

Geert-Jan de Steur

Entrepreneur Meister

Entrepreneur Meister is a column that focuses on the lives and ventures of entrepreneurs. We take a close look at the entrepreneurs behind the vision, strategy, passion and action in ventures across all sectors.



Geert-Jan de Steur is not an easy name to pronounce if you don't speak Dutch. I'm desperately trying to learn Spanish as my third language but I seriously doubt Dutch would be my fourth language to cram into my little cranium.

Entrepreneurs are entrepreneurs no matter where they reside.

The entrepreneur journey of Geert-Jan and his company, DrawBridge 54 in Utrecht, The Netherlands, is a classic case of an entrepreneur "productizing" a service and his intellectual capital. However, it's easier said than done sometimes.

For all the ADDE (Attention Deficit Disorder Entrepreneurs) entrepreneurs out there, DrawBridge 54, in short, is a consulting methodology transforming itself into a web-based platform that enables corporations to take their strategy and turn it into actionable results.

After I spent a minute trying to pronounce his name correctly, Geert-Jan was kind enough to say, "Just call me Jerry. For the English audience it might be easier." Having a European background myself, and becoming Americanized, it is fascinating for me to hear a European entrepreneur's point of view. In America, entrepreneurs chase the 'American Dream.' In Europe, the entrepreneurs chase the 'European Dream?' Hell, what would that be?

Geert-Jan told me he became an entrepreneur because, "It was some kind of an internal urge, and probably also an evolution in time." His father worked for Shell for 36 years. Initially Geert-Jan followed in his father's footsteps and worked for large companies including AKZO, Kodak, Nedlloyd and Tyco.



“Working for huge companies like Shell,” explained Geert-Jan, “you’re in there forever because you’ve got your pension funds, your social security, etc., but your job’s kind of boring.” I think most Fortune 1000 executives-turned-entrepreneur would agree. Entrepreneurs leaving their corporate jobs because they got bored... hmm, I’ve seen that more than once.

Boredom breeds entrepreneurship.

Working for those larger companies, Geert-Jan was in sales, marketing and project management with an emphasis on organizational structure. I’ve interviewed thousands of entrepreneurs, as a venture capitalist and a media publisher, and I’ve seen the same entrepreneurial pattern: the past and the present prepare the entrepreneur for the future.

After leaving Kodak, Geert-Jan was with a mergers and acquisitions (M&A) company called APM Venture Capital, for five years. He explained how this company had a different concept than most M&A companies. They wouldn’t just buy a damn company and sit on their ass and wait to sell it later. APM actually bought other companies that they believed in, for a low price and then spent a lot of money improving and recovering the company. They even brought in their own team to make shit happen. “They had this concept that made it one family so everyone was working for the best results,” said Geert-Jan.

Working at APM Venture Capital helped Geert-Jan polish his entrepreneurial skills. It was a perfect environment to experience, learn, and fine-tune his idea of turning strategy into actionable results.

Taking that entrepreneurial leap of faith is different for every entrepreneur. Genetics and environment play their cards of fate differently for each person. Geert-Jan was influenced by his grandfather to eventually cross the line to entrepreneurland. “My grandfather was a timber man and he worked for himself during WWII. So my father knew the downsides of being an entrepreneur at that point in time.” Seeing those pitfalls of entrepreneurship, Geert-Jan’s father chose the safer, corporate route.

But there comes a moment in every entrepreneur's life when they turn from the dark side (corporate world of boredom) to see the sunlight of entrepreneurland and entrepreneur possibilities.

Geert-Jan reflected, "Sometimes you're just at a crossroad where you have to choose left or right. And if the left side is closed you automatically take the right side. In 2001, the economy was pretty bad, as it is now. I had to decide, am I going to follow my dream? The amount of time and work and energy for going for your dream or going for a fixed job is actually the same. So I just thought, well, let's tell people my experience with regard to transition, change and structuring companies, and especially with helping people to get a better view of how they work – so a bit by sheer luck in the network, my first assignment was in Denmark."



Timing in life is everything. It was for Geert-Jan as well. "That came just in time. It shouldn't have come a month later. So I had an assignment in Denmark for two years" said Geert-Jan.

