

Sports Entrepreneurship Program – Lesson 1



Sports Entrepreneurship Program

A 3-month course for aspiring sports business leaders in South Africa



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Lesson Plan: Embracing Creativity and Innovation in Sports Entrepreneurship

This lesson plan aims to equip sports entrepreneurs with the tools and mindset needed to navigate the challenges of the modern business landscape, encouraging innovation and creativity at every step.

Objectives:

- Understand the VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity) world and its implications for sports entrepreneurship.
- Learn the four-step creative process for generating and developing new ideas.
- Apply creative thinking and problem-solving to real-world sports business challenges.
- Design and test a user-friendly service prototype relevant to the sports industry.

Introduction to the VUCA World

The world is not going to change towards a stable system that is predictable. In order to guarantee positive results in changing circumstances, entrepreneurs must be ready with the right way of thinking.

The biggest challenge that today's entrepreneurs are confronting is the "VUCA world". The entrepreneur needs to assess their readiness towards – **V**olatility, **U**ncertainty, **C**omplexity and **A**mbiguity in order to survive and grow. The VUCA business world is highly turbulent and unpredictable, but with the right blend of competencies and processes, entrepreneurs are expected to be VUCA-ready. The more you know about the situation – your decisions will be more accurate.

Why is a process for finding new ideas important?

Our world is changing all the time. Challenges and new frontiers are everywhere. We need 'new songs'! Therefore, the process of working out innovative solutions is as vital today as ever.

Ideas and solutions are 'birthed' within a creative process. New ideas are fragile and undeveloped at first, so trust, clear communication, and positivity will help you and your team to get the best results. Therefore, a leader needs to be intentional to create a safe, productive, creative process.

Ideas and solutions that originate in this creative process are best when they are innovative and owned by you and your team, but they also need to be simple and practical.

Four step process

Watch the Intro video on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cmBf1fBRXms>

There are four steps in the process of developing new ideas:



1. Clarify/define | Convergent Thinking

Make sure everyone understands the topic or challenge. Be specific and define the problem you are trying to solve – in this case, creating a thriving sports-based business within the South African context.

2. Stretch | Divergent thinking

Create a range of ideas to choose from. Brainstorm, stretch thinking and use roadblocks to think in new directions. Ideas need to be many, wide ranging, and unique. The more ideas you gather together, the more ideas there are to eventually choose from.

3. Play | Emergent thinking

Develop ideas to see their potential. Explore, design, play, workshop, make prototypes, collaborate, test and have fun. Keep an open mind because some 'crazy' ideas can lead to very innovative and practical solutions.

4. Choose | Convergent thinking

Choose the best and most usable ideas. Prioritize, shape a template, write, edit, trial, evaluate and use. This is a time to be practical and understand that ideas will need to be useful and uncomplicated if they are to be implemented.

Tackling Roadblocks – What is currently stopping you from starting your business today?

Problems and challenges will always emerge as a group works together. A 'roadblock' is simply an opportunity for a creative solution.



Roadblocks can come from an external situation (no money, covid, disaster, mistake, etc.) or one we create internally (size of our resource, add an object, put in limitations of time, etc.).

As we explore a way around the roadblock, it gives us an opportunity to find a solution we have never tried before.

Try these roadblocks:

1. Market size and demand

The first roadblock is to assess the size and demand of the market you are targeting.

How many people need or want your product or service? How much are they willing to pay for it? How often will they use it? How much competition do you have? A scalable idea should have a large and growing market that is not saturated or dominated by a few players. You should also be able to differentiate your offer from others and create a loyal customer base.

2. Business model and revenue streams.

The second roadblock is to analyse your business model and revenue streams.

How will you make money from your idea? What are your costs and margins? How will you acquire and retain customers? How will you deliver value and quality?

A scalable idea should have a clear and profitable business model that can generate multiple and recurring revenue streams. You should also be able to reduce your costs and increase your efficiency as you grow.

3. Technology and automation.

The third roadblock is to examine your technology and automation capabilities.

How will you use technology to enhance your product or service? How will you automate your processes and operations? How will you leverage data and analytics? Can you market your idea on Social Media? Can you use online payment methods?

A scalable idea should have a strong technology foundation that can support your growth and innovation. You should also be able to automate your tasks and activities as much as possible to save time and money.

4. Scalability test and feedback.

The fourth roadblock is to conduct a scalability test and feedback loop.

How will you validate your idea and measure its performance? How will you collect and analyze feedback from your customers and stakeholders? How will you iterate and improve your idea based on the feedback?

A scalable idea should have a scalable test that can prove its viability and potential. You should also have a feedback loop that can help you learn from your mistakes and successes.

5. Growth strategy and vision.

The fifth roadblock is to define your growth strategy and vision.

How will you scale your idea from a small prototype to a large-scale operation? What are your short-term and long-term goals? What are the opportunities and risks you face?

A scalable idea should have a realistic and ambitious growth strategy that can guide your actions and decisions. You should also have a clear and compelling vision that can inspire your team and customers.

Make a prototype - How can you create a user-friendly service prototype?

Service prototyping is a process of creating a simplified and interactive version of a service idea, that allows you to test it with real users and get feedback. It can help you validate your assumptions, identify problems, and improve your design before investing in development.

