

ORIGINAL

Consulting and advising business startups

La consultoría y asesoría de las startup de negocios

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ABSTRACT

Startups are recently established companies, which are mainly based on selling products and/or services through information and communication technologies. They are companies that differ from others in that they have fairly small costs compared to their profits and that also tend to develop significantly. The objective of this investigation was to study the organizations that provide startup consulting and advice to Venezuelan entrepreneurial companies. A qualitative, case study-type investigation was carried out with the support of documentary research, for which 17 experts who work in three organizations that advise startup companies were interviewed. It was determined that the organizations studied converge in that all the experts are specialists in technology, financial, legal aspects, marketing, business models, likewise, the organizations studied specify mission and reasons for undertaking. It was concluded that each institution advises these ventures from its experience and the dynamics of the market that is present, therefore it is recommended to propose lines of action or guidelines, such as financing, technology, marketing, values, among others.

Keywords: Consulting and Advisory Service; Business Entrepreneurship; Quality System.

RESUMEN

Las startup son empresas de reciente data, que se basa principalmente en vender productos y/o servicios a través de las tecnologías de la información y la comunicación. Son empresas que discrepan de otras por tener costos bastante pequeños, en comparación con sus ganancias y que además suelen desarrollarse de modo significativo. El objetivo de esta indagación fue estudiar las organizaciones que realizan consultoría y asesoría de startups a empresas de emprendimientos venezolanos. Se realizó una investigación cualitativa, tipo estudio de caso con apoyo de la investigación documental, para lo cual se entrevistó a 17 expertos que se desempeñan en tres organizaciones que asesoran este tipo de empresas. Se pudo determinar que las organizaciones estudiadas, convergen en que todos los expertos son especialistas en tecnología, aspectos financieros, legales, mercadeo, modelos de negocios, asimismo, las organizaciones estudiadas puntualizan misión y motivos para emprender. Se concluyó, que cada institución asesora estos emprendimientos desde su experiencia y la dinámica del mercado que esté presente, por ello se recomienda, plantear líneas de acción o directrices, como financiamiento, tecnología, mercadeo, valores, entre otros.

Palabras clave: Servicio de Consultoría y Asesoría; Emprendimiento de Negocio; Sistema de la Calidad.

INTRODUCTION

In today's world, so convulsed and constantly evolving, despite the crises that new companies are emerging every day to offer their products and services in different sectors such as agriculture, telecommunications, and energy, among others, affecting society in general, new companies are emerging every day to offer their products and services in different sectors such as agriculture, telecommunications, and energy.^(1,2) However, many have a particularity that differentiates them from the rest: they apply the potential of information and communication technologies in their business. These are known as startups, companies that have great growth possibilities thanks to their scalable business model and new technologies. This business typology has gained strength in recent years. The times we live in are very different from those of years ago.^(3,4,5)

Business has changed, and so has the way of doing business, and certain aspects are taken into account that were not so much considered before, such as the environment, customers, and society. Customers' needs are listened to with greater attention because their unresolved problems represent great opportunities to carry out ventures.^(6,7,8) All this leads to the emergence of new management models to meet the new needs of society, such as startups. The same is different from traditional companies and ventures, and currently, in the world, there is a large presence of them^(1,9,10); for example, those dedicated to finance, known as fintech startups, in America went from almost 5,700 in 2018, to more than 10,700 by the end of 2023, followed by the set of fintech startups in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, with more than 9,300 companies.^(11,12,12,14,15)

So, in Venezuela, this trend has been maintained during the last ten years. According to studies conducted by Venezuelan educational institutions, from 2003 to 2012, between 18 % and 20 % of Venezuelans of legal age are starting a new business. Another important fact is that the percentage of entrepreneurship that exceeds three and a half years is around 1 % or 1,5 %. That is to say, 20 % of people start businesses, but only 1,5 % start businesses established for over three and a half years.^(16,17,18) This evidences a gap between those born and those sustained in time after 3,5 years.^(19,20,21)

