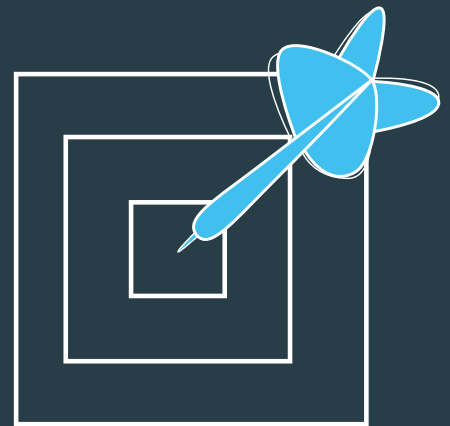
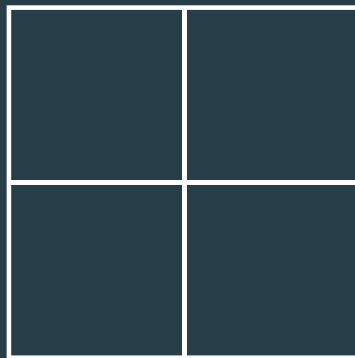


# WHERE TO PLAY

**3 STEPS FOR DISCOVERING  
YOUR MOST VALUABLE  
MARKET OPPORTUNITIES**



**Marc Gruber and Sharon Tal**

*'Enjoy discovering highly practical worksheets, maps and dartboards of tremendous interest to better identify, evaluate and strategise market opportunities.'*

Alex Osterwalder and Yves Pigneur, authors of the bestseller *Business Model Generation*

## What others say about this book

*'Designed to work seamlessly with our Business Model and Value Proposition Canvases, the Market Opportunity Navigator, proposed by Marc and Sharon, will help entrepreneurs and innovators to commercialise technologies. You will enjoy discovering highly practical worksheets, maps and dartboards of tremendous interest if you want to better identify, evaluate and strategise market opportunities. Let yourself be charmed by the toolkit and the case studies, along with the thoughts of Marc and Sharon.'*

Alex Osterwalder and Yves Pigneur, authors of the bestseller *Business Model Generation*

*'When two internationally-known experts in entrepreneurship write a "how to" book on market opportunities for entrepreneurs, it is bound to be a very valuable book indeed. Marc Gruber and Sharon Tal have created just the right book for first-time and experienced entrepreneurs. It contains both step-by-step plans and very valuable tips on identifying market opportunities – an invaluable complement to both the Lean Start-up Process and the Business Model Canvas!'*

Eric von Hippel, T. Wilson Professor of Innovation, MIT Sloan School of Management

*'From entrepreneurship thought leaders comes this innovative step-by-step guide to thinking through the market essentials of an opportunity. Rather than relying on generic examples or others' stories, the authors put the reader in the driver's seat by encouraging him or her to generate, evaluate and prepare to act on their own opportunities. I can't think of a more practically useful entrepreneurship book.'*

Dean A. Shepherd, Ray and Milann Siegfried Professor of Entrepreneurship, Mendoza College of Business, Notre Dame University

*'Gruber and Tal have crafted a visually exciting way for entrepreneurs to identify and analyse their opportunities, before they dive into execution. This book pairs nicely with the Business Model Canvas and Lean Startup. Best of all, it also tells you how to focus, and what NOT to do!'*

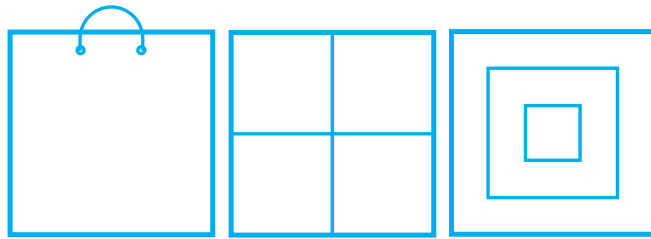
Henry Chesbrough, UC Berkeley Haas School of Business professor, and author of Open Innovation.

