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Design as Entrepreneurship: Towards a Design-Specific Entrepreneurship Framework

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Design as Entrepreneurship: Towards a Design-Specific Entrepreneurship Framework

Mr. Con Kennedy

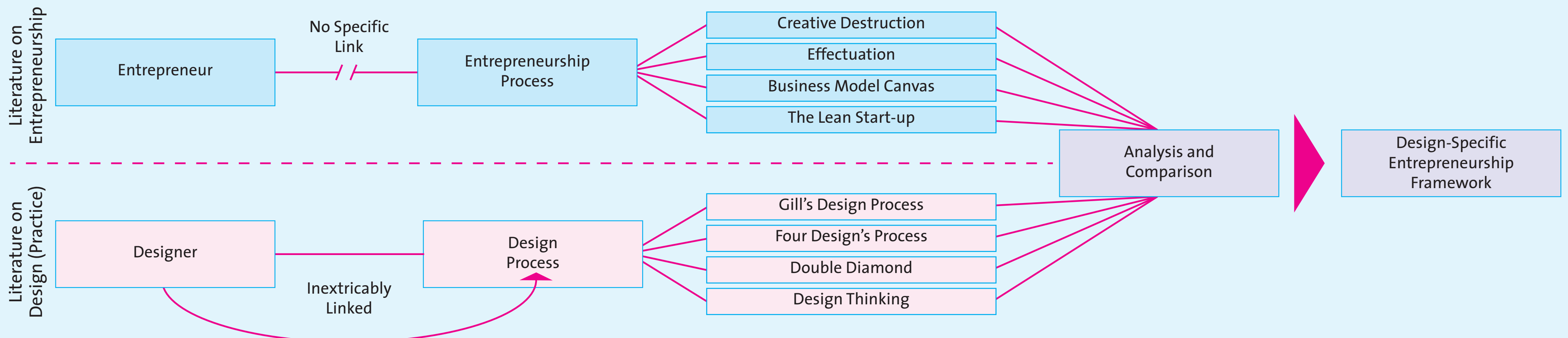
Aims & Objectives

This research investigates the applicability of entrepreneurship frameworks for Communications Design enterprises. Current frameworks are discussed through the lens of a Design Entrepreneur. Entrepreneurship frameworks are compared with Design frameworks to identify critical factors in determining applicability to the sector. The study also analyses the Irish industry in comparison to the industry internationally. A competitive analysis of the Irish industry is undertaken to identify factors affecting entrepreneurial activities of the sector.

Methodology

Research is conducted through literature review and primary analysis (semi-structured interviews). National and International literature is used to identify appropriate Entrepreneurship Frameworks and compares these to relevant Design Frameworks. This analysis determines the appropriateness of existing Entrepreneurship Frameworks for Communications Design Enterprises. From this, a Design-Specific Entrepreneurship Framework is proposed to address the identified gap in the literature.

