

•••global venture lab

•••for problems worth solving

CO-CREATING GREAT
ENABLERS

THE GLOBAL VENTURE LAB EXPLORATION IN FINLAND

A New Game Is On!

PERSONAL **BOOK**[™]
NEW LEAF IN VALUE CREATION

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Foreword

What You are holding in your hands is four years of GVL Finland stories. The greatest stories are told by our partners and our students: Our heroes. The stories are not only entertaining and enchanting, but also reveal the power of co-creation so strong and passionate that it has the ability to truly change the world. And this is exactly what Global Venture Lab set out to achieve in Finland.

Early on, we figured if we want to help solve the world's Big Problems, we better get to work. Over time, our own entrepreneurial and industrial experiences and educational backgrounds varying from Business Studies to Engineering and ICT, and Law to Political Science, have only strengthened our key conclusion that there is one code in the world that can yield quick solutions to big problems, if co-creatively rewritten. That's the code of "Enterprise", when dedicated to problems worth solving.

But how did we go about the code, the rewriting, and education of people willing and able to co-create Great Global Enterprises, firms that solve Big Problems? First of all, in this game, as in swimming, we thought, instructors should be swimmers themselves and the learning should take place in water. With this in mind, we launched bold experiments on how to learn global growth venture creation based on Live Case material. In short, we've been learning by doing ourselves.

We realized how research on enterprise has classically produced only rather abstract outcomes. We aimed at more concrete results: Real businesses, products and services, even entire ecosystems, which resemble works of art, rather than science. This is co-creating unique solutions for unique problems, rather than aiming at generalization of findings and repeatability of process. Right there, our outcomes supplement the products of “kauppätiede” (Science of Business Administration), our point of departure. By participating in co-creation of enterprise for problems worth solving, we stumbled into inventing “kauppataide” (Art of Business Creation), a concept coined by President Martti Ahtisaari, we later learned, in a Public Lecture at the University of Helsinki already in 1997.

In a way, GVL Finland has been a four-year pregnancy for Art of Business Creation. At the end, we are positioned to produce “knowledgists” willing and able to co-create Great Global Enterprises and the needed kind of knowledge. There are many biological fathers and mothers, but the future of this baby is in the hands of a wider community of parents, visionaries from participating universities, partner companies, funders, chambers of commerce and the likes of Protomo and Team Academy. We want to transform GVL Finland from a pilot exercise to a truly Great Enabler. Together we can!

The Game has changed.
It is Global.
There will be new Players.
Who will make the Rules.
Let's play the Game!

June 10, 2011

On the behalf of all GVL Finland team members – past, present, and future,


Christian Aspegren


Ilkka Hämäläinen


Leni Kuivaniemi


Marko Seppä


Mari Suoranta

Editors' Note

“Who wants to be a chief editor?” With these words, Leni Kuivaniemi introduced the unique opportunity for two students to write a book about GVL Finland. The GVL team had been planning to do the book already a year ago, but it had been delayed. So why not have the book done as a student project! Two students were brave enough, or, as Aki Soudunsaari put it, had enough balls to take up the challenge. We – Susanna Hytönen and Katri Mäkinen – were the ones.

Little did we know what we get into when taking this job. Trigger words for us were producing and editing text in English because we both are English majors. At first, the task seemed enormous and we weren't quite sure what GVL was really about. After being momentarily dazed and confused, we rolled up our sleeves. Our job was to contact people who in one way or another had been involved with GVL, interview them, and write the story of GVL based on their comments.

The responsibilities were shared: wanting to push the limits of her comfort zone, Katri took on the job of contacting the interviewees, whereas Susanna was more closely in contact with student teams who conducted some of the interviews. Eventually, the interviews were completed and it was time to put the stories together in the form of a book – the one you're holding in your hands!

For Katri, this was a chance to combine her experience as a translator with the challenge of putting together the puzzle of the interviews so that the pieces fit together seamlessly. “Producing a book from scratch is a big challenge, I knew that, but I also knew we could do it. And I wouldn't have missed such a chance for the world! Having proved my skills, I was invited to work for the GVL team. This wouldn't have happened without my studies in GVL and all the amazing opportunities and projects I had the chance to participate in.”

For Susanna, the experience was as fruitful as it was for Katri. “I have sent job applications for positions which I wouldn't have applied for a year ago, before my studies in GVL. I have also had interesting conversations with Aki Soudunsaari about the pedagogical issues related to GVL. Who knows what this can bring forth in the future... I have always known that I'm able to do things if I want to, but have perhaps lacked the courage. After being part of the unique atmosphere in GVL I would be crazy to keep my skills and knowledge under a lid!”

We feel fortunate for the opportunity to study at GVL. Not only do we have a better understanding of business and the courage to do things outside our comfort areas; we are also more aware of our capabilities and how to put them into effective use. We have grown as individuals: we now see all the possibilities ahead of us and feel confident about the future.

This book project gave us the opportunity to show what we were made of. During the process, we have created networks and gained courage to do things outside our discipline. We would like to thank everyone who we worked with: the interviewees for their time, interest and enthusiastic comments, student teams who did some of the interviews, and the GVL team for their trust, support and for giving us free rein to do as we please.

All this has been a mind-blowing experience.

Jyväskylä, spring 2011



Susanna Hytönen & Katri Mäkinen

PART ONE!

Will to combine academia and
growth venture creation
– a match made in heaven?





Will to combine academia and growth venture creation – a match made in heaven?

The University is positioned as the ultimate knowledge factory of the mankind. Not a bad place to be, in a world where knowledge – not cash – increasingly is king. However, the sometimes compromised relationship between theory and practice is increasingly underscored in the context of Business School, in general, and Business Creation, in particular.

To bring about change, brave new initiatives are required to enable and encourage more engaging scholarly roles and more practically relevant research missions and outcomes. For the future of management, the needs are perhaps the most profound in the context of Business Creation: Commercialization of inventions, productization, and the launching of new global growth ventures.

There is a call for ever more deeply interdisciplinary foundations within academia, both in research and education, with ever more intimate – bolder, deeper, and ever more creative – interaction with practitioners of both established and emerging companies. Such new programs are under way in several universities around the world.

WORKING ON A GLOBAL SOLUTION: THE NEED FOR GLOBAL VENTURE LAB

Global Venture Lab (GVL) builds on the need for "Human Technology Business": The growing need to connect (or integrate) humanities and technology with business. While GVL's three co-founders each run such initiatives on a local level, they envision co-creating a truly global university program or a "Distributed Business Creation School". The co-founders share a deep concern for Big Problems and a passion for solving them by means of growth venture creation – by using the vehicle value of corporations in the global free enterprise system.

GLOBAL - think boundary-less

- bringing local innovations to global markets
- collaborating with international faculty & university institutions
- cutting across cultures, disciplines of science & sectors of economy

VENTURE - think of business

- focusing on individuals with an intention to grow a business to its maximal market potential
- networking with dedicated serial entrepreneurs in Finland & the world
- investing knowledge (committed competence), not just money

LAB - think of co-creation

- bringing entrepreneurs into university and students & researchers into the business world
- focus on business creation and commercialization as science – not just a practice
- learning side by side, studying and execution of business creation, real life, real time, and for real profits

For problems worth solving

We're facing major global challenges that need bright minds, young and old, that are willing and able to push for solutions. Global Venture Lab promotes growth venture creation for sustainability – that is, creating profit-driven, growth-oriented and knowledge-invested businesses that serve a purpose deeper yet than wealth creation, namely solution creation for problems worth solving.

