

Entrepreneurial Marketing: Creating a Customer Base

Author John Kalu Osiri. ASIN: B00HPL25ZA. 1st Edition, January 2014. Kindle Edition, 92 pages, \$9.99.
Unleash Publishing, Pullman, WA. <http://jkosiri.tumblr.com/>

Book Reviewer: Francisco Conejo

Dell, Google, Facebook. Just a few examples of billion-dollar companies launched by college students. With employment prospects still shaky, and young, mega-successful entrepreneurs à la Mssr. Zuckerberg inspiring Millennials, starting up a business remains an option for future grads.

Building on his teaching and business experience, author John Kalu Osiri now offers *Entrepreneurial Marketing: Creating a Customer Base*, a primer targeting the more venturesome college students. As the author indicates, p. 1:

"This book is written for those, particularly students, who want to start something new and seek to create a customer base. The content is straight-forward and loaded with information you can put into action immediately. It is short and concise for a reason, because it is written for students who are already slammed with school work and various extra-curricular activities. Nonetheless, whether you are selling merchandise, opening a barber shop near campus, or starting a consulting firm, this book provides practical steps to creating your customer base."

Entrepreneurial Marketing begins with *A Letter from Dr. Osiri*. In it, he explains where this new book fits in regards to the five entrepreneurial processes presented in his previous publication, *Unleashing Your Idea: Steps to a Successful Start*. Specifically, this latter effort helps implement the personal strategy guiding entrepreneurial innovation.

After this introduction come *Entrepreneurial Marketing's* four parts. These address Osiri's *Four E* framework towards building a customer base: *Step 1 – Explore Your Idea*, is about developing a solid product strategy. This chapter discusses, among others, the importance of maintaining a customer focus and evaluating concepts' viability from a market perspective. *Step 2 – Examine Your Idea*, addresses the development of a pricing strategy for the product to be launched. It discusses issues like prototyping and consumer trials; the development of a solid business plan; and obtaining funding. *Step 3 – Exploit the Opportunity*, covers the development of a product distribution strategy. It addresses topics such as taking advantage of market circumstances; the use of different forms of capital; and the importance of ongoing innovation to remain relevant. *Step 4 – Expand the Opportunity*, discusses the development of a promotion strategy to communicate the product's value proposition to an increasingly broader market. It talks about how products catch on (and potential backlashes); different promotional approaches; and offers a series of short entrepreneurial cases and profiles. The book then ends with brief sections on *References* and *Acknowledgements*.

Entrepreneurial Marketing is short and to the point. It is written in straightforward language devoid of technical/academic jargon. The book's style is also candid and personal. It often uses first and second person tenses as if talking directly to readers. *Entrepreneurial Marketing* draws liberally from a variety of sources and is also full of quotes, ranging from Peter Drucker to Dr. Seuss. All the above should make the book appealing to its collegiate target.

However, the ideas presented by *Entrepreneurial Marketing* are by no means groundbreaking. They have been long available in the academic and popular literatures, summarized and repackaged for the present effort. Though more concerning are the book's simplistic, and at times sensationalistic claims lacking any substantive discussion. To illustrate, in an effort to portray entrepreneurial marketing as something new and unique, hence legitimize the book, traditional marketing is criticized for lacking proper consumer research, not being truly customer-oriented, and overly relying on rules of thumb. Ironically, this book ends up doing precisely the latter, offering a rather shallow cookbook-approach towards entrepreneurship.

Regardless of these theoretical limitations, even inaccuracies, Osiri's efforts need to be recognized. On the one hand, *Entrepreneurial Marketing* does cover (albeit lightly) most of the basics. His *Four-E Framework* closely mirrors marketing's Four-Ps. Though by giving each of the latter an entrepreneurial twist, he makes the book focused, relevant and thus useful. On the other hand, and more importantly, is the enthusiasm Osiri conveys. While acknowledging the risks and hardships associated to new ventures, his book champions the benefits and importance of the entrepreneurial spirit, encouraging students to start their own business. This alone is most valuable.