

# Joint SPRU/Business and Management seminar

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**Title** From 'built to grow' to 'built to sell': The evolution of new venture creation in the US pacemaker field (1949-2012)

## Abstract

Although we know that entrepreneurship is a contextual, evolutionary and multi-level phenomenon (e.g. Schoonhoven and Romanelli, 2001; Aldrich and Martinez, 2001) and one of the sources of technological and organizational variations (e.g. Baum and McKelsvey, 1999; Anderson, 1999), we have a limited understanding of the inter-organizational dimension of the entrepreneurial process underpinning the emergence and evolution of new industries, markets and fields (e.g. Van de Ven, 1993; Mezias and Kuperman, 2000; Forbes and Kirsch, 2011). This paper explains how and why entrepreneurship viewed as 'new venture creation process' changes during the emergence and evolution of a technological field. It takes a co-evolutionary lens based on a multi-level, longitudinal and historical approach to study new venture creation in the US pacemaker field from its origin in the late 1940s until present. Archival data on biographies and careers of members of the founding teams and venture histories were collected together with detailed historical events of the emergence and evolution of the inter-organizational entrepreneurial community composed by other populations of actors – investors, law firms, trade publications, professional associations, academic institutions, etc. - that have co-evolved and grown up servicing the entrepreneurial teams and their ventures, and other organizations which constitute the pacemaker field. The analysis shows different patterns of new venture creation over four different periods of the emergence and evolution of the technological field. Changes in entrepreneurial practices identified at individual/team, organizational and inter-organizational levels highlight a move from a 'built to grow' to a 'built to sell' logic over the four different periods. The paper explains the patterns and changes in practices and logics of new venture creation in terms of co-evolutionary dynamics in hierarchically related systems and the mechanisms behind these dynamics such as mobility of people, circulation and institutionalization of business templates, and mobilization of financial resources. The discussion of the co-evolutionary mechanisms behind the evolution of new venture creation, and the implications of the findings for theory, policy and practice (e.g. changes in prices of entry tickets in the field and the patterns of entrepreneurship that

should be encouraged from a public policy perspective) are the main contributions of this paper.