

**Physical, Mental and Social Health of Young Entrepreneurs in Switzerland -  
An exploratory study of how healthy young entrepreneurs in Switzerland feel,  
and how healthy they really are**

DISSERTATION

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## **Abstract**

Little is known about the physiological, emotional as well as social effects of owning a business (Boyd & Gumpert, 1983). In order to explore the holistic health of young Swiss entrepreneurs, this work contributes to the fields of entrepreneurship, occupational health and organizational behavior using an innovative multi-method, multiple case study approach.

In the integrative framework introduced in this study, entrepreneurship represents a causal condition. Entrepreneurship-specific impacts on health include business type, business stage, profitability as well as the individual's previous work or entrepreneurial experience. The entrepreneur's health needs to be put in context: At an individual level, age and gender, personal health awareness, health history as well as lifestyle choices affect health. At a social level, social support, the health-awareness of the environment together with other social influences contribute to health. All these impacts lead to effects on the entrepreneur's health: If the effects are positive, they may directly reflect back to the entrepreneur's health. If the effects are negative, they will require the individual to employ corresponding interaction/coping strategies, which then lead to consequences that will again contribute to the entrepreneur's health. Which strategies an individual decides to choose is again determined by the individual as well as the social context.

## Abstract

Wenig ist bekannt über die soziologischen, emotionalen sowie sozialen Effekte auf das Unternehmer-Dasein (Boyd & Gumpert, 1983). Diese Dissertation erforscht die holistische Gesundheit von Jungunternehmern in der Schweiz und leistet damit einen entscheidenden Beitrag in den Bereichen Unternehmertum, betriebliche Gesundheitsförderung sowie Organisationslehre mittels einem multi-methodischen Forschungsdesign basierend auf acht Fallstudien.

Im integrativen Modell, welches in dieser Studie vorgestellt wird, repräsentiert Unternehmertum eine kausale Bedingung. Zu den Unternehmer-spezifischen Auswirkungen auf die Gesundheit zählen die Art des Unternehmens, die Entwicklungsphase, Rentabilität sowie die individuelle unternehmerische sowie arbeitstechnische Erfahrung. Die Gesundheit des Unternehmers muss im Kontext betrachtet werden: Auf einer individuellen Ebene spielen Alter und Geschlecht, persönliches Gesundheitsbewusstsein, Krankheitsgeschichte wie auch bewusste Lebensführung eine wichtige Rolle. Auf der sozialen Ebene tragen soziale Unterstützung, Gesundheitsbewusstsein des Umfelds und weitere soziale Einflüsse zu Gesundheit bei. All diese Einflüsse führen zu gesundheitlichen Auswirkungen: Sind diese positiv, reflektieren sie direkt auf die Gesundheit des Unternehmers. Sind die Auswirkungen negativ, verlangen sie nach Interaktionsstrategien, die zu bestimmten Konsequenzen führen werden, die wiederum zur Gesundheit des Unternehmers beitragen. Welche Strategien ein Individuum appliziert wird wiederum determiniert vom individuellen und sozialen Kontext.

# **1. Introduction**

## **1.1 Topic Background**

Entrepreneurship is a rigorous activity, not only physically but also mentally. In many instances, work and its demands dominate the lives of entrepreneurs. Very often, entrepreneurs have difficulty recuperating physically, mentally and emotionally from a stressful workday, contributing to personal distress, poor health as well as substance abuse risk (Patterson et al., 2005, p. 221-222). Work-related stress and illnesses are detrimental to an entrepreneur's health (Béjean & Sultan-Taïeb, 2004, p. 16). Especially entrepreneurs of start-up ventures are challenged, as these individuals are "both the foundation and fountainhead for all other resources that will become the organization" (Greene et al., 1999, p. 111). An entrepreneur produces and sustains his "own human capital" in the form of health, knowledge, skills and values by investing in education, training as well as medical care (Becker, 1993).

