The theme of this issue of the International Journal on Media Management is “Media and Entrepreneurship”. The purpose of this theme was to provide a forum for topics addressing issues related to the impact of entrepreneurship in the field of media and telecommunications. Four articles were chosen for publication.

The study of specific industries, such as automobiles, banks, insurance etc. has been well-established in business management research. However, the media industries have only recently become subject to such industry analysis (cf. Hess/Böning-Spohr 2000; Gerpott 1998). In 1998 Schusser claimed that despite the economic significance of the media industry, media management still had very little theoretical foundation and only a few areas, such as broadcasting economics, is well developed (cf. Schusser 1998, p. 600). Sjurts comes to the same conclusion (2001) that the theoretical deficit in media management implies, that it is still a relatively new discipline (cf. Sjurts 2001, p. 18). Telecommunications management has only received attention in Europe as a business management specialization since the liberalization of the telecommunications markets on January 1, 1998. Szyperski/Loebbecke (1999) and Gerpott (2002) made initial proposals here. Since the liberalization of these industries, it must be said that there has been a great deal of interest shown in the question of media and telecommunications management especially in the areas of: the deregulation of the broadcasting and telecommunications markets; technological innovation, particularly in the area of digitalization, and the convergence of the media, information technology and telecommunications markets (cf. Sjurts 2001 and Gerpott 1998).

Parallel to this development, the political, business and scientific worlds in all industrial nations are showing increasing interest in entrepreneurship. The increased popularity is due to the potentially positive effects on employment and the innovative economic power which has resulted from the growth of “high tech” start-ups in the USA. As a result, entrepreneurship has become one of the most significant areas of business management teaching and research in Europe and the USA (cf. Bronner/Mellewigt/Späth 2001).

Against this background, this special issue of the International Journal on Media Management deals with the question of how much is known about start-ups in the telecommunications and media industries. As both are very new disciplines it is no surprise that little empirical research have been conducted so far. For this reason we are pleased to present four papers on this theme. It is interesting to note that all papers deal with start-ups in either liberalized sub-segments (GSM mobile communications market) or in convergence areas (online bookshops, mobile business start-ups). Interestingly we received no contributions on new ventures in the traditional media markets (e.g., TV, newspaper, books, radio).

In the first article Thomas Ehrman, Florian Haas and Rainer Harms from University of Muenster, Germany, investigate two well-established concepts in the entrepreneurship literature: the liability of size and newness. They apply these concepts to new entrants in the e-commerce business, and more specifically to the online book market. The authors show that younger companies and larger companies have a higher quality web presence and are more successful than older or smaller companies. Consequently, the liability of newness does not have an adverse performance impact in the online book market. Regarding the liability of size the authors conclude that having enough resources to build up a high quality web presence is necessary.

The second article, by Bodo zu Knyphausen-Aufsess from University of Bamberg, Germany, Christian Krys from Roland Berger Strategy Consultants and Lars Schweizer from University of Bamberg, Germany, deals with the market entry and competitive strategies of third entrants into the European GSM market. In the first part of the paper the authors stress a very important observation: despite the homogeneous market structure in European GSM markets, there are substantial performance differences between the various operators. Subsequently the authors
present two case studies of third entrants in the GSM market: the very successful Greek mobile communications operator Cosmote and the less successful German operator E-Plus. The authors argue that the performance differences are mainly due to strategy and resource differences.

In the third article, Nikolaus Franke and Martin Schreier from Vienna University of Economics, Austria, discuss a new and promising method for entrepreneurial opportunity recognition: toolkits for user innovation and design. The author shows that toolkits are an innovative method for new product development which shifts the design task to the customer by taking advantage of recent developments in IT, media and production technologies. Franke proposes that instead of screening the target market for new product needs and desperately trying to translate vague information into product specification, manufacturers can enable customers to act as innovators. This method might help to reduce product failure rates, improve the design and engineering of products and help to test ideas using less time and money. Modes of exploiting the opportunities offered by toolkits for user innovation and design, and the limitations of this method are discussed.

In the final article Torsten Gerpott and Christian Niegel from University of Duisburg, Germany, provide an initial exploration of success drivers of mobile business start-ups in Germany. First, the authors conducted Internet research and reviewed business press publications on m-business start-ups and identified 50 mobile business start-ups in Germany. Second, four different business models were identified for m-business start-ups and the 50 companies were assigned to the business models. Finally, three face-to-face interviews were conducted with experts from corporate venture capital firms. On this basis nine internal critical success factors for m-business start-ups were derived, which should be tested in future studies.

Taken together these articles represent a promising start to research on new ventures in the media and telecommunications industries. We hope that this special forum will inspire other research on this important topic in these crucial industries.

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References