So, due to the short time that most ventures in Venezuela are maintained, one of the most overwhelming weaknesses is the inadequate training for each business and its organization. Some universities have taken the initiative to extend courses to contribute to their training, guiding and orienting them from the quality with the ISO 9001:2015 standard. This international standard establishes the requirements to be met by a management system to ensure the quality of the service or product in any company, regardless of its size or production process.⁽⁵⁾

Thus, this standard focuses on all the elements that a company must have to have an effective system that allows it to manage and improve the quality of its products or services. In addition to training and proper guidance, the business idea must be guided and tested to ensure that the business lasts, and adjustments should be made if necessary. Therefore, this article focuses on studying the organizations that guide and advise these ventures, thereby opening up a range of possibilities to set up a quality model for advising these ventures on new data.

METHODS

The research was framed within qualitative research, case study type, with the support of documentary research. The study was carried out in three organizations of the university education sector that advise entrepreneurship in Venezuela; a structured interview was conducted through an interview script with 17 experts working in these institutions of higher education; no selection criteria were established because these informants were accessible.

Likewise, a search was conducted in the following databases: Redalyc, Scielo, Doaj, Latindex and Google Scholar, Scopus, Scimago, Webgrafía Review, and Digital Repositories, and the information was filtered taking into account scientific articles in Spanish, mainly, and the keywords: Startup, entrepreneurship, consulting, quality models to orient the categories or keywords collated in the files. It should be noted that this research is the beginning of the study of these ventures, and according to its approach, further research will be carried out to orient these organizations ontologically. From this perspective, this research aimed to study the organizations that provide consulting and startup advisory services to Venezuelan ventures.

RESULTS

In order to make a diagnosis of the situation of the organizations that provide startup consulting services to Venezuelan ventures, table 1 describes particularities such as the role and area of expertise of each expert. It can be seen that the 17 experts of the companies studied are mentors/specialists; in addition, they specialize in technology, financial aspects, marketing, business models, and business models.

In table 2, a compilation of the categories for advising Venezuelan entrepreneurial companies was made, from which it can be seen that the experts are advising from the following categories: Mission, reasons for entrepreneurship, competitiveness, strategic alliances, network of mentors, and services provided. This survey was carried out based on the experiences of these experts, which was considered relevant.

Table 1. Particularities of the experts of the studied institutions

Expert	Role	Area of Expertise
1	Mentor and Specialist	Artificial intelligence and technology. Digital transformation and innovative business models.
2	Specialist	Finance for entrepreneurs.
3	Mentor and Specialist	Digital product design. Validation of business models. Support in the fund raising process (Seed Capital). Operations.
4	Mentor and Specialist	Strategic planning, finance and marketing for entrepreneurs.
5	Mentor and Specialist	Financial aspects of the venture.
6	Specialist	Accounting aspects. Operations.
7	Specialist	Legal and tax aspects.
8	Mentor and Specialist	Marketing, innovation and entrepreneurship. Business models.
9	Specialist	Legal aspects of entrepreneurship.
10	Specialist	Organizational aspects and human resources.
11	Mentor and Specialist	Social entrepreneurship, organizational and human resources aspects.
12	Mentor and Specialist	Finance and business models.
13	Mentor and Specialist	Finance, venture capital, datamining, business simulation and business modeling.
14	Mentor and Specialist	Marketing and digital marketing. Business models. Operations.
15	Mentor and Specialist	Organizational aspects, business models and human resources. Operations.
16	Mentor and Specialist	Marketing and sales. Business models.
17	Mentor and Specialist	Finance and planning. Networking.

