

Best - and worst - practices that help to survive in the adventure of endeavouring

By: Miriam Salomão

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The Business Case Roadmap – BCR

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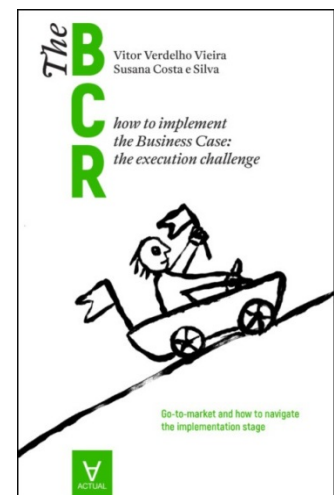
Vitor Verdelho Vieira

Consultant and visiting professor at Católica Porto Business School and School of Arts.



Susana Costa e Silva

Coordinates the MSc in Management and is an associate professor at Católica Porto Business School



The Business Case Roadmap (BCR) is a collection of 3 books, sequential and complementary, each one discussing a different stage of the lifecycle of an entrepreneurial project.

In the first book, authors present how to rise what was just a business idea; although it seems simple, if the business case is not well structured on the correct answers for the right questions, it is difficult for stages 2 and 3 to have any use. The second book – the one we're talking about in this review – is about bringing life to the project, or the implementation through execution programs. Also, finally, the third piece of the trilogy - to

be launched in autumn 2019 - will address the growth of the business.

The idea of calling the collection a roadmap is perfect, once it offers a structured process approach, revealing a very pragmatic way of dealing with the imponderable situations of a new venture. Indeed, authors call the process an algorithm based on a logical sequence of operations, according to heuristic concepts and best practices.

They adopted a question-and-answer methodology – tested with hundreds of entrepreneurs and MBA students - whereby they suggest us an almost dichotomic way of

thinking; they argue that although life is not dichotomous, this process simplifies the judgment between the possible options. It is certain that, in each step, the choice of paths varies from business to business, but the global logic is the same, so the book was designed to present the set of different alternatives in each step and the reasoning of choosing. Moreover, once we understand why we choose a specific path among the many options, the process flows.

What the authors teach us through the BCR is that we are all entrepreneurs, even if we decide not to start a business; we are entrepreneurs of our private lives, and we can apply the BCR also to our daily life! But, although entrepreneurship has always existed, in recent years we have witnessed its maturing process. We have seen large companies incubating new ventures, investors supporting new businesses, and even brave people who dreamed of transforming their passion into a business. However, the fact is that many of them will fail because of a lack of knowledge, so the BCR brings the algorithm to support the many doubts that will doubtless appear along the entrepreneur's path.

The book is organized in 21 chapters (by the way, all three volumes have 21 chapters each).

Some of them refer to management tools, like the case checklist, time and priority management, programmes and plans for implementation, routine maps for the business conduction, and so on.

Some other chapters are focused on controlling tools (without the stereotype of being just bureaucratic business activities), like the discussion of critical success factors, balanced scorecard, budgeting, and risk management.

I've particularly enjoyed the chapters related to the competitive environment, where are presented the importance of the benchmark definition and the competitor profile, the commercial plan, the richness of networking and partnership with stakeholders, and also the role of business intelligence.

Also, there are a few chapters dedicated to the definition of the customer profile and the importance of putting the focus on the customer centricity, as well as to the marketing plan. Under my point of view, there could be more customer chapters, given its importance.

The discussion of the corporate DNA works as a backdrop to all the subjects and, even without a specific chapter related to people, authors make it clear throughout the book that the success of a business depends on the correct choice of the right people: complimentary profiles in the team and a leadership that combines knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence.

The book format is a bonus. I'm not referring to its graphic design or to the easy-to-get schemes, which are also very didactic and helpful, but to the easiness of finding the

desired subject into the full three-book work. Each chapter starts with a "what is" or a "how to", so that reader won't get lost into the good management tools. In situations where the entrepreneur stumbles upon a particular challenge, his last concern should be to understand the procedure manual instead of focusing on what really matters.

The BCR has a fluid and accessible language, but do not fool yourself; the book has its foundations in theory. Concepts and definitions are underlying the full work, not in the context of an academic book but instead to simplify complex subjects and demystify clichés.

Most books about entrepreneurship were either written by entrepreneurs who believe that can explain how to do it just because they did, or by professors with great theoretical basis but without the experience of applying it into the real business world. In this case, authors bring both best practices and best theories that enable a balanced perspective to the book.

On the one hand, Vitor Verdelho Vieira has Physics as a background and the entrepreneurship as his inspiration. Besides having established his management knowledge through several specialized training courses, he has also founded two biotech companies, both internationally recognized, being one of them currently the European leader in its sector. He also has experience as a consultant, participating in more than forty R&D projects and interacting with more than two hundred European organizations. His current connection with Universidade Católica Portuguesa in Porto ranges from supporting projects at the Incubator Programme to being a visiting professor at Católica Porto Business School and School of Arts.

On the other hand, Susana Costa e Silva aggregates a solid background with a genuine interest for business in her instinct! Graduated in Management, MSc in Economics, and PhD in Marketing, she is an associate professor at Católica Porto Business School, where she teaches and coordinates the MSc in Management; she is also a researcher with publications in many well recognized academic journals, as well as a visiting scholar in universities at China, Poland and Brazil. Supervising more than a hundred theses and being a consultant in marketing and international business make her experience rich and plural.

Different skills and experiences allowed the authors to construct this tool based on best (and worst!) practices observed over many years in conducting business. Hopefully, with the help of BCR, we'll watch a rising number of survivors in this great adventure of endeavouring. Enjoy it!