For society at large, a healthy population is essential for keeping a sufficient number of people at work and keeping productivity high, while mitigating the skyrocketing costs of health care. Businesses are now required to invest in health at the workplace, marketplace, community, and policy levels as health has become a global public good (Kawachi & Wamala, 2007). Healthy personnel is a vital prerequisite for (labor) productivity, a vital condition for continuous learning and consequently essential for a company's innovation capacity in a knowledge society (Zwetsloot & Pot, 2004, p. 118).

## **1.2 Importance of the Topic/Evidence of a Gap in the Research**

Health being a crucial resource for the success of a venture is an aspect that has mostly been neglected in the entrepreneurship research. Previous studies exist in the field of occupational health and work stress. However, these studies mostly rely on self-reported perceptions of both stress and health. Furthermore, most health measures employed are limited to the perceived state of mental health, rather than physical health (Manning et al., 1996, p. 739). Even for those studies that did include physical health, many researchers based their findings on self-reported checklists of health symptoms (e.g. Karasek & Theorell, 1990) instead of a "holistic view of health".

In the United States, occupational stress causes an annual loss of approximately 200 million working days. In Finland, more than half of the working population shows stress symptoms. In Germany, production losses due to occupational pathologies exceed 2.5 billion Euro. Three out of ten employees in the UK complain of mental health issues (Ramaciotti & Perriard, 2003). In Switzerland, financial ramifications due to occupational stress are estimated to exceed 4.6 Mio. Swiss Francs every year, which corresponds to 1.2% of the GDP (Meyer, 2009). In addition to financial impacts, further negative consequences include higher staff turnover (De Croon et al., 2004), lowered productivity (Takeuchi et al., 2005) as well as higher absenteeism (Demerouti et al., 2001). Moreover, chronic job pressures lead to increased mortality (House et al, 1986), and perceived occupational stress is related to various physical as well as psychological disorders (House et al., 1979). Job-related stress can also induce harmful behavioral practices such as excessive drinking, smoking or drug abuse (Béjean & Sultan-Taieb, 2004).

Despite these negative implications, research conducted about the health of entrepreneurs has been scarce. Not only is the health of an entrepreneur a crucial resource for the success of a business venture, but also for the political economy of a given country as a whole. As a consequence, the effects as well as challenges that the nature of entrepreneurial work brings for the entrepreneur's health need to be analyzed and highlighted.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

The practical part of this thesis explores the impact that entrepreneurship has on the health of young Swiss entrepreneurs. In order to gain a better appreciation of the variables at work in this nascent field of research, eight case studies will be conducted. The following questions will be explored:

- How important is health to the entrepreneurs?
- How do they manage their own health?
- How does entrepreneurship impact the entrepreneur's (physical, mental, social) health?
- Do they actively cope with (potential) threats to their health, and if so, how?
- Is health a topic that is discussed at work (with investors, co-founders, employees)?

This thesis will focus on young male entrepreneurs in Switzerland. Recruitment of only male entrepreneurs to this pilot study was selected to reduce variability introduced by gender differences (Burman & Margolin, 1992). Ivancevich & Matteson (1980) also found that individuals respond differently to various stressors as a function of roles determined partly on the basis of their gender.

This study is of exploratory nature and does not claim to be statistically representative. Based on merely eight selected cases, the sample is too small to allow theory building. In order to explore the holistic health of young Swiss entrepreneurs, this work aims at contributing to the fields of entrepreneurship and occupational health using an innovative multi-method approach. Not only shall a general overview for researchers in this field of nascent research be provided, this thesis also hopes to offer pragmatic recommendations for practitioners as well as fellow entrepreneurs.

