Changing Entrepreneurship Education: Finding the Right Entrepreneur for the Job

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Editor's Note: This article addresses the need for university education to initiate changes in the way entrepreneurs are trained and instructed. The increased demand for courses in entrepreneurship and the inability of the traditional academic researcher to meet this demand has resulted in a need for new approaches to teaching. Using a practising "entrepreneur" as a part-time lecturer raises concerns about legitimacy, credibility and teaching capability that deserves attention. As a part-time lecturer, the entrepreneur becomes a change agent in an educational setting. The motives of the entrepreneur, the entrepreneur's experiences, knowledge and teaching skills all become critical to the success of the educational process.

In the last ten years, educational institutions have witnessed an increasing demand for courses relating to entrepreneurship and/or small business. A recent survey of US educational institutions (Vesper, 1985) identified over 250 colleges offering entrepreneurship courses in either their business and/or engineering schools, and there is some belief that the number has now exceeded 350. During this time, there has also been an expressed desire among students for more "experienced" business teachers. Students want access to an individual who possesses applied knowledge and street credibility and who can describe what life is like in the entrepreneurial "trenches".

Unfortunately, while the pressures to provide entrepreneurship education continue to grow, the supply of academics qualified and willing to teach it has not grown at a corresponding rate. Increasingly, universities have either chosen or been forced to meet these demands by employing a practising entrepreneur as a lecturer or instructor. Bringing such a person into the classroom, however, generates an entirely new set of questions for a college and its faculty. These questions — about legitimacy, credibility and teaching capability — must be answered to satisfy the concerns of full-time faculty and administrators.

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The question facing many of our more traditional business schools confronting this issue is quite simple: can the process of finding and attracting the right entrepreneur — the person who can fulfill a programme’s objectives — be improved from the often serendipitous method currently used? The purpose of this article is to explore two issues inherent in this question: (1) how can the institution identify an entrepreneur qualified and interested in teaching and (2) what can the institution do to attract such individuals and make their transition to teaching as easy as possible?

We take the position that whenever feasible, entrepreneurship courses should be taught by practising entrepreneurs. This does not mean that the academic interested in entrepreneurship must forfeit teaching the subject, only that student pressures for more courses and greater access to practitioners provide a niche for the entrepreneur as well as the professor.

Interestingly, the entrepreneur is initially viewed at many schools/colleges as simply a supplement to the full-time academic(s) teaching entrepreneurship. They are brought in to teach a “special” or “experimental” course on a trial basis. Yet in many colleges, successes in the classroom, combined with the growth and popularity of entrepreneurship programmes, have resulted in entrepreneurs taking over the lion’s share of the teaching burden. At universities throughout the USA, more and more entrepreneurship and small business courses are taught by practitioners. Students enjoy this; they like the enthusiasm entrepreneurs show for their subject and, particularly, their commitment to good teaching. Students are introduced to people who practise daily what they teach and who provide a unique source of motivation, energy and experience. In many students’ minds, the entrepreneur’s dose of reality is a welcome relief from the theory provided by most business schools.

Research in Entrepreneurship Education
The need for research into issues related to entrepreneurship education has been recognised by a number of authors (Comerford, 1981; Sexton, 1982; Vesper, 1982) who have identified topics in which research has either been conducted or in which it has been suggested that future research could be productive. Such topics include: can entrepreneurship be taught? tracking the career development of students participating in entrepreneurship programmes, what should the content of entrepreneurship courses be? and how should they be taught? Unfortunately, there has been virtually no research on who should teach entrepreneurship. Instead, there are oft-given opinions that entrepreneurs should have some role in the process of educating students in entrepreneurial skills (Weinrauch, 1984). Typically, this role has been that of an active model, that is, inviting them into the classroom as guest speakers. Other schools use entrepreneurs as part- or full-time instructors. To date, however, no attempts empirically to justify what it is that entrepreneurs add to a class, or if they are even perceived as better instructors of entrepreneurship, have been recorded.