In Jyväskylä, the story began in the fall of 2006, when [Mari Suoranta](#), a post-doc researcher at the University of Jyväskylä since 2004, was appointed Assistant Professor of a new and experimental minor program, initiated by the university's Rector Aino Sallinen. The purpose was to teach business competence to students majoring in science and technology, with the goal of advancing the birth of new businesses and improving the relationships between the university and the industry.

This study programme became the foundation upon which GVL later developed. The first students of Technology Business started in the program in fall 2006. With the pride of GVL's Director of Study Programs, Mari says that by spring 2008, the results and feedback were so impressive that in the fall 2008 a sister programme, Service Business, could be launched. All in all, 2007–2008 witnessed the co-creation and development of the basic building blocks of GVL, such as the partnership program with companies and international cooperation with the UC Berkeley in the United States and IIT Kharagpur in India.

Mari says that GVL was born because “we wanted to combine teaching, research and industry cooperation more clearly. At GVL we early on wanted to use novel ways of teaching and doing research and to make companies involved in both teaching and research in a new manner – to mix up the roles of students, researchers and businesspeople.”

Officially, GVL was launched in November 2008 at the University of California at Berkeley, followed by Indian Institute of Technology at Kharagpur (India) in January 2009 and University Alliance Finland at Tampere University of Technology, University of Jyväskylä and University of Tampere in March 2009. However, Mari notes that the formation of the GVL Finland team began already in 2007, when [Marko Seppä](#) had started as Professor of Growth Venture Creation at the University of Jyväskylä.

MARKO SEPPÄ: “Being involved with GVL has clarified my mission in life.”

When Marko was invited to become a professor at the University of Jyväskylä for a 5-year term, beginning in 2007, the Rector, Aino Sallinen, told him to “think big”. She did not know who she told, Marko quotes his wife. Marko says that his duty as a professor was to critically consider what was being done in his field – what was taught and thought of business and growth venture creation at the university at large – and what use was the work being done?

Mari Suoranta, who in September 2006 had kick-started the study program that would form the basis of all GVL actions, clapped her hands. From the get-go, the two teamed up. In Marko's words: M1 was the bedrock for what became a globally distributed operational experiment. Marko persistently refers to Mari as GVL Finland's first M and himself as M2.

The answer to the Rector's challenge of “thinking big” was the co-creation of GVL starting in 2007, which was based on the original idea of exchanging and sharing global cases between the students from different continents. Having first met in 2005, Marko Seppä and Professor [Ikhlāq Sidhu](#) of UC Berkeley teamed up with Professor [Dhrubesh Biswas](#) of IIT Kharagpur, whom Ikhlāq had met earlier, during fall 2007. The three co-founders felt that it was necessary to create growth ventures globally, not just locally: the time was ripe, both in Finland and internationally, and there was a real need for new ways of global growth venture creation.

“Thanks to the support of professors Markus Pessa of Tampere University of Technology and Jarmo Viteli of University of Tampere, GVL got a jump start in Finland, as a University Alliance Finland research cluster of excellence, in June 2008.”



MARKO SEPPÄ: "The right people met each other at the right time."

In Marko's words, the mission of GVL Finland is to create professionals who are willing and able to co-create such new business and enterprise that can solve the world's Big Problems. Marko highlights the importance of growth venture creation as a catalyst for change and in creating employment. Creating successful growth ventures requires knowledge and competences that must be available in university education.

Therefore, the GVL strategy is to create professionals by creating companies – as both are needed in this equation. The GVL vision is for university researchers and professors to bring companies to universities. In this situation, the researchers and co-entrepreneurs, who have been invited to join to work on the “Live Cases”, must have an incentive to improve the success of the businesses. This requires particular structures that GVL Finland has already begun to build.

With the help of these structures, also university students participating in GVL would become part of this emerging co-entrepreneurial community. Indeed, as GVL develops in the future, Marko would want to see more co-creation with the students, as they can offer fresh viewpoints to things such as business creation. He would want to “force people out of their comfort zone” and encourage them towards growth venture creation, with the motto that “solving big problems via enterprise is both noble and demanding.”

For Marko, growth venture creation is a way to bring better practices to areas where bad practices are in use. Lobbying for new and suitable standards is also a means to achieve a competitive advantage and to steer businesses away from bad practices. “You can’t create a new code without breaking the old one,” Marko says. However, instead of completely replacing the old paradigm, GVL wants to create a new formula that supplements the existing ones.

GVL as a global platform rests upon the three co-founders; however, in reality it was more like a joining together of three teams. Marko stresses the importance of the team in GVL Finland's history, development and success. If Mari and Marko were the first two M's of GVL, the team was later strengthened with M3, M4, M5, M6, M7 and M8, as Mia Häkkinen, Mikko Oksanen, Mila Hakanen, Mitro Kivinen, Merie Joseph and Markku Lampola joined in during 2008–2011.

The team has evolved over the years as new members have come along, complementing it with new competences and ideas, while others have moved on. Besides Mikko, Mitro, and Markku, also Sakari Sipola, Samppa Lajunen and Timo Seppälä have each paid a visit of contribution. Rotation from industry to academia and back is only a natural part of GVL.

From within the team came also GVL's first “Dirty Dog”: Entrepreneur Ilkka Hämäläinen, part of GVL since early 2010, was the first one to go through GVL's Director-to-Doctor programme, professor emeritus Pertti Kettunen. Ilkka earned a doctorate degree majoring in Growth Venture Creation in August 2010.

Throughout his life, Ilkka has wanted to develop professionally: as an engineer, as a management consultant, and in the field of science. For Ilkka “science was a way to understand what I had done in the past” and also a way of gathering knowledge on how to create and improve new businesses in the future.

As a serial entrepreneur, and also because of his attitude – he describes himself as “a perpetual questioner, searcher for new ideas, challenger of the existing order” – Ilkka fit the GVL team well. In his own words, he started as a “kind of a hang-around member” and since 2011 has been a part-time post-doc researcher and Project Director.

When Marko asked if Ilkka was interested in contributing to development of the GVL concept, Ilkka said yes. “Being involved in developing important new ways of thinking in the field of business studies is a dream come true: I can combine my experiences in business with science in a new way – in my own avant garde-attitude.”

In 2008, the GVL team got more multidisciplinary and international when Jane Porter came along. Having finished her International business degree at Carlton University, Ottawa, Canada, Jane had come to Finland to do her Master's Degree in Corporate Environmental Management at the University of Jyväskylä. She ended up working for GVL after a chain of events that could be described as serendipity: a colleague in her study program insisted that Jane meet Professor Marko Seppä – and at the end of their first meeting, Jane says, Marko offered her a job.

When asked about her first impressions about GVL, Jane enthusiastically says that she subscribed to the vision of innovation, to starting up new companies and getting people excited. It was of particular importance to her that it was all about sustainability. At some point she even remembers saying: “I can't think of being in a better place, because this is what my passion is.” In her job, Jane was involved in developing the GVL concept further, and in addition she did research for her thesis, which focused on growth venturing for sustainability.





Jane describes GVL as a “university-based business creation platform”, where an entrepreneur with a new technology at one university can have a direct access to similar communities in other universities in order to commercialize the technology in a much more rapid and efficient way. The local entrepreneurs are then also connected to financiers and entrepreneurs in those other universities and their surrounding areas. As Jane says, “to create the solutions, you need different perspectives around the table. The only way to come up with better solutions is to invite people to bring their different perspectives.”

In Jane's words, “GVL always had and always will have a solid vision: we understand what we need. Getting there in practice and tying that together globally in practice is extremely difficult.” Nevertheless, GVL is also “about testing new ways of moving forward – and GVL is still moving.”