## 2. On being healthy

### 2.1 The History of Health

Early notions of health as well as health status first emerged in ancient Greek and Chinese concepts. Based on Hippocratic thought, health was considered an internal equilibrium among the four humors of the body: blood, phlegm, black bile and yellow bile (Sigerist, 1943). These four humors corresponded to the four elements that constituted nature: air, water, fire and earth. If the equilibrium between these four humors were disturbed, Dysksasia meant that the individual was sick. The degree of this internal equilibrium is determined by external balance between man and his environment. Therefore, environmental factors played a crucial role in affecting health of the individual (Breslow, 1989, p. 206).

Ancient Chinese health thought characterized health as a series of interacting systems, a generic concept. Forces acting on and within the human body had to be balanced (Bowers & Purcell, 1974).

Until the Renaissance, Greek thinking dominated medical tradition in what was to become the Western world. The biomedical revolution of the 19th century later on drowned out the ancient notions, replacing “balanced, connected systems” with mechanistic ideas.

During the times of early Industrialization, people flocked to cities, attracted by new opportunities and hopes, only to be attacked by communicable disease epidemics. Pathologists started to delineate diseases in great detail, responding to the health conditions of the general public. In the flurry of discovering diseases, the very idea of health submerged. Health was now simply the absence of disease.

In the early part of the 20th century, progress in controlling the communicable diseases brought increasing longevity. The paramount disease problems were now the non-communicable diseases of middle and later life. Researchers and biomedical scientists started to focus on improved technology such as molecular biology to the solution of cancer, heart disease, as well as other current disease problems. The idea of health as a balanced and desired state has thereupon reemerged in the modern world (Breslow, 1989, p. 206). Antonovsky (1979) was the first to introduce the concept of “salutogenesis” (deriving from the Latin *salus* = health and the Greek *genesis* = origin) to replace the previous “pathogenesis” model. In his health continuum from “health-ease” to “dis-ease”, individuals may move in either direction.

## 2.2 Health redefined

“When we are healthy, we don’t notice our health but concentrate on other things. Health is, as it were, transparent, whereas illness and disease is opaque.”

(Downie & Macnaughton, 1998, p. 823)

“Health” is a subject that is omnipresent in modern societies, yet it lacks a universally accepted definition (Greiner, 1998, p. 39). As Nietzsche wrote, “for there is no health as such, and all attempts to define anything that way have been miserable failures. Even the determination of what health means for your body depends on our ideals and phantasms of your soul” (as cited in Downie & Macnaughton, 1998, p. 824). “Health status”, “functional status” and “health-related quality of life” are terms which are often used interchangeably to define the health of an individual. The differentiation between these terms is often based on the objectives of measurement, political motives as well as the particular concerns of the users (Gift & Atchison, 1995, p. 58).

The amount of concepts and scales trying to measure health is multifaceted. Very few researchers have, however, discussed the importance of a generally applicable theoretical health concept (Ducki & Greiner, 1992). As Marmot and Madge (1987) state: “In studies of psychosocial factors it seems, too often, that any health ‘outcome’ will do” (p. 8). Due to its complexity and abstract nature, the debate over the measurement of health is likely to continue (McDowell & Newell, 1987; Stewart & Ware, 1992).

For the purpose of this thesis, health is defined as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (Preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organization, 1946). This definition was adapted in the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion (1986) to further include the ability to lead a socially and economically productive life:

An individual must be able to identify and to realize aspirations, to satisfy needs, and to change or cope with the environment. Health is, therefore, seen as a resource for everyday life, not the objective of living. Health is a positive concept emphasizing social and personal resources, as well as physical capacities.



## **2.3 Health Concepts**

The physical, mental and social aspects of health are considered crucial elements for an interdisciplinary as well as holistic definition of health (Badura, 1993).

### **2.3.1 Physical Health**

Physical health refers to the state of our physical body – our biological, physiological being. It is an organic concept deriving from traditional medical treatment which aims at assessing an individual's physical well-being for clinical and research purposes (Fried et al., 1984). Physiological measurements may include elements such as cardiovascular endurance, coordination, hypertension or cholesterol levels. These results are crucial for a doctor to make quick actions in life-threatening situations. In daily life, however, factors such as agility, fitness, mobility, flexibility or the impairment of physical activities play a much more important role as they determine the degree of an individual's autonomy (Pedroni & Zweifel, 1990, p. 18).