Like many entrepreneurs, Geert-Jan is motivated by the creative process. He explained enthusiastically that once he's in with a client, he is driven by the possibility of helping people and enabling them to rise to the occasion. "It's something in my work," he said. "It's when you do a great job in an assignment, for example the assignment in Denmark for Sigma Coatings, which is now PPG."

Listening to Geert-Jan reminded me of the common traits all great entrepreneurs share. One is that entrepreneurs are what I call *business artists*¹. The other is that entrepreneurs become entrepreneurs because they think outside the box or outside the conventional wisdom. "And what I see right now is

¹ *Business Artists*: This is one of my description variables for entrepreneurs. After analyzing hundreds of entrepreneurs, I think there is a very close correlation between art and entrepreneurship. All great entrepreneurs are creative in many different endeavors.

that, in this economy, too many companies are afraid to think outside the box,” said Geert-Jan. “It is all standard. They’re so afraid to really just do and go.”

He described his assignment with Sigma Coatings, “We had to sell the service centers which was a tough job because we went from 300 people to 30. But I had a creative idea, why not sell the service center to the people of Sigma themselves? So instead of firing 270 people, most of them actually – where they sold paint to professional painters who come in every morning to buy paint and then go on their job and come back in the evening again – so we actually sold the service center with the distribution and franchising contract to the people themselves so they were able to become entrepreneurs themselves.”



Instead of taking the easy route, which is to fire everyone’s ass, Geert-Jan enabled others to become entrepreneurs. The irony is that at that point, he was still not an entrepreneur.

Before starting DrawBridge 54, he tried a venture in corporate recovery. With a background in M&A it seemed a good fit for Geert-Jan. After a year and a half he decided he likes people too much to stay in that line of business. “It is not my thing,” he said. “Because you have to be so damn hard and not care about people at all. Because it is just about the company - that’s it.” Geert-Jan is an entrepreneur with heart.

He came up with the idea for DrawBridge 54 based on his personal experiences working for the Fortune 1000 companies. “What you see is that when you see a big company like AKZO implementing something like software, for example, what you see is that it is a total digital exercise. They forget about people completely.” He explained that what it boils down to is that, especially in the mid-level management layer and below, people suffer from bad decisions made by the top layer. “The same thing goes for change. If a company decides to go from a classical structure – for example, if you have 10 companies

beside each other and you say, 'Let's integrate it and share service centers' - if not communicated well enough you have a terrible disaster at the mid-layer. I've been in that mid-layer and know what it is to translate strategy from top level to the lower level and again from the lower level because they think it's ridiculous or whatever."



To use a sports analogy for all the jocks out there, it's the difference between developing a game plan of how the game should be played, and then transferring that strategy into real action on the field. Geert-Jan reminded me that business and entrepreneurship always comes down to people. Even I sometimes forget that.

"If you have an MBA from a proper school, either in the states or in Europe, we're all trained to think in visions and to make PowerPoint slide after PowerPoint slide about how it should be, etc. etc.," Geert-Jan explained. I had to laugh. He told me he didn't respect companies that pay the large fees demanded for these presentations without asking for an execution plan.

Geert-Jan's elevator pitch was not the classical pitch I've heard from thousands of entrepreneurs over the last ten years. He explained that the purpose of DrawBridge 54 is, "In essence, enabling people to rise to the occasion. It's about people. It looks as if it's a mathematical content-oriented thing, which it's not. It's about how do you get the attention of people to go through a journey where they know that there is going to be pain. Pain in the sense that they don't know what job they will have in a year. And pain in the sense that they are going to do things that they don't like. So if you focus on their own surroundings, the surroundings that they can influence in their job in the HR or sales department or whatever, that's actually what Drawbridge insures. It's a methodology. It's a toolset."



Geert-Jan has productized his brainpower. When a company develops a strategy for something, whatever division or department, they have to transfer that strategy into an execution plan. DrawBridge 54 is the web-based methodology and solution to create actionable results. Geert-Jan elaborated on his process:

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“The following happens: If I’m sitting with, let’s say, the sales department, my question will be, ‘What is it that you do?’ They will give me head tasks and subtasks and describe it and they will see that it fills in a mold. It’s an 8-step plan. The next question I always ask is, ‘Now you are the sales department, what is the actual overall strategy of the company?’ Eight out of 10 times they will look at me and say, ‘Yeah, well, I saw it on a poster somewhere in the hall, but I could not frankly tell you by heart.’

