LECTURE ANNOUNCEMENT

OPEN TO STUDENTS AND STAFF

Vertical take-off:
Participant reflections on creating high growth businesses

Time/Date: 14.30-16.00, October 20, 2015
Venue: Fib 15.B, Aalborg University

Speaker: Dr. Norman M. Fraser

Norman Fraser is an IT entrepreneur who has played a key role in founding and running several high growth multinational IT companies with diverse offerings and business models. In this lecture he offers first-hand reflections on the differing challenges of growing businesses offering human services, cloud services, hardware products and software products. Each calls for different approaches to innovation and intellectual property, human resources, investment and cash management, value creation and exit. And each defines success in a subtly different way.

Drawing on a host of illustrative anecdotes and participant observations, Fraser examines the lifecycle of each of the different business types, highlighting key threats and critical success factors for each. He analyses the tension between the need to innovate to differentiate versus the challenge of legitimizing newness. He sheds light on strategies to break out of stalled growth plateaus and progress up the value chain. And he explores the pros and cons of pivoting a business to address new realities.

Fraser argues that the kind of practitioner expertise he describes is largely unfamiliar to venture capital investors, who tend to esteem a different and sometimes conflicting corpus of received wisdom, namely 'venture capital orthodoxy'. He offers compelling examples of how investment professionals in London and Silicon Valley follow standard practices to undermine their own best interests and the interests of their investee businesses, without realising it. He concludes by proposing a set of principles to align business and investment to maximise growth.

Norman Fraser is Visiting Fellow at Henley Business School and Faculty Member at Theory Building Research Programme where he leads a theory building research programme "Legitimation Theory": (http://www.tbrp.aau.dk/theory-building-projects/legitimation-theory/).