This traditional biomedical model is the most common concept used to describe health, even though it focuses on the absence of illnesses rather than health. It is problematic for a number of reasons: First of all, many illnesses such as chronic back pain or cardiovascular diseases cannot be described solely through biomedical pathogenesis. Psychological factors play a crucial role in the origin of many physical illnesses (Elkeles et al., 1994). Second, such a narrow definition of health excludes many physical as well as psychic conditions that are not based on a physically detectable symptomatology (such as psychosomatic complaints) yet are still able to affect an individual's quality of life (Greiner, 1998, p. 41). Third, results of social-epidemiological studies showing a higher morbidity as well as mortality of almost all diseases for people with a low socioeconomic status are precluded (Syme, 1991).

### **2.3.2 Mental Health**

Mental health, as defined by the Surgeon General's Report on Mental Health (1999), refers to "the successful performance of mental function, resulting in productive activities, fulfilling relationships with other people, and the ability to adapt to change and cope with adversity". From childhood on, mental health is "the springboard of thinking and communication skills, learning, emotional growth, resilience, and self-esteem".

Mental illness, on the other continuum, is a term that “refers to all mental disorders” – meaning “health conditions that are characterized by alternations in thinking, mood or behavior (or some combination thereof) associated with distress and/or impaired functioning”.

Terms such as mental health or mental illness have to be defined in cultural contexts as they are rooted in value judgments (Secker, 1998). The Western understanding of mental health divides overall health into three realms while the Eastern notion views health in terms of “bodily systems working in harmony”. An “imbalance” or “disharmony” results from “physical, psychological, nutritional, environmental or spiritual influences tipping that balance” (Tsai, 2010).

The mental well-being of an individual refers to transitory psychological states rather than permanent personality traits or severe psychological disorders, possible transitory states include human psychological responses in adapting to certain environmental conditions or changes. Typical responses consist of mood, emotions (Huy, 1999; Zott & Quy Nguyen, 2007), as well as psychophysical reactions such as stress (Hammer et al., 2003).

### **2.3.3 Social Health**

Forming social attachments is a fundamental human need that people will pursue under most social conditions. Feeling a sense of belonging has strong effects on emotional patterns as well as cognitive processes (Baumeister & Leary, 2000).

Various writers highlight the positive effects of strong social relationships on an individual’s physical and emotional well-being (Jehn & Shah, 1997; Gersick et al., 2000). Consistent with Sauter, Murphy & Hurrell’s (1990) framework of the psychosocial factors that make up healthy work, long-standing research asserts that positive relationships with coworkers are associated with reduced strain (Johnson & Hall, 1988; Koeske & Koeske, 1989; Beehr et al., 2000; Fry & Barker, 2002), enhanced job satisfaction (Roxburgh, 1999; Ducharme & Martin, 2000; Hain & Francis, 2006; Meyer et al., 2002) as well as improved performance (Barrick et al., 1998). When belongingness needs are left unfulfilled, data has consistently shown negative effects that accrue to well-being (Twenge et al., 2001; Twenge et al., 2003). In addition, individuals that encounter social isolation – both in the number and the quality of their relationships – face greater mortality risks from several infectious, neoplastic, and cardiovascular diseases (Costa & Kahn, 2008; Durkheim, 1897; Pearlin, 1985). Feelings of social isolation may even lead to al-

terations in the activity of genes that drive inflammation, the first response of the immune system (Cole et al., 2007).