*'Using thoughtful research and compelling examples, Where to Play provides important guidance on how to balance focus and flexibility when launching a new venture. It builds on the Lean Startup model by providing meaningful insights on what markets to address first.'*

Tina Seelig, Professor of the Practice, Stanford School of Engineering

*'Where to Play attacks head-on one of the most difficult questions any aspiring entrepreneur must answer: "Which target market should I serve?" It's visual, easy-to-apply, and full of common-sense. If I were starting a business today, I wouldn't leave the starting blocks without it!'*

John Mullins, Professor, London Business School; best selling author, *The New Business Road Test* and *The Customer-Funded Business*



# WHERE TO PLAY



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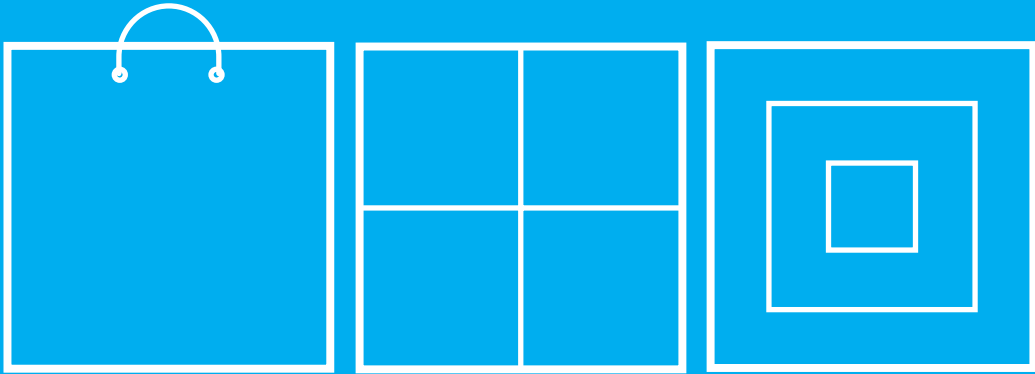
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# WHERE TO PLAY

3 steps for discovering your most valuable market opportunities

Marc Gruber and Sharon Tal



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## About the authors

*Where to Play* presents a new business tool with a solid underpinning called the Market Opportunity Navigator. It was developed based on over 15 years of rigorous research, combined with years of practical experience in consulting and teaching budding entrepreneurs. Hundreds of cases, from different industries and countries, were studied and analysed as we developed the underlying logic of the Market Opportunity Navigator. The result is a simple and appealing tool, which has the right amount of depth to help you make solid decisions.



**Marc** is a world-leading researcher in the domain of innovation, entrepreneurship and technology commercialisation. He is Vice President for Innovation at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (EPFL) in Lausanne, Switzerland, where he also heads the Chair of Entrepreneurship and Technology Commercialisation. He works as the Deputy Editor for the #1 empirical research journal in management, the *Academy of Management Journal*. He received multiple 'Thought Leader' awards for his breakthrough research. Marc is actively engaged in teaching, consulting and executive training programmes in Europe, the US and Asia, and regularly acts as a jury member in start-up and corporate entrepreneurship competitions across Europe.

**Sharon** is one of the co-founders and former executive director of the Entrepreneurship Centre at the Technion, Israel Institute of Technology, and a well-recognised lecturer on marketing for high-tech start-ups. She conducts seminars and workshops on a regular basis to students and start-ups, and serves as a mentor in many organisations that aim to help budding entrepreneurs. Sharon has vast experience in marketing and has served as a marketing manager for firms in several industries. She also has extensive experience in strategy consulting. Her PhD research investigated the market entry decisions of hundreds of start-ups and their consequences on firm performance and flexibility.

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## Figures

Part 3.3 from *Business Model Generation: A Handbook for Visionaries, Game Changers, and Challengers*. (Osterwalder, A., Pigneur, Y., In Clark, T. & Smith, A. 2010). Courtesy of Strategyzer (<https://strategyzer.com>); Part 3.3 from *Value Proposition Design: How to Create Products and Services Customers Want*, Hoboken Wiley (Osterwalder, A., Pigneur, Y., Bernarda, G. & Smith, A. 2015). Courtesy of Strategyzer (<https://strategyzer.com>).

