LOCAL, DISTANT, AND ONLINE: WHERE SMALL BUSINESS ENTREPRENEURS SEEK PEER ADVICE AND WHY (SUMMARY)

Kristine M. Kuhn
Washington State University, USA, kmkuhn@wsu.edu

Tera Galloway
Illinois State University, USA

Maureen Collins-Williams
University of Northern Iowa, USA

Recommended Citation
Kuhn, Kristine M.; Galloway, Tera; and Collins-Williams, Maureen (2014) "LOCAL, DISTANT, AND ONLINE: WHERE SMALL BUSINESS ENTREPRENEURS SEEK PEER ADVICE AND WHY (SUMMARY)," Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research: Vol. 34 : Iss. 7 , Article 3.
Available at: https://digitalknowledge.babson.edu/fer/vol34/iss7/3

This Summary is brought to you for free and open access by the Entrepreneurship at Babson at Digital Knowledge at Babson. It has been accepted for inclusion in Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research by an authorized editor of Digital Knowledge at Babson. For more information, please contact digitalknowledge@babson.edu.
ENTREPRENEURIAL NETWORKS

LOCAL, DISTANT, AND ONLINE: WHERE SMALL BUSINESS ENTREPRENEURS SEEK PEER ADVICE AND WHY

Kristine M. Kuhn, Washington State University, USA
Tera Galloway, Illinois State University, USA
Maureen Collins-Williams, University of Northern Iowa, USA

Principal Topic

Although there is extensive literature on entrepreneurs’ external advice seeking from private and public sector business advisors, we know relatively little about the prevalence with which small business owner-managers seek advice from other small business owners, how they locate peer advisors, and what possible barriers to peer networking they face. In this study we address this gap by surveying a large sample of small business entrepreneurs across a variety of sectors and assessing factors that predict their utilization of different sources of peer advisors. Of particular interest is the extent to which entrepreneurs use the internet to seek advice from peers they have not met face-to-face.

Method

This is an empirical study that analyzes a cross-sectional survey of over 600 small business owners in a Midwestern US state. The primary dependent variables are the extent to which entrepreneurs had sought advice in the previous year from each of three sources: other small business owners in their town/region they had met in person, those from outside their town/region they had met in person, and those whom they had communicated with only online. As a more broad-based assessment of online assistance, respondents were also asked to rate the degree to which they had received advice and/or support from other entrepreneurs in online forums or via social media.

Results and Implications

Almost two-thirds of respondents had received advice from a local peer or peers, and over half had received advice from a non-local peer they had met in person. Somewhat surprisingly, a third of respondents reported they had received advice from an “online-only” peer they had not met in person. Businesses located in the most rural areas were more likely to have sought advice from a non-local peer, but reported usage of online-only peers did not vary by location. Businesses in the technology sector and those that were experiencing growth were more likely to have sought advice from an online-only peer. In contrast to public entrepreneurial support services, neither the size nor age of a business had a significant association with seeking advice from any source of peers.

CONTACT: Kristine Kuhn; kmkuhn@wsu.edu; (T): 509-335-1694; Department of Management, Information Systems, and Entrepreneurship, Washington State University, Pullman Washington, 99164-4743, USA.