

What are the Different Attributes between Entrepreneurs in Australia and New Zealand?

M. Drever^a and H. De Vries^b

^aSouthern Cross University, Coffs Harbour, Code Coffs Harbour, Australia

^bChristchurch College of Education, Christchurch College of Education, code Christchurch, New Zealand
margaret.drever@scu.edu.au

Principal Topic

This paper involved intensive interviews, both in Australia and New Zealand based on the framework developed by Timmons (1996), as to what are the attributes of an entrepreneur and the differences are significant from one country to another. Names of the entrepreneurs were randomly selected from the Business Enterprise Register (BER) located at Southern Cross University (Coffs Harbour - campus) in Australia. The selecting criteria of small enterprises for this study were they had to have more than ten employees and less than twenty employees. Whereas in New Zealand a Christchurch Small Business Database developed at Christchurch College of Education was used to extract a random selection of small enterprises that aligned with the criteria set in Australia. Both regions are regarded as tourist destinations and it is of interest to see whether the entrepreneurs have the similar or different attributes. The purpose of interviewing entrepreneurs, in the Coffs Harbour, New South Wales Australia and comparing them with entrepreneurs in Christchurch, New Zealand, to evaluate potential differences in their attributes.

Both regions have different employment situations. The Australian region studied had a high percentage of unemployment (approximately fourteen per cent). Some of the entrepreneurs commenced their businesses by using their redundancy payments or moved from the metropolitan areas for a better life style. However the New Zealand region of Canterbury has had traditionally low unemployment and the entrepreneurs sampled entered business for family, lifestyle and achievement reasons. All respondents had previous experience in their particular industry prior to entering self employment.

Methodology/Key Propositions

The methodology in both locations was qualitative by interviewing the entrepreneurs of the small enterprises. In Australia the BER randomly selected sixty-three small enterprises, of which the first twelve that responded to being telephoned, were interviewed. All of the interviews were for thirty minutes, and the structure of the interview was formulated from the example from Timmons (1996).

An instrument based on the Australian study was used in Christchurch, New Zealand in which the first twelve randomly selected enterprises that responded favourably to a telephone request were interviewed and here too the entrepreneurs wanted to participate fully to have their views documented to assist others entering into business. In many cases the entrepreneurs in Australia took longer to express some of their concerns and issues that they felt necessary for others to know when starting a new venture. All of the interviews were taped with the permission of the entrepreneurs.

Key propositions studied dealt with the entrepreneurs' strengths and weaknesses. Some of the attributes considered were had did they select employees, what were their personal rewards, who were their advisors and what would they advice would they give for anyone starting out on a new venture.

Results and Implications

As a result of the interviewed entrepreneurs there were clear conclusions made that signified that there were differences and similarities in both regions, as from their comments their strengths and weaknesses were noted, how they selected employees and their advisers and what were personal rewards.

The results of the study will not necessarily have wide application because of the sample size and the limitations of the analysis. Notwithstanding some interesting aspects of entrepreneurship in a regional context were identified and these will form the basis for future and more rigorous research.

The implications are to see over time which enterprises cease to exist and which ones grow. The study also enables further research to be conducted by applying the same parameters in other regions of Australia and New Zealand with the effect that an evaluation can be ongoing by a longitudinal study in the future.

Contact

Margaret Drever. Southern Cross University, Coffs Harbour, Code Coffs Harbour, Australia.
(T) 02 66593176, (F) , Email: margaret.drever@scu.edu.au