Social networks influence health through both biological and social pathways (Costa & Kahn, 2008). Friends can help to provide physical, cognitive and economic assistance, health information as well as the peer pressure needed to reinforce good health habits (Aizer & Currie, 2004). Moreover, social networks are not only channels through which emotional as well as psychological support can be obtained and exchanged between individuals (Achat et al., 1998, p. 735), they may also positively affect cellular immune response and neuroendocrine functioning (Costa & Kahn, 2008).

Researchers have developed various theories in order to explain the role of social integration in the maintenance of physical and emotional well-being, including social causation (Kessler & McLeod, 1985), symbolic interactionist, social exchange, social comparison, self-esteem and personal control theories (Wills, 1985). The terms “social well-being”, “social adjustment”, “social functioning” as well as “social performance” are used interchangeably to measure the social dimension of health (McDowell, 1987).

### **3. Entrepreneurship and Health**

Building and managing a company can be both exhausting and rewarding. While financial risks are inherent, substantial profits become possible at the same time. Anxiety and exhilaration run neck and neck throughout the entrepreneurial experience.

In comparison with the large numbers of studies on employees in occupational health psychology, the entrepreneur's health is very rarely a subject of research. Much of what has been researched in the field of entrepreneurship focuses on how to start a business, what produces financial success as well as attributes of individuals that become entrepreneurs. However, little is known about the physiological, emotional and social effects of owning a business (Boyd & Gumpert, 1983).

The few studies on the entrepreneur's health have provided rather contradictory findings probably due to the primary reliance on self-reports as well as the variation in choice of comparison groups (Stephan & Rösler, 2010). According to Stephan & Rösler (2010), entrepreneurs show better health results on a number of measures used. The subjects exhibit significantly lower overall somatic and mental morbidity, lower blood pressure, lower prevalence rates of hypertension or somatoform disorders, as well as higher well-being and more favorable self-reported behavioral health indicators (less physician visits and sick days) in general. These findings support the view that entrepreneurs may be healthier than employees (as suggested by e.g. Subramanian et al., 1987; Korunka et al., 1993; Kawakami et al., 1996; Tetrick et al., 2000; Bradley & Roberts, 2004).

Contrary to these findings, other studies have found entrepreneurs to have worse health than employees (e.g. Eden, 1975; Naughton, 1987; Buttner, 1992; Jamal, 1997; Lewin-Epstein & Yuchtman-Yaar, 1991; Rahim, 1996; Parslow et al., 2004; Rau et al., 2008). Based on a study of Jamal & Badawi (1995), work and its demands dominate the lives of self-employed individuals profoundly. A clear separation between working hours and nonworking hours is generally blurred, typical workdays can easily extend to 12 hours or more, and having a weekend off has become exceptionally rare. A high failure rate among small businesses put entrepreneurs in a state of constant struggle that requires most of their emotional as well as physical resources. Other threats to the entrepreneur's health include constant uncertainty, personal sacrifices, the burden of responsibility, the dominance of professional life, as well as the loss of psychological well-being (Akande, 1994; Boyd & Gumpert, 1983; Boyd & Webb, 1982; Loscocco & Leicht, 1993).

In this chapter, characteristics of the entrepreneur's personality, his job and its resulting consequences on the entrepreneur's health shall be examined.

### **3.1 The Entrepreneur's Personality and its Impacts on Health**

Personality and well-being are generally and consistently associated (Brough et al., 2009). Entrepreneurs possess a specific set of personal characteristics that impact their physical, mental and social health in a unique way.

#### **3.1.1 Need for Achievement**

According to existing literature, entrepreneurs are primarily motivated by a strong urge to build in combination with an overwhelming need for achievement (McClelland, 1987; Brockhaus, 1982; Langan-Fox & Roth, 1995; Begley & Boyd, 1986). McClelland (1961) views the achievement motive as an individual's non-conscious concern for achieving brilliance in accomplishments through his or her individual efforts. Boyd & Gumpert (1983) wrote in this context: "To survive and prosper as a business owner, one must be a hard driver – an achiever. Achievement brings satisfaction." These individuals thrive on "life in the fast lane" as they focus on quickly doing things that lead to occupational and material success (Friedman & Rosenman, 1974).

