret of Success’ brochure tell the story of how they are embracing digital technology to help their own and other new businesses to thrive.

20 minutes

Let the students look at the ‘Secret of Success’ brochure and let them individually pick and read four or five of the profiles of the digital entrepreneurs. After the students have spent 10 – 15 minutes reading, stop them and ask a few questions:

- Which of the entrepreneurs impressed them?
- Which entrepreneur had the best idea?
- Of the ones they read about, which one would they prefer to work with?

Make sure you leave enough time for your students to be innovative, creative and to think outside the box. Your main challenge will be to motivate and encourage your students at the start.

Helpful hint:

A teacher can do the following exercise, but a combination of a teacher and a business volunteer involved in the digital sector doing it together is the preferred solution. Ensuring that schools are engaging with outside partners is not just a good thing, it's essential if we want to realise young people's potential as entrepreneurs and ensure they are relevant in the job market of the future.

20 minutes

Now you will move into a brainstorming session with the whole class. The brainstorming is about what entrepreneurs, like the ones in this book, need to consider when running their businesses. Discuss with the students the basic rules of brainstorming:

- No judgment or criticism about ideas
- Encourage wild ideas
- It is OK to build on the ideas of others
- Record all the ideas (make sure you have someone in the group writing everything down)
- Look for quantity (lots of ideas)

Involve the whole class by splitting them into groups of 5-6.

Using different brainstorming techniques can help you involve all the students:

- **Freewheeling:** Group members call out their ideas spontaneously and the writer records everything.
- **Round Robin:** The writer asks each person for an idea; a person can say “pass” if they can’t think of anything, but there should be several rounds in order to give everyone a chance to contribute and generate as many ideas as possible.
- **Silent Brainstorming:** Everyone writes their ideas on a post-it note and hands them into the writer. This process can be done more than once in order to get as many ideas as possible.
- **Reverse Brainstorming:** Think about all the things that would NOT work. Make a list and then think of how you could turn all those negatives into positives.

In brainstorming, it is OK to build on the ideas of others. You can encourage the students to write all the ideas on flip charts and let them briefly present them to the others. The different groups are allowed to “steal” from each other for the second round.

You can find more about brainstorming and creativity in the “Virtual Guide to Entrepreneurial Learning”

– www.tesguide.eu

Helpful hint:

Try using a deck of 52 creativity cards:
www.tesguide.eu/tool-method/creative-cards.htm

60 minutes

The challenge you give to the groups

Take your students on a little journey through time and give them the challenge:

- Imagine that the context is 2022.
- Imagine that you (the group) are running a very successful business within the digital sector.
- Imagine that back in 2014/2015, you read an inspirational 'Secrets of Success' brochure, which told stories about successful digital entrepreneurs.

Involve the whole class by splitting them into groups of five/six in each group.

You were inspired by how new digital technologies such as mobile & social solutions, data analytics, cloud computing, digitisation of manufacturing and design, prototyping and testing offered a range of new opportunities for you to set up your own business.

You looked into the creation of new business services in the knowledge economy, but also in the supply chain of new digital products and services and in the area of smart and efficient use of IT.

Since you are now running a very successful business within one or more of these areas: come up with all the reasons why your business is booming in this context!

After your introduction and 15 minutes of brainstorming, you can ask the students to try to cluster their ideas. They can try to put every idea into one of the categories to the right, which is something that every successful business needs to address:

- Price
- Financing
- Product
- Location
- Employees
- Image / Brand
- Target customers

You can explain that every entrepreneur needs to think about the elements in the list above.

These are the elements of a business plan.

Ask your students to write in a few sentences their 'key concepts'. It might be several, ask them to write them on a flip chart and encourage all the groups to share their key concepts with each other. Maybe they can add elements from the other groups.

Homework activity

Ask your students to look up a 'business plan' on the internet as a homework assignment. Ask them to see if there is anything there that they did not come up with on their own list.

Next session - 120 minutes

The Innovation Competition

Make sure all the ideas from the last session are visible in the room.

Let the students 'apply' to one of the ideas and create groups around the ideas. Try to limit the number in each group to a maximum of five students. From now, it is about coming up with one idea, developing a short concept paper and presenting the idea in front of the others.

The Task

"We are back in 2022, same context and situation. You will now create the new business idea."

Describe the business idea; write a short concept paper describing the business they run and why it is so successful. Prepare a presentation and a short 'pitch', a convincing 2 minute presentation.

The concept paper can include:

- The name of the team members
- A short description of the idea (max 100 words)
- **Innovation** - describe why the solution is innovative (max 100 words)
- **Resources** - where do you see the need for the idea? What key resources do you need to realise your idea? (max 50 words)
- **Target group** - who will use/benefit from the solution? (max 50 words)

A competition?

If possible, make it more challenging and exciting by arranging for an "external audience" – a neighbouring class, other teachers or even the school director, who could act as the 'jury'.

The jury should review the concept paper first and then watch the presentations.

The 2-minute presentation should aim to convince others about why their idea will be successful, and why it will help to create more jobs in the digital world.

Testimonials

Andrija

Teacher from Serbia



My experience with the Company Programme is that teachers and students find it is the best way of learning about entrepreneurship and gaining entrepreneurial skills.

