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Collaborative and Competitive Strategies in Virtual Teams of e-Entrepreneurs: A pan-European Perspective

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Abstract

Recent advances in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and the advent of the Internet have facilitated the emergence and growth of collaborative strategies amongst small e-Businesses (Matlay & Westhead, 2005). In addition, during the last decade or so, team-led entrepreneurship has been identified as a highly profitable alternative to single founder entrepreneurship. Recent research suggests that growth oriented, small e-Businesses operating in international e-Markets are more likely to be founded and managed by teams of e-Entrepreneurs (Matlay & Westhead, 2007). In increasingly globalised and hyper-competitive markets, "virtual teams" of e-Entrepreneurs search, discover and exploit new entrepreneurial opportunities. This type of entrepreneurial team consists of geographically dispersed entrepreneurs who are led by common entrepreneurial interests and interact electronically in order to promote interdependent strategies and fulfil entrepreneurial goals. In this article, an illustrative longitudinal case study of a pan-European virtual team of 24 e-Entrepreneur members is used to evaluate emergent collaborative and competitive strategies in small e-Businesses that are lead and managed by members. Collaborative and competitive strategies of e-Businesses are identified and related outcomes are analysed. Future research opportunities are suggested and pertinent policy recommendations are offered.

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