

BOOK REVIEW

Cases on Arts Entrepreneurship

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ABSTRACT: *Cases on Arts Entrepreneurship* (Tonelli, M., & Heise, A. [Eds.]. [2023]. *Cases on Arts Entrepreneurship*. Edward Elgar Publishing) presents a collection of thirteen case studies that will be much appreciated by professors who teach and students who are studying entrepreneurship in the arts. Each case study exhibits a similar framework: a descriptive narrative that runs between seven and sixteen pages, including references; Teaching Notes that include an abstract, learning outcomes, keyword topics, discussion questions, a seventy-five-minute class plan, and supplemental readings (if any). The editors provide a brief introduction to the book's purpose as well as a seven-page concluding chapter that identifies five themes that emerge across chapters: exposure to the arts at a young age, network and relationship building, kindness and collaboration, financial management, and balancing multiple income streams. **KEYWORDS:** arts entrepreneurship, case studies, arts management, entrepreneurship, arts entrepreneurs. **DOI:** doi.org/10.34053/artivate.12.1.210

Cases on Arts Entrepreneurship presents a collection of thirteen case studies that will be much appreciated by professors who teach and students who are studying entrepreneurship in the arts. Editors Mark Tonelli and Andrew Heise represent two core disciplinary perspectives on the subject—Prof Tonelli is an associate professor in the School of Music at Millikin University and Professor Heise is an assistant teaching professor in the Department of Entrepreneurship and Management at the Henry W. Bloch School of Management at the University of Missouri, Kansas City. Each case study exhibits a similar framework: a descriptive narrative that runs between seven and sixteen pages, including references; Teaching Notes that include an abstract, learning outcomes, keyword topics, discussion questions, a seventy-five-minute class plan, and supplemental readings (if any). The editors provide a brief introduction to the book's purpose as well as a seven-page concluding chapter that identifies five themes that emerge across chapters: exposure to the arts at a young age, network and relationship building, kindness and collaboration, financial management, and balancing multiple income streams.

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The thirteen cases included in this volume examine entrepreneurs across a wide range of artistic disciplines and occupations. Six chapters deal with musicians working in a variety of occupations (such as performer, educator, songwriter, recording producer, arts administrator, and social service provider) in various genres and in assorted organizational settings (freelance, ensemble, for-profit business, nonprofit organization, festival, project and/or individual production; Chapters 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, and 12). An additional case tracks the career and impact of a self-made contemporary chamber opera impresario (Chapter 11).

Other performing arts cases include a choreographer/dancer motivated by a scarcity of suitable and affordable concert venues who decided to address this need by developing an annual showcase festival benefitting many dance companies (Chapter 3). The first of three theater cases examines the career and impact of a theater director who built a career as an institutional entrepreneur aiming to bridge the boundaries between professional commercial theater and amateur academic and community theater to develop a tributary theater system (Chapter 5). A second theater case follows a multi-talented dancer, actor, choreographer, and producer who eventually focused on the occupation of makeup designer (Chapter 7). A third case looks at a trained actor who undertook a career as a law enforcement professional, then combined these two very different professions to pursue a successful career specializing in portraying policemen and detectives on TV and in film (Chapter 13). There is also a visual arts case of two high school friends who developed an interest in pottery-making and decided to create a dual mission enterprise—a coffeehouse and pottery studio (Chapter 1). The last case follows a classroom project in which students from design, marketing, videography, photography, arts entrepreneurship, and arts administration worked with a faculty member to create a student consulting venture to provide creative services to community clients (Chapter 9).

In general, case studies examine real-world phenomena within a set context to determine generalizations, insights, and patterns. These, in turn, support efforts to formulate concepts, construct and test theories, acquire a deeper understanding of a topic, and perhaps deduce knowledge that can be applied to decision-making, educational training, or strategic thinking. The state of research and theorization regarding arts entrepreneurship has not developed to the point where case studies can be used to test theories. But the case studies in this volume add to the literature that will build toward an ability to theorize and conceptualize.

These cases of arts entrepreneurship present a mix of description, explanation, and exploration. Each focuses on the experience of a single individual (or a small group of individuals) over a lengthy period of time. Many cases follow the long career trajectory of its subject. Many of the cases focus on career entrepreneurship of a particular creative individual. A few are more focused on the entrepreneurship development of a business venture or an organization. Details of the life history and occupational development of each specific artist or venture enrich the descriptiveness of the phenomenon of art

entrepreneurship as practiced. The behavior, choices, and opportunities of the individual subjects are treated as explanatory evidence of entrepreneurial activity, opportunity awareness, risk-taking, and adaptation that contribute to the subject's ability to advance, learn, and achieve both artistic and financial rewards.

This set of 13 cases reveals both similarities and differences depending on the context of their specific fields, the social and economic circumstances of the time, and the skills and experiences of a particular entrepreneur. Together this complement of cases expands the exploration of arts entrepreneurship and contributes to a better understanding of this complex phenomenon.

The strength and primary value of *Cases on Arts Entrepreneurship* are the quality and variety of the cases themselves. Also helpful are the Teaching Notes that accompany each case. However, as someone who has taught classes on arts entrepreneurship, I found some of the class plans likely to require more than seventy-five minutes.

The sections that frame the collection—the short introduction to the book and the final chapter identifying common themes—are less well-developed. For example, the theme concerning the balancing of multiple income streams could pay more attention to how income diversity was an outcome of building portfolios of artistic and occupational options, which in turn involved networking and attention to lifelong learning, including the acquisition of financial management skills. The cases provide extensive information about how individual arts entrepreneurs are motivated to find and/or create opportunities both in terms of artistic goals and financial streams. The cases also demonstrate that arts entrepreneurship is a lifelong strategy of sequential as well as consecutive opportunity recognition and development. While the role of happenstance is vividly noticed in the case studies, its relation to the importance of context goes unremarked.

Some of the particularly well-developed cases—such as Diane Ragsdale's study of theater director and producer Margo Jones, Stacey Tirro's study of dancer/choreographer/festival administrator Astrid von Ussar, and Hannah Grannemann's study of opera impresario Beth Morrison—suggest a particular subset of arts entrepreneurs who have a formative impact on a field as well as their own career.

Cases in Arts Entrepreneurship is most likely to be useful as a complement to other books and articles that have tried to further the field by developing frameworks for understanding and studying arts entrepreneurship. It is the integration of conceptualization and case studies that can inform future research, which in turn can facilitate teaching and practicing arts entrepreneurship. *Cases on Arts Entrepreneurship* has made an important contribution in adding to our knowledge of arts entrepreneurs in a variety of creative settings.