From a university viewpoint, Jane says GVL is “about creating courses that are multidisciplinary; that bring entrepreneurs into the classroom. It's real world learning, but the courses also are connected to issues that are challenges – whether health care, renewable energy, climate change... it all has a purpose.” In other words, GVL combines teaching, research and business for “problems worth solving”.

What GVL does – creating multidisciplinary classrooms, where Humanities students mix with engineers – is not only cutting edge, but it is also necessary because “that's what's happening in the real world.” Especially in business, Jane points out, “you need to have people skills, know how to work a team, and a very diverse team – quite often, you're not given the chance to learn those skills at university.” Instead, students often spend their time with similar, likeminded people the whole way through.

To tackle this issue and to encourage students to come “out of their boxes” and to exchange ideas with non-likeminded people, Jane was involved in organizing JYU Talks. The university-wide event aimed at discussing current problems on a global scale. It was also a way of reaching out to the entire university and letting them know about GVL.

“This was an experiment that was used to see what could happen when people from different backgrounds were brought together for a purpose.” Jane is passionate about students thinking about the bigger picture. She wanted students to leave university with a clearer idea of how they could put their skills to use for solving some of the major issues, the “big problems”, instead of jumping into a job and forgetting about their dreams and ideals that they really cared about while being a student.

Jane clearly has a passion for making the world a better place. So does **Leni Kuivaniemi**, who joined the GVL team in 2009, having been introduced to it through Professor Seppä. The two shared a similar mindset about economics and how it should or should not be taught at a university level. Having graduated from Law School and working in her own company, Leni wanted to finish her doctorate and GVL offered her a good chance for doing that.

With the hint of a smile, Leni describes herself as “a human rights lawyer wanting to save the world.” In GVL, she found a platform for working on matters that interested her. She describes her job at GVL as a “hobby”, because it takes all the excess time and mental energy that is left over from her own entrepreneurial activity. For Leni, the huge potential of GVL is what attracts her – she can be part of something meaningful that has a purpose, and with which one can actually make a change in the surrounding society. After completing her PhD, Leni has served GVL as Assistant Professor and Project Director.

LENI KUIVANIEMI: “With GVL – It just clicked.”

GVL wants to bring about changes in society through research based on Live Cases. In these case studies, researchers and GVL students work together with companies who have brought the case to GVL's attention. The purpose of this collaboration is to solve real business problems of the companies in a multidisciplinary environment. From the participating company's point of view, this kind of cooperation of such different parties can result in novel insights into things such as the company's core business or marketing strategies, provide ideas for the firm's growth, and research results that can be beneficial for the company. From the researchers' point of view, this cooperation increases the academic understanding of how businesses are created and run, and provides valuable information for research purposes.

A concrete example of this kind of Live Case research where GVL has had an important role in creating a growth oriented venture is the Health Kiosk project in India, in cooperation with GVL co-founder Dhruves Biswas and IIT Kharagpur.

The venture aims to create an efficient and affordable health care delivery model, or ecosystem, for rural areas in India, where the poor population does not have access to or cannot afford public healthcare. GVL has been involved in researching how such a high growth-oriented venture should be built so that it is easily scalable, what is needed in order for such a model to work, and in which ways companies from outside India could be involved in creating the ecosystem.

One of the people working for this project is [Merie Joseph](#), whose cooperation with GVL began when she applied for another project at the University of Jyväskylä. In the job interview, it turned out that GVL was actually looking for a person who was Indian and had technical and managerial experience. Merie got the position and later met Jane Porter, Marko Seppä and Mari Suoranta; at first, Merie was hired for four months, and eventually until the end of 2011.

MERIE JOSEPH: "GVL is not isolated in an ivory tower away from people and reality."

In Merie's view, GVL is "the type of organization which is interested in making things happen and creating science out of that. GVL is a university that isn't isolated in an ivory tower away from people and reality." GVL combines research, business, and teaching aspects; this is close to Merie's heart, because her PhD deals with social entrepreneurship. A further thing close to her heart is the Health Kiosk project in India for which she is working. "The project is about solving big problems in India and is proceeding in the right direction," says Merie proudly. With GVL, Merie has the chance to be part of important projects, and to create a network on which to build her career further.

Merie says that "GVL is different from the other companies I have worked in, because GVL is much smaller, which in my opinion is a good thing. Even a young and not-so-experienced person's voice is heard." In Merie's view, also the people in GVL are different from Finnish people in general. "I have worked with many Finnish people, but only in GVL have I heard people joking, laughing and having good vibes in their actions," says Merie, laughing. She also feels that it has been a good education for her as a researcher to have experienced people like Christian Aspegren around her.

[Christian Aspegren](#) joined GVL in January 2009. With him comes not only passion but knowledge, networks and experience, which he offers for use. He had noticed that the assignments and start-ups he was taking part in were more and more global. "Even though I have constantly tried to learn more about internationalization," Christian says, "global know-how especially was an interest of mine."



In his view, companies should break away from their own starting points and see opportunities as global. Christian had also noticed that a great breach was taking place in global markets, “a breach similar to what happened in the 80’s in Finland and other countries as well, when several new theories, especially organizational theories, were born.” Boundaries are vanishing, certain companies are growing globally; the game field and its rules are changing all the time.

The companies that grow fast and are able to benefit from technological possibilities are in a position to force even big companies to change. “Those who understand this game best can put themselves into a position where they can be a part of growth and forward the change rather than being forced to adapt and be the underdog,” Christian points out. When it comes to Finland, he is excited: a small country has a chance to thrive, when it knows how to be the captain and take advantage of the resources available and put them into suitable use.

Christian and Marko Seppä discussed this already in 2008, when they met for the first time; the discussion was what triggered co-operation. Christian feels that in addition to the need to grow globally, there was, and is, a growing need for competencies. “We live in a competence-society,” says Christian, “the meaning of academia is growing and therefore, academic experts and visionary thinkers are needed.”



Academia, business and the rest of society should in Christian's view come closer together and look for places for interaction. Almost frustrated, he says, “it is ridiculous that even today a line is drawn between academics and practitioners in top academic literature and research; in reality the two don't exclude but complete each other.”

Christian says we are living in a time where we should grow and develop faster and faster; as individuals, teams and companies, there is no time to do things at a traditional, slower pace. There are tools that allow processes to be faster and enable a different kind of pacing. “People should have two working paces: first we have the effective pace, then it is time for rest and creativity, which is again followed by the effective pace,” he says. “This isn't often the situation, however; people push their limits all the time, and this leads to burnout and for companies to go under.”

CHRISTIAN ASPEGREN: “Students can gain from my experience, and I, in return, can gain from the students as well.”

Students are important in and for GVL. “We would like them to realize their own capabilities and how to use them as soon as possible,” says Christian. When this happens, students are giving something to GVL as well. “Students have given something for me too. I have had to be humble when coming here even though I'm an old star,” he laughs, “with loads of experience and networks. I wanted to be easy to approach and give my experience to the students and let them initiate co-operation.” In his opinion, it is absolutely crazy to let people like him retire

without taking advantage of the tacit knowledge and networks they have. This is one reason why Christian is a part of GVL today, as PhD candidate and Project Director.

Innovations fascinate Christian; he has done a lot of research on them and had central roles when innovations have been developed further. He raises an important question: “Why is it so difficult for start-up companies to benefit from innovations?” This is one question that he and other researchers are looking to answer at GVL. In start-up companies, resources are few and going forward becomes an obstacle; “in a situation like this, creative paths have to be found.”

Frustrated, Christian feels it is crazy for decision makers to hope for us to cope in the huge innovation boom happening in the world right now. The problem is not in creating innovations per se, but rather how to benefit from them and getting some money in. He says: “Global markets and commercialization processes are not yet ready to tackle these issues, but in GVL we are hoping and determined to find answers.”

