

Preface

This is a best-practices book with a difference.

Yes, we do focus on product exemplars: works of entrepreneurship research excellence that can be examined and emulated. But the difference is that we also focus on people-exemplars: on making the ‘how-to’ skills used by top-tier entrepreneurship researchers explicit.

We have been able to accomplish the task of uncovering the ‘tacit and implicit’ understandings of top-tier researchers, and making these ‘concrete and explicit,’ through the generosity and support of an entire research community. As a result, the Excellence in Entrepreneurship Research Exemplars Initiative has been recognized by the Academy of Management Board of Governors at the 2009 Annual Meeting as an Academy-wide best practice. Thank you to all who have assisted.

Within these pages, and on the companion website (www.researchexemplars.org), you can read and hear the narratives from many contributors, who explain how top-tier research capabilities can be acquired. You can also obtain descriptions of the ‘how-to’ process for publishing work in ten top journals. Why is enabling your access to this previously hard-to-get-at information important to us?

Throughout our careers, we have worked under the assumption, perhaps even the world-view, that there is captive value inherent in human relationships that we can help to release. Our interest in entrepreneurship as a field of research flows from our belief that – in very real ways – entrepreneurs identify and remove the obstacles to the emergence of this inherent value in an economic sense. Moreover, we consider entrepreneurship research itself to be crucial to identifying and removing these obstacles within our society; and we see it as our entrepreneurial role (in the scholarly sense) to help our colleagues remove the obstacles to their capability to produce more top-tier research in our field. This is, therefore, a book about the acquisition and retention of top-tier research capabilities.

These capabilities may productively be conceptualized as the ‘[best practices] whose purpose is to improve the productivity of the other resources’ (Makadok, 2001: 389), or the ‘capacity to deploy *Resources* . . . to effect a desired end’ (Amit and Schoemaker, 1993: 35, emphasis in original). In this sense, top-tier research capabilities are a ‘stock’ of best-practice

behaviors that are enriched by the ‘inflow’ of new and effective practices, and are further enriched by the ‘outflow’ of unproductive assumptions and practices (see Dierickx and Cool, 1989). And since inflows, outflows and capabilities-stock accumulation occur within the scholarly environment, we also see our task as one of helping colleagues to engage this environment constructively. Additionally, then, this is a book about person–environment (P-E) fit.

We therefore begin (Chapter 1) with a broad-brush application of P-E fit concepts to offer a high-level ‘flyby’ of the narratives that have been produced for your use. These narratives are organized in three sections: (1) seven keynote addresses (Chapters 2–8) from leaders in the top-tier entrepreneurship research community; (2) ten editor/author sessions (Chapters 9–18) – where Ron Mitchell, with the help of several co-moderators, engages editors or associate editors from ten top journals which publish entrepreneurship research (see also Exhibit I) and authors who have recently published their work within those journals, to elicit the specific ‘how-to’ process of successfully publishing entrepreneurship research therein; and (3) four appendices (Appendices A–D) which provide access to the context: A: setting the stage, B: building your publishing career, C: worldwide reach, and D: where to from here?

We note that the narratives have been edited for clarity and flow; and so we ask your indulgence where small departures from the spoken narrative have been made to aid the written one. We also note that for ease of access, both the keynotes and the editor/author sessions have been arranged alphabetically (keynotes by contributor’s last name, and editor/author sessions by journal name) instead of in their order of appearance at the Exemplars Conference (Exhibit II).

This book may be experienced in a variety of ways, depending upon web accessibility and time constraints. You may use it as a workbook to assist with note-taking and idea-generation as you experience both video/spoken (via the web: www.researchexemplars.org) and written works in tandem. You may use it as a reference guide, simply to look up what might assist you as you prepare to submit your research: either in trying to decide which journal to target, or – if targeted – how to position your work most effectively for a given journal. Or, you may use this book in a more general way: to gain insight into the top-tier research publishing craft by seeing it through the eyes of those who are presently engaged therein. And there may be other, even more productive ways which you will discover in applying the information we present here. We invite you

to explore each of these possibilities as you examine with us exemplars in entrepreneurship research: in search of research excellence.

Ron Mitchell
Texas Tech University

Rich Dino
University of Connecticut

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