Anecdotal evidence holds that “practical knowledge” should be held in high esteem when teaching entrepreneurship. For instance, interviews with 46 business
school graduates (Gasse, 1982) found that university business courses were perceived as too abstract. Professors were characterised as theorists with insufficient practical knowledge of the small and medium-sized business environment — unable to prepare students properly for the real world. Graduates were frustrated by their lack of practical experience and recommended hiring instructors possessing more of a real-world orientation and significant experience with smaller businesses.

Regardless of faculty perceptions of entrepreneurs, students ascribe a great deal of face validity to their presence. Even outside the United States, this seems to be true. For example, Fitzgerald, et al. (1984) reported on an experimental programme to teach hi-tech entrepreneurship in Ireland. According to participants, the most important characteristic for the leader was personal experience in the business formation process. They felt a track record was necessary for the instructor to empathise and help with problems encountered during the students’ initial instruction. In general, experience in business formation not only enhanced the leaders’ credibility, but was perceived as more significant to their ability to teach successfully than was specific experience in a hi-tech field.

Jeff Timmons, Director of The Price-Babson College Fellows Program placed the issue in perspective (1987, p. 2):

> Increasingly, business education is criticized for its inattention to the real world, epitomized by research that often says more and more about less and less, and teaching that seems to put more emphasis on theory and “telling”, than on practice and learning. In too many instances this pattern is exacerbated by institutional pressures on business educators to specialize, publish, and become more quantitative. To make matters worse, the recruiting, mentoring and tenure processes for new faculty may actually discourage or penalize practitioners who might otherwise be inclined to teach at a later point in their careers. Can there be any serious doubt that successful entrepreneurs have a lot to contribute to entrepreneurship education? We think not.

**Who Should Teach Entrepreneurship?**

The arguments against using entrepreneurs in the classroom are endless: they are unskilled in teaching, they lack the proper academic focus, they do not possess the appropriate terminal credentials, etc. In an attempt to capture the heart of this problem, McMullan and Long (1987, p. 268) commented:

> As with other applied programs there is an ongoing problem of striking an effective balance between academic and practitioner perspectives. Academics are specialists in knowledge formulation, acquisition and dissemination. Practitioners bring expertise in societal norms and community practices. Academics provide evidence from scientific studies. Practitioners provide examples of making it all happen.

Can these perspectives be reconciled? We believe so. Furthermore, we feel that employing qualified entrepreneurs on a full-time basis can enhance a school’s entrepreneurship/small business programme.

Putting young people into an entrepreneur’s hands requires an institution’s faculty and administration to take a leap of faith. They must trust the entrepreneur’s judgement, integrity and ability to educate. He or she must be able not only to teach content, but also to provide an environment that encourages students to learn. “Hard-core” faculty members who still think entrepreneurship belongs in
vocational/technical institutions are often critical of the entrepreneur’s ability to do this. Yet the task is analogous to much of what the entrepreneur does in building an organisation: the educator develops an environment for learning; the entrepreneur builds a culture that enables his or her managers to manage. Both must develop in other people an attitude that invites them to experiment and to challenge “traditional” wisdom within certain parameters of acceptable behaviour.

Turning over the educational process to someone without an academic background can also be traumatic for faculty caught up in the “terminal degree” syndrome. The PhD, by virtue of the degree, is assumed to be an adequate teacher until proven otherwise, whereas the individual without such a degree is generally assumed to have few, if any, teaching skills. This assumption is hypocritical at best, because few doctoral students today receive training in teaching methodologies and philosophies. Instead, graduate programmes focus on imparting research skills. Teaching skills are learned by doing, i.e. through “on-the-job” training. Why, then, the unsupportive attitude towards entrepreneurs who learn about teaching from first-hand experience? To all intents and purposes, the entrepreneur entering the classroom for the first time has no less training in teaching skills than the majority of recent business school PhDs beginning in academia. And some entrepreneurs contend that they actually have more, because teaching skills are essential to the general manager’s bag of tricks.

Although business schools teach the management of change, it is evident that they themselves are slow to accept it. Traditionally, academic programmes must show that they can stand the test of time, that is, that what they do constitutes a legitimate academic discipline. Entrepreneurship is clearly hard pressed to demonstrate this permanence; indeed, some academics contend that it is nothing more than a fad. Pressures for entrepreneurship education, however, are becoming stronger from students and alumni alike. Unfortunately, the current supply of terminally degreeed entrepreneurship educators is not sufficient to meet this demand.

