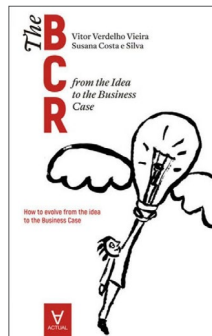


From Portugal: the complete map for new conquests

Book review: The Business Case Roadmap – BCR

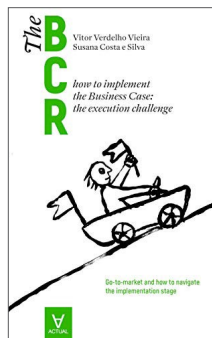
POR MIRIAM SALOMÃO - *Doutora em Administração*



Vol. 1 - from de idea do the Business Case

Publisher: Actual (Grupo Almedina)

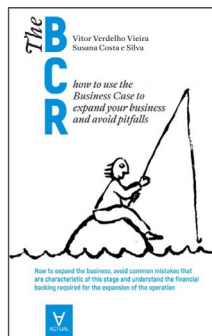
Year: 2018 (Vol. 1).



Vol. 2 - how to implement the Business Case: the execution challenge

Publisher: Actual (Grupo Almedina)

Year: 2019 (Vol. 2)



Vol. 3 - how to use the Business Case to expand your business and avoid pitfalls

Publisher: Actual (Grupo Almedina)

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The Business Case Roadmap (BCR) is a sequence of three books that discusses the different stages of an entrepreneurial venture: the rising of a business idea, the implementation through execution programmes, and the growth path for the business.

But before we jump into the book review, allow me to introduce you the authors, so you'll notice that the complementarity of their profiles is the reason for the book's balance between both best practices and best theories.

Vitor is an entrepreneur by nature, having founded two biotech companies, both internationally recognized (one of them is currently the European leader in its sector). He graduated in Physics and has acquired knowledge in management in practice, besides several specialized training courses. He also works as a consultant, having interacted with more than two hundred European organizations and more than forty R&D projects. Moreover, he supports projects at the Incubator Programme from Universidade Católica Portuguesa in Porto, where he's also a visiting professor. Católica Porto Business School (at Universidade Católica Portuguesa) is the connecting link between the two authors.

Susana has accumulated a solid background since her graduation in Management, MSc in Economics, and PhD in Marketing. She is a researcher and an associate professor at Católica Porto Business School and the coordinator of the MSc in Management, what has brought her the opportunity of supervising more than a hundred theses, besides having her studies published in many well recognized academic journals. She is also a visiting scholar in universities at China, Poland and Brazil. Furthermore, she works as a consultant in marketing and international business, having contact with entrepreneurs and executives from various sectors, which make her experience so plural.

That said, one could predict that their initiative would result in an easy-to-read, but still well-grounded book collection. Behind the graphic design and the fluid language, theories and concepts sustain the structured process approach for the many hard decisions in a business, whether they were planned or not. The authors call this pragmatic perspective an algorithm, defined by them as *a logical sequence of operations, according to heuristic concepts and best practices*.

The three books are organized in 21 chapters each, portraying sequential steps of a roadmap, as suggested by the title. Each chapter is titled by a "what is" or a "how to", and the question-and-answer format prompts the reader to reason about the alternative options. They argue that the understanding of why a

specific path was chosen among others is crucial for the process to flow.

The first book, the "from the Idea to the Business Case", addresses the business idea and how to make it feasible. Under my reader point of view, I would say that it deals with two major themes. The first one has to do with the sense of opportunity: how to recognize the good business ideas, how to evaluate the factors that would make the idea a success, when the transformation of an existing business may be more motivating than a new one, and how the business motivations impact the definition of the mission, vision, values and purposes of the new venture.

The second major theme is related to the business model itself: the market evaluation, the competitors' selection, the differentiation factors from the competitors; it also discusses how to write and present a business case, which *gran finale* is precisely how the business case will transform ideas into business!

In the middle of the first book, there is one chapter that calls our attention to the team and the importance of finding the people that will best fit the business. At first glance, it seemed to me a shy and lonely chapter given the importance of the subject. But as soon as you get the second book you realize that it was just a matter of in which book they would give due importance.

Book number two is called "how to implement the Business Case" and it is, in fact, a practical manual for the implementation stage. There are chapters dedicated to the many management tools, like balanced scorecard and routine maps, as well as financial control tools, like budgeting, costing and risk management. It also brings relevant concepts like commercial plan and marketing programme.

There are also chapters talking about the competitive environment by highlighting the benchmark definition and the continuous competitors' analysis. And still other chapters focusing the consumer side, with the customer-centric proposition to create a committed brand with the consumer.

But book two is inherently generous when talking about people, even without a specific chapter related to people. Hidden behind some managerial tools (like time and priorities management), and the discussion about network attitude and partnership spirit, there is an emphasis on the correct choice of the right people because business depends on these people to be successful. The complementary profiles in the team and a leadership that combines knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence are essential to reinforce the corporate DNA.

The third book is called “how to use the Business Case to expand your business and avoid pitfalls”. Supported by the understanding of companies’ lifecycle, the book brings alternatives to potentialize the good phases and to avoid the descendent one. Like the characteristics of companies that grow faster than the common ones, and the companies that live longer than ordinary ones. Also, through contemporary concepts, like gazelle and unicorn companies, the authors discuss what we can learn from them and how disruptive models can be adapted to every business.

Moreover, book three brings us different strategies for business expansion: acquisition or organic growth, with or without external investors, going abroad as an international venture or staying local, and so on. And it finally addresses the possibility of selling the business, by adequately evaluating its tangible and intangible assets.

But I would like to call your attention to the subtitle of the third book. The primary approach of this volume is the discussion about pitfalls, putting light into the most common business failure factors and the main business management mistakes.

The BCR is, thus, a collection designed for people with an entrepreneurial spirit. But the willingness for a new venture is not enough, once we have seen many companies that fail in their very beginning, just because of a lack of knowledge. A book was missing to teach us, pragmatically, the fundamental concepts of a Business Case.

The collection is highly recommended for adoption in Business Administration courses as a way of clarifying and encouraging student entrepreneurship.

May the BCR be the confidence we need to venture out! Enjoy the reading!