CHRISTIAN ASPEGREN: “We in GVL have the courage to make mistakes together and do something where there is the risk of failure. But we learn from our mistakes and sometimes, they are really valuable for us.”

GVL already has answers to what should be done with companies in their early stages. In Christian's words: “We can bring the companies intuition, vision and widen their spectrum. We help to pace their growth in their early stages and create potent entrepreneurs avoiding entrepreneurial impotence.” Christian invented the phrase entrepreneurial impotence because, as he says with a hint of a smile, “it describes best the situation that many companies face”. For that GVL can offer help. help, together with partners who share a responsible global mindset. Since the early days, Christian points, GVL has been inspired by the concept and achievements of Team Academy.

An interesting viewpoint, comparison and frame of reference to GVL's methods in teaching, learning and working comes from [Johannes Par-tanen](#), the founder of the Jyväskylä-based Team Academy, a kind of independent educational ecosystem. Team Academy, or TA, is the Entrepreneurship Center of Excellence of the JAMK University of Applied Sciences. As the moniker suggests, the ethos of the school contains two central elements: entrepreneurship and teams.

Firstly, the focus on entrepreneurship is visible in that students, when beginning their studies at TA, start up and run their own cooperative businesses, and thus implement what they learn in a very much hands-on manner. Secondly, as one might guess from the name “Team Academy”, the team holds a central position. But why should the two – entrepreneurship and teams – be combined? In Johannes' words: “Team entrepreneurship or ‘teampreneurship’ is the new direction of growth venture creation.”

JOHANNES PARTANEN: “Don't just talk – instead, do first and show that your idea works, and only after that, explain what you have done, saying, ‘hey, come and take a look!’”

The importance of the team comes to fore in several ways. For instance, TA has no teachers as such; instead, TA has team coaches who come from different walks of life. However, they are not coaches in the sports sense. Johannes says that the creation or birth of a true and functioning team is a long and, in great part, an emotional process. Therefore, the emotional side in team coaching requires special knowledge. Team coaches need not only manage one-to-one communication, but also understand and handle group dynamics, the group as a whole.

In Johannes's view, the current academic world with its course structures does not support the creation and building up of team working skills, which are needed in working life, because there are so few real-life situations to test and learn them as part of a team. Therefore, Johannes thinks it is necessary to get rid of the old structures that nowadays are more of an impediment to learning.

Instead, the focus should be on the learning process, or process learning. Rigid structures, such as a clearly defined curriculum, determine beforehand what is to be taught, done and learnt, but nowadays the needs and requirements of real working life change so fast that the curricula do not correspond to them anymore.

Johannes believes that the creation of new businesses has to be the original reason and purpose for setting up a framework like GVL or TA, otherwise it won't work. Team Academy has practical knowledge on how to build a platform that takes learning as its focal point, where “learning by doing” and dialogue are of central importance. Learning by doing is quite self-explanatory, but dialogue as a learning method might need some clarification: at TA, learning takes place in a dialogue with other team members, in a situation where everyone is sitting face-to-face in a circle. This relates back to the centrality of the team: everyone is equal, and everyone can learn from anyone.

Johannes feels that GVL is a radical brand, just like Team Academy: knowledge of the brand spreads by word of mouth, instead of via traditional marketing, to raise awareness. There are several other similarities between TA and GVL, and both could benefit and learn from the other. In fact, Johannes would like to see more cooperation also between the students of these two: who knows what they might be capable of together, if strong academic knowledge and know-how was combined with enthusiastic co-op entrepreneurs?

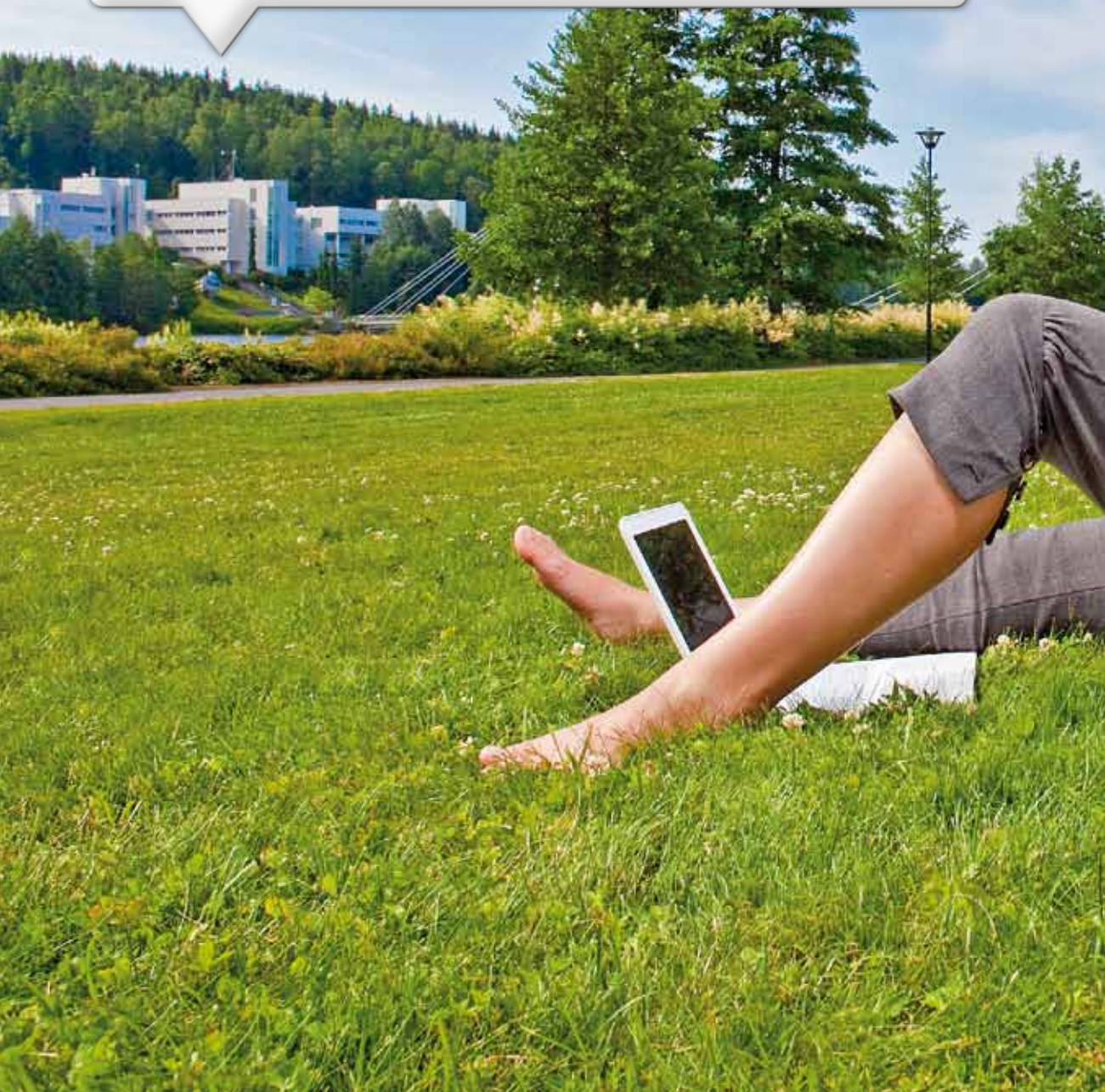
JOHANNES PARTANEN: "Competence is not something one has from the start; it comes only after one has done something."