How can schools use entrepreneurs to satisfy this demand while minimising the “trauma” of using an outsider? Perhaps the question can be restated: “What qualities must this person possess to attain some credibility with the school’s administration and faculty members?” Seldom do schools answer this question. Rather, they avoid it by hiring local entrepreneurs and simply isolating these specialists from the larger business school community. Some entrepreneurs may get lucky and be introduced to a few faculty members but, for the most part, they are left to fend for themselves. This isolation reinforces the faculty’s perception of them as part-timers, not deserving of equal status with the full-time faculty. It also costs the business school its chance to broaden the entrepreneur’s perspective by making them aware of the richness of academic interests within the school.

This is unpalatable for several reasons:

1. the entrepreneurs are kept in the dark concerning how they and their classes fit into the current and future plans of the colleges and their educational philosophies;
(2) they have little, if any, credibility among faculty members, and hence little collegiality and status, and

(3) they are isolated from academic life in general, with almost no access to everyday faculty discussions on teaching and research issues or to the social camaraderie of their faculties.

In sum, entrepreneurs are rarely admitted to either the formal or the informal networks of their schools.

Outside his or her particular group of students, what can the entrepreneur bring to the larger business school community? Bringing entrepreneurs into the classroom can provide multiple benefits to both administrators and faculty. Administrators get cheap labour and are respected for bringing the “intelligentsia” back to the realities of the business world. Faculty may obtain relief from crowded classrooms and teaching overloads. The entrepreneur may also be able to field some of the continual questions confronting the faculty member from prospective business founders. Sharing this load can greatly liberate the faculty member whose time and energies are already subject to more than enough other demands.

Recruiting a Qualified Entrepreneur
Business schools typically follow two approaches in “recruiting” an entrepreneur into the classroom. First, they use contacts — former graduates or personal and business acquaintances — to identify and recommend worthy candidates. Unfortunately, many schools stop after they identify one individual, rather than attempting to create a pool of potential candidates.

A second approach commonly used by schools to find an entrepreneur willing to teach is the “serendipitous” method: wait till either you run into someone who wants to teach, or until that someone approaches you. In some cases this works well; in others, it fails miserably. Again, such a passive approach allows luck to play too big a role in determining whether or not students get a good education.

Either way, schools typically base their choice on one criterion — success in the business world. This practice ignores many of the realities of teaching and reduces the selection decision to a hunch or a gamble. In addition, business success does not necessarily translate into instant credibility with a research-based faculty possibly removed from the realities of the entrepreneurial world. Though success is important, it is only one component of the package for which business schools should be looking.

It is our contention that a little systematic and proactive planning will help a programme find the right candidate — an entrepreneur who will provide an enthusiastic, knowledge-based educational experience. A faculty must consider in advance what is required of this individual. For example, what qualities and skills are needed to make a smooth transition from the freedom of one’s own company to the bureaucracy of a university? What does the entrepreneur need to know about the differences between teaching and entrepreneuring? How extensive must the entrepreneur’s academic knowledge be? How can academics best explain the differences between the business world’s culture and theirs, the
tedious hours of grading, frustrating student attitudes, learning how to ask questions and lead discussions rather than give orders and direct, the intellectual challenges and rewards, the differences between motivating employees and motivating students, and so on?

Not all entrepreneurs are generalists capable of teaching an entire course in entrepreneurship. Some are better suited to teaching marketing and product development than financing the new venture. Others are more capable of teaching the art of deal-making than they are of giving students the tools to initiate new businesses. The match between the institution’s needs and their skills is critical, and in order to ensure that the match is appropriate, everyone’s expectations must be communicated and understood. One way of working through this morass of questions and expectations is to use a framework that puts them into perspective, our approach considers four main issues: (1) motives; (2) entrepreneurial experiences; (3) academic knowledge, and (4) teaching skills.

