

LESSONS IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The moving picture show

Mark Moore's current venture proves that the result is rarely the starting point. Stuart Read and Robert Wiltbank report

Have you ever thought of starting a company? Mark Moore, 42, has. Four times. And with two acquisitions and an IPO behind him, expectations on his current venture, One True Media, are high. So where do the ideas come from? How does Moore create that flash of brilliance that gives ignition to a successful company?

START WITH A PROBLEM

Moore keeps a list. Not a list of ideas for companies, but a list of problems he sees every day. Call him a technology anthropologist. The problem behind One True Media was that suddenly people everywhere were generating an unmanageable quantity of digital content. Tiny digital cameras, video cameras and camera phones were filling hard disks with photos and videos at an alarming rate. There was no good way to organise, present or edit the information. Moore knew he could create something the world needed.

EXCHANGE WITH CUSTOMERS

What exactly did amateur photographers want? And how would he translate that into a business model? Moore simply got started. He founded One True Media knowing he would change the business model quickly and continuously. The

initial online service let users create a montage, a scrapbook, from their photos. One True Media would print it, package it in a photo album, and mail it to the user. From this start, the company began learning and is still learning. It changes the service every two weeks. Employees watch how people use the tools, constantly adding and removing features. There is a phone number, an email feedback form, and live chat for suggestions. Every week Moore reviews all the input and sends the top five promising or recurring suggestions to the entire company.

IT'S NEVER THE BIG THINGS

In creating ventures, it's little changes that really matter. One True Media had a terrific holiday season in 2005, but in January 2006 the business went dark. Moore and his team kept changing. By end of January, they had a breakthrough. People wanted to share. One True Media added a simple feature that let users put photos and video on to

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myspace, an internet community site. All of a sudden users were doubling every two weeks. Less than a year and countless more changes later, One True Media has over 880,000 registered users and has created over a million videos.

RADICAL CHANGES

Successful ventures are rarely a flash of brilliance. An idea is sculpted and sometimes radically changed in conjunction with customers and partners. Moore's philosophy is this: "Think of yourself in a room with many locked doors. Your customer is on the other side of one of the doors. She is yelling at you, saying, 'I'm over here'. Your job is to unlock the right doors. The faster you unlock doors, the sooner you find real opportunity."



Mark Moore (above) began his business by looking for problems

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