Gerd Zimmer

Nothing is constant, except change - about the hard job of East German SMEs to move towards new markets

-Teaching Note-

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Case Summary

This background case addresses the topic of economic changes /situations of crisis regarding the need of fast adaptation to a new market situation and to a fast changing socio-economic environment. It also regards specific aspects of innovation management under fast changing and uncertain conditions. The author, senior researcher of a German research institute located in the Eastern part of Germany, presents this topic based on information and experiences gathered after the German reunification. Analysis and conclusions in the background case do not refer to a single company but were collected in a Technological Park with several newly established small companies within a three years project. The results were condensed, considered under learning aspects and presented in this study with the focus on:

The challenge to start with an innovative idea, practical no management knowledge and little financial and material resources within a highly competitive market.

The case regards at the beginning the situation and circumstances when the East German industry came down and thousands of employees lost their jobs. At a first glance, this seems to be a look into a quite specific situation but it is indeed a look into a general issue having in mind the developments that occurred in several countries after 2008. The case therefore has potentials to initiate more generalized discussion (with university students) on consequences of a globalized economy and unrestricted market development and also regarding the topic of business ethics. The case touches the decision of emigrating versus trying to establish an own business under difficult conditions. It addresses resources, needs and obstacles on the challenging way of creating a start-up. Crucial topics of planning and avoiding / dealing with failure have been presented for analysis and discussion.

The case has been designed for the InnoCase project. It fits into the general concept of learning with cases: to bring theoretical input and analysis of “real world” closer together, to initiate analysis and application of what has been or should be learnt to be prepared for the challenges of the professional life and practise. The author tries to link discussion to the valuable resources of the Innovation Guide highlighting relevant chapters to initiate or back up discussion with the learners. The InnoCase / InnoSupport innovation guide delivers chapters to develop required skills for problem solving and decision making and can be considered for both, theoretical input and development of skills for application in real life situations.

The case offers a flexible approach for management students or managers / company staff attending further education offers. This will be indicated in the various suggestions for “visiting points”. Depending on the level of knowledge and available time, learners’ “stay at visiting points” can be handled very flexible, addressing only one or more potential discussion points or suggested activities.
Main learning objectives:

- Relevant innovation management tools, success factors and factors of failure when starting a business.
- Encouragement to re-start and not to give in after bad success at the beginning.
- Learn to discover and to explore the InnoCase Innovation Guide as a useful learning tool.

Possible starting point (recommended for students of management and economics)
Models of Economical systems
(The implementation of a quite general discussion can be interesting with management students/ students of economics. This topic might be less convenient for further education with company staff / managers).

You can ask students to form two groups –

“Socialists” to do research and to find arguments in favour of short and long term development planning, regulation what goods will be produced in order to avoid misuse of resources. Planning, how many persons will be needed in sectors to provide information to the educational system and avoid unemployment of academics and of persons that finalized professional training…

2nd Group – avoid any kind of intervention into the forces of a “free market development”.

Alternative models, can / will there be third way? It can be very interesting to study the model of the worldwide biggest cooperative / federation of cooperatives, the “Montdragon Corporation” that at the end of 2013 had 74,000 employees in more than 250 companies and organizations and that mastered better than other companies the economic crisis so far. First access: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mondragon_Corporation

This visiting point is appropriate to organise group work. Work on the topic, presentation and discussion about 60 -90 min.

Potential Visiting Point: Business ethics
You can ask students to imagine a market for her/ his company in an underdeveloped country. There is a good chance for his / her products and they can bring products on the market cheaper than the national competitors that have not sufficient resources for efficient production and marketing.

We know that by doing this, it will destroy traditional structures, small businesses and many people will lose their jobs. How should we decide?

Or, another approach: As described in the case what happened in East Germany and in other places: I find a competitor with a competitive product on the market, even better than mine. I have the resources to buy this company / buy the licence for the innovative product in order to keep it in my safe. Would you do so in order to eliminate the competitor and implement your business? Why or why not?

What alternative procedure could you imagine?

This visiting point is appropriate to organise group work. Work on the topic, presentation and discussion about 60 min.
Getting aware of potentials…

**Resources for innovation and start up**
*(Visiting point but possibly AFTER discussing the topic of a business plan)*
In the chapter is addressed the problem of having innovative ideas / potentials versus lacking financial /material resources. It can be useful to initiate a brainstorming session here, or learners can use of one of the other creative techniques that are presented in the resources of the InnoSupport/InnoCase Innovation guide Chapter 4: Tools for developing innovative solutions (http://goo.gl/EMERn3).

