
Preface

Professional services are among the fastest growing industries in modern economies. Our systematic understanding of the processes underlying the identification and exploitation of new business opportunities in this sector is, however, limited and scattered. This handbook is intended as a step towards bringing together and further developing some of this knowledge. In the following 19 chapters, 34 scholars from nine countries engage in an endeavor to explore the intersection of the entrepreneurship and professional service fields.

For us as editors this handbook project has been a great venture. While our previous publications are in fields related to entrepreneurship, such as knowledge creation and transfer, innovation, new organizational forms, opportunity seeking through internationalization, and learning through client–consultant interactions, we have not considered ourselves as typical entrepreneurship researchers. This changed when Royston Greenwood asked one of us at the Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management in Anaheim in 2008 to take on the job of editing this handbook. This was the starting point of our venture, which has truly been a very rewarding cooperative learning experience for the editors and, we hope, for the contributors as well.

As with most projects of this kind, this has been a longer and more time-consuming process than anticipated. All chapters were peer-reviewed by both editors and at least one other contributor. The underlying idea of using our contributors as reviewers had not only practical reasons; it also facilitated the creation of a community of scholars who are working at the crossroads of professional services and entrepreneurship. This proved to be very gratifying; some of the fruits of this collaboration were presented and discussed at a symposium at the Academy of Management meeting in Montreal in 2010.

Without the support of a number of colleagues, associates, and friends, this handbook would never have been finished. First of all, we would like to thank all contributors for their impressive scholarly work, which inspired our own thinking and reflection upon entrepreneurship in professional services. We very much enjoyed your contributions, your collegial and constructive reviews, and your timely response to all our requests. We thank all of you for making this a truly enjoyable venture.

We would also like to thank our additional reviewers, who helped to develop a constructive assessment and view on the contributions submitted to this handbook. In particular, we would like to thank Royston Greenwood, Andreas Günther, Dirk Klimkeit, Kathrin Rosing, and Christoph Seckler for their helpful comments. For the administrative support especially in pre-formatting and proof-reading the manuscripts for the publisher, we would like to thank Sebastian Göse, Elias Kaiser, and Monika Lesner from Leuphana University of Lüneburg. Last but not least, we are very grateful for the encouragement, continuous support, and especially patience of Alan Sturmer from Edward Elgar Publishing.

It has been an honor to serve as editors for this volume. We hope the reader will enjoy the contributions to this handbook as much as we enjoyed them during the course of this venture.

Markus Reihlen and Andreas Werr