Academic knowledge, entrepreneurship, enthusiasm for making a change – these words describe the central themes in what GVL is doing. And let's not forget about the global point of view: Jane Porter and Merie Joseph have brought international perspectives with them. Moreover, Professor Dhruves Biswas from the partner university IIT Kharagpur in India is a frequent visitor in Finland and co-creator in a global venture. The flow also goes to the other direction, away from Jyväskylä; Assistant Professor Mari Suoranta, has worked as visiting scholar at the partner university UC Berkeley twice, for 5 months in 2008 and again from November 2010 until August 2011.

GVL does not want to do research for the sake of research, but tries to find creative paths and new solutions to problems currently "out there" in the business arena, whether local or global. Their credo, in the words of Marko Seppä, is that they want to foster change by producing champions of business creation for problems worth solving, through a Live Case method. The stories in the next chapter tell how.

PART TWO!

Creating growth ventures and
company cooperation





Creating growth ventures and company cooperation

Companies are an important factor in the GVL triangle. Company cooperation finds its expression in several ways: in offering the firm an outsider point of view into their business, ideas for further development, and research data to back these up. A key term is co-creation: with the help of the Live Case method, the company, researchers and GVL students work together in discovering new perspectives.

Sami Kettunen, co-founder and CEO of the Jyväskylä-based company Samcom, has only positive things to say about cooperation with GVL. Samcom, creating custom-built high-end data system solutions for various Finnish companies, has benefited from the GVL method of allowing students with different backgrounds to work at live cases.

In addition to useful and valuable results, delivered by student groups working on various cases related to Samcom, the company also found new employees when students applied for a job at Samcom after Sami's guest lecture at the university. Moreover, thanks to this cooperation, Samcom has been able to offer the students and GVL the chance to look at and learn from Samcom's experience of the business world and its workings – a win-win situation for both GVL and Samcom.

SAMI KETTUNEN: "There are benefits to be gained in student cooperation."

Sami emphasizes that multidisciplinary is "The Thing" that is good about working with GVL, and that it should be cherished. The project teams working on Samcom's live cases were highly heterogeneous, ranging from sports and communications students to business majors. Sami deems this "cross-pollination of ideas" very valuable, as the students had highly different viewpoints of the cases and of Samcom's world.

Having someone outside the company evaluate Samcom's sales tactics, story and visibility has been exciting. The results and feedback were not only useful, but also reduced the risk of the company becoming too self-complacent. For instance, Sami says that feedback and ideas concerning Samcom's website were taken into account in redesigning the company's online presence.

On one occasion, Samcom and students at GVL worked together on a case commissioned by a Samcom client who wanted to know how to use social media in their business. Instead of having Samcom employees work on the case, the company “outsourced” it to GVL; in this way Samcom got an external professional view on the topic, and also offered an interesting project to the university.

In Sami's view, the best thing about this project was that the students doing the analysis use social media on a daily basis, and could therefore delve deeper into the topic. In other words, there were many good reasons for having a student group work on the case, and, all in all, Sami feels it was a “really excellent” project.

One of Sami's best memories about GVL cooperation comes from a course where students analyzed Samcom's marketing and sales strategies. As several heterogeneous teams worked on the same topic, they had very different viewpoints and arrived at different conclusions. This, Sami says, was most valuable to Samcom. Also, the final feedback session made an impression: even the evaluation panel, where in addition to Sami there was, among others, a university professor in marketing, came up with good ideas on how the company could be developed.

SAMI KETTUNEN: “Companies have a lot to gain from GVL.”

Sami thinks that companies deciding to partner with GVL can benefit in several ways: they can find new employees, receive good, tight reports of commissioned cases, and get fresh, multidisciplinary perspectives on their own business. A multicultural group such as GVL students can make comments from a slightly different point of view, which Sami considers the greatest strength of GVL. Companies in consumer business could benefit from this kind of cooperation the most, as the b2b world is typically more distant and inaccessible to students. There are also separate paths for growth-oriented companies that can gain a lot of ideas from GVL.

Furthermore, Sami mentions the great importance of highly motivated and skilful people working at GVL, who have brought additional information and flavor to the cooperation between Samcom and GVL. “The GVL team has a real interest and passion to do this job, which shines through in everything they do,” Sami says. However, he feels that GVL should never stop marketing themselves in order to attract new companies to work with. Nevertheless, word of mouth has already proven to be fruitful: when Sami has mentioned Samcom's co-operation and his positive experience with GVL to his colleagues, some of them have actually grasped the opportunity to be a part of the unique work done at GVL.



The list of companies who have in one way or another cooperated with GVL is long. One of them is Dazzle, a future-oriented company focusing on coaching, facilitating and consulting, aiming to create sustainable success for their clients. Dazzle believes that the most successful companies and organizations in the future will be those based on the win-win-win principle. In win-win-win, positive interaction between individuals, organizations, society and the environment creates sustainable success for all parties. Dazzle searches for novel thinking and co-designs next practices in leadership, collaboration, strategy, business models & innovation.

Aki Koivistoinen, Director of Business Evolution at Dazzle, values working with people who have passion, positive energy, and a certain creative madness for making things happen. Luckily, he has had the chance to work with such people on many different occasions during the course of his life and in his current job at Dazzle – also in working with GVL, of which he first heard from Christian Aspegren in late fall 2009. It soon became clear that both Dazzle and GVL wanted to make the world a better place and, while doing it, create new operations models, and build sustainable success with an innovative and holistic approach.

The first encounter led up to a series of meetings between Dazzle and GVL during 2010 and 2011. In the first of these meetings, the Indian Health Kiosk concept already described in the previous chapter was presented to Dazzle by the venture's founding father, Professor Dhruves Biswas. Eventually the Health Kiosk venture and its development became a core area of cooperation between Dazzle and GVL – with very tangible results.

For instance, Dazzle decided to advance the venture by enabling the opening of one new Health Kiosk near IIT Kharagpur in India. Dazzle has also been involved in further developing the “GVL – Problems worth solving” concept. Aki's passions lie in business model design, foresight & strategy work, and innovation; as we can see, these go well together with the needs of the Health Kiosk project.

The cooperation between Dazzle and GVL concerning the Health Kiosk venture has in Aki's view been “fruitful and important work for advancing an excellent cause”. Dazzle got the opportunity to contribute to “a real win-win-win venture”, and had rewarding discussions on the challenges and possibilities of the Health Kiosk concept. Dazzle has also received positive feedback and visibility by helping set up of the 16th Health Kiosk.

”The excitement and passion of the GVL team towards their work really shows,” says Aki. He witnessed it in action at a meeting with Professor Dhruves Biswas and Christian Aspegren concerning the Health Kiosk. The two proudly presented the venture's latest developments, saying that the goals were raised higher, and that they wanted to set up 1,000 kiosks instead of 100. This, in Aki's view, was a good example of the courage to grow, learning by doing, involving networks into the venture's own actions and valuing openness – values which Dazzle shares with GVL.

“Companies that decide to support GVL in promoting the Health Kiosk venture can gain a good reputation by being part of creating a concept of better health care in India,” Aki says. He also feels that by developing the GVL concept further, ventures such as Health Kiosk can yield good profits to involved parties, for instance through new BoP-models (Base of the Pyramid). Transparent actions and the chance at long-term profits enable the project's scalability, which in turn is a requirement for reaching the venture's intended impact.

AKI KOIVISTOINEN: "GVL is a forerunner in creating new glocal operations models."

In Aki's words, "GVL is a collective and versatile resource focusing its energy on important targets both globally and locally, and the ventures set up by GVL solve problems and make good things happen. What GVL does is more than charity – it's about creating system intelligent and sustainable ways of acting by combining cross-scientific, cross-industrial, and cross-cultural views. Moreover, it's about enabling the creation of new kinds of businesses, by taking people into account and by respecting the local culture."

