

# Editorial: Lean and Global

Chris McPhee, Editor-in-Chief

Stoyan Tanev, Guest Editor

## From the Editor-in-Chief

Welcome to the May 2017 issue of the *Technology Innovation Management Review*. This month's editorial theme is **Lean and Global**, and it is my pleasure to introduce our Guest Editor, **Stoyan Tanev**, Associate Professor of Technology Entrepreneurship and Innovation in the Innovation & Design Engineering Group at the University of Southern Denmark.

In June, we feature articles based on the recent ISPIM Innovation Forum, which was held in Toronto, Canada, from March 19–22, 2017. ISPIM – the International Society for Professional Innovation Management (ISPIM; [ispim-innovation.com](http://ispim-innovation.com)) – is a network of researchers, industrialists, consultants, and public bodies who share an interest in innovation management.

For future issues, we are accepting general submissions of articles on technology entrepreneurship, innovation management, and other topics relevant to launching and growing technology companies and solving practical problems in emerging domains. Please contact us ([timreview.ca/contact](http://timreview.ca/contact)) with potential article topics and submissions.

**Chris McPhee**  
Editor-in-Chief

## From the Guest Editor

It is a pleasure offering the reader the opportunity for a critical reflection on the potential synergy between lean startup and born-global entrepreneurial perspectives in the context of new technology firms. The articles included in this special issue acknowledge the wide application of the lean startup approach to technology entrepreneurship in the last five years. Initially driven by practitioners, it has now attracted the attention of both scholars and policy makers. The lean startup method revolutionized the world of technology startups by shifting the focus of entrepreneurs from product development to the equally important parallel process of customer development. The shift is from an obsession with great technology, product design, and functionality to a focus on discovery and learning about customers as early as possible so that problems can be fixed before the actual product launch.

The lean startup approach has granted entrepreneurs many instruments that could help them deal with uncertainty in the early stages of their businesses. However, it has remained relatively detached from another opportunity: to take into account the growing relevance of existing or emerging global markets. At the same time, many entrepreneurs see their startups as global from day one because, since the inception of their businesses, they have pursued markets outside their home country. In addition, for some of them, the pursuit of global markets is not the only way to exploit global opportunities. They have succeeded in making a difference by creating business models that explore and exploit resources in multiple countries. An increasing number of new technology businesses do not aim for, but start with, international operations. This is where the need to integrate knowledge from research on born-global firms and global startups comes in. The aim of the present special issue is to address this need in the context of new technology firms.

In the first article, I summarize insights from previous literature focusing on global startups and articulate in greater detail the benefits of considering the lean global startup as a new type of firm. The article explores some

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of the main ideas discussed in the interview with Nicole Coviello, which is also part of this special issue. The main message of the article is that the lessons learned from the emergence of lean startup entrepreneurship offer a basis for promoting a similar lean phase in technology-based global startup research and practice.

Next, **Michael Neubert**, Professor at the International School of Management in Paris, France, adopts a comparative cross-national multiple case study research approach to explore the speed of internationalization of high-tech startups operating internationally from within small and open economies. The key finding of the study is the identification of a relationship between the speed of early market internationalization and the adoption of lean market development processes. The finding offers a basis for developing propositions for further comparative studies focusing on the early and fast internationalization of high-tech startups based in emerging and developed markets.

Then, **Erik Stavnsager Rasmussen**, Associate Professor in the Department of Marketing and Management at the University of Southern Denmark in Odense, and **Nicolaj Hannesbo Petersen**, a PhD student in the same department, discuss the challenges of high-tech global startups with respect to their ability to synergize innovation and internationalization. The empirical component of the article is based on interviews with the executive managers of eight innovative international firms from a Danish Welfare Tech cluster. The study indicates the existence of a relationship between the startups' engagements with innovation and internationalization. The firms have focused on developing a platform-based core product or service offering, which became a basis for serving new customers and users in new countries. The key challenges for the firms turned around the co-evolution of the platform, products, and services, allowing them to pivot their core value propositions by adapting the platform to new international contexts.