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*'The entrepreneur's dilemma: focus, focus, focus – but on WHAT?'*

David Roth, Forbes Magazine

*'The hardest thing when you think about focusing. You think focusing is about saying "Yes". No. Focusing is about saying "No".'*

Steve Jobs, Apple co-founder

*'The thing about inventing is you have to be both stubborn and flexible, more or less simultaneously. The hard part is figuring out when to be which!'*

Jeff Bezos, Amazon founder

*'You have to be prepared to see the better idea when it arrives. And the hardest part of that is often discarding your old idea.'*

Paul Graham, Y Combinator co-founder

If you've ever felt these challenges,  
this book is for you . . .

*Where to Play* presents the Market Opportunity Navigator- a tool that will help you:



Discover promising market opportunities

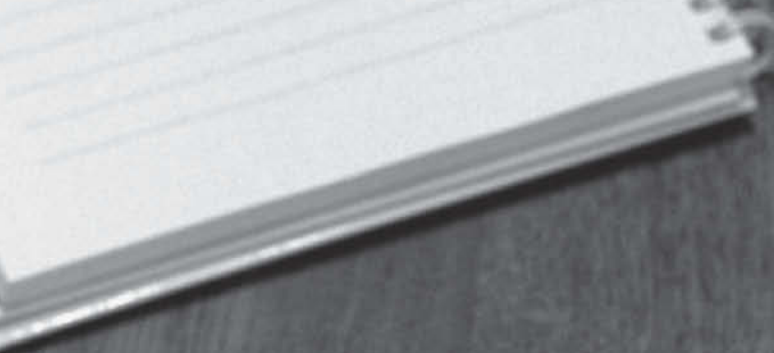


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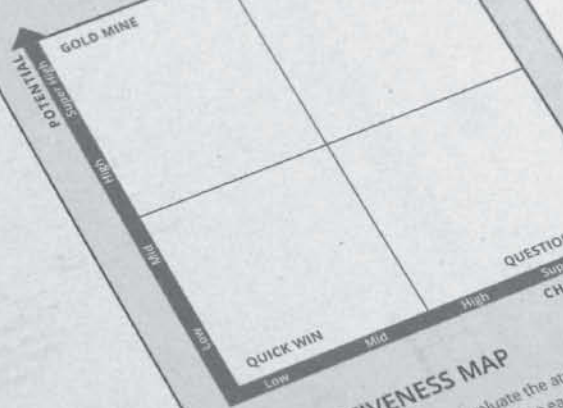


Set your strategic focus smartly

To make sure you're running in the right direction and remain agile, without losing your focus!



# THE MARKET OPPORTUNITY NAVIGATOR



## MARKET OPPORTUNITY SET

- 1 Use Worksheet 1 to identify potential market opportunities, and place them in the set.

## ATTRACTIVENESS MAP

- 2 Use Worksheet 2 to evaluate the attractiveness of each market opportunity, and place each opportunity in the map.

Every combination of application + customer = market opportunity



## Overview

- 1.1 Are you running in the right direction?
- 1.2 The Market Opportunity Navigator in a nutshell

## 1.1 Are you running in the right direction?

---

### **Commercialising innovative ideas is a constant run.**

It requires immense efforts, as you attempt to move forward and make progress on your way . . . while facing one hurdle after the other. And it's not just simply running . . . in fact, entrepreneurs and innovators are trained to run fast. Time can be one of your greatest enemies when new products or services are waiting to be adopted, and speed is seen as critical to successful innovation.

Yet, running, and even running fast, may simply be useless if you are not running in the right direction! If you are not pursuing a valuable market opportunity, or not playing in the right field, you are wasting your time, energy and resources . . . and those of others, too!

Finding the right direction, however, is not obvious at all. Your unique resources and abilities can address different needs, for different sets of customers, thereby creating several potential market opportunities for your venture – or a set of possible paths in your entrepreneurial race!

So before you run fast, make sure you are running in the right direction, because . . .

### **Different paths lead to different results**

Market opportunities differ in their value creation potential and thus in your ability to generate sales and become successful.