GVL wants to offer resources, knowledge and facilities for companies – ranging from one-man start-ups to established enterprises – to enable their development and growth. For this reason, GVL has joined with companies like Dazzle that have a passion to enable sustainable success for individuals, organizations and businesses, society and the environment. In addition, GVL has partnered with organizations that can offer special know-how in areas relevant to business creation and growth. One of GVL's partners is PwC – although, in fact, cooperation between GVL and PwC actually began before GVL as an entity even existed, as PwC has been a cooperation partner in seminars already for some 10 years with GVL's Tampere-based "predecessor" eBRC.

Janne Rajalahti, Partner and Authorized Public Accountant at PwC, has worked with GVL from the get-go. Initially, Janne's role in the cooperation between GVL and PwC was to be a kind of "point of contact". In addition to Janne, there are several other people at PwC actively involved in working with fast-growing companies, offering accounting, taxation and various other consultation services. Therefore, gradually, other members of the PwC team have been participating in tighter cooperation with GVL, thus broadening the contacts between PwC and GVL.

For PwC, the cooperation with GVL has been interesting and rewarding, Janne says, as it has given them the chance to meet motivated new entrepreneurs, growth entrepreneurs and researchers. An interesting dialogue on the everyday life of an entrepreneur, seen from a suitable academic perspective, has also broadened the mindset at PwC. Janne believes that this partnership has resulted in a widened knowledge and awareness about everyday matters concerning business and growth venturing among entrepreneurs they have worked with.





New and expanding companies are a challenging and interesting field for PwC, offering them the opportunity to support and guide new entrepreneurs and young entrepreneurs-to-be. For this reason, PwC has participated in various “sparring events” organized by GVL, such as Runway to Growth. Janne particularly mentions the R2G events as exceptionally good hands-on interaction situations with real enterprises, where “we can work on real and concrete issues.”

Janne is not the only one with good experience of the R2G events. The benefits are tangible also to the companies and entrepreneurs on the other side of the table, as “cases to be developed”. An exceptionally fruitful example of this comes from [Niko Järvinen](#), an entrepreneur and also a student in GVL (who, on a side note, says that his studies with GVL have been mind-blowing!). Niko took part in R2G through his own company; that his company was chosen to attend was an honor to him, Niko says, because all the other companies were really big.



“I can say that that day really blew my mind away,” Niko says. “At best, the situation was that five people were sitting across the table and each of them was firing questions at me, questions which I would have never thought of as a new entrepreneur.” During the day, as Niko recollects, he learned a huge amount of new things, perhaps more than he had learned in all his university courses put together. “I cannot quite put my finger on it, but if six different specialist companies use 45 minutes on me and my company, words cannot describe how much I can learn from them,” says Niko.

As a student and a growth-oriented entrepreneur, Niko has been very satisfied with what he has gained from GVL. He values the moral support and the business creation tools GVL can offer. Niko feels that he hasn't had to give up the role of entrepreneur as a student or vice versa; on the contrary, these two roles complement each other: “In my own companies, I can implement everything in practice straight away – the knowledge and support I have received. GVL makes this possible.”

PART THREE!

Thinking outside the box creates new ways of teaching and new professionals





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Thinking outside the box creates new ways of teaching and new professionals

In addition to creating and enabling the growth of new ventures, GVL also wants to create new kinds of young professionals who see the world from a slightly different perspective. Therefore, GVL has offered two minor subjects, Technology Business and Service Business, for students who have a background in something other than economics. These study programmes have managed to change the mindset of many, and after attending the studies, some students even say that they want to change the world. Pretty big words, but after reading the following testimonials you'll believe that GVL is up to something good!

Let's begin by hearing what **Aki Soudunsaari**, a former GVL student and co-founder of Pedasport, has to say on this. Aki chose to minor in GVL studies because a friend of his said they were excellent and emphasized a new way of thinking. "This came close to my own interests in entrepreneurship and doing things in my own way," says Aki. The course palette in general was very interesting to him and his openness towards new things led him to take almost every course available!

Live cases were an excellent way of doing courses: "With them I had the chance to really DO things and not just read about them in books," Aki says. As a whole, for Aki, his studies in and later cooperation with GVL were inspiring and gave the chance to do things with a purpose. In Aki's view, things were not done because they needed to be done but because they really were worth doing.

In the GVL studies, Aki also noticed differences in teaching and learning compared to his other studies at the university. In his opinion, GVL tries to bring academic studying and everyday actions together by combining theory and live cases. In working life, theory and science have their role, but cannot be the main point, Aki says. For these reasons, he feels that the way in which things were applied in practice was in a league of its own compared to other faculties.

When it comes to his own personal development, Aki says it to be enormous, especially in the field of economics. He describes a totally new world opening up for him during the studies and, perhaps surprisingly, found qualities in himself suitable for the world of business. "I have a 'Let's do it' attitude, good people skills and an understanding about how teams work", Aki says. He found himself to be a suitable person for GVL and his determination and speaking skills earned him a job in the team!

How this really happened... This is how Aki himself puts it: "After a few discussions with Leni Kuivaniemi and Marko Seppä, it became clear that it would be possible to integrate my postgraduate studies and doctorate thesis with GVL. The GVL team was lacking certain pedagogical knowledge that I had. I brought forward my own thoughts about that and things developed, one meeting after another, into the current situation which is me being a project researcher at GVL."

Aki is one example of how students can make the most of their newly gained skills and knowledge and prove themselves capable of rising to new challenges – whether taking on a new project or applying for a job. Moreover, he is definitely not the only student who has experienced and acknowledged the benefits of the courses and studying methods at GVL. On the contrary, a great many feel that they have gained a lot and learned essential new skills that will be useful in life outside university.

When asked what kinds of skills or competences the courses have provided or developed, students mention for instance the following set: skills in project management and planning, team work and cooperation skills, ability to tolerate pressure and to work independently, understanding and appreciating different viewpoints. All these can be described as improving competences that are required in the working life.

Of course, it is possible to acquire skills in the above-mentioned areas in other ways and at other courses at the university. However, what makes the GVL courses special is their “learning by doing” attitude, brought forward with the method of working with Live Cases: working on actual cases, real issues, straight from business life. For many students, this is the first, and sometimes a very eye-opening, opportunity to directly apply their theoretical knowledge into practice in a hands-on, concrete way.

This concretion – just like Aki described it above – is something that the students at GVL value highly. Why? Simply because it bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge gained at the university and the reality and requirements of working life. Students feel that the courses have given them concrete skills and models for solving challenges they might face in working life. In short, they have learnt how to turn their knowledge into actions.

