The idea of this Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods in Entrepreneurship first emerged in a discussion with Francine O’Sullivan from Edward Elgar in the spring of 2003. Edward Elgar had already commissioned a volume on international business and we agreed that the field of entrepreneurship needed a similar effort. However, at the time we did not know where this informal talk would lead. So when Francine wanted to know if we would undertake the responsibility for such a volume, we were more than pleasantly surprised. We accepted the commission and we are very satisfied with the fact that we have succeeded in bringing together such a broad and highly competent group of contributors.

We know many of the contributors from our professional and personal networks, although some also responded to the call for papers, which was distributed at various American and European entrepreneurship conferences and posted on the Aarhus School of Business website. From the suggestions for chapters forwarded to us we selected 17 original contributions for publication in the Handbook and one reprint of a seminal article. We thoroughly enjoyed working with the 23 contributors from Scandinavia, Europe, the USA and New Zealand. We were very fortunate to receive abstracts from both junior and more experienced researchers, which has provided an excellent basis for methodological innovation, experimentation as well as refined and well-tested approaches. The contributions cover a wide spectrum and the editorial process has provided us with much opportunity to gain new insight into familiar methodologies and techniques, and to learn about those with which we were less well acquainted. Warm thanks therefore go to all the contributors to this volume. Some have in the process even become personal friends.

During the process we have talked to many people about the book and have consistently encountered encouragement and appreciation of our work with this Handbook. According to the comments we have received, the book seems to be much needed and truly fills a gap. We would therefore like to thank all those who have expressed their appreciation of our efforts; it makes all the hard work worth it.

All the chapters have been through a blind review process. Therefore we would like to express our sincere gratitude to our panel of reviewers, who did a marvellous job. All the contributions have benefited tremendously from your helpful comments and careful advice on how to improve the chapters.

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It has been a challenging endeavour for us to produce such an extensive volume, and we have encountered many challenges, some easier to overcome than others. Last, but not least, we would like to thank Francine O’Sullivan for her patience with the process and for her continuous encouragement and support.

Helle Neergaard and John Parm Ulhøi
Aarhus, January 2006