**Motives: Why Do They Want to Teach?**

The question of motives is perhaps the most important issue in the search for a full-time teaching candidate. Is this person looking for a way to slow down? For a “safe harbour” from the pressures of business? Is age catching up? What is driving this individual to change the focus of his or her career? Can the entrepreneur effectively articulate his or her reasons for desiring to teach? If not, the school should be wary. Mixed motives and unclear objectives do not augur well for the classroom. While this issue may not be as important in the search for a part-time teacher, it still must carry weight. The recruiting school must be certain that the motives of the part-time candidate are ethical and above reproach. No faculty should bring in an entrepreneur who wants to use students’ skills for his/her own gain. Some of the dangers inherent in this situation were illustrated by the well-publicised Asher Edelman case at Columbia University, where Edelman offered US$100,000 to the student who identified the best possible candidate for a takeover by Edelman’s firm.

The need for a haven from the pressures of entrepreneurial is neither a complete nor a satisfactory rationale for teaching. It ignores the realities of teaching full-time: the enormous pressures and costs imposed by students on the entrepreneurs’ time and energies. Entrepreneurs seeking a respite from business may fail to recognise that the institution is entrusting them with the education of its young people and that fulfilling that trust can be an arduous process. Do they understand what they are getting into in this new endeavour?

Entrepreneurs typically give several personal and professional reasons for wishing to redirect or refocus their careers toward teaching. Institutions should check to see whether their candidate’s motives match any of the following. If not, is this the right person to put in front of classes?

1. Entrepreneurs often believe that they have a duty to put something back into a system from which they have profited.
2. They feel that they should share the lessons they have learned so that others will not make the same kinds of mistakes.
They desire to influence other people’s lives and to offer something of value, something that hindsight has suggested was missing from their own educational experiences — a philosophy or at least ‘rule of thumb’ that has served them well in their ventures.

They perceive an intellectual challenge in education that is missing from their past and/or current ventures.

They want to take advantage of teaching’s two-way street, to get access to potential job candidates and a window into their minds — their opinions, values, beliefs. If the students are potential consumers or clients of the entrepreneur’s products or services, this can be a particularly insightful and cheap form of market research.

They want to refine some of the same professional skills — for example, listening and planning — that they are trying to impart to their students. Entrepreneurs can not adequately teach students the ins and outs of entrepreneurship without studying and thinking about the topic themselves, thus raising their own level of competence.

They find that nothing is more exhilarating than an audience of grateful and admiring students on whom they have made a big impact.

Notwithstanding their importance, motives are only part of the puzzle. There must be a ‘fit’ among motives, experience, academic knowledge and teaching skills. Without it, the resulting inconsistency leads to a less than satisfying educational experience for all parties involved.

Entrepreneurial Experience

Should schools look for the entrepreneur with the one big success, or a variety of experiences? Institutions are often enamoured of the ‘superstar’ entrepreneur, but could a Steven Jobs, a Bill Gates, or a Fred Smith, all masterful entrepreneurs, make a successful transition into teaching? Obviously there is no way of knowing, but we feel that the chances that a given entrepreneur can teach are enhanced if that person has had a multiplicity of experiences and has encountered both success and failure. It takes a number of entrepreneurial experiences to perceive which insights are common to most endeavours and worth teaching, and which are unique to a particular venture. That is, mature entrepreneurial insight comes from a multiplicity of experiences. Successful entrepreneurs can communicate the ‘highs’ of entrepreneuring with little difficulty. But failure is too often a reality of the entrepreneurial process, thus the ‘lows’ are also as important to discuss.

Success stories get students excited and turned on to the idea of entrepreneuring, and this is what the superstar entrepreneurs can do best. But if they have had only one entrepreneurial experience, do they really know what it takes... or were they just lucky? Lacking a variety of experiences, can such entrepreneurs know themselves, and then teach their students, the underlying skills needed to pull off an entrepreneurial endeavour with any degree of certainty? We think not. We believe that entrepreneurs with many experiences — with successes and failures under their belts — are better equipped to deliver a balanced message.
Discussing the realities of failure is an unusual task for a business school class. Yet entrepreneurship courses must talk not only about how to avoid failure but also about how failure can contribute to eventual success. The entrepreneur must make students recognise that failure is an authentic and often beneficial part of venturing.