We can ask (a group of) learners to read and summarize *chapter 8 of the Innovation Guide: Sources of Finance for Innovation* (http://goo.gl/jqCxkh) to gather basic ideas for further discussion and evaluation of the results gathered by brainstorming / other creative techniques.

Suggested time 90 min.

**The chance and challenge of flexibility/mobility**
**Potential visiting point**
For some learning groups it can be interesting to take up the problem presented in the Case for discussing chances and risks/advantages and disadvantages of mobility for the professional carrier / searching a job leaving the area or the country.

Professional mobility on the one hand is seen as a real chance for the creation of a common European market for employment, for professional development and for freedom of movement and of establishment. There are on the other hand cons because of the impact on individual and common social structures (there are whole regions without young people because they have left).

**Possible Case question to discuss in group work or in plenum with students:**
- What does the freedom but also the challenge for professional mobility mean to you?
- What does this mean for social relationships and family life, would it affect this in your case and would you be concerned about this?
- When thinking of professional mobility, would you think about a different socio-cultural environment and consider intercultural preparation?
- Would you consider to come back in order to bring in your professional knowledge?
- What are important values for you (high salary, attractive living place, family and friends…). What is your concept about professional mobility?
- Would you demand of a 50 years old unemployed family member (woman or man) that she or he moves to another region to find a job?

Suggested time for preparation, presentation and discussion 45-60 min.

**Visiting Point for learning and for discussion:**
“Learning about Company Management – what do I really need to know?”

This could be a very good starting point to show the learners the InnoCase / InnoSupport Innovation Guide http://innocase.org/ and (www.InnoSupport.net).

The challenge for students and company staff is not the lack of resources for information and learning about Management and Innovation but it is lack of time.
This is the idea behind the online Innovation guide: It is an introduction to basic tools to support innovation and innovation management in SMEs. The improved version presents with the new InnoCase platform crucial elements: Cases collected in real company life for analyse and discussion.

You should tell the learners that the Guide does not aim to address experienced R&D experts but rather staff in SMEs (human resource managers, staff responsible for product and process development in small and medium enterprises) who need to know the basics of a successful innovation practice and look for fast orientation and assistance.

The guide addresses people who do not have overall knowledge of the many-facetted innovation processes but who wish or indeed need to know more about it.

Therefore, the guide also addresses marketing and service personnel, students or continuing professional development trainees who might use it as “a pocket guide” for economic and innovation related subjects. Business consultants might wish to use it as an additional tool to support their clients or to give their clients a general understanding of innovative issues.

Show the students that about 40 chapters have been designed to support general understanding of innovation related issues and to support learning of the processes in the workplace.

The chapters include examples, checklists and instructions. As a crucial element, it contains cases from practical company life for analysis and discussion. In addition, the online platform enables users to exchange knowledge and experiences with others. The guide is a combined learning and working tool. For readers who require more complex tools, a reference section at the end of each chapter will guide to additional resources.

After reading the content of a chapter and relevant practical cases the learner will be in a better position to make a sound decision on the usefulness of a certain innovation tool for her / his purposes and specific working environment. The guide and the platform offer orientation, learning and exchange with colleagues according to individual needs.

The present background case has been designed for the InnoCase project. It fits into the general concept of learning with cases: to bring theoretical input and analysis of “real world” closer together, to initiate analysis and application of what has been or should be learnt to be prepared for the challenges of the professional life. The author tries to link discussion to the Innovation Guide and relevant chapters in order to initiate or back up discussion with and between the learners. The guide itself delivers chapters to develop required skills for problem solving and decision making and can be considered for both, theoretical input and development of skills for application in real life situation.

Suggestions for implementation:

“Learning about Company Management”
Case questions:
- Where to begin to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to start a business, what is a must and what can be addressed later?
- Where would you start and why?
- Did not many big businesses start small and by learning management by doing and not “hanging out” in a seminar?
- How could those start-ups with almost nothing else than an innovative idea and a motivated individual or small team get assistance to acquire management knowledge?
• How to deal with the challenge to buy (money!) or to acquire (time!) necessary knowledge?

