

Chapter 1: Making Dreams a Reality

“Dare to live the life you have dreamed for yourself. Go forward and make your dreams come true.”

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

Thank you for picking up *“The Entrepreneur’s Shepherd.”* This guide is your compass, navigating from the germination of an idea to the pinnacle of a profitable business. While many embark on this journey, statistics show that it’s a path where few find success. This book guides that ascent, providing steady support as you surmount obstacles and celebrate accomplishments.

The entrepreneurial spirit of moguls is palpable, yet business reality is unforgiving. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that a mere 10% of start-ups survive the first five years, showcasing the harsh landscape of entrepreneurship. And regarding profitability, only about 40% of surviving start-ups reach that milestone.

These numbers paint a challenging climb. But within these trials lies the true spirit of entrepreneurship - the relentless pursuit of triumph against the odds. But don’t let the statistics deter you. Let them inspire you.

The entrepreneurial path you tread is not merely about endurance; it’s about flourishing and turning your budding concepts into enduring legacies. Let’s bring clarity to these statistics, transforming them from mere figures into lessons of tenacity and strategies for success.

Understanding the common challenges is like having a map in this business adventure story for you, the Entrepreneur. It is critical to navigating rough seas to the safe harbors of success. This journey is more than just having a bright idea or an unyielding passion; it's about stepping into this entrepreneurial adventure equipped with insights, prepared to tackle challenges with well-thought-out strategies, and drawing lessons from those who have journeyed before you.

The rise of start-ups is a testament to an economy brimming with possibilities, reflecting the entrepreneurial spirit alive and well. However, it is crucial to recognize and understand the potential setbacks to building your success story in this competitive marketplace.

Entering the world of start-ups means being prepared for the realities of business. It starts with an idea, but success hinges on much more. Access to this start-up world is built on a thorough understanding of the business landscape. It's about anticipating potential obstacles, recognizing risks that might seem minor but can have significant impacts, and identifying opportunities to drive your business forward.

Now, let's focus on some typical challenges entrepreneurs encounter and how to address them effectively.

Our story often begins with an entrepreneur filled with confidence, armed with an idea and a basic plotline. But beware, this is the illusion of knowledge, a common pitfall where one believes they understand the whole story, only to realize they've just started. This surface-level grasp is often not enough to build a successful business.

Consider this to be understanding your goal but not the steps to achieve it yet. Entrepreneurs may envision their ultimate success, but the path to get there involves navigating complexities and unforeseen challenges.

As an entrepreneur, this is where you must become a voracious learner, recognizing that proper understanding is a multi-dimensional journey through market insights, customer psychology, and the intricate dance of competition and financial stewardship.

Many entrepreneurs think they're ready to launch their venture—they have a plan, some capital, and a belief in their offering. But true preparedness is not just a checklist; it's a thorough understanding of the landscape with a strategy encompassing finance, operations, and marketing.

Effective execution is like being a maestro, ensuring every element of your enterprise performs in harmony. It's a dynamic stage requiring vigilance, agility, and the readiness to rewrite your strategy when the plot demands it.

In this narrative of entrepreneurship, humility and confidence must walk hand in hand. Knowing that execution is a nuanced art and being open to learning and adapting is crucial. With this mindset, you can turn a perilous journey into a successful enterprise.

My entrepreneurial journey didn't begin in the boardroom; it started at dawn, delivering newspapers at age 11. The crisp morning air and the silent streets were my first teachers, instilling a work ethic that's stayed with me through the years. This early start laid a foundation that was as humble as it was significant.

Years later, armed with degrees from Villanova University, I entered the corporate world with a solid theoretical education. Yet, it wasn't until I joined the ranks of IBM and AT&T that the real learning began, translating theory into practice in a world where business acumen was king. Here, the lessons were immediate and often harsh, but always valuable.

However, it was during my tenure at Infonet and the USC School of Business Administration's Executive Management Program that my education truly took form. It blended real-world challenges and management strategies that textbooks don't cover, and lectures can't impart. These experiences were not just lessons but revelations that shaped my career.

As I navigated through the ranks to my first CEO position, these lessons coalesced into a management style that was uniquely my own. This was where the concept of "Morganized" was born—a term a senior executive coined after witnessing my approach to restructuring and energizing teams across the globe. It defines my disciplined, goal-oriented, and compelling style.

Every business I touched was a new canvas, a fresh challenge to apply the "Morganized" principles. Some would say it's an art, but I've always seen it as a craft—a careful balance of strategy and instinct honed by experience.

This book is a testament to those experiences, a compilation of the wisdom from successes and failures. In entrepreneurship, every misstep is a steppingstone to greater understanding, and every triumph is a lesson in what's possible.

Embarking on the entrepreneurial path is as thrilling as it is daunting. As the Entrepreneur-in-Residence at the University of

California at Riverside and San Diego, I initiated an endeavor to structure this journey for the creative and innovative minds in academia. This initiative was named “EPIC” – a beacon for those poised to transition their intellectual property into viable, market-ready products.