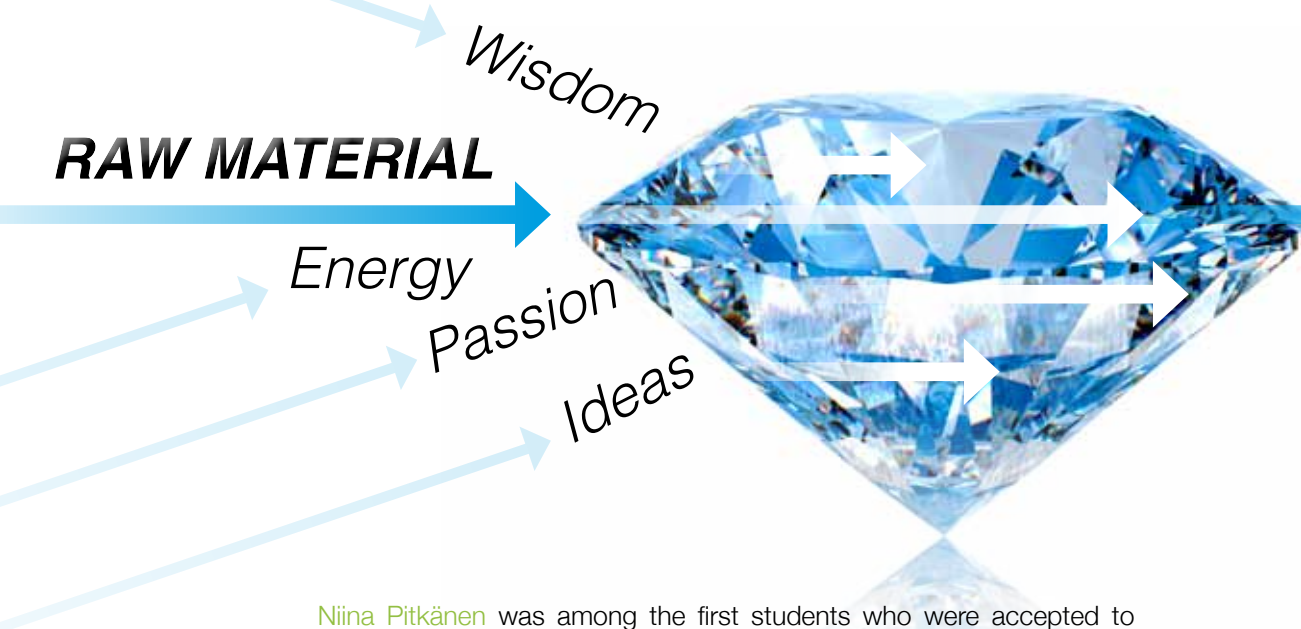
How to apply the know-how of one's major subject in creative businesses; learning to understand the various mechanisms and aspects of the business world; appreciating the importance of networks; discovering one's own entrepreneurial spirit... These are just some areas where GVL students, who come from highly diverse backgrounds, have discovered new ways of thinking and acting. In other words, the positive effects are not limited to improving skills and competences, but can in fact really open the student's eyes to a completely new way of looking at the world.

Naturally, a new way of seeing, doing and thinking is also a personal challenge. Further challenges come in the form of multidisciplinary teams and the “messiness” of working with real-life cases: unwanted surprises or changes come along, what needs to be done may not be clear from the get-go, everything may seem chaotic – things do not always go smoothly.

However, things don't always go smoothly in working life either, and the GVL courses are a useful testing ground for the future. In the words of one student, the studies offer “the chance to grow as a person”, and as we know, one can't make an omelet without breaking the eggs...

NIINA PITKÄNEN: "Studies with GVL are a fun way to get introduced to business. It has been the most important minor subject for me and has also widened my perspective and reinforced my know-how. I recommend this kind of learning to everyone!"





Niina Pitkänen was among the first students who were accepted to study service business at GVL during the academic year 2008–2009. Majoring in speech communication, she thought that a deeper understanding of business would both be interesting and smooth her way when applying for a job. She expected to gain an overall understanding of business and the processes in it; also marketing and leadership were of great interest to her.

Two years after finishing her studies, Niina has only fond memories of that time. Her expectations were met: she had the opportunity to choose courses based on her interests and even though (and understandably so) it was not possible to gain a thorough knowledge of business in only one year, she felt that the secrets of business opened up to her sufficiently. Niina focused particularly on marketing, as it was a suitable combination with her major, and was excited over working on live cases commissioned by companies that really interested her professionally.

The studies enabled her to perceive business processes as a whole, which is useful in her current job. Without the studies, Niina says, her manner of examining companies' way of doing business would be more limited, but now she is able to better comment on things such as marketing, management or entrepreneurship. Also her view of her own skills and knowledge evolved during the studies: Niina feels she got a more comprehensive picture of her own know-how and was therefore better prepared for working life.

NIINA PITKÄNEN: "It is a good thing to be involved with real-life topics at the university, in addition to building up theoretical knowledge."

GREAT ENABLERS

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 Enterprises 

 Ecosystems 

Preparing better for working life happened in different ways. For instance, one particular comment from a live case feedback session stuck in Niina's mind: it was a course where all student groups worked on a task commissioned by the Jyväskylä-based IT company Samcom. Incidentally, this is the same course that Samcom's CEO Sami Kettunen mentioned earlier in this book as one of his best memories with GVL.

In the feedback session of this course, Niina remembers how Sami commented on the best case report by saying that it was “**concise and compact**”. For Niina, these words were a useful reminder of how some things are valued differently in the business world compared to the university: a clear focus and to-the-point comments may be more valuable than lengthy and explorative reports.

The method of learning and working in groups, and with real live cases, suited Niina well, and it's something she warmly recommends for other faculties as well. Moreover, working in a multidisciplinary group where members are of different ages and have different motives for taking the courses was a useful learning experience – also good preparation for life outside university.

NIINA PITKÄNEN: “It would do everyone good to see the world from several different perspectives.”

In fact, Agora Center, where Niina currently works, is hoping to co-operate with other faculties in the University of Jyväskylä and introduce project-based courses open for all students. According to Niina, it would be a good thing to shake up the normal routines of university studies and teaching, because they bear no resemblance to real working life.


A further student statement comes from **Janne Kekäläinen**, a Physics major. Janne's journey with GVL studies began when he received an email telling about the studies. He was instantly sold on the idea and decided to apply. Entrepreneurship has been Janne's interest already before these studies, and he expected to gain more knowledge and skills on business in general and how to go about it. "Expectations have really been fulfilled," says Janne, "my own thoughts and ideas got wind below their wings and I'm ready to carry them out. Last year revolutionized the way I look at the world."

When asked about differences between other and GVL studies, Janne describes them readily. In his view, GVL studies are practical; students have an opportunity to work with real cases and problems coming from real companies. "There are no invented situations; this together with the hands on-experience have probably been the best thing. Something I didn't get from other studies," says Janne.

These studies have brought about some concrete changes; Janne feels that his knowledge and skills in business have developed, and what has changed as well is his view of the business world. Earlier, Janne saw economic sciences, business in general and entrepreneurship as something cold, hard and capitalistic. During his studies he realized that by doing business and being an entrepreneur one can really make a difference in the world. Waxing philosophical, Janne says that "the world can be changed either by demonstrating outside City Hall or by doing something tangible, and I chose the latter course."

Janne feels that his GVL studies will help him in the future. He believes that knowledge about economics and business is needed almost everywhere, whether in the academic or corporate world. "It doesn't matter where you work, you still have to understand how the world works." The studies have also pushed his ambition to be something more than a basic white-collar worker. Janne has always been ambitious but without these studies, he says, he would have ended up being just another low-level R&D worker in some technology company.