As time of presence learning is limited, the suggestion is to leave this as an individual or group work for the students that could be prepared outside presence learning and presented in the seminar. The intention is to get deeper into the potentials of the InnoCase Innovation Guide and to identify 1-3 chapters that they would recommend when planning starting a company. The learning aim is also to discuss about the need of (theoretical) preparation for management and how this can be acquired.

For learning with Managers / company staff we suggest also to leave this as an ex-classroom activity in order to not limit too much the time for browsing within the Innovation Guide. The task can be to identify 1-(2) topics from the guide that are of specific individual interest. This could be because there is a problem that has to be solved or simply because it brings a new, until now not regarded, perspective and leads the manager to the idea that this can be interesting for his company. Those view-points should be presented in the seminar. This would bring in other practical experience – that also could be additional / controversial to the content in the read chapter, initiate discussion.

If appropriate, brain storming and other creative techniques can be used in order to further develop ideas / solutions for a challenge together in the seminar.

Suggested time, depending on the number of presented company specific input: 60 -120 min. The facilitator has here the chance to identify valuable practical input, presented by managers or company staff that might be too complex to be discussed immediately. Such input can / should be taken up for further learning sessions.

Other potential discussion points:
• Exchange of experiences / good practice with formal and informal further education offers for innovation management.
• Gather suggestions where the focus should be for further training offers, how training should be implemented.
• How to deal with the problem of finding time for further education / learning about project management – exchange of good practice and ideas (by experiencing creativity techniques presented in the guide chapter 4)

Potential visiting points: Business Plan and SWOT

From the Case: It was also agreed that a business plan would be essential, because it can help to avoid internal mental manipulation of one’s own business idea in order to have a pink perspective and only see the positive outcome of the business at the end.

The case already addresses discussion points such as:
• Did all successful businesses start with a business plan?
• Will I be able to keep a critical perspective regarding my exciting idea or would it be better to ask for external assistance?
• If deciding for assistance, where can I get it, confidential and competent assistance?
• To what extent a SWOT is required / helpful / useless … at this stage of development?
These questions are convenient for group discussion when addressing the topic for following deeper analysis.

Suggested time: 20-30 min.

**Business plan:**
There is a whole chapter in the *Innovation guide* dealing with the topic:
8.2 Business planning, that can serve as a first overview.
The chapter addresses the following topics:
8.2.1 What is a Business Plan?
8.2.2 Why produce a Business Plan?
8.2.3 Where can a Business Plan be used?
8.2.4 How to prepare a Business Plan?

You can ask students to develop individually or in group work elements of a business plan (structure see 8.2.4). For a complete and more extensive plan, the Innovation Guide will not provide sufficient theoretical input.
If available, we suggest using an example business plan for assistance that can also be analysed together in advance.

**Mind Map** – Learn how to work with mind maps – the business plan exercise is an excellent moment to deal with this topic.
The InnoCase / InnoSupport Innovation guide provides the section of “Innovation Rooms” http://www.innosupport.net/index.php?id=141. Ask the learners to enter the innovation room and show them “mindmeister”. There is a video tutorial to introduce how to use the tool and do mind mapping.

A practical exercise is recommended, if students really should get familiar with the instrument. For this, pair work or work in groups of three is recommended in order to provide sufficient space for individually dealing with such instrument. Pair or group work involves mutual assistance for learning to do mind mapping and gives the tutor more space to work /provide input to the groups or pairs.
Planned time: For introduction, practical implementation, feedback at least 60-90 min.

**SWOT Analysis** – When addressing the necessary critical view on the business concept, pros and cons, risks, potentials… – there naturally will arise the question of how to structure this. If learners already know it, here they should suggest the SWOT analysis tool.

If it is new for them, you can develop that step by step clustering the input presented by the learners in the proper way via white board or other media so that you can present it at the end as a SWOT.

Chapter 2.2 [http://goo.gl/62j4fH](http://goo.gl/62j4fH) in the *InnoCase / InnoSupport Innovation guide* provides useful basic information to this topic. Are your learners already familiar with the tool or is a new subject? This will be the first question that you would have to consider when addressing the topic and to plan the required time.

The introduction from the Guide provides this structure:
2.2.1 What is a SWOT Analysis?
2.2.2 Why use SWOT?
2.2.3 Where can you use it?
2.2.4 How to implement SWOT?
Having in mind the huge amount of publications about SWOT, you will find helpful the presentation in the Innovation Guide that is focussed on essential aspects and that is well-structured.