This programme is, from its essence, totally about bridging the gap between the educational system and the reality of the business world.

Kasia

Teacher from Germany



For me it's an ingenious idea.

I've already started to use the tools and methods at the school where I work, because I found it difficult for my students to think in a creative way and to discuss and search for solutions. They should deal with such activities as often as possible! Thanks :-)

Ben

Teacher from Slovenia



The materials can be used regularly in the learning process. It helps to develop thinking, intellect and creativity.

The methods are very well described and will be useful to everyone during the school year.

About JA-YE Europe

www.ja-ye.org

JA-YE Europe is Europe's largest provider of entrepreneurship education programmes, currently reaching 3.2 million students in 39 countries.

Funded by businesses, institutions, foundations and individuals, JA-YE brings the public and private sectors together to provide young people in primary and secondary schools and early university with experiences that promote the skills, understanding and perspective that they will need to succeed in a global economy.

The JA-YE Company Programme is recognised by the European Commission Enterprise Directorate General as a 'Best Practice in Entrepreneurship Education'.

JA-YE Europe is the European Regional Operating Centre for JA Worldwide®.





Business Support on Your Doorstep

What support can you get from Europe?

Are you looking for help to set up or expand your enterprise? The European Commission assists small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) through networks and business support measures, such as:

The Enterprise Europe Network

The Enterprise Europe Network offers support and advice to European SMEs. The Network is made up of around 600 partner organisations in 50 countries. It is Europe's largest business and technology network. Partners include chambers of commerce, enterprise agencies, regional development organisations, research institutes, universities, technology centres and innovation centres. Strongly rooted in local communities and regions across Europe, the Network provides information on EU legislation and funding, helps companies find business partners, especially in other countries, and offers advice on how to develop an innovative idea.

To find out more, visit:
<http://een.ec.europa.eu/>

Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs

Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs is a cross-border exchange programme which gives new or aspiring entrepreneurs the chance to learn from experienced entrepreneurs running small businesses in other European Union countries. The exchange of experience takes place during a stay with the experienced entrepreneur, which helps the new entrepreneur acquire the skills needed to run a small business and get to know the market of another European country. The host benefits from fresh perspectives on his/her

business and gets the opportunity to co-operate with foreign partners or learn about new markets.

The stay is partially funded by the European Union.

To find out more, visit:
www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu

Access to Finance

The Commission is helping small businesses to overcome financial market weaknesses, mostly by working together with various financial institutions to provide them with funding. The goal is to increase the opportunities for small businesses to obtain finance from banks, guarantee providers and venture capital funds.

To find out more, visit:
www.access2finance.eu

The European Progress Microfinance Facility (EPMF)

The EPMF provides micro-credit to small and micro-enterprises, and to people who have lost their jobs and want to start their own small businesses.

To find out more, visit:
<http://bit.ly/progressmicrofinance>

European Small Business Portal

Do you want to find out what the EU does to boost small businesses in Europe and on the global market, and what it can do for your business? This portal gathers together all the information provided by the EU on and for SMEs, ranging from practical advice to policy issues, from local contact points to networking links.

To find out more, visit:
<http://ec.europa.eu/small-business>

Your Europe Business

Your Europe Business portal gives individuals and businesses practical information on their rights and opportunities in the EU as a whole and in the individual Member States, including information on national funding opportunities.

To find out more, visit:
<http://ec.europa.eu/youreurope/business>

Women Entrepreneurship Portal

The Commission has set up this portal specifically devoted to the promotion of women's entrepreneurship. This women's entrepreneurship portal aims at providing links to the websites of women entrepreneurs' representative organisations, networks, projects and events that relate to the promotion of female entrepreneurship.

To find out more, visit:
<http://j.mp/womenentrepreneurship>

Network of Mentors for Women Entrepreneurs

The Mentors Network provides advice and support to women entrepreneurs on the start up, running and growth of their enterprises in the early phase of their life. The network covers 17 European countries.

To find out more, visit:
<http://j.mp/enmwe-contact>

Enterprise & Industry Magazine

The Enterprise & Industry online magazine (<http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/magazine>) covers issues related to SMEs, innovation, entrepreneurship, the single market for goods, competitiveness, environmental protection, industrial policies across a wide range of sectors and more.

The printed edition of the magazine is published three times a year.

You can subscribe online - <http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/magazine/print-edition/subscription> to receive it in English, French, German or Italian - free of charge by post.

- **European SME Week**
<http://ec.europa.eu/sme-week>
- **Erasmus for Entrepreneurs**
<http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/promoting-entrepreneurship/erasmus-entrepreneurs>
- **Enterprise Europe Network**
www.enterprise-europe-network.ec.europa.eu
- **European Small Business Portal**
<http://ec.europa.eu/small-business>
- **Your Europe Portal**
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<http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/business-environment/smooth-transfer>

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http://ec.europa.eu/represent_en.htm
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 - by contacting the Europe Direct service
http://europa.eu/eurodirect/index_en.htm
or calling 00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11
(freephone number from anywhere in the EU) (*).

(* The information given is free, as are most calls (though some operators, phone boxes or hotels may charge you).

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