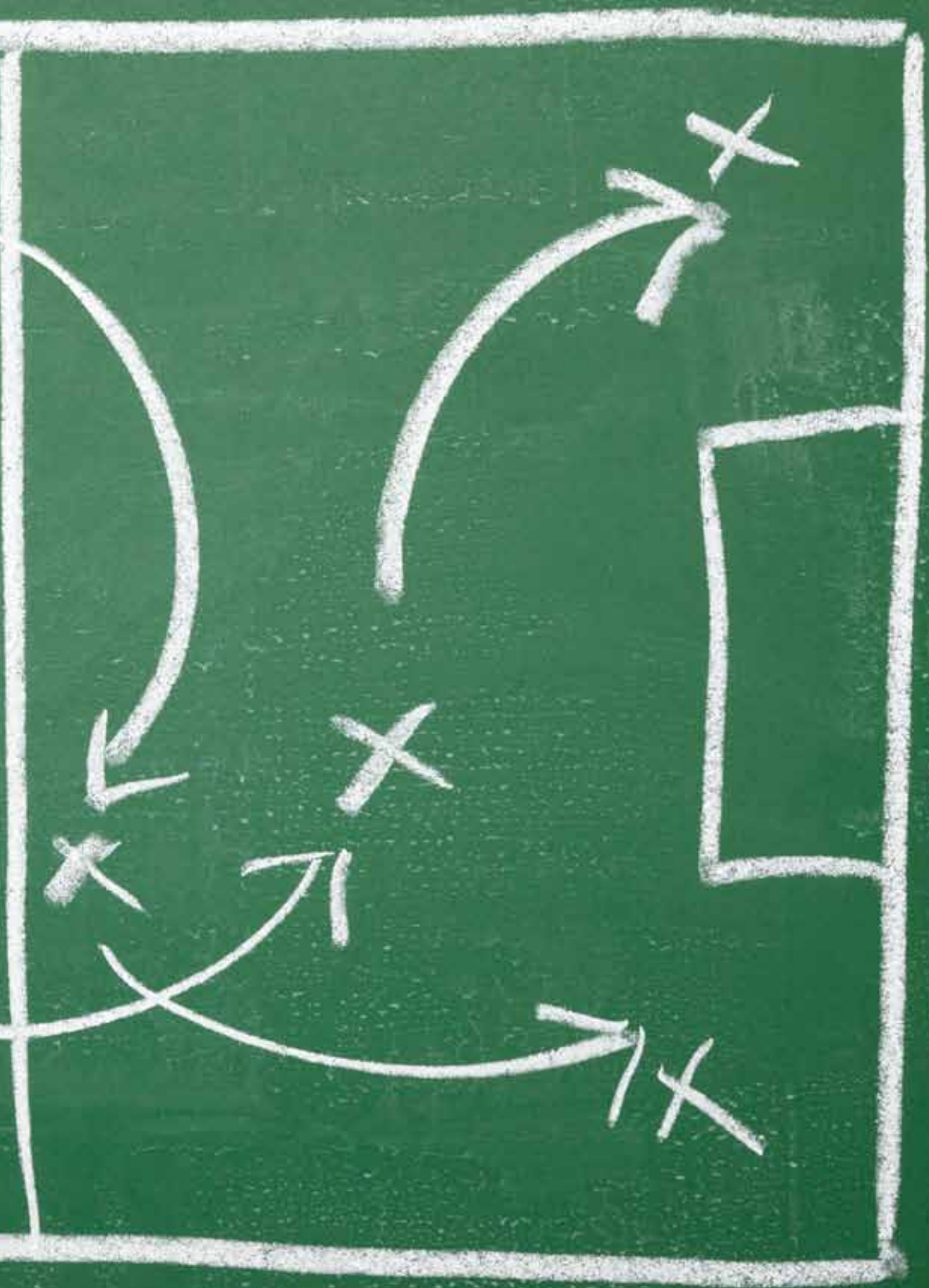
Combining physics and business studies, Janne is confident when looking for work. "Look at any job advertisements; they are looking for either experts in technology or business. I have expertise in both of them; that should do it!" His confidence was not unfounded: Janne was recently employed and is heading for India for 6 months.

A young woman with short blonde hair, wearing a black tank top and grey pants, is walking on a modern university hallway. She is looking upwards and to the left. In the background, other students are walking, and the architecture features large glass windows and white structural elements.

When asked of the overall use and importance of their studies with GVL, several students answer that it has been the most useful minor subject they have taken at the university, especially in terms of their professional development. Student feedback, such as “it has been a significant signpost towards my future career”, “I can't even imagine how much I would've missed, had I not applied for the program”, “It changed my life”, or “GVL studies turned me into a future entrepreneur,” does not leave much room for doubt. A choice few even explicitly state that they want to become growth entrepreneurs! In one way or another, the studies have made a lasting impression on, or, as we have seen in the stories above, even changed the course of life of several students and future professionals.

PART FOUR!
Let the game begin







Let's take a final look at what GVL wants to be in the future. Earlier in this book, Christian Aspegren talked about ecosystems and how GVL wants to create new kinds of ecosystems. The Health Kiosk project in India is a concrete example of creating an ecosystem in which Finnish companies can take part. "No one believed that such a project would ever succeed but it has done just that and will grow with several hundreds of kiosks this year," Christian says with pride. The aim is to create similar ecosystems in different fields, such as education.

Involvement with GVL has reinforced Christian's view on how to make success possible for several companies simultaneously. "The creation of the mechanisms for this to happen is so very central and crucial. For Finland, here lies a prominent global opportunity."

The creation of success does not happen overnight, but requires a certain kind of environment and particular tools. In Christian's view there are two factors that make this possible. The first are enabler companies, a term coined by Christian, which try to create growth for other companies and during the process grow as well. In Finland, there have been too few companies like these, Nokia being the only significant one, which has caused Finnish companies to look for help elsewhere in the world.

The second important factor are enabler mechanisms. It is Christian's mission in GVL to create enabler concepts, which allow companies to grow as fast as possible. “However, we in GVL are still impotent in this matter: we know how things should be done, but we don't yet have all the tools that we will have in the future,” Christian points out.

When there are enabler companies and enabler mechanisms in place, there is still a need for enabler persons. GVL is an experiment in creating these kinds of individuals: new kinds of “knowledgists”, equipped to co-create great global enterprises that help solve Big Problems.

Where is all this going then? Now is the 'proof of concept' phase for GVL, when documentation of its actions is gathered – this book being a good example. The wheel has already turned forward: new partners, such as Aalto University in Helsinki, are now committed to GVL. For the future, together with selected partners, GVL wants to transform into a strong operator in global markets and forward the development to which others have to adapt.

The Game is about to change. There is a need for people who are willing and able to join the Game and make the Rules. Both in academia and in the business world, it is necessary to find individuals who are ready to commit. From them, a new ecosystem, Global Faculty Partners (GFP), is in the making, one in which the right people are wanted as co-owners, doers, and players.

“We are trying to bring different universities, academics and sciences together into the same playground and create an ecosystem for education, science and the making of science,” says Christian passionately. “GVL has been the famous ‘someone’ who we needed to lead and show the way to others, and act as a routine-breaking force.”

Let the game begin!

The future GVL will be a new player in the global playground, one who sets the rules

Are you game?

The future GVL will be one of the global forces in business, education and research



Co-Creating Great Enablers

-The Global Venture Lab Exploration in Finland

In today's changing world of global markets and various Big Problems, such as inequality, or environmental and energy issues, there is a lot of talk about how we need new breakthrough ideas, new entrepreneurs, new experts and doers, new innovations, new jobs, and new players to succeed and to thrive. There are many who talk the talk, but how many actually walk the walk? **GVL does.**

GVL combines three areas - business, education and research - in a unique way that has boosted the development of emerging businesses, entrepreneurs, exciting ideas and experts, with tangible results.

This book maps out the story of GVL from the birth of the idea of a global network to create and enable international co-creation and growth venturing, to the current stage, where something new, something bigger is about to be born... The Game is about to change. **Are you ready to play?**

"What GVL does is more than charity – it's about creating system intelligent and sustainable ways of acting by combining cross-scientific, cross-industrial, and cross-cultural views. Moreover, it's about enabling the creation of new kinds of businesses, by taking people into account and by respecting the local culture."

(Aki Koivistoinen, Director in Business Evolution, Dazzle Oy)

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