

The USC Marshall Greif Center Entrepreneurship Case Collection

New Releases for 2018

The case collection from the Lloyd Greif Center for Entrepreneurial Studies captures stories of entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship and corporate innovation. From Southern California startups to a Bogota business incubator to a rising Beijing smartphone maker, these cases feature the narratives of innovators who are changing the rules for building new ventures.



Lloyd Greif Center
for Entrepreneurial Studies

USC Marshall
School of Business


Jeremy B. Dann
Katherine Barnhett
Andrew Ogden
Xiaomi: Designing an Ecosystem For the "Internet of Things"

Accompanying
Xiaomi employees
observed customer
and Chen were
tried out a design
interest because
smartphones—
and Chen played
took part in the

...on this consumer observation mission were La Niñing...
...trained in design at Pasadena, California's Art Center. WI...
...tablets on counters near the front of the s...
...of products. A college...
...design...

Full Psyche: Getting Somewhere By Going Nowhere (A)


Paul Harmeling, the founder and CEO of Full Psyche, looked out the la...
Full Psyche had just opened its third location, two months earlier.



Harmeling had...
Full Psyche had...
success since openi...
Costa Mesa in Fe...
second studio in M...
studio was now poi...
the biggest bottin...
studios in the Unit...
famous SoulCycle, w...
York and was exp...
country.

Jeff Smulyan and NextRadio: Mobilizing a Company and an Industry

Jeff Smulyan loved seeing his hometown of Indianapolis crowded with visitors—even...
traffic almost made him late for his first meeting of the day. "March Madness"—...
Collegiate Athletic Association's renowned, tradition-rich basketball tournament—...
once again to Indianapolis in 2015. Smulyan was taking advantage of the opportunity...
several media executives in town to watch the "Final Four" teams vie for the title.



It was a warm spring day in early April. Smulyan walked...
from his office on Indianapolis' famous Monument Circle to a...
nearby lunch with fellow members of the National Association...
of Broadcasters. As he walked, he listened to "The Dan Dakich...
Show" on "The Fan" 107.5 FM, a station Smulyan's company,...
Emmis Communications, owned. "We're putting it out there...
to the listeners: who's going to win Saturday's Semifinal? Will...
it be the overall number one seed Kentucky, or will it be the...
Wisconsin Badgers? Vote now," declared Dakich, a nationally-...
known sports radio host. Smulyan pulled out his Sprint HTC...
and his vote for the underdog Wisconsin.

Robert Goodwin: Accelerating Social Impact at Mattel

Robert Goodwin waited in his office at the high-rise headquarters of Mattel, Inc. in El Seg...
California. He glanced at some memos as he prepared for an afternoon meeting with...
members of the Hot Wheels brand team. Goodwin served as the Executive Director o...
multinational toy manufacturing company's charitable foundation, the Mattel Children's Founda...
and simultaneously as the Director of Corporate Affairs and Philanthropy for Mattel. The purpo...
of that day's meeting was to discuss how the company should build upon the results of the Foundati...
Hot Wheels "Speedometry" program and integrate more "purpose" into the commercial strategies...
the Hot Wheels brand.



Goodwin had come to Mattel from Executives Without Borders, where he had served as the C...
and worked with nonprofits in Brazil and Haiti to help...
scale their models of impact by leveraging the expertise of...
multinational corporations. While that work had been...
demanding in a myriad of ways, he wondered if...
convincing the executives of a Fortune 500 company that...
blending a social mission with its core business operations...
to increase the bottom line might be an even greater...
challenge.

When Goodwin joined the team in 2014, Mattel had...
divided its charitable efforts evenly among activities...
initiatives, and global toy donations. When Goodwin...
agreed to lead philanthropy for Mattel, his goal was to find ways to increase...
overall business strategy for Mattel, his goal was to find ways to increase...
giant. The...



New Releases for 2018



Bratwurst, Beer and Business: Planning for Growth at Wurstküche

Tyler Wilson and Joseph Pitruzzelli are young entrepreneurs who find rapid success opening a restaurant in Downtown Los Angeles during the height of the 2008 economic recession, when many experienced restaurateurs were forced to close their businesses. The company's emphasis on branding and customer service allows them to pursue a successful second location in Venice, California. When Wilson and Pitruzzelli expand to Denver, Colorado, however, they unexpectedly struggle with operational complications and organizational culture problems across disparate locations.