But how can you create a user-friendly service prototype that meets your users' needs and expectations? Here are some tips to guide you.

1. Understand your goals.

Before you start prototyping, you need to have a clear vision of what you want to achieve with your service or product, and how you will measure its success.

What is the main problem you are solving for your users? What are the key features and benefits of your service? How will you test your prototype and collect feedback? Having a well-defined goal will help you focus your prototyping efforts and avoid wasting time and resources on unnecessary details.

2. Choose the right fidelity.

The fidelity of your prototype refers to how realistic and detailed it is. Depending on your goals, you can choose between low-fidelity, medium-fidelity, or high-fidelity prototypes.

Low-fidelity prototypes are quick and easy to make, using simple tools like paper, sketches, or wireframes. They are useful for testing the basic functionality and layout of your service, and getting early feedback. Medium-fidelity prototypes are more refined and interactive, using tools like mock-ups, prototypes, or digital tools. They are useful for testing the visual design and user interface of your service, and getting more specific feedback. High-fidelity prototypes are very realistic and detailed, using tools like code, animations, or data. They are useful for testing the final look and feel of your service, and getting final feedback.

3. Involve your users.

The best way to create a user-friendly service prototype is to involve your users throughout the prototyping process. You can use various methods to research your users' needs, preferences, behaviours, and pain points, such as interviews, surveys, observations, or personas. You can also co-create your prototype with your users, by inviting them to participate in brainstorming, sketching, or testing sessions. This will help you gain valuable insights, feedback, and ideas from your users, and ensure that your prototype meets their expectations and solves their problems.

4. Iterate and improve.

Creating a user-friendly service prototype is not a one-time activity, but a continuous process of learning and improvement. You should test your prototype with real users as often as possible, using methods like usability testing, user testing, or A/B testing. You should collect and analyse the feedback you receive, and identify the strengths and weaknesses of your prototype. You should then use the feedback to make changes and improvements to your prototype and test it again.

You should repeat this cycle until you are satisfied with the results, and ready to launch your service.

5. Document and communicate.

Finally, you should document and communicate your service prototype effectively, to showcase your work and share your findings. You should create a clear and concise documentation that explains the purpose, features, and benefits of your service, and how you tested and validated it with users.

You should also create a compelling presentation that tells the story of your service prototype, and highlights the key insights, feedback, and outcomes. You should use visual aids, such as screenshots, videos, or demos, to illustrate your prototype and make it more engaging. You should also use simple and clear language, and avoid jargon and technical terms, to make your prototype accessible and understandable to your audience.

Embracing Creativity and Innovation in Sports Entrepreneurship

In today's highly competitive sports industry, entrepreneurship and innovation have become essential elements for success. Sports organizations and entrepreneurs are constantly looking for new ways to stand out, attract customers, and generate revenue. To achieve this, embracing creativity and innovation is crucial.

Creativity and innovation go hand in hand in sports entrepreneurship, as they involve thinking outside the box, challenging the status quo, and finding unique solutions to problems and opportunities (Ratten, 2018). By embracing creativity, sports entrepreneurs can differentiate themselves from competitors and create a unique value proposition for their customers. By continuously seeking innovative ideas and approaches, they can stay ahead of market trends and adapt to changing consumer demands. Moreover, creativity and innovation can lead to the development of groundbreaking products, services, and experiences that revolutionize the sports industry. However, embracing creativity and innovation can be challenging for sports entrepreneurs. They may face roadblocks such as limited resources, resistance to change, and a fear of failure. To overcome these roadblocks, sports entrepreneurs can adopt a design thinking approach. This approach involves taking a customer-centric perspective, understanding the needs and desires of target audience, and using that insight to drive innovation. By conducting market research, observing consumer behavior, and gathering feedback from customers, sports entrepreneurs can identify areas where creativity and innovation are needed most.

Once the need for innovation has been identified, the next step is to create a user-friendly service prototype. Service prototyping is a process of creating a simplified and interactive version of a service idea, that allows sports entrepreneurs to test it with real users and get feedback. By understanding the goals of the service, choosing the right fidelity for the prototype, and utilizing tools like paper sketches or digital mockups, sports entrepreneurs can create a user-friendly prototype that meets the needs and expectations of their target audience. This user-friendly prototype serves as a tangible representation of the innovative ideas and concepts that sports entrepreneurs aim to bring to life. With the prototype in hand, sports entrepreneurs can then conduct a scalability test and feedback loop, which involves validating the idea and measuring its performance. They can collect and analyze feedback from customers and stakeholders, iterate and improve their idea based on the feedback received, and ensure that their idea is scalable and has the potential to grow from a small prototype to a large-scale operation.

Moreover, sports entrepreneurs need to define their growth strategy and vision. They need to have a clear plan on how they will scale their idea and achieve their short-term and long-term goals. They need to consider the opportunities and risks they may face in the sports industry and develop a realistic yet ambitious growth strategy. By embracing creativity and innovation in sports entrepreneurship, entrepreneurs can overcome the challenges they face and create new opportunities for success. Embracing creativity and innovation in sports entrepreneurship is crucial for staying ahead in the competitive sports industry.