The Entrepreneur & Entrepreneurship / The Designer & Design Process

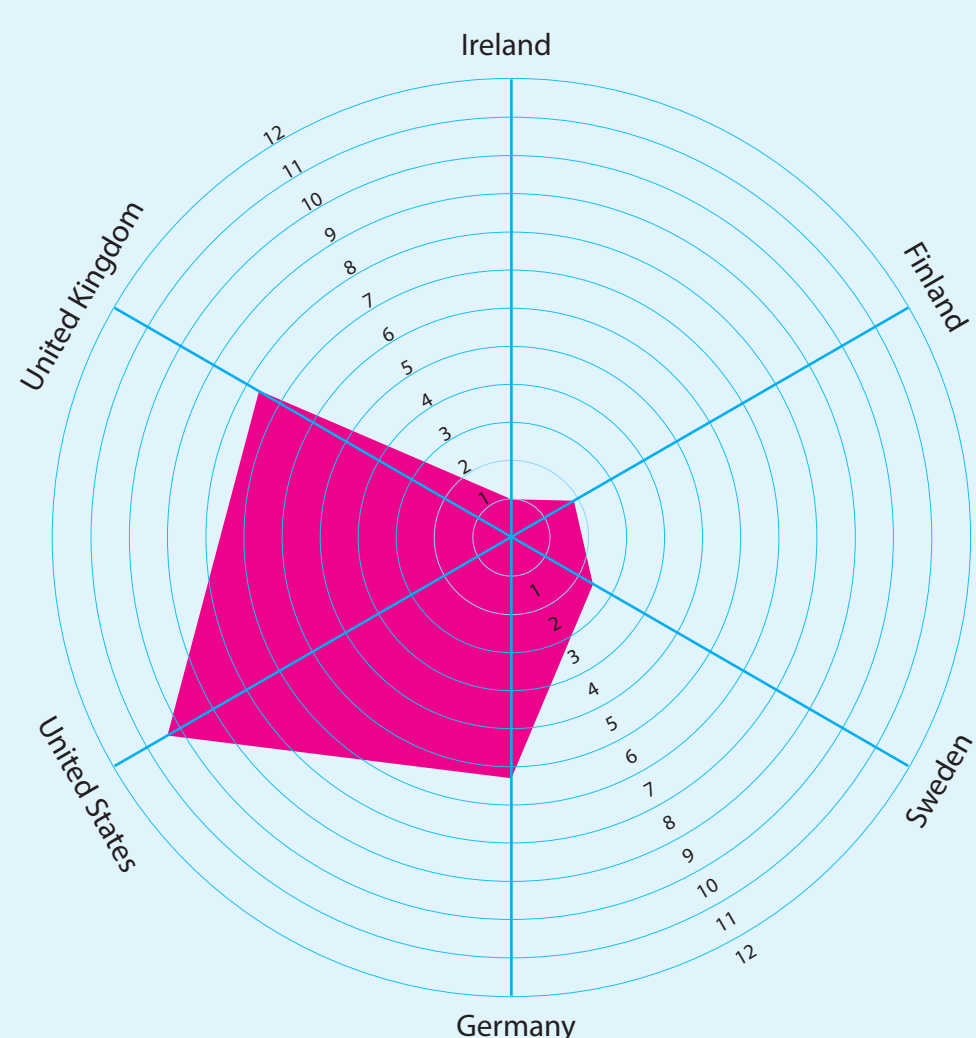


The literature identifies various entrepreneurship frameworks available to Entrepreneurs, elements of which may be applicable for use by Design Entrepreneurs in their businesses. Current Entrepreneurship thinking indicates that there is no specific link between the Entrepreneur and their enterprise (Gartner, 1988). However, Designers, not Entrepreneurs from design enterprises (Design Council, 2005) and Designers possess an individual approach to their creative work (Lupton, 2011; Schön, 1983) that is inseparable from the practitioner (Heller, 2008). Therefore, the Designer is both the product offering and the enterprise, which offers a different view of the Entrepreneur in Design than previously discussed. The literature on Entrepreneurship does not explicitly discuss Entrepreneurship's place in Design, and in particular, Communication Design, which indicates a gap in the literature and an opportunity to have a specific framework of entrepreneurship developed which applies to Design entrepreneurs.

Source: Author. Adapted from: Design Council (2019) What is the Double Diamond?; Four Design (2019) The Four Design Process; Naiman (2019) Design Thinking as a Strategy for Innovation; Gill (2013) The process of Creativity; Ries (2011) The Lean Startup; Sarasvathy (2011) What is effectuation?; Osterwalder & Pigneur (2010) Business Model Generation; Gartner (1988) "Who is an Entrepreneur?" is the Wrong Question; Schumpeter (1934) The Theory of Economic Development: An Inquiry into Profits, Capital, Credit, Interest and the Business

Lupton (2011) Graphic Design Thinking; Heller, S. (2008) The Design Entrepreneur: Turning Graphic Design Into Goods That Sell; Design Council (2005) The Business of Design; Schön (1983) The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action