Now the manager, sales manager or sales director, will have to react on that. He will say, ‘Hey, I’m the tough guy I know the strategy.’ Then I will ask him as an objective bystander of the DB54 consultant, ‘So what is it?’ If he says it is about quality improvement for the back office, the next question is, ‘What is the translation of *quality improvement* for your sales organization? What does it mean for that guy in row one? What is he going to do with quality improvement?’ And there is where he sees the translation because then it’s on every sheet.

I always start with, first – overall strategy, and second – the translation of the overall strategy. The rest of the sheet is head tasks and subtasks so people can relate. They will start with the content of their job - head tasks and subtasks – and then I will refer to strategy – do you know it? What does that mean for you? And only to get the discussion, ‘Yes, we know it,’ ‘Yes, we work with it,’ ‘Yes we don’t know it,’ etc. And then after step 2 or 3 the plan is to tell them, ‘Okay, so if there’s not a translation of the words *quality improvement* for your company then I think we should make that and make that concrete. Then we leave that question to the manager. That is his action point to actually get that done and make a presentation to his sales department in order to explain how that works.”

I told Geert-Jan that I could envision venture capitalists using this methodology. Say I’m a venture capital fund who’s going to put \$2 to \$5 million dollars in your business. You (the entrepreneur) need the money because you need more people because you have a strategy to scale the business. You’re gonna need to manage that strategy at every level of the organization so that you don’t end up with a wonderful PowerPoint presentation worth framing, but shitty results. This is where DrawBridge enables the entrepreneur to make it happen.



Organization of change is what DrawBridge 54 is all about. "The thing is that if you come from BPM (business process management) or process flows, etc - that's the digital side of it. This is the organizing of the movement of the execution of change," said Geert-Jan.

I asked Geert-Jan how DrawBridge makes money. He explained that their big moneymaker is in training and certifying consultants, plus they charge per user. "That's the portal web-based version, so that's a pretty easy model," he said. The company's direct competition is the KPMG's of the world because they have their own methodologies and toolsets.

DrawBridge 54 is in the early stages of financing. Geert-Jan said he's looking for the right investor. "First of all, I truly believe that the mission of DB54 is to support organizations and their employees during change projects by means of a simple structure that connects, changes and embeds," he explained. "We see how much pain there is in the middle level of bigger companies and we deal with people in order to make that better or help. And that is also my personal goal so I'm very vulnerable to a venture capitalist says, 'Hey, I'll give you five million and shut up and I will use it for so and so.' I will be less interested than in the venture capitalist that for one million says, 'Hey, we have the same ideas about people. Let's try to make something interesting out of it.'"

From an investor perspective, Geert-Jan is what we call a domain expert. "This is what it boils down to," he said, "if you don't have a feeling for people, if you don't have experience with the pain of change in bigger companies, and smaller companies as well, then you're not able to work with it. Then you will not sense where the bridges are between the different steps of the methodology."

DrawBridge 54's business model is different than in other consulting firms. "I want to be the spider in the web," said Geert-Jan. "I don't want to have the company of 2,000 people. I want to be the company



with probably 30 to 50 people doing business all over the world. So having a training organization in the U.S., perhaps one or 10, but quality - not the biggest company - the one with the heart in the right place.

I thought competitive differentiation was going to be one of the critical points to DrawBridge 54's success. "If you look at the Internet and search for 'strategy implementation or whatever,'" said Geert-Jan, "then you get all these Harvard, or Stanford or blah blah blah blah!" He said those are all good institutions, however, "They give you the information, they tell you how it's done, but then you have to translate it yourself into the company and it just stops. And where all those things stop, we start." He confidently explained that that was why DB54 would be successful. Plus their program is easy to use.

