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When I thought about the word entrepreneur only one stereotype came to mind. I automatically thought about the family owned market down the street, or the café on the corner of the neighborhood. The word entrepreneur meant to run a lifestyle type of business, a business that was small and produced enough profit for the owner and their family to live comfortably. Over the past year, this stereotype of mine has been altered drastically. I never considered all the large, multi million dollar companies as starting off in the same way as the small lifestyle companies I always envisioned owning. Both types of companies start off only as an idea, sometimes the product or service offered can really take off and grow at a spike, or it can constantly earn about the same profit every year in order to support the owner and the small staff.

After this stereotype was cleared up for me, I began wondering what the real difference between different kinds of companies and their creators really were. While sitting through several entrepreneur speakers and listening to their stories of success and failure, I realized why there is no standardized definition of the word entrepreneur. The reason being that an entrepreneur can have as many different and unique characteristics as each person in this world is different from the other. Not one individual is the same; this rule also applies to entrepreneurs, which are all extremely different in character. I decided to pursue a few similarities between successful entrepreneurs no matter what business they in.

Interviewing entrepreneurs was very exciting to me but I did not know at what angle to direct the interview, or what kind of entrepreneur I was interested in interviewing. I started with several broad questions for a few entrepreneurs that I personally knew and that are all involved in drastically different businesses. I wanted to challenge the idea that successful entrepreneurs tend to jump all over the place, yet still follow a type of trend, which leads them to the venture they own and operate now. Like Magdalena Yesil in the first case our class studied, I found that David Peacock, Kym Meyers and Carol Majeske all followed a trend throughout their educational and employment history. However, these three individuals had a much more straight-line trend than Magdalena did, they seemed to know what they were interested in during the beginning and stumbled upon opportunities along their way. These so called trends create distinctive competencies through the experience curve, which leads to the so far success of their businesses. Entrepreneurs need the technical skills and knowledge of the industry they are pursuing in order to succeed and these three contained these necessary skills.

A second conclusion from these interviews are that these individuals and many other entrepreneurs are more than business owners, they pursue other activities such as full time jobs, attending college and raising families. You could take the term "Super Mom" and apply it to "Super Entrepreneur". Many people, including myself, think that entrepreneurs put all of their time and energy into their business, but they are involved in so much more. First, I will share the trends these new entrepreneurs followed on their

way to becoming business creators and owner and then I will discuss the characteristics of these “Super Entrepreneurs”.

David, the owner and operator of SeeLikeBuy, an on-line auctioneering company, started collecting sports memorabilia and decided to make some money on his collections several years later. This venture started from a hobby David enjoyed as a boy. As David reached the age to attend college, he received his Bachelors in Marketing from the Salt Lake Community College (SLCC) and is currently pursuing his Management degree at the U. David was heavily involved in campaigning for student body Vice President at SLCC. These activities and business interests led to David's desire to lead and be in charge. David also worked for Franklin Covey in marketing but when his whole department was laid off he dove into the SeeLikeBuy venture. For David, he was able to combine his childhood interests and hobbies with his marketing and management experience and education to pursue the opportunity of the on-line auction market.

Kym Meyers, the founder and CEO of LEAP (Licensing Exam Preparation), followed an even straighter path of employment and education than David did. Kym has held at least two jobs since she was sixteen, all being in the area of mental health and social work. After a couple of years working in these fields, Kym decided to pursue a Bachelor in psychology from Arizona State University. After graduating, she worked for several nonprofits in the area of psychology and social work. She then decided to take the Executive Director position with the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). Even though Kym received a Bachelor in psychology, her many work experiences allowed her to learn skills in marketing and management. As an independent contractor for behavioral therapy and the Executive Director for NASW, Kym was able to get hands on business experience and to learn what it is like to be your own boss. Kym began pursuing a PhD in psychology but felt that the program and the people were quite judgmental and ended the educational pursuit, but only in this field. Kym decided to pursue an MBA with a focus on marketing. She felt this degree could help her to become more marketable in the future. While working at NASW, Kym saw the need for licensing and exam preparation courses, especially in the areas of Social Work, Marriage and Family Therapy, and Licensed Professional Counseling. She tried to convince the NASW Utah chapter as well as other chapters throughout the nation to pursue a licensing and exam preparation course. The Utah chapter board decided to let Kym try this idea. They made an incredible amount of money on the first workshop. However, working for a nonprofit, Kym found it hard to pursue this idea to its full potential. Kym and two other individuals partnered together to create their own business in licensing and exam preparation, now known as LEAP. By combining her psychology, social work, mental health and business experiences and education, she found herself upon an opportunity to fill the need for licensing and exam preparation.