### **Your market choice imprints your venture**

Your market choice will shape many aspects of your emerging venture. It will not be easy to un-do, especially when significant investments are required.





## Have you been asking yourself . . .

- How can I identify blockbuster opportunities?
- Did I miss out on any?
- How do I know what's the most valuable option if there is so much uncertainty out there?
- How can I let go of seemingly promising opportunities?
- Should I pursue several opportunities in parallel?

**The Market Opportunity Navigator will support your market choice and help you to systematically uncover the most valuable market opportunities.**

**In short: it will help you to make sure that you are running in the right direction.**



## Are you locking yourself into one direction?

Once you have chosen your direction, you also need to make sure that you can remain agile, without slowing your pace. Your efforts, your resources, your attention – they should all be focused on advancing your chosen path, but at the same time you need to develop your capabilities in a way that would allow you to redirect your route.

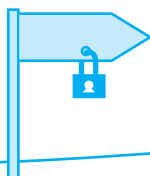
That is because unforeseeable things may happen: despite your best, diligent efforts in choosing the most promising path, you may reach a startling dead-end and will need to pivot; you may also uncover a new, more attractive opportunity and consider its potential; or, down the road you may simply want to exploit your next growth options in the most efficient and effective manner. In short: new junctions, which are currently unforeseeable, may appear along your way, and you must make sure that you make the most out of them.

So, what does it mean to remain agile while running in your chosen direction? It means that you understand your options and keep some of them open now – so that you avoid locking yourself out of other interesting directions in the future.

When you consciously keep selected options open, you can, for example, create a more modularised technology, cast a wider intellectual property (IP) net or even pick a brand name that would lend itself to redirection. In short, it would help you to develop your resources and capabilities in a way that would allow for greater flexibility down the road.

Especially for start-ups, being able to focus while remaining agile is crucial. If you are not open to alternative paths while concentrating your available resources, and can't handle change or adaptation efficiently, you may simply lose the race . . .

**|** *The innovator's challenge: focus and be agile.*





## Have you been asking yourself . . .

- If market choice is so important how can I hedge my bets?
- How can I focus sharply yet stay flexible at the same time?
- What shall I do with new information that cracks my confidence in our chosen path?
- How can I deal with the next junction in our road?

The Market Opportunity Navigator will help you to strategise your opportunities and decide which options you should keep open as backups or for additional growth, so that you can stay both focused and agile at the same time.

## Three steps to support your market opportunity choice

The book will take you through three steps that are necessary for designing your market opportunity strategy and choosing where to play:



### I. Search broadly

#### **Which market opportunities exist for us?**

It is important to understand your terrain and uncover potential paths before you start running. Step 1 will guide you on how to search systematically and broadly for market opportunities in order to create a varied set of options.



### II. Assess deeply

#### **What are the most attractive market opportunities for us?**

Next, it is essential to assess your options and understand their pros and cons. Step 2 will guide you on how to evaluate opportunities, so that you can estimate and compare their attractiveness in an unbiased manner.



### III. Strategise smartly

#### **What market opportunities should we focus on?**

This is where choosing smartly comes in: it's not only about focusing on the most promising option, but also about remaining agile. Step 3 will guide you on how to build your Agile Focus Strategy, so that you can mitigate your risks and increase the value you can create – with minimum effort!

**Overall, this book will take you by the hand as you progress from:**



## Manage your commercialisation effort in the face of uncertainty

The Agile Focus Strategy clearly defines the market opportunities that you will pursue now, and the opportunities that you will keep open as Backup or Growth Options, so that you can manage your start-up with foresight and agility, while facing uncertainty.

This smart portfolio will be essential for running in the right direction and for remaining agile. Eventually, it will have significant implications on how you build and design your firm.

So before you . . .

- Develop your technology
  - File your patents
  - Recruit new employees
  - Engage your stakeholders
  - Nurture your company culture
  - Pick a brand name
  - Design your marketing materials
- 
- Make sure to apply the Market Opportunity Navigator and design your Agile Focus Strategy!