Table 2. Categories for advising Venezuelan entrepreneurial enterprises

Categories for advice to entrepreneurs	Organizations		
	Institution 1	Institution 2	Institution 3
Mission	Consolidate, accelerate and promote profitable, scalable and replicable business models.	Transforming ideas into sustainable and innovative businesses	Business incubator
Reasons for undertaking	Business opportunity Need From an entrepreneur's trade	Business Opportunity Economic Growth Opportunity Positively impact your environment	Business Opportunity Pursuit of Dreams Search for freedom
Competitiveness and risk	Oriented towards customer satisfactionRisk, oriented from the ISO 9001 (2015) standard.	Oriented towards customer satisfaction risk, oriented from the ISO 9001 (2015) standard.	Oriented towards customer satisfaction risk, oriented from the ISO 9001 (2015) standard.
Strategic alliances national and International	BBVA Foundation Provincial, Italtbank, FUNDES Latin America, PepsiCo Venezuela	Babson College, Harvard Business School, Inter-American Inter-American Development Bank	Wayra Academy
Mentoring network	Its network of mentors oriented towards the business opportunity	With expertise in diverse lines of research and work lines such as business model design and entrepreneurship.	Specialized in different areas such as digital product design and business model validation.

Main services provided	Accompaniment: PIAP Model (Pre-incubator, acceleration and acceleration) Consulting.	Mentoring incubation, and post-	Mentoring. Support in accessing seed capital and financing sources. (Funds, accelerators and multilateral)
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Under this context and after performing the diagnosis to the organizations that provide consulting services for these companies, we proceeded to identify the key elements of these services, framed in quality management, as well as considering the purpose or nature of the services, i.e., oriented to business startups. Aspects were also extracted from the files that were considered by the researchers, which could be used to form an integrated quality system in terms of service provision and consulting based on the International Standard, as shown in table 3.

Table 3. Key elements of quality management and the guidelines that integrate it for Startud		
Clause	Key factors	Elements
4	Context of the organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of the organization and its context. Understanding the needs and expectations of the interested parties. Determination of the scope of the quality management system. Quality management system and its processes.
5	Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership and commitment Policy Roles, responsibilities and authorities in the organization.
6	Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actions to address risks and opportunities Quality objectives and planning to achieve them Planning for change.
7	Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources Competencies Awareness Communication Documented information.
8	Operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational planning and control Requirements for products and services Design and development of products and services Control of processes, products and services provided Production and service provision Release of products and services Control of non-conforming outputs.
9	Performance evaluation Control and follow-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring, measurement, analysis and evaluation Internal audit Management review.
10	Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Non-conformity and corrective action Continuous improvement.
11	International Standard ISO 9001-2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financing, education, technology, politics, market opening, infrastructure, culture, values.

CONCLUSIONS

It could be concluded that each organization promotes entrepreneurship from the culture and innovation, encourages and stimulates it with particular approaches, entrepreneurship with a focus on social responsibility through the consolidation of social enterprises, also promotes the development of technology-based business models through the development of management skills, strategic and innovation, also stimulates and develops entrepreneurship for the generation of business models oriented to profitability, scalability and development of microenterprises.

On the other hand, the main driver of the ventures advised by the three (03) organizations is opportunity because they are the product of a structured process supported by analysis and market research, which seeks to propose an innovative solution and developed by multidisciplinary teams, such as students and professionals who complement each other in terms of knowledge, skills, and experiences, to develop their business initiative.

Regarding the key elements in the field of quality management, it was decided to use the framework established in the quality management system under the guidelines of the International Standard ISO 9001:2015 because it is the most widely accepted and global standard, in addition to recognizing the growing importance of the service sector, as well as linking the process-based approach and risk-based thinking, which allows a robust and consistent quality management system design.

After the findings are found, the quality management model can be oriented to these organizations of new data, such as startups, so that it is an advance for these organizations since these ventures are characterized by their short time in the market; in this sense, the suggestions oriented to the management model, can solve environmental problems and be at the forefront, to contribute to the consolidation of the quality of life of citizens and impact on the country's economy.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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