The Pathways to a Successful “Scale-up”
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Ken Stauffer Bio

Ken Stauffer spent 34 years in the telecommunications industry. He began his career at AT&T Bell Laboratories in Holmdel, NJ graduating from Brooklyn Polytechnic with an MSEE. At Bell Labs, Ken worked in Data Services, International Operations, and Global Strategy and Business Development.

Ken left AT&T in 1999 to become an entrepreneur, helping found EPIK Communications—a $460M start-up. He served as EPIK’s Senior Vice President of Operations and Chief Technology Officer. In 2003, Ken founded Technology Assurance Labs and in 2005 Cypress Equipment. In 2010, Technology Assurance Labs started developing RFID products for the rail industry and IoT products for the propane and natural gas industry. Ken was the CEO for 15 years.

Ken was born and raised in Tanzania, East Africa, he is a Life Senior Member of IEEE, and in 2015 he co-founded IEEE Entrepreneurship, currently serving as its 2020 Chair. Ken is also Chair of the Vaughn College Board of Trustees in NYC.

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Companies Co-founded

- EPIK Communications -- 1999
- KKC Consulting -- 2002
- Technology Assurance Labs -- 2003
- Cypress Equipment -- 2005

- IEEE Entrepreneurship -- 2015 (Current Chair)
Import Traits for Entrepreneurs

• They empower themselves
• They adapt to change
• They know when to say no
• They own their mistakes
• They celebrate others successes
• They fail.... and try again
• They persist

“Most mentally strong kids always do these 7 things”
by Amy Morin – psychotherapist and TEDx talk
“The Secret of Becoming Mentally Strong”

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Outline of the Talk

In IEEE Entrepreneurship we define entrepreneurship in three stages

• Product Ideation

• Start-up

• Growth

Different “scaling” is needed at each step.

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Product Ideation Stage

- Innovation and research is lightening in a bottle, but entrepreneurship is lightening in a market
- Focus outward on the market, not inward on your innovation
- Build a great business model
- Find the “watering holes” where your customers and competitors congregate
- Start to develop your pitch for investors, customers, employees, etc.
- Think about IP – copyright, register mark, patent, NDAs

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Start-up Stage (1-5 employees)

- Decide how you will fund your company – non-dilutive or dilutive investment
- Register your company – LLC, S Corp, Delaware C Corp, etc.
- Find partners / employees with complimentary skills to join you
- Find good mentors
- Use rapid prototype process gets a beta in the hands of a “potential customer”
- Refine your business plan and execute on it.
- STAYED FOCUSED – don’t get distracted

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Growth Stage

- Time for serious money

- Need to delegate and play positions -- everyone can’t be involved on every decision

- Develop an organization chart and processes

- Often times start-up founder’s skills don’t translate well into the new org chart – so you need to deal with it those emotions

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Asante!    Thank You!

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“Ukitaka kwenda kasi, nenda peke yako. Ukitaka kwenda mbali, nendeni pamoja”

“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”

–African Saying

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Photo by Dale Ressler