A practical example case is provided in 2.2.5 http://goo.gl/4QdoSi:
Company X has set the following objective: "To release an innovative service during the next two years." The managing director (MD) gathered all employees to exchange ideas and conducted a SWOT analysis for this purpose.

Also another kind of check list is provided in the annex: “Indicative SWOT analysis template with questions to trigger your mind!” http://goo.gl/Y4PMur

If you provide the learners a business plan example or you have developed one together, individually or in groups, this can now be linked to the SWOT perspective in order to apply and to consolidate SWOT factors.

Learners should be convinced at the end to have a really practical and efficient tool. In order to reach this, more than once practical application by the learners (with your assistance) will be required!

The required time depends on the knowledge that the students bring in. For introduction, implementation and feedback no less than 90 min should be considered.

Visiting point – Reasons for failure of a business start-up

From the Case: Nevertheless, not all start-ups were there at the end of the three years project. What happened? You know, there can be many reasons. Before you continue reading, you might hold on and think about it. In the next chapter, we are going to refer to some that we have identified.

I can be a good idea to use do brainstorming and to use for this also the brainstorming tool that the InnoCase / InnoSupport guide provides after dealing with the content that is presented in Chapter 4.2 http://goo.gl/k2bic8 in guide. The free media supported brainstorming tool is provided in the innovation room http://goo.gl/JoCZz2. Please note that this tool is free for one topic and five users – so group work will be a good option if you want to try this tool.

The case presents statements of start-up managers for further analysis. These statements contain already questions (but no answers) so that they are convenient for further discussion.

The statements, that address reasons of failure, have been selected and presented in a structured way:

**Statement Wolfgang K., IT start-up:**

Key points: There is a fast and constant change. Your idea, if it is brand new will be brand new for a short period of time; your USP will not be unique for long.

The manager addressed several interesting questions in his statement such as:

- How many resources, staff, time, money…do I have to implement the idea into a market?
(If you have worked on the business plan topic before, you can regard further individually or this question, particularly:

- How much time do I have realistically to reach the break even and make profit afterwards? How much time will competitors realistically need to imitate my product?
- Will they probably have more efficient equipment and better distribution channels than I?
- Should I and how can I protect my product?

**Statement  Klaus B., Training Centre start-up**

**Key points:** You need the right, motivated people for your team and your idea at the right time and you need a proper organisational culture from the beginning.

Learners should be aware that the manager focusses on one of the most challenging management topics, staff recruitment and development / company culture:

“There are mainly these elements that have to go together: You have to find the right people that bring in the required skills and competences and that fit into the team, and you have to deal with them as the most important resource that you have in your company”

The case study author contrasts this statement to another one gathered in a seminar with managers:

“There are enough people outside waiting for a job, I do not care about and I do not have time for those things that you present here about human resources management. We do not need this”.

Both contrary statements offer the chance to discuss arguments in favour and against, a presentation of pros and cons.

The author provides another specific input for discussion:

*You might think – ok, this can be true for the cleaning lady. My answer will be: Are you sure?*

His argument – not shown in the case study - is paying also attention to the cleaning lady. This argument in favour doing so is supported by those reflections:

If the cleaning lady is a highly motivated person, doing her job always properly, how much time and quarrels can it save you? Does the cleaning lady have a family, friends, people she talks to? Are these perhaps potential clients, will they talk to other people, in a positive or negative way? So what can a motivated and estimated employee, even at a low position, mean for the reputation and success of your business?

**Possible Visiting point for deeper analysis:**

In the InnoCase / InnoSupport innovation guide there are three chapters dealing specifically with Human Resources Management:

**10.1 Human Resource (HR) competence requirements for innovations**


This learning module addresses topics such as recruitment and selection process, staff development / further education, needs and performing HR development activities. Motivation as crucial factor for employees’ participation in the innovation process, motivation techniques concerning both financial and non-financial motivators.

The estimated time to review this module is 2 hours if you want to work it through completely with the learners.
Possible Visiting point for deeper analysis:

10.2 Creating a Company Culture for Continuous Innovation
http://www.innosupport.net/index.php?id=2321&L=-1%

This chapter provides a well-structured and sound introduction to the company culture and importance of change (we need not only to be able to adapt to change but we need to be able to create change!).

