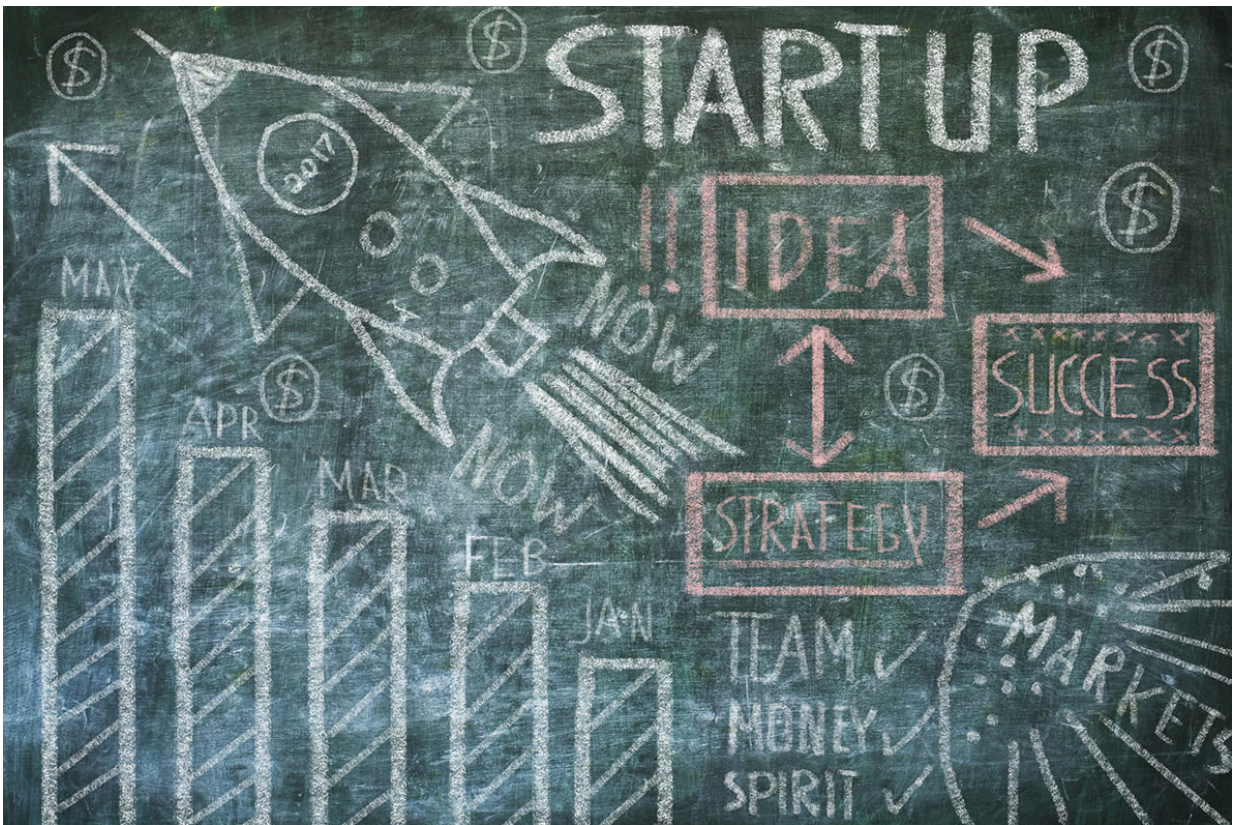


Measuring the value of 'imaginativeness' in new business success

May 29 2018, by Eric Hollenbeck



Credit: Washington State University

Visionary entrepreneurs fare best with not one but three types of imagination: creative, social and practical.

In a recent article, Alexander Kier, assistant professor of entrepreneurship with the Carson College of Business at Washington State University Vancouver, and coauthor Jeffery McMullen from Indiana University, quantified the importance of what they call "imaginativeness" in regards to the quality and quantity of new venture ideas.

Their study, published in the *Academy of Management Journal*, surveyed 506 U.S. people who had varying degrees of entrepreneurial experience. They developed an "imaginativeness scale" to measure respondents in terms of creative, social and practical imaginativeness.

While creative imaginativeness helps entrepreneurs make novel connections and come up with new solutions to problems, social imaginativeness helps them see things from others' perspectives and anticipate their wants and needs, and practical imaginativeness facilitates planning, forecasting and organizing.

Researchers found that people who rank high in all three areas not only generated more ideas, but the ideas were also of better quality compared to those who ranked lower in one or more categories.

Future directions: Imaginativeness and team performance

"Most startups nowadays are created by a team of entrepreneurs," Kier said. "It would be really interesting to see how this plays out at the team level." For example, future research could help better identify areas of strength within teams, as well as which areas need mentoring and further development.

"We know imagination matters," Kier said. "If we can develop these

skills in people over time, that's going to help people perform their jobs better."

The article "Entrepreneurial Imaginativeness in New Venture Ideation" is available online in the *Academy of Management Journal*.

More information: Alexander Kier et al, Entrepreneurial Imaginativeness in New Venture Ideation, *Academy of Management Journal* (2018). [DOI: 10.5465/amj.2017.0395](https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2017.0395)

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