If entrepreneuring is a valid discipline for an academic institution to teach, then entrepreneurial training must improve a student’s chances of succeeding with a current or future venture. There is no question that the odds are stacked against the entrepreneur; however, we believe these same odds are much better with than without such training. Still, embarking on an entrepreneurial career should be tantamount to acknowledging that failure is quite probable. For some students, this is an uncomfortable position — no one likes to talk or think about failing. But this is where the entrepreneur who has experienced both success and failure can be most helpful: in candid discussions of the realities of failure and how each incident can contribute to the learning process. In addition, students ill at ease with the thought of failure may find, after hearing an entrepreneur’s experiences, that entrepreneuring is simply not for them. They may find this course the perfect opportunity to redirect themselves into career paths where the chances for success are better served.

**Academic Knowledge**

There are those who contend that entrepreneurial experience is all that is needed to teach the subject. Many academics, however, are not comfortable with the thought of having an individual relying solely on “experience” teaching in their institution. They see this individual as unskilled labour, relying on “war stories” rather than a solid base of knowledge developed from the research literature in the field. The entrepreneur is condemned as a “how-I-did it” teacher, lacking the objective outlook of a trained academian. Detractors point to the lack of theory as evidence that entrepreneurship education is merely a fad. Although a growing research literature and improved theoretical foundations may put this worry to rest in the not-too-distant future, the question remains: how much, and what kind of, academic knowledge should be required of an entrepreneur wishing to teach in a college of business?

We recommend a solid academic grounding in the fundamentals of business — marketing, manufacturing, finance, personnel, etc. In fact, we suggest that, whenever possible, the teaching entrepreneurs possess an MBA degree. This may sound unreasonable; it may be objected that an MBA programme does not address entrepreneurial skills, but instead trains students for staff careers in Fortune 500 companies, and that many successful entrepreneurs lack any degree, business or otherwise. Unfortunately, these people often turn out to be excellent guest speakers, but not good teachers of a complete course. What an MBA programme does provide is a generalist orientation, which is particularly helpful to an entrepreneur wishing to teach a generalist course such as entrepreneurship.

In the business world, the entrepreneur deficient in certain functional areas of the firm’s business can delegate those activities to other members of the management team. In the classroom, however, such deficiencies become glaring,
and no number of guest speakers can make up for them. At the very least, the MBA has a basic academic grounding in each of the firm’s functional areas. A teaching entrepreneur with this grounding can tell students which theories worked and which did not, and offer insights as to why or why not. The MBA’s “generalist” orientation provides a conceptual framework within which to discuss both his or her own entrepreneurial ventures and those of others.

Teaching Skills
Business education is an interesting phenomenon. On the one hand, it is criticised as being too applied and career-oriented; on the other, many of our own business students complain that it is not applied enough. What we teach is too abstract and artificial. Their attitude becomes lackadaisical and college becomes a way to pass the time until they reach the “real world”. The entrepreneur, by virtue of experience and success, starts the term with the credibility necessary to overcome this attitude. Here is someone who has succeeded in the very world that the student aspires to enter. But all the entrepreneur’s experience, knowledge and success means nothing if he or she cannot communicate with students in a meaningful and entertaining way. Thus, evidence of teaching skills is critical to the hiring decision. The selection committee should ask the candidate to stand in for a faculty member as a guest lecturer and observe. Can the candidate be a ham, an actor, a public speaker, and a lecturer all in one? Can this entrepreneur, however “real” and “relevant”, motivate a class of students who are often dependent on receiving wisdom from an “intellectual God”? Does this person look and seem comfortable in front of a class?

Entrepreneurs frequently enter the classroom with a vision of imitating their own outstanding teachers. The candidate should be prepared to discuss these role models. What did they do that was so outstanding? Does the candidate recognise that teaching methodologies vary, and what was a good method for one class may not work as well with another? (This may be particularly true with a class as diverse as entrepreneurship.) What type of teaching approach would the candidate use and why? Can this person teach a case, lead a discussion, be a facilitator rather than a decision maker, control the classroom without overcontrolling, keep the students’ attention and earn their respect?

The committee might well ask specifically how the candidate would handle some of the following recurrent situations: the student who attempts to dominate classroom discussions, the student who is caught cheating but denies it, the student who attempts to influence the teacher’s grading decision, the student who is simply not in touch with what is happening in the classroom. Can the candidate avoid favouring the better students and disliking the poorer students who make little or no effort? How would he or she deal with the proverbial “whiner” who complains about the emphasis placed on class participation?