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Geert-Jan is a man with experience, domain expertise and what I call reality-based situations. Entrepreneur passion drives him. I think he could talk about his vision of helping corporations 24/7. He gave an example to summarize:

"For Volkswagen in the Netherlands, they had this strategy to make shared service centers for the back office. They had these eight or nine companies, two or three lease companies, two or three banks, insurances, etc. So they had this strategy in PowerPoint, etc., from people with MBAs, economic, financial... I don't know what... muscle science, etc. And then it didn't work, and they hired me to actually make it operational. One of the things that really struck me was that their strategy for back office was 'quality improvement' and getting the vulnerability of the people down. Now when you ask of somebody who's doing input work all day, 'Tell me what that means to you?' then they would look at you like you're from outer space."

Behind the Interview Questions

DAMIR: Do you think entrepreneurs are born, made or a combination?

GEERT-JAN: Under normal circumstance, they would probably be born. What I mean is that I see people around me that have the ultimate feel for making deals. I think that for 20% of the entrepreneurs, they are born with the sense, or the nose for deal making in any segment or branch they operate. That really is a special breed. You probably have those examples around you that you're wondering, 'How is it possible that he's pulling that off?' I have no explanation for that. I know that once you have money, that money will make money, but still there are a couple of entrepreneurs that are just born with this feeling, and probably also they're great psychological genes are in such a way that they are able to just focus on one thing, and they don't care about anything besides it, so they're not distracted by anything else.



DAMIR: What do you think is the secret to becoming a successful entrepreneur?

GEERT-JAN: I think that most of the entrepreneurs, in that first group, are really separate breed. If I look at the major part of it, I see entrepreneurs that by hard work, making mistakes, trial and error, they become an entrepreneur somewhere in time -- some successful, some a bit less.

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DAMIR: Most entrepreneurs have their ups and downs. What are some entrepreneur myths you've experienced?

GEERT-JAN: You can absolutely not make or get money overnight. That's a reality at this point in time. Everybody is stressed, focused on sitting on the money. Nobody is spending money. Even if you have a group business plan, they will play the game and wait and wait and see if you have customers. Once you start drowning, then they will act. That's the fact of life now.

DAMIR: So getting money in Europe is really tight right now?

GEERT-JAN: It's very tight. If you look at banks, that's a complete disaster. If you come from the states and you really have money and you want to invest in Europe, you go to a bigger investment group and a bank, so it's all about the larger number. Most of the people that are in the lower amounts of money, needing 250 thousand euros to a million – that's quite difficult.

DAMIR: I've learned that it's sometimes harder to raise smaller money that bigger money. Rolling 'one million' or 'ten million euros' out of my mouth takes the same effort. How is the venture capital community in the Netherlands?

GEERT-JAN: I talked, for Drawbridge 54, with a couple of venture capitalists, and you get invited because it's a nice idea and normally they have 30 ventures and now they have three, so they didn't know how fast they had to sell ventures in time and just take their loss. So they all went for secure environments, and there are only a few people that bear to take risks. It's all about a combination of venture capital, bank, private capital, and those kinds of things. The guy from Spyker who bought SAAB, which is kind of weird...

DAMIR: We love Spyker!

GEERT-JAN: It is absolutely a fantastic car and made in the Netherlands, and I think people here are proud of that. But the way that went, from a financial point of view... It's a very small company taking over a huge company and done with a lot of stamina and done only with the network that he has around him.



DAMIR: He's thinking outside the box like you are.

GEERT-JAN: Yes!

DAMIR: The reason I'm asking is that we have 50 major myths in our book "Entrepreneur Myths" that we're putting out this year. And one myth is that entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley sometimes freak out when they see that they aren't first to market when in reality there are so many different variables and dynamics played out when you have an idea, especially when a market is in its early stages. Apple was not the first to come out with a computer. Or iPod or an iPhone. But last time I checked I cannot get rid of my iPhone and I'm addicted to it!

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GEERT-JAN: Yeah, I agree. You don't always have to be the first and sometimes it's even better to not be the first.

DAMIR: What size corporations could use the DB54 process? Is this something an entrepreneur corporation of 20 to 40 people can use?

GEERT-JAN: Yes. We're starting very small in the Netherlands as well. Where I live we have a very small foundation. They are doing the sports park here. They have 35 or 40 million in order to make a soccer park and hockey park, etc. They were being criticized by the environment for not knowing what they're doing and there's a lot of money involved. I told them, 'Don't be distracted by the seeming complexity of the sheets because it's not, let's just throw in what tasks you are doing.' So finance is doing that and that, and the guy who's doing secretarial things is doing that and that – just to show to people that hey, we thought about it, you can trust us.