**Kaisa Still**, a Senior Scientist at VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland, explores how the adoption of the lean startup paradigm has led to the emergence of a new process model that could accelerate innovation in the context of research at universities and other research organizations. The article is based on the assumption that the organizational context matters, suggesting that a deeper understanding of the research context could enable the acceleration of the corres-

ponding innovation process. The study complements several theoretical examples with a case study from the VTT Technical Research Institute of Finland. The findings indicate that many of the lean startup concepts can also be relevant within the research context. However, in the research context, there is a weaker focus on the articulation of value propositions and the adoption of growth strategies resulting in a future scalable business.

**Ferran Giones**, Assistant Professor at the University of Southern Denmark in Sønderborg, and **Alexander Brem**, Professor of Technology Management at Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, Germany, focus on defining technology entrepreneurship in the context of growing digitization and globalization. Based on current examples, they offer a description of technology entrepreneurship, digital technology entrepreneurship, and digital entrepreneurship. The suggested delineation of the terms is used as an opportunity for the articulation of a new research agenda in the field of technology entrepreneurship. It is expected to foster a discussion between researchers, entrepreneurs, and policy makers on the impact of digitization on entrepreneurship.

Finally, the special issue includes an interview with **Nicole Coviello**, Lazaridis Research Professor and Professor of Marketing at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Canada. The interview was inspired by a recent publication by Coviello in which she emphasized the need to re-think existing research on international entrepreneurship and born-global firms by focusing on the development of a more consistent collective research identity through an ongoing process of terminological refinement and clarification. Coviello calls for a more cautious use of the term "born global" because very few firms were really born on a global scene. According to Coviello, the international entrepreneurship research community has to work harder to better integrate innovation management scholarship, business model innovation frameworks, and early internationalization theories. She encourages multi-level research and attention to the actual decision makers of global startups and, especially, to young founders who are different in terms of how they relate to technology and the world in general. For Coviello, the lean startup approach is not really new but does set the stage well for the internationalization of startups. It is also associated with business models that should be further studied in a global context.

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The overall message of the special issue emphasizes the benefits of integrating the lean startup and global startup entrepreneurial perspectives. The authors of the contributions do not suggest that every technology startup should aim to operate globally. They do, however, emphasize that startups having a global orientation since their inception could benefit from adopting a lean startup attitude towards the effectuation of their global resourcing and market reach.

**Stoyan Tanev**  
Guest Editor

### About the Editors

**Chris McPhee** is Editor-in-Chief of the *Technology Innovation Management Review*. He holds an MASc degree in Technology Innovation Management from Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada, and BScH and MSc degrees in Biology from Queen's University in Kingston, Canada. Chris has nearly 20 years of management, design, and content-development experience in Canada and Scotland, primarily in the science, health, and education sectors. As an advisor and editor, he helps entrepreneurs, executives, and researchers develop and express their ideas.

**Stoyan Tanev** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Technology and Innovation, Faculty of Engineering, Southern Denmark University (SDU) in Odense. Dr. Tanev is leading the Technology Entrepreneurship stream of the Master Program of Product Development and Innovation at SDU. He is also an Adjunct Research Professor in the Sprott School of Business at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada, where he is associated with the Technology Innovation Management Program. He has a MSc and a PhD in Physics jointly from the University Pierre and Marie Curie, Paris, France, and the University of Sofia, Bulgaria, a PhD in Theology from the University of Sofia, Bulgaria, an MEng in Technology Innovation Management from Carleton University, Canada, and an MA from the University of Sherbrooke, Canada. He has multidisciplinary research interests with a focus on the fields of global technology entrepreneurship, technology innovation management, business model design, and value co-creation. Dr. Tanev is Senior IEEE member, as well as member of the editorial boards of the *Technology Innovation Management Review*, the *International Journal of Actor-Network Theory*, and *Technological Innovation*.

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