- Interesting points for discussion can be:
  (With managers, employees) What are the most important assumptions and values in your company? Classify them in two categories: those fostering innovation and those inhibiting it.
- What is the situation in your own company concerning innovation? Have you experienced problems, which could be caused by the fact that the organisational culture does not suit the strategic goals and/or the innovation philosophy of the company?
- Leadership behaviour is important for the company culture. How should a manager behave in order to support a positive company culture?

The “case study” in 10.2 provides a list of possible measures / ideas to support a positive company culture. This could be taken as a starting point for discussion or for comparison of ideas developed together with your learners.

Possible Visiting point for deeper analysis:

10.3 Knowledge Management for Innovation
http://www.innosupport.net/index.php?id=5988&L=-1%

Dealing with this question could be initiated by the following statement:

**Statement Wolfram K., Biotech related start-up** “Knowledge Management is something that might be important for a large company. We here are working closely together every day, each of us knows all colleagues. We do not need such complicated system”.

In contrast to many publications, the InnoCase / Innosupport Guide module shows in an understandable and practical way, that it is useful and not complicated to implement knowledge management techniques in a small and even micro company. The module provides basic information about how to identify key knowledge in the company and to identify tools to generate, to distribute and to keep knowledge.

**Interesting discussion points** may be:

- Have you ever thought about if knowledge is properly organised and stored in the company? Go through your staff and imagine that somebody would not appear tomorrow and would be absent for the next six months due to an accident. Is key knowledge organised in the company in a way that serious disturbance of processes can be avoided?
- In a company there is an experienced welder who always is required to do a complicated welding which only he knows to do in a perfect way. He is getting retired in one year’s time. What would you suggest in order to “save” the (tacit!) expert knowledge in the company?

With manager / employee further education arrangements also a check list could be a good starting point to motivate your learners:
### Check list

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do employees have all information they need for motivated, high qualified?</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance in order to feel involved in processes?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel employees free to make criticism and suggestions for improvements?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Is there a culture of helping each other and sharing knowledge?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is there rather an atmosphere to see own knowledge as a competitive factor and to &quot;protect&quot; it?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you think that you get all information in order to make sound decisions?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you sometimes spend too much time to find information in your files?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you know what your employees did before starting work in the company and which special knowledge (professional skills, networks/clients information...) they have?</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Have you tried to make advantage from this special knowledge?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you know who was responsible for a project or service provided to a certain customer two years ago and how it was done?</td>
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Or this one:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Partly</th>
<th>Not Yet</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We store knowledge in a structured way</td>
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<tr>
<td>We use structured devices to store information</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We evaluate and store results of finished projects</td>
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<td>We transfer lessons learnt from finished projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>We use a data base where we record which tasks were done when by whom</td>
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<tr>
<td>We use a data base where we record information about cooperation with partners and clients</td>
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<tr>
<td>We have created our own &quot;yellow pages&quot; where we have stored information about specific expertise (work experience, special knowledge and interests) of staff and outside experts</td>
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There is a good practice example, collected by pro-kompetenz after a manager seminar, that can be motivating for small and micro companies because it shows practical implementation (and the interconnection between the different innovation guide modules):

*In a seminar to introduce KM in SMEs we presented creativity techniques from this guide – Brainstorming and Brainwriting (635-Technique) and management of innovative internal proposals. The owners of an ice café decided to ask employees and trainees to bring in ideas*
for new and attractive products. They used motivating awards as well as an introductory session analysing the situation of the company and asking for the employees’ commitment. They created a form for the idea description and provided this online and in paper version. The result was excellent – they could create new and successful products. Particularly the trainees brought in very fresh ideas. (Gerd Zimmer)

Useful tools for knowledge management are presented in the guide.

We refer especially to the modules presented in 4 –Creativity techniques. Also 11 - Networking, present tools related to KM, such as 11.3 Communities of Practise (CoPs) or 11.4 Social network analyses.

KM requires a culture in the organisation that promotes initiative and knowledge sharing. You will find information specifically in 10.2 company’s culture but also in 4.1 introductions to creativity and 4.6 management of innovative proposals.

These both chapters, 4.1 and 4.6 also provide detailed information on incentive systems which can be used for promoting KM as well as on other motivating factors.

Planned time for the Knowledge Management topic: due to the importance of the topic and the potential connections / visiting points, there is enough input for a full day seminar or even more than one day.