DAMIR: MBAs have fads – reengineering, business process management, blah blah blah, okay? This is not really that. It's really much different because all of those things to me were fads where at the end of the day they cut the head count. That's why it didn't work.

GEERT-JAN: Exactly.

DAMIR: What stage in the venture are you in right now? Are you self-funded? Angel-funded? How are you financed right now?

GEERT-JAN: That's one of my major challenges. The website is in Dutch and English and the toolset is in English as well. We have the fact sheets. We have the pricing. Everything is ready and we started to make sales pitches in September 2009. We made a lot of mistakes there.

DAMIR: No way! No entrepreneur ever makes any mistakes.



GEERT-JAN: (laughs) The thing is, you come across things. There is this hospital. They have a service center, 1,800 people and they wanted to do a test for the HRN department for 120 people. They asked me to put it down on paper. And what I made, from my perspective, was a good offer. But it was in my language; it wasn't in the language of the hospital so they didn't understand it. And it went back and forth at least 10 times, and as you guessed, I just lost the pitch. Other consulting agencies work with 10 people on offers that last for 3 or 4 weeks in order to really get the psychology of the customer into it. So I was a bit too immature in making it. Now I know how it works.

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DAMIR: It's a learning curve, my friend. Everyone has it. I've been through a lot of startups and I ran a venture fund. But even today, I think the biggest thing entrepreneurs should take notice of is that you are always learning. No matter what you know – what level of experience – you're always learning. I wish it was easy, right?

GEERT-JAN: No. I wish it were just a *little* bit easier. I don't mind it. I like starting from the underdog position and then climbing up and falling down and climbing up. But at this point in time the only thing that is difficult is the neurosis, or the psychotic market. Where people don't even see the good things that will help enable them, and help them to work on a higher level.

DAMIR: Everyone's scared right now to a certain extent. What do you want to do with your venture? For example, with Entrepreneurdex, I have a vision of building it into a huge community of entrepreneurs. That's only one component of it but everything will be focused on helping entrepreneurs and educating them and making them better and having them share their ideas. For example, today I'm learning more from you than you are from me. I'm being selfish. But that is what's so wonderful about entrepreneurs sharing ideas. So what is the end of the journey for your venture? Do you want to grow it into a big business, have it be family-owned, or do you want to have it eventually be acquired by another consultancy agency or software company, or do you want to continue it forever?

GEERT-JAN: I want to work on an international basis, because as I said, my father being in Curacao for ten years, and Switzerland, I feel that working in the Netherlands, that my brain dies off after a year or two years. That's rude to say, but I get so much more energy by working in different countries. So that's the reason that we actually made it that you can adapt the data base to different countries. You only have to translate 50 words or something and then you're off.

DAMIR: So the way you've productized this. It's a web-based software and anyone can tap into it in any level of the organization.

DAMIR: Who is your direct competition?



GEERT-JAN: The KPMGs, etc. because they have so many methodologies and toolsets. That is enormous. They will not accept something easy because they have all the difficult toolsets and methodologies available.

DAMIR: So how do you protect yourself - protect your IP with KPMG? You're kind of like in a co-optition where in some respects you might be competing, but in other respects you're kind of helping each other.

GEERT-JAN: Correct. We have taken the measures to secure it but I'm not sure as to what extent that can be done. With software, that's always a risk. And time to market is an important issue. That's the reason I'd like to find a party that, from the heart, would love to invest and go along, because distribution and sales is the only thing that has to be accelerated at this point in time. I don't think that you can really secure all forms of software at this time.

DAMIR: I think you're right.

GEERT-JAN: You just have to focus on your own thing. The story of why I developed it is unique. Nobody has that. There is one competitor here in the Netherlands. I'm trying to get it tested at the University of Twente. And this professor of innovation and change management, he's also working together with BPM (Bit Process Management) guys, they're called Bit Design or something and they have something like this which is ten times, from a software point of view, better but it's so bloody digital. It's done by a technical guy who worked on it for five years-

DAMIR: Oh! Good Lord.

GEERT-JAN: -with no experience at all with change management.