TOPICS: Management Skills, Organizational Culture, Customer Focus, Managing Uncertainty, Managing People, Developing Employees, Scale



Built on Grit: h.wood and John Terzian

John Terzian is a rising nightclub owner and restaurateur in Los Angeles, CA. As a co-founder and CEO of The h.wood Group, he has cultivated the success of each new venue through stubborn grit, a trusting nature, and reliance on personal touch. This highly

involved, time-intensive approach has attracted A-list celebrities. However, as The h.wood Group begins to scale outside Los Angeles, Terzian must manage the use of his personal attributes as strengths while preventing them from turning into pitfalls.

TOPICS: Entrepreneurship, Influence, Power sharing, Networks, Social capital, Individual abilities, Persuasion, Personal Characteristics, Scale

Full Psyche: Getting Somewhere by Going Nowhere

Paul Harmeling, an investment banker, pursues his passion for indoor cycling ("spinning") and launches the Full Psyche fitness studio. After the third location opens, it is clear that the early success can be attributed to exclusive technology rights and Harmeling's personality and enthusiasm. As Harmeling prepares to take the brand to a national level, the case explores the challenges of replicating this success across multiple locations. The case also examines the five expansion strategies available to Harmeling and the potential trade-offs each offers.

TOPICS: Startups, Growth Strategy, Startup Financing, Franchising, Scale



Jeff Smulyan and NextRadio: Mobilizing a Company and an Industry

Experienced radio entrepreneur Jeff Smulyan finds an opportunity to embed FM-capable chips into US smartphones, enabling users to listen to over-the-air broadcasts for the first time. His company creates the app and the ecosystem that seems like it will be mutually beneficial to broadcasters, advertisers, and artists. Still, Smulyan and his team ponder how to keep industry giants committed to NextRadio and how soon the venture should tap into international markets.

TOPICS: Entrepreneurs, Innovation, Business models, Business and Government Relations, Multi-Party Alliances, Entering Foreign Markets



KCC: Third Time's the Charm?

KCC was founded by two bankruptcy lawyers who saw the potential to tap technology to make dramatic improvements in the work they could perform for clients. Their current dance with a potential acquirer is their third attempt at selling their startup to a larger company. The case details their experiences and lessons from each of their first two attempts and the terms they are considering from the latest suitor. Should they agree to aggressive earn-out hurdles? To an eight-year non-competition agreement? To changing the founders' roles in the company after the acquisition closes?

TOPICS: Startups, Exit Strategy, Entrepreneurs, Entrepreneurial Management

Nanxi Liu: Finding the Keys to Sales Success at Enplug

In 2012, Nanxi Liu and her four co-founders launched Enplug, a digital signage company that specialized in providing businesses with customizable, interactive digital displays. A few years into the venture, Enplug pivoted from an installation-based service model that relied heavily on digital advertisements for revenue to a product-focused company that built and sold downloadable software. The case revolves around Liu's considerations of Enplug's pricing models, sales strategy, and newly launched reseller program. It also examines Enplug's startup culture and how that played a role in Liu's decision-making as Enplug's Chief Executive Officer.

TOPICS: Startups, Organizational Development, Capabilities, Sales Strategy, Product Development, Organizational Culture



Polymath Ventures: Building an International Incubator

Polymath Ventures is a distinctive “company builder” fostering enterprises for the rising middle class in Latin America. Founded by Wenyi Cai, a successful Silicon Valley entrepreneur, Polymath boasted a business development methodology that sought to leverage international expertise to envision, finance, and scale innovations for the Colombian market. After two successful years, Polymath’s latest venture is facing early setbacks and Polymath’s Silicon Valley-inspired corporate culture is causing friction within Colombia’s traditional entrepreneurial environment.



TOPICS: International Business, Global New Ventures, Entrepreneurship, Innovation International Human Resources, Women in Business, Organizational Culture

Redgate Media Group: M&A During Global Financial Crises

In 2008, Peter Brack was on the verge of a Nasdaq IPO with Redgate Media Group, a high-growth Chinese media conglomerate. Brack had guided the accelerated expansion of Redgate in five short years on the promise of this rapid IPO. However, the global financial crisis in 2008 upended Redgate’s plans, leaving the company with limited cash and many angry employees. Brack must now scramble to restructure Redgate to reduce costs and find a new market in which to IPO.

TOPICS: International Business, Entrepreneurship, Rapid Growth Stage, Exit Strategy, IPOs, Mergers and Acquisitions

Robert Goodwin: Accelerating Social Impact at Mattel

Robert Goodwin simultaneously serves as the Executive Director of the Mattel Children’s Foundation and the Director of Corporate Affairs and Philanthropy for Mattel, Inc., one of the largest toy companies in the world. His goal is to “integrate purpose” into the overall business strategy of the company to increase its social and financial value. One initiative he spearheads is Speedometry, a curriculum that incorporates the popular Hot Wheels brand to provide STEM education to elementary school students. Goodwin must figure out how to effectively scale and sustain this program while navigating Mattel’s complex bureaucracies and appealing to the company’s commercially focused brands.