Performing in front of the classroom, however, is only one aspect of teaching. Another is designing and organising the course. Course design is a formidable task, requiring considerable time and energy. Is the entrepreneur aware of all that must go into this activity and, at the same time, of its importance? Teaching entrepreneurs, like any other educator, must be organised, must understand the
importance of scheduling and providing a logical flow to their material rather than presenting a disparate set of topics, must have a sense of what constitutes realistic expectations for students at a particular school and how to test and evaluate student performance; and must appreciate the necessity of providing a variety of learning experiences — cases, papers, lectures, projects, etc. Anyone who has built a successful company should understand organisation, but the resources at such a person’s disposal differ dramatically from those available to the typical educator. There must be a recognition of the importance of this task on the part of the entrepreneur yet, at the same time, an understanding of how different it is from their typical organising efforts.

**Attracting and Keeping the Qualified Entrepreneur**

The problem confronting business schools is not just finding qualified entrepreneurs; faculty and administrators generally have fairly well-developed networks that can recommend a potential candidate. But how can the institution entice these people to accept the offered positions? And how can it ease their transition into teaching and provide enough inducements to maintain their interest and commitment?

Most entrepreneurs are not over-concerned with pay. Many would just as soon teach for nothing as for the small amount they get as a lecturer or instructor. The things they are really interested in are the satisfaction of influencing students, status and credibility with faculty and administrators. They want to be recognised as playing a valuable role in their colleges. Administrators can address all of these issues by paying attention to three items: (1) rewards; (2) support and commitment, and (3) providing a “host” faculty member to guide the entrepreneur through the business school and university bureaucracies.

**Rewards**

Entrepreneurs who want to teach also want recognition, both within and outside a college of business. For instance, providing the entrepreneur with a title is not only the courteous thing to do, but will also be welcomed by the entrepreneur as a sign of acceptance from the larger business school community. “Lecturer” or “instructor”; however, are status-lacking titles and should be reserved for part-time people rather than the entrepreneur willing to make a full-time commitment. Instead, the full-time teaching entrepreneur might be given an honorary title such as Adjunct Professor of Entrepreneurship. Adjunct connotes a more equal status than the “subordinate” position implied by adjunct, and the title’s meaning is more in line with the current usage of the term in liberal arts schools. Whatever title is chosen, it is the idea of equality that is uppermost in the mind of the entrepreneur.

Prestige, status, recognition, credibility, etc. can also be provided through other relatively low-cost rewards. For example, entrepreneurs should be given the opportunity to participate in professional meetings. They should be encouraged and funded to perform “academic” duties such as attending meetings such as the Academy of Management or the Price-Babson College Fellows’ Program. The entrepreneurs benefit from the interaction with colleagues from other schools, while the programme gets increased visibility and recognition.
Faculty should also involve entrepreneurs in the "social circle" of the school. At the very least, they should be invited to business school functions — honours and recognition ceremonies, graduation events, orientation activities, etc. They will also appreciate "perks" such as parking, membership in the university faculty club, football or basketball tickets, and so on. They should be made to feel that they are equal members of the business school faculty. If they are treated courteously, the institution's return on investment can be spectacular.

**Support and Commitment**

The school must demonstrate its commitment to the teaching entrepreneur. The whole idea of support and assistance, however, is typically an afterthought. In order to retain good people the school must give them support where needed, e.g. a teacher's assistant to help grade papers, typing and clerical help equal to that given to regular faculty, and office space in which they can conduct their business. Too often, the entrepreneur is provided with a space no bigger than the proverbial broom-closet and even that must be shared with other part-time instructors. Adding insult to injury, the office is frequently not even on the same floor as those of the regular faculty members. This simply re-emphasizes any differences in status between the entrepreneur and full-time faculty.

Many of the little things that regular faculty members take for granted mean more to the entrepreneur. For example, they especially need some latitude in scheduling. They may need to teach all their classes on Monday or Tuesday so they can travel, if necessary, during the balance of the week. After all, it is seldom that entrepreneurs, even those committing themselves to a full-time teaching schedule, give up all their outside commitments. Hence, a certain amount of flexibility that will allow them to maintain these activities is gratefully accepted.