You need to know how to market, how to minimise financial risk and to find a way to optimise your management skills

We have already addressed the fact that the market conditions can change fast, or founders might have seen the chances for implementing the product in a too positive light. Markets are quite saturated, many customers buy “traditional”, that means, what they know, and “that works”, trying also to minimise their risk of failure. Mentality of small shops is similar, placing a new product is not only a chance but also a risk for them. The market risk is obvious and has many facets. How can we minimise the market risk?

The (brainstorming) analysis that can be based on this case chapter could be used to address two interesting topics: Benchmarking and Marketing plan. The InnoCase / InnoSupport innovation guide dedicates chapter 5.3 to Benchmarking. 

Benchmarking is important, especially when we have to establish a new production line or services.

It is a tool to help us share experiences with leading companies, to assess where we are, how to organise the new (innovative) business, to be competitive, how to improve the business once it starts etc. It is a vital source of data for the decision making process. Market and competitor analysis might take up those questions presented in the guide: Which are your competitor’s strengths? How are you going to keep your market share? How can you attract more clients? a) With a better design b) Achieving greater reliability? c) Keeping lower prices?
If you address Benchmarking with managers or company staff, it might be really recommended to use benchmarking criteria (as presented in the guide) or additional ones and prepare a real basic benchmarking study of one or more presented companies. Participants know about the main competitors, their products and services. Benchmarking group work on a real case of participating managers will be useful and therefore highly motivating.

Suggested time: about 90 -120 minutes.

Chapter 9.1 of the Innovation guide provides basic information about Marketing.
http://www.innosupport.net/index.php?id=80&no_cache=1&L=aauocihzz

The successful marketer, in this age of innovation overload, cannot presume the success of a new product just because it is a better “mousetrap”, but must market it toward those wants and needs it is satisfying.¹

The life cycle matrix and creating awareness that different stages within the products life cycle require changes in the marketing mix approach, might be helpful for the learners.

There is also a short but useful table on “Basic characteristics that appear to influence consumer acceptance” and “Pitfalls to avoid” that provide input for group work or individual analysis.

Time planned: Marketing is a very huge topic and many practical issues (USP, how to find a good marketing mix…) are not sufficiently explained in the innovation guide. Therefore, it will depend on the target group (students or company staff / managers) how much time you can spend. With students, e.g. you could apply creative techniques in order to create a USP for a presented product or a product chosen by the students, with managers, creation of a practical marketing plan or discussion of the elements of a marketing mix will be motivating.

Statement Dr. Bernd G., Biotech-start-up “You know, you have many permanent payments, salaries, insurances, social contributions, bank loan interests, materials and equipment for production have permanently to be paid. And on the other hand, buyers of products and services often do not respect the time allowed for payment. You spend hours with phone calls, writing reminders, they simply do not pay… or simply your product does not sell in the way that you expected… You really have to check carefully, if the business, I mean the new product or service, is strong enough to pay for the financial obligations….”

What would you do to minimise financial risks?

Chapter 8.1 of the InnoCase / Innosupport innovation guide presents several ideas for financing an innovative product or service at the different stages of development and placement on the market.
http://www.innosupport.net/index.php?id=81&no_cache=1&L=aauocihzz

The Related Resources section of the guide provides a case study in form of an interview of a manager representing a Bulgarian micro company that could be a good starting point for further analysis and discussion
http://www.innosupport.net/index.php?id=2286&L=wsiiwlplqf

¹Hebig, Paul A; Kramer, Hugh, 1994, “The effect of information overload of the innovation choice”
An inadequate organizational structure and insufficient competence of the manager, is high risk when starting a new business. If managers have little or no management experience they will face significant challenges in running a successful company. Start-up managers often hesitated to share management tasks, to involve competent staff or even to hire experts, make use of retired experienced managers that would be able and willing to provide assistance. It can be interesting to analyse reasons for this attitude and find convincing arguments and strategies to overcome it.

The last chapter addresses again the importance of the acquisition of management skills. It also addresses the question on how to overcome fear of sharing responsibilities and control (company culture!). This final chapter provides the opportunity to revise / summarize success factors and factors of failure when starting or running a company. The chapter tries to motivate for learning for more efficiency and successful acting.

Suggested time: depending on the depth of analysis and the knowledge/needs of the target audience.