EPIC stands for:

Entrepreneurial – It’s where the seeds of enterprise are sown. At EPIC, entrepreneurial spirit isn’t just celebrated; it’s a prerequisite. We kindle the fire of commercial ambition in students and faculty alike, fostering a mindset that transforms thinkers into doers and ideas into actions.

Proof of Concept – The cornerstone of any entrepreneurial venture is validating that an idea is both good on paper and viable in the market. EPIC provides the fertile ground for such validation, offering grants that serve as seed money. These grants are the lifeblood of early-stage prototypes, helping to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

Innovation – At the heart of EPIC is innovation. It’s the currency we trade in, the language we speak. We harness the creative sparks of the University’s intellect and give them a platform to morph into groundbreaking products, services, and technologies.

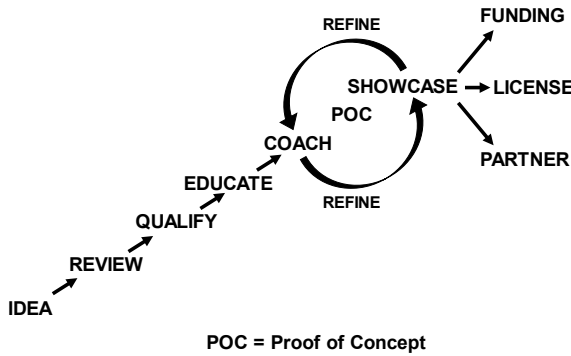
Center – EPIC is not just a program; it’s a nexus where bright minds converge. It’s a hub that brings together the resources, education, guidance, and network necessary to propel intellectual property from the lab’s confines to the marketplace’s dynamism.

Through EPIC, I constructed an ecosystem that supports the entire lifecycle of a start-up – from ideation to pitch. We didn't just hand out funds; we provided a comprehensive education on the nuances of business creation, with insights that will unfold in later chapters. We helped polish ideas into pitches that resonate with investors, sparking interest and investment.

Beyond funding, EPIC's fabric is woven with partnerships and alliances. Corporate sponsors and partnerships have been instrumental in scaling ideas into sustainable ventures. With the Highlander Fund, we've taken it a step further, signaling our deep investment in the potential of our academic community by co-investing with venture capitalists.

All these efforts merge into a singular mission: to facilitate the journey from intellectual conception to commercial realization, ensuring that the brilliance of academic research doesn't merely end as published papers but evolves into enterprises that shape our future. This is the essence of EPIC – an initiative that embodies the full circle of entrepreneurial evolution, offered generously to the students and faculty, nurturing tomorrow's innovators today.

A Proven Commercialization Process



The results were terrific!

We coached and prepared hundreds for pitch contests. We provided millions of dollars in proof-of-concept grants. Start-ups were formed. The University, founders, and initial investors made money. The ecosystem within the university, as well as the community, began to thrive. It is a model that many other universities around the world could replicate.

Achieving my goal of giving back is still a work in progress as I continue to serve on boards for start-ups while mentoring and coaching promising entrepreneurs. Hopefully, *“The Entrepreneur’s Shepherd”* will contribute to your success by helping you avoid a myriad of pitfalls, accelerate your learning curve, and enjoy the experience of building a successful and profitable company.

Who will find value in this narrative of innovation and enterprise? The audience is as varied as the spectrum of business itself.

Aspiring Entrepreneurs

You're on the starting block, dreams in hand, ready to sprint into the future. This book is your training manual, equipping you with the insights to navigate the course. It's here to support those of you in academia, the spirited thinkers and creators ready to transition from ideation to execution.

For The Small Business Owners

This is a toolkit for refinement and rejuvenation. The concepts discussed may mirror the challenges you face daily. I aim to provide fresh tactics to address these familiar foes, helping you to evolve and progress.

Middle Managers

You are often the unsung heroes of the corporate world. Here, you'll discover strategies that may enhance your current operations and serve as a springboard into the world of start-ups, should you choose to take that leap. Your expertise and insight into industry gaps hold the potential to shape the next wave of innovation.

This book is designed to be a companion for all of you. Regardless of the stage you're at or the aspirations you harbor, it seeks to shed light on the path you've chosen. We will undertake a journey together, learning to build businesses and legacies—a journey that promises to be as enlightening as it is exhilarating.

"The Entrepreneur's Shepherd" is more than a book. Each Entrepreneur's story is different. Every challenge is distinct. This

book is intended to be a roadmap, offering proven strategies in a straightforward format.

Each chapter zeroes in on a pivotal action that, when performed adeptly, can raise your odds of success. Each will start with an inspiring quote and dive into the related challenges. I will outline various strategies and potential solutions. I invite you to note concrete actions that can elevate **your** success as you progress through each vital stage of your entrepreneurial journey.

Enriched with personal anecdotes, this book aims to broaden your perspective of real-world success stories with lessons from missteps, statistical evidence, and practical recommendations. It's not about dictating your moves; it's about igniting your thoughts and building upon what you know, thus minimizing wasted efforts and speeding up your educational journey.

I wish you continued success and a productive journey!

LARRY MORGAN