DAMIR: Once again, it clarifies the classical case of an entrepreneur working somewhere or doing something and then seeing a void in the marketplace and saying, "I'm taking it." I love it. How big, in your estimation, is your market?

GEERT-JAN: If I had the right amount of money behind it to really go after the sales and distribution - and that means we are able to hire an agency for 150 or 200 thousand euros to go in the newspapers to sell it, to have articles, etc. - then we have a pretty massive market. And I will be able to make the decision, either I'm going to train Drawbridge 54 consultants in house, or they will be freelancers, or trainers - the same thing. I want to be the one who's going to the conventions, and studying it and learning how it works in order to get it rolling on a higher perspective. If you ask me how much it is - I missed three bids last year. One at Tyco, one at-



DAMIR: Wow! These are large companies.

GEERT-JAN: I focused on Tyco, for example, they wanted to set up a shared service center and a couple of competence centers. If you look at this format you can evaluate one department on one A4 (sheet of paper) because you get your overall strategy, derived strategy, head tasks, subtasks, who they're working with within the company, where the issues are, etc. So it makes it very easy to work with. But Tyco changed their strategy from the U.S. U.S. companies have the tendency, that if it doesn't go well in the economy, to shut the money crane to Europe and close a couple of centers.

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DAMIR: Yeah, that's the easiest way to do it. Just shut things down.

GEERT-JAN: But that was an order of 120,000 euros and the test pilot was 50,000 euros so those are... now I can tell that I'm a bit distracted by the economy. I'm just trying to everyday reinvent the elevator pitch so can get it across to people.

DAMIR: Obviously the elevator pitch could consist of a couple of things. One, you actually convert strategy into action, which is not easy to do. Anyone can strategize, hell I can hire twenty MBAs, and I used to fund PhDs, and everything looks great on paper but how do you make strategy into reality? That's one thing you do, and then obviously it's the consistent message. If I'm the CEO of a large corporation, one of the biggest things I worry about is my message and my vision, and everything communicated.

Another thing is, you're saving people money, and you're also having them look at it from an 'outside of the box' standpoint. That all takes effort and time.

Another question: a lot of entrepreneurs make the mistake of raising either too much money or not enough and that's an art as much as science. How much capital do you need in your business to be cash flow positive, where you do not have to go and raise any more capital?

GEERT-JAN: We made a three-year plan where we are break-even by the end of year two and focusing on 1.2 or 1.5 euros as external money.

DAMIR: If you would've told me you're going to break even in 9 months I would have hung up on you. I'm kidding. Because I can't tell you how many people will say that, especially when you're selling into corporate markets. The cycle is long.



GEERT-JAN: It is very long. I've been in sales myself, in corporate pitches, and I know that the difficulty with corporate is that you have to get back to them all the time. It will probably take you two years to really get things done.

DAMIR: That's reality.

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GEERT-JAN: Yes. And we thought, if we get to year three then we have to make a five-year plan. And we made it when the economy was – that was in March of last year – so it was really in the end of year two, and a major part of the money is spent on all commercial activities and getting people onboard, etc.

DAMIR: Since you're pitching corporations you probably have a pretty good feel for the pulse of the economic conditions. Do you see the economy improving in the next couple of years or do you see that we're in it for a 5-year nightmare?

GEERT-JAN: Oooo! There are some slight improvements, but that's nearly on a weekly basis because the next week it's down again. I think it will last somewhat longer because it's such a mess in the financial sector. I think it's going to take awhile before they resolve that.

DAMIR: There's a major financial hangover, that's for sure. It's difficult to predict those things. Now the fun part: Why do you think you're venture is going to succeed? Because there is no other choice, right?

GEERT-JAN: (laughs) I would love to say that but there are so many things. As I said, where other companies stop, we start. That's the reason that it will be successful. It's so easy to use. People will see that their remarks are put into the model and they can work with it.

DAMIR: Then next thing is we need to help you develop an iPhone app for it. Look, I don't have an MBA - I did speak to the MBA students at Oxford on entrepreneurship and my book collection probably consists of books that every MBA university has. One thing I've learned from reading a lot of books on strategy – and Michael Porter is one of my heroes – is that it's one thing to talk about strategy. And this is why entrepreneurs are entrepreneurs, and successful entrepreneurs take strategy and make it into reality, okay? And that's what's lacking at the corporate level. Nothing against MBAs - I had a lot of them work for me, but it's one thing to pontificate and put it in a PowerPoint presentation, as you said, but it's another thing to make it a reality where the rubber meets the road.

