

# Innovators and Creators

by Marshall Doak, SOU SBDC Director

It can start with a stray thought or idea. Sometimes through observation it is realized that there must be a better way, or a faster way to accomplish an objective, or some other improvement becomes obvious. New technologies or materials may become available and through investigation, these may be used to come up with new platforms, products, or services. With some refinement and some effort, these new inventions could become truly innovative, and establish themselves in the marketplace, or even create new markets on the cutting edge of the boundary between inspiration and reality. What a great feeling, to ideate or create something new, to build the concept into a realistic business to nurture and grow success! This describes an early-stage entrepreneur engaged in formulating and developing a notion into a successful reality.

To be an entrepreneur is to have a passion for what you do or think up, to have tenacity to build, to educate and convince your audience to adopt your invention and better their lives as a result. What an experience, to be able to grow and develop your idea into a successful business, which will give you the opportunity to control your life and will give you the means to enjoy your work, your company and be a respected contributor to your community. This describes a passionate pioneer and business developer, building value for self, employees, and community.

To call yourself an entrepreneur is to declare that you are motivated, that you have the drive and the critical thinking skills necessary to see your creation all the way to where it is a fully developed entity in its own right. It gives others around you the understanding you are not afraid to learn, to develop and to seek mentorship, and to weather the difficulties in obtaining early-stage financing.

To what end?

Entrepreneurs are the builders who society relies on to continue forward progress. Entrepreneurs are the leaders who work for a better tomorrow for their families, and for the communities they live in and represent. Entrepreneurs are oftentimes the most prosperous people in a town or County, as successful business people should be. Entrepreneurs create lasting value that transfers to the second and third generation. The lessons learned through the years of struggle, of the many pivots made to concepts, products and services come back as wisdom, as respect from peers, and builds the base for creating legacy.

If you are an entrepreneur, then you are an innovator and a creator. You have developed the ability to think outside the norm, to see the world in a different light, a view of not just of what could be but one of determining the future to make it what you vision it could be. Taking the responsibility to work diligently and to find success is a gift that we all have in our inheritance from previous generations, regardless of our provenance. Those who choose to exercise those gifts are true entrepreneurs and visionaries who are leading the way forward for all.

If you are interested in entrepreneurship, then a first step is to look at ideation, or the creative idea generation and critical thinking necessary to form innovations that fuel entrepreneurship. One such opportunity is coming to the RCC White City Campus on Saturday, March 11 for an 'Innovation Jam'

sponsored by InventOr in conjunction with RCC, SOU and the SOU SBDC. Come see College students develop ideas and create solutions to problems while building team goals and products.

A second opportunity is to attend and support the upcoming SOU student Business Plan Competition later this spring. More information regarding this event will be forthcoming in future articles.

One other current effort is a concept for a Regional Innovation Hub is being developed for Jackson and Josephine Counties. The Southern Oregon Regional Innovation Hub is needing continued interest to become a resource for our youth, businesses, K-12 schools, Higher Education and industry to collaborate together to add to the stability and growth of our regional economy.

For mentorship while you are developing your innovative business, and as an entrepreneur involved with the build process, give us a call at: 541-552-8300 and we can give you the support you need for reviews, advice, connections to resources from finance, HR and market acquisition all the way through exporting to other countries.

Happy Innovating!

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***Oregon Small Business Development Centers are funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration, and by the Oregon Business Development Department. All opinions, conclusions or recommendations expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the SBA.***