TOPICS: Corporate Social Entrepreneurship, Social Entrepreneurship, Triple Bottom Line, Strategic Philanthropy, Business and Government Relations

Senn Delaney: An Entrepreneurial Exit in the Consulting Industry

Senn Delaney is a culture-shaping consulting firm located in California. From 1999-2012, the firm was led by CEO Jim Hart. The case traces Senn Delaney’s path from acquisition target in 1999 to private buyout after failure of the acquirer in 2003. It also examines the significant investments the firm made in culture, structure, and technology to restore and expand its capacity to serve its clients. When faced with a decision point for exit, stakes are high as Hart and the legacy partners decide what entrepreneurial exit strategy will provide the greatest reward for the firm and its partners.

TOPICS: Exit Strategy, Organizational Culture, Human Capital, Acquisition Strategies, Firm Value

Xiaomi: Designing an Ecosystem for the “Internet of Things”

After its founding in 2010, Xiaomi quickly rose to become one of China’s top smartphone manufacturers. By mid-2015, it was looking to bolster its declining repeat purchase rate and deepen the impact of its products. The company begins to invest heavily in an “Ecosystem” of allied companies and compatible smart products. Xiaomi also must determine if its Internet-based sales model will continue to drive growth or if it must invest hundreds of millions of dollars in a full-fledged retail network.



TOPICS: Innovation, Business Models, Open Innovation, Design, Customer Feedback, Corporate Ventures, Value Networks

Wolo: The Highs and Lows of a Socially-Conscious Venture

This case describes the strategic and operational challenges faced by John Frederick, the founder of Wolo, an online marketplace for socially-conscious businesses. Frederick has difficult decisions to make regarding investment, brand orientation and personnel as he seeks to increase Wolo’s profitability. Frederick sees great potential in focusing on the yoga products category, but needs to decide if Wolo will abandon its vision of creating the first marketplace that spans the spectrum of socially-conscious products.

TOPICS: Entrepreneurship, Social Entrepreneurship

New Classroom Exercises for 2018

John Q. Inventor and The Cardboard Snowplow

The Cardboard Snowplow tells the story of an inventor who has a novel idea that he believes represents a business opportunity. In response to this story, students are asked to summarize the problem (the high cost and physical exertion of clearing snow) and proposed solution (a corrugated cardboard snowplow). They are asked to (1) assess the solution's likely potential as a business opportunity; (2) identify what they perceive as the most likely sources of business launch vulnerability; and (3) propose potential tests that might inform a data-driven "go/no go" decision.

TOPICS: Entrepreneurship, Market Research, inventions

Rebel Technologies Series Seed Negotiation

Students engage in a high-stakes seed stage investment negotiation between Empire Ventures, a leading venture capital firm, and Rebel Technologies, a cutting-edge virtual reality game developer. The parties must quickly hash out the size of the investment, board composition, founder vesting provisions, and other issues, or risk falling behind in a fast-moving marketplace.

TOPICS: Venture Capital, Entrepreneurial Finance, Negotiations



 **Lloyd Greif Center**
for Entrepreneurial Studies

USC Marshall
School of Business

Lloyd Greif Center for Entrepreneurial Studies | USC Marshall School of Business

The Lloyd Greif Center for Entrepreneurial Studies at the USC Marshall School of Business is the nation's oldest integrated entrepreneurship program. Consistently ranked among the top programs in the United States and abroad, the Greif Center was named #4 by *US News & World Report* in its Best Business Schools 2017 rankings and #4 worldwide by the Financial Times in 2015. With more than 93 classes taught by 31 professors and practitioners, the Greif Center offers a wide range of courses in entrepreneurship designed for students who want to start or own a high-growth business, join an emerging business or participate in an entrepreneurial venture in a mature corporation (intrapreneurship). The Greif Center also offers co-curricular programs such as venture competitions, speaker events and a new venture incubator, and it actively engages with alumni to support their work and to connect them with our current community of student entrepreneurs.

CONTACT:

Lloyd Greif Center for Entrepreneurial Studies
USC Marshall School of Business
T: 213-740-0641 E: greifcases@marshall.usc.edu

For more information and to order, please visit:

HARVARD BUSINESS PUBLISHING FOR EDUCATORS

www.hbsp.harvard.edu/

THE CASE CENTRE

www.thecasecentre.org/educators/ordering/whatsavailable/collections/GreifCenter