FUN FACTS ABOUT GEERT-JAN de STEUR

Education:	I did my first MBA in Holland at what was the College of International Business Administration, and that is now Henley Business School
Favorite Hero or Heroes:	Local people who have the courage to speak up. At this point in time, it's important that local people really make something out of their situation in helping each other to grow. And in order to do so they really have to speak up. Those are my heroes
Biggest influence in life to become an entrepreneur:	My father
Favorite Entrepreneur (s):	I haven't figured that out. It's difficult because if you read all the different books, it's sometimes hard to get a grip on the man or woman who's behind it
How many hours per day do you entrepreneur?	15 to 18 hours
Favorite Book:	So many great books, but one of those by the Dalai Lama
Favorite Cartoon:	Winnie the Poo
Favorite Flower:	Rose
Favorite Car:	Maserati Quattroporte
Favorite Hobby:	Writing and painting
Favorite Sport:	Field hockey and skiing
Favorite Music Artist:	Led Zeppelin
Favorite Song:	<i>Money</i> by Pink Floyd
Favorite Actor:	Rutger Hauer
Favorite Painter:	Jan Sierhuis



Favorite Food: Crab

Favorite Drink: Coke Lite

Favorite Restaurant: In Paris, forget the name...

Favorite Web Site: Drawridge54.nl, of course

Favorite Phrase: "Don't ever giggle"

What do you want written on your Tombstone? He lived life to the max

QUESTIONS FOR THE READER

1. What do you think about the DrawBridge 54 Elevator Pitch? Do you think it needs to be different? How would you pitch it?
2. What do you think is the difference between American and European entrepreneurs?
3. With the financial chaos in the world today, what is the current American Dream? What is the European Dream? What is the Asian Dream? What is the African Dream?
4. DrawBridge 54: Fund it or Not?

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Reader Note: If you have any tips on Angel investing or Entrepreneurship, please email me. Don't worry -- I'm not a credit monger.

About Damir Perge
Chairman, CEO, Founder and Chief Janitorial Officer

Entrepreneurdex.com™
Only Serious Entrepreneurs Need Apply™

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Only Serious Angels Need Apply™

Damir Perge founded Entrepreneurdex and Angeldex because he is a multi-venture entrepreneur. He's an entrepreneurholic and people who know him will tell you he just can't help himself. He lives in the world of ideas but he's not just a dreamer. He focuses on bringing ideas to reality.

His brain can't stop coming up with ideas! Whether products, services, movies, books or ventures, they pop into his head every day. He can't stop them, not that he wants to. His biggest problem is sorting out the ideas and figuring out which ones to bring to life.

Damir has been on both sides of the fence. He ran a venture fund and a publishing company. So he knows what it's like to be an entrepreneur and what it's like to invest and manage portfolio companies.

Being an entrepreneur is exciting. Damir can work 20 hours straight and not even feel the pain of the work, because work is fun and fun is work. He says he wishes he could live a thousand years so he could startup and build a thousand different businesses.

Entrepreneurdex.com is for serious entrepreneurs only. Membership is by invitation. That doesn't mean you aren't going to have fun. Life is too short not to have fun.

Entrepreneurdex.com is not for "wanna be" entrepreneurs looking to sell some multi-level service or product (unless you're the owner of the company) or some get-rich-quick scheme. Nothing against multi-level marketing entrepreneurs or get-rich-quick scheme entrepreneurs but there are plenty of other sites for them.



Damir's vision is to build a community of serious entrepreneurs who love entrepreneurship and want to share experiences and network with other successful entrepreneurs.

How to Become an Entrepreneur or Angel Member

Entrepreneurdex and Angeldex are by invitation only. You have to be invited by someone that is already a member or email us to send you an invitation. If we don't know you, we will call you to verify you are a serious entrepreneur or Angel. Please, no wanna-be entrepreneurs, multi-level marketing folks, get-rich-scheme artists, wanna-be Angels or Devil Angels. Email us at membership@entrepreneurdex.com