Carol Majeske also followed a fairly straight and narrow path, which led her to the creation and implementation of the nonprofit organization the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation. Carol started out and ended up in the field of parks and recreation. While at the University of Montana, Carol received a Bachelors in Recreation Management, and later a Masters in Recreation Resources Planning from Colorado State University. After

graduating, she landed a job with the County Parks and Recreation Department of Virginia. She was in charge of all the outdoor recreation leading, organization, program creation and implementation, park planning and partnership management. All of Carol's employment experience has been in the parks and recreation field, spending most of her working time with the Forest Service, about 12 years of full time employment. She now works for the Salt Lake Ranger District for the Forest Service. She is the recreation director in this office. Through Carol's parks and recreation experience and contacts, she came upon the opportunity of implementing the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation (CCF). The four ski resorts in Big and Little Cottonwood (Snowbird, Alta, Brighton and Solitude) first created CCF. The nonprofit only existed on paper however; the resorts never implemented the nonprofit into an actual organization. Two years after it's incorporation, Carol was looking for a way to create effective environmental interpretation programs for the Wasatch Cache National Forest. The Forest Service did not have any money to hire an employee to create and implement these types of programs, so they decided to create a partnership with a nonprofit. Carol approached CCF and soon was the mastermind to getting the nonprofit up and running, she made the company into an actual organization. With the appointment of Patrick Nelson, the Executive Director of CCF, the two of them work side by side in creating stewardship and educational programs for the Cottonwood Canyons. Carol's focus of recreation and her internal business skills allowed this organization to really thrive and meet it's vision.

Magdalena was seen as a wild bouncy ball that just jumped from one opportunity to another, but she actually stayed within the field of engineering with the Internet, and marketing, which led her into the field of finance, specifically venture capitalism. Her skills were built on top of each other, and through networking and constant learning, she was able to pursue an individual investment opportunity. Like Magdalena, David, Kym and Carol all used their skills and constant learning in their professional fields to pursue the opportunities proposed to them.

People are constantly told that owning your own business is a 24 hour a day, 7 days a week job. Vacation time is close to none, sick time, bonuses and other perks from a Monday through Friday, 9am to 5 pm job are not available. When you hear this information, you think, wow, that's devotion, how do they have time for anything else? After the interviews with David, Kym and Carol, I realized that the venture is not the only commitment entrepreneurs face. A large percentage of entrepreneurs in the start-up phase of their company also have full time jobs, families to take care of, and are attending school for a higher education. I would consider this the "Super Entrepreneur".

David goes to school full time at the University of Utah, just started a family, and is the sole owner and operator for his company SeeLikeBuy. Due to this dedication; David explains his most challenge is committing time to his business in order to properly grow it. Kym is one of the most energetic and hard working individuals I have ever met. Like David, she also has a family, owns and operates LEAP, and is attending the Graduate School of Business at the U, full time. On top of this load, she also works full time as the Executive Director for the NASW, Utah chapter. It really makes you wonder if these individuals get chances to sleep at night. Carol spends time working with CCF on a daily

basis, yet she also has a family and works full time with the Forest Service. There is one explanation for this dedication and multi tasking.

During the start-up phase of a business venture, there are several stages in which the company and the entrepreneur face. The first stage is creating. One starts to secure the vision of the company and this phase consists mostly of brainstorming and working on your new idea. The second phase is called the kitchen table, where a prototype is built and most of your help consists of friends and family. The third phase is the commitment phase. During this time, the founders must commit fully to the new venture; this is usually a period of cold feet and trying to gross sales to evaluate the prospect of the new business. The fourth phase is the pullout, the entrepreneur quits their other jobs and commitments and puts all of their time and effort into the new business. Only at this phase can the entrepreneur truly grow the venture to meet the long-term view of the venture. Looking at these first four stages of the start-up process, one can see that David, Kym and Carol are all stuck between the third and fourth stage. These individuals have all committed to the organization but not to the point where they give up their other commitments and pursue the venture by itself. All three of these individuals actually commented on this problem. David said he felt his biggest problem was committing time to the venture, and this was a barrier for growth. He hopes he can really commit to the business after he graduates with his Bachelors. Kym too hopes to be able to quit her job with NASW and work full time with LEAP. She is waiting for two reasons, one, to graduate, which will happen in December. Two, she is just starting to really use the profits from sales to increase the marketing and advertising efforts for the business. She hopes this effort will dramatically increase sales. She wants to see sales and profits at a certain level before she quits her job with NASW so she can support herself and her family. Carols position is a little different considering it is a nonprofit organization. She explained that she planned on being a part of CCF for as long as it takes, or until she is no longer needed. Carol is more of a consulting partner for Patrick to help get the organization off the ground, rather than an individual who is to make money off the venture. She never plans on leaving her job because this is her source of revenue.

I learned many things about these individuals personally as well as from an entrepreneur stand point. It was fascinating and exciting to hear about their experiences, hard times, profitable times and just to see the excitement in their eyes and hear it in their voices about their businesses and organization. Through these interviews and listening to the testimonies of our class's guest speakers, individuals who truly succeed in business are those who have attained the technical skills and knowledge of their industry through past experience and education. This brings so many unknown opportunities to me, since I have just begun my experience, who knows what is around the next corner. All I have to do is keep my eyes and ears open for the next opportunity.