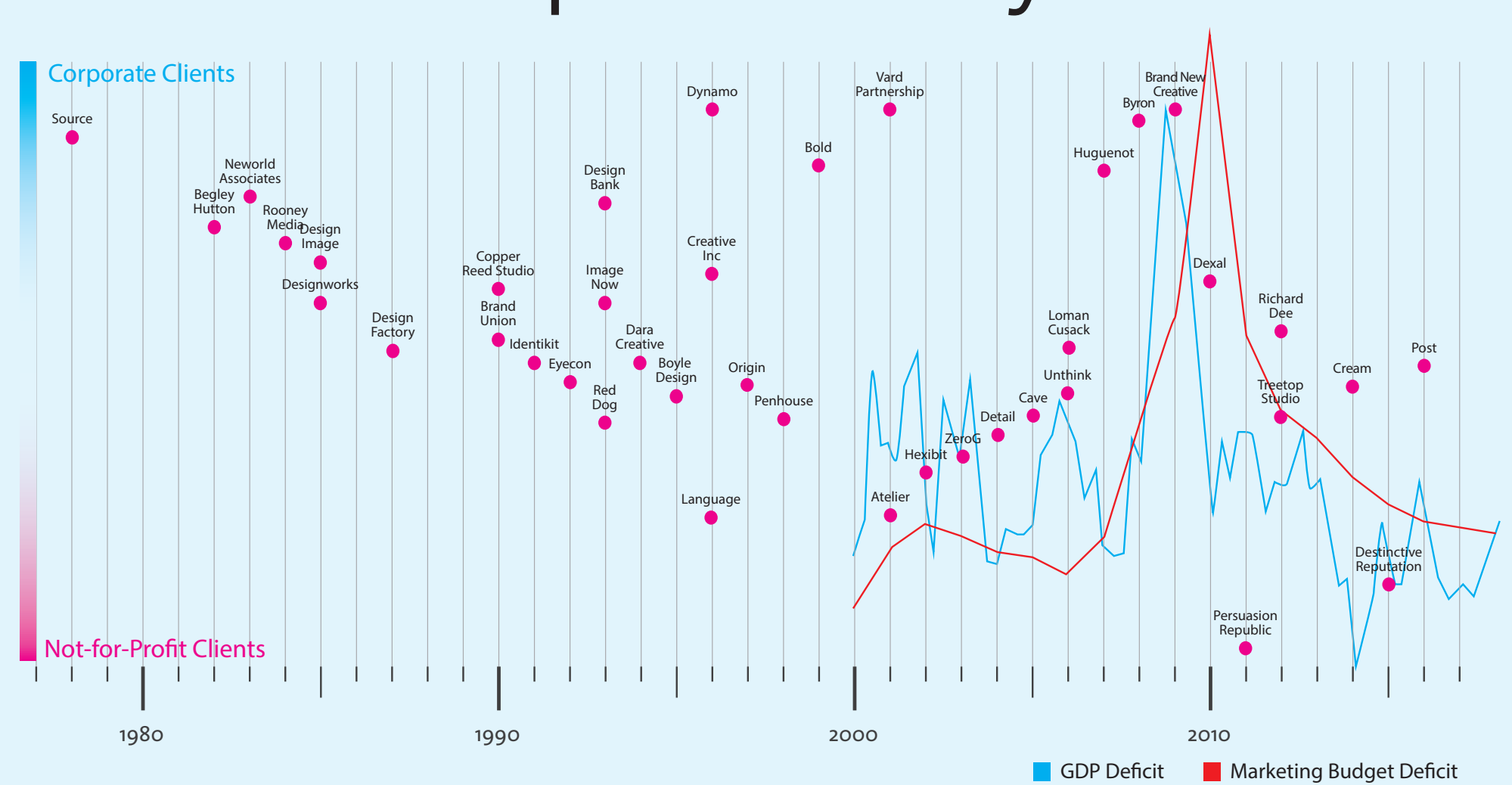
Sector Performance



The turnover of the Communication Design sector internationally expressed as a percentage of designers within the workforce reveals the underperformance of the sector in Ireland. The Irish industry remains significantly behind that of international norms. Designers in the industry lack skill and competencies that centre around entrepreneurship and business management (UK Design Council, 2007). The historical context of Communication Design in Ireland, coupled with government policy (King and Sissons, 2011; Marchant and Addis, 1984), has also contributed to this underperformance. Therefore, an applicable framework of entrepreneurship to address the specific entrepreneurship needs for the Communication Design sector is required.

