

# **Academic entrepreneurs in a technology-oriented setting – empirical study surveying characteristics of young entrepreneurs participating in the entrepreneurship training programme “ExTra!®”**

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## **Keywords**

academic start-ups, entrepreneurship training, technology-oriented start-ups, university entrepreneurship education, empirical study, women way of entrepreneurship

## **Abstract**

In this paper, we present the results of an empirical study surveying the development of forthcoming academic entrepreneurs participating in the tailored entrepreneurship training programme “ExTra!®”, carried out by and hosted at the Department of Business Information Systems and Operations Research (BiOR), University of Kaiserslautern, Germany.

The study includes three empirical samples, an early first one of 1999, then the second one of 2000, and a third one of late 2004. The primary research objective was to identify characteristics of successful entrepreneurs compared to those who have obviously failed. In the latest study, we additionally tried to find out similarities and differences between male and female entrepreneurs, and in a more detailed fashion, if a certain “women way of entrepreneurship” could be observed. Determining these gender-specific aspects of becoming and being an entrepreneur is also a goal of another project of ours, called “WWoE”, which is part of the EQUAL programme currently run by the European Union.

The general purpose of our tripartite empirical study – accompanied by the evaluation of other studies – was to better understand the start-up processes of technology-oriented enterprises. The results are to help to establish new and improve existing training programmes, particularly our own, and to share our experience with other entrepreneurship training activities. Based on our research, we finally derive key conclusions, especially in terms of two topics probably crucial for successful start-ups: characteristics of the entrepreneur, such as skills and attitude, and importance of sales and marketing for survival of a young company. Together, these key conclusions may set a framework on how to best design and conduct an entrepreneurship training at universities.

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