Simple things can save the entrepreneur untold hours of frustration and aggravation. For example, the entrepreneur will not know everything there is to know about the school and its campus, even if he or she is a graduate. Memories dim and campuses change. An orientation tour will help; so will a campus map and a guide to where the essential offices are located. The entrepreneur should be taken to the library and introduced to the business librarians and administrators who can explain how to put books on reserve, use databases, etc. They should address the numerous ways in which they can be helpful to both the entrepreneur and the class. With the proliferation of business software and students' increasing ability to use packages such as LOTUS 1-2-3, the entrepreneur may also need a contact with the computer services staff. Finally, like any other new faculty member, the teaching entrepreneur should have a copy of the business school prospectus along with the typical handouts acquainting students with university services. Students are not bashful about asking for help from anyone who might have information. To respond adequately, the entrepreneur needs to know who to contact for what. Consider the consequences. Every time a student asks a question about university rules or procedures and the teaching entrepreneur has to say, "I don't know", (1) the student goes unhelped; (2) the student may perceive the institution as disorganised, and (3) the teaching entrepreneur's "outsider" status is underlined both for him or her and for the student.
The first tangible sign of commitment by the school is generally the contract the entrepreneur is asked to sign. This provides the first glimpse into the culture of the school and just how far it is willing to go to support this person. Although contracts are typically for a year at a time, departments should consider offering a multi-year contract after an initial probationary period is completed, or even immediately if they are sure of the individual’s abilities. The risks are apparent; but a two- or three-year contract tells the entrepreneur that the school trusts his or her abilities and is ready to provide the support necessary for successful teaching. Such a contract recognises and values the work and preparation the entrepreneur is about to begin. This is not to be a one-shot performance.

A ‘‘Host’’ Faculty Member
In order to do much of the above, the institution needs to provide a ‘‘host’’ to help guide the entrepreneur through the unending maze of the business school. This role can easily be filled by a faculty interested in entrepreneurship. And its importance cannot be overstated — it is critical to the entrepreneur’s success. The host not only provides advice, but serves as an important social intermediary, giving background information, making introductions, and filling the new person in on the latest information circulating through the school. In essence, the host provides an important communication channel between the entrepreneur and the faculty and administration of the business school. While this may not sound like much, it will make all the difference in the world to the entrepreneur, who might otherwise be completely isolated. To a great extent, this is how the entrepreneur finds out what, where, when, how, why and by whom things are done in the business school. For an entrepreneur to function successfully within the constraints of the school, it is essential that this role be filled by someone who understands the importance of this link between the involved parties.

Conclusion
Entrepreneurship education is rapidly becoming part of the curriculum at more and more universities. As it does so, it is outstripping the supply of full-time academics interested in the area. The natural inclination of many schools short of teaching resources in entrepreneurship is to turn to the outside for help. Once faculty have been convinced of the value of an entrepreneurship curriculum, the next and probably most critical task is to give them evidence that the entrepreneurs who will be teaching are qualified educators. Given the typical biases towards “outside” instructors, this is not an easy task. It is further complicated by the difficulty of identifying qualified entrepreneurs.

In order to improve this process, we have recommended that schools examine motives, entrepreneurial experiences, academic knowledge and teaching skills. A thorough screening on these dimensions should provide a qualified and capable educator. If it sounds as though all the skills and attributes we have suggested add up to the last of the Renaissance Men, administrators should take heart. The teaching success of many entrepreneurs supports the idea that such Renaissance Men — and Women — still exist.
Once hired, the entrepreneur can make an easier transition into teaching if attention is paid to the reward system, if the institution provides the support and commitment necessary for teaching success, and if the new person is assigned a faculty “host” to explain the ground rules of teaching in a school of business. All of these conditions contribute to providing a successful educational experience for both the entrepreneur and the students, but the bottom line is that the entrepreneur must want it. He or she must be willing to serve as a role model, to teach classes that are often looked down on by other faculty, and to explore topics that are both ambiguous and complex, and for which little theory or empirical study exists. It is a position that can be both stressful and exciting — not unlike building one’s own company.

References