Source: Author. Adapted from: BEDA (2006) European Design Report; Central Statistics Office (2012); European Commission (2014); Intertrade Ireland (2009) A Study of the Design Services Sector on the Island of Ireland; National Career Services (2012); US Bureau of Labor Statistics (2014); Moultrie, J and Livesey, F. (2009) International Design Scoreboard

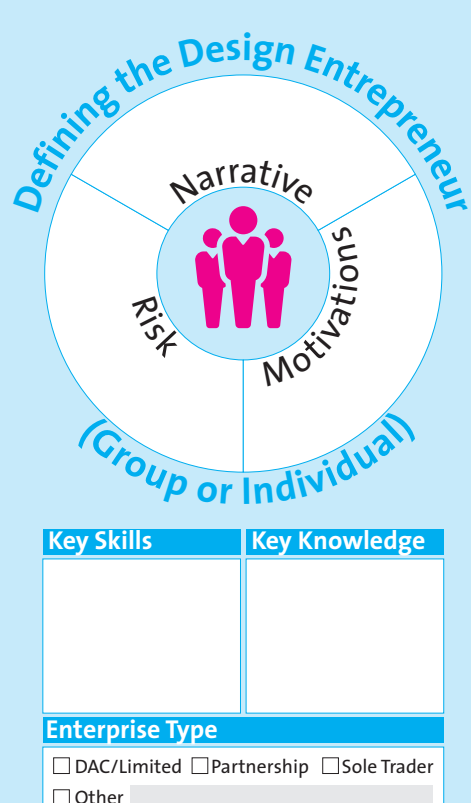
Competitive Analysis



A competitive analysis of the Irish Communications Design industry reveals that established practices tend to have more Corporate clients; newer practices tend to have more Not-for-Profit clients. Which suggests that established practices are trusted by clients, while emerging practices may engage in pro-bono work to establish their design studios and build a creative reputation. However, the relationships between the performance of the economy during the recent recession (GDP deficit and the retraction in client spend), affects the position taken by these enterprises. Therefore the impact on the economy fundamentally changes the approach and position taken by entrepreneurs in the Communication Design sector. The literature on Design discusses the paradigm as practice with a creative output; ultimately, the above diagram indicates that the sector is behaving in an entrepreneurial manner, despite Design Entrepreneurs lacking specific skills. Therefore, Design Entrepreneurs may be acting entrepreneurially without realisation.

Source: Author. Adapted from: CRO(2019); Eurostat (2019); The Institute of Practitioners in Advertising/Bellwether (2019)

Design-Specific Entrepreneurship Framework



Design Practice
Resources
Primary Design Activities
Secondary Design Activities
Support Services
Size of Design Enterprise
Enterprise Location
Design Process
Studio Culture

Engagement
Leadership Style
Relationships
Partners & Suppliers
Customer Segment
Primary Clients
Client Representative

Market Environment
Value Proposition
Marketing
Promotional Channels
Positioning
Competitors
Differentiation
Key Objectives

Finances
Seed Capital (if applicable)
Revenue Streams & Models
Financial Planning
Overheads
Profit
Future Investment
Future Opportunity

Entrepreneurship Vision

Source: Author.

Discussions and Conclusions

There is a definable process to both Entrepreneurship and Communication Design, with some commonalities. Current Entrepreneurship frameworks do not address the specific requirements of the Designer, in particular, the entrepreneurship skill deficit. Because of the link between the Designer's process, their creativity and their enterprise, the Design Entrepreneur would seem to be different from other entrepreneurs. The Design Entrepreneur is both the product offering and the enterprise - and the Designer. Therefore a Design-Specific Entrepreneurship framework is required to answer the research question. The above framework is developed through literature review and primary research to address the gap in the literature. It proposes a specific framework to aid Designers to understand entrepreneurship for their enterprises.