Very often, entrepreneurs are described as "overachievers": individuals that "perform above standard or achieve more success than expected" (Merriam-Webster, 2003). Overachievers constantly push themselves to the next level – no matter whether it is professionally, academically, personally, in a sport or hobby. They naturally do well in everything they choose to do because they work hard and hold themselves to a high standard of performance. Overachievers tend to juggle many activities and projects at the same time, trying to be "a rockstar in everything they do" (Robbins, 2007).

The need for achievement might impact the entrepreneur's health in various ways: In positive terms, it could motivate and challenge the entrepreneur – as well as his business organization – to become more effective in order to achieve more in less time. The entrepreneur is mentally stimulated, inspired and driven to excel. In negative terms, the need for achievement could turn into an addiction. Workaholicism is especially common among self-employed individuals and entrepreneurs

who are willing to work tirelessly in order to succeed (Snir & Harpaz, 2006). In Boyd & Gumpert's study (1983), even though some entrepreneurs realize the dangers of unbridled ambition ("I realize how to succeed, and I'm doing it. And that's all wonderful, as long as I don't kill myself in the process."), most of them still cannot hold back their inner high achiever ("I'm not a bullet – I'm a shotgun. When I come to work, I try to be four things at once..."). Individuals with a high need for achievement are particularly scared of failure as they define an essential part of their identity through their achievements (Mitra, 2009). To prevent this case from ever happening, many entrepreneurs devote their entire lives to their business: This may increase one's competitiveness in the short-term but will be counterproductive in the longer term as increased stress will inevitably lead to adverse physical as well as mental health outcomes.

### **3.1.2 Internal Locus of Control**

Entrepreneurs exhibit a stronger desire to be in control of their own fate (Brockhaus, 1982; Cooper et al., 1988). While people with an external locus of control believe that what happens to them is determined largely by other people, luck or "fate"; individuals with an internal locus of control believe that what happens to them is under their control (Rotter, 1966). Various researchers have identified internal locus of control (also see Chapter 3.2.1) to be a moderator in the relationship between stressors and strains. Many entrepreneurs experience lower strains due to their belief that they can control a stressful situation in order to achieve their goals (Kahn & Byosiere, 1992; Horner, 1996).

Internal locus of control is often linked to positive self-regard, another crucial factor when coping with potential stressors. Feeling that one can control, manage and make sense out of pressures may improve one's ability to handle work stress (Patterson et al., 2005, p. 224). When faced with the same environmental stressors, individuals with higher self-esteem are more likely to adopt effective coping strategies than people with low self-esteem (Ganster & Schaubroeck, 1995). Judge et al. (2005) identified that workers with positive self-regard were more likely to have self-concordant goals and were therefore more satisfied with their jobs, themselves as well as their lives in general.

The ability to regulate negative moods is also closely interlinked to unwinding (Patterson et al., 2005, p. 224). Emotionally confident individuals can alleviate negative moods better, are more likely to go out with friends or exercise when fee-

ling down, and expect that they will be less likely to smoke or drink after a stressful event (Patterson et al., 2004).

### **3.1.3 Loving One's Job**

Passion – or the genuine love of one's work – has been identified as another core characteristic of successful entrepreneurs (Locke, 2000). Introduced by Kelloway et al. (2010), the construct of loving one's job comprises a passion for the work itself, commitment to the organization as well as high-quality intimate relationships with coworkers. As a predictor of success, loving one's job has been linked to task and financial performance (Baum & Locke, 2004) as well as life happiness. Despite the many obstacles they may face, entrepreneurs are tenacious about pursuing their goals and confronting challenges with fervor (Yukl, 1989; Locke, 2000). As suggested by Smilor (1997), passion may be “perhaps the most observed phenomenon of the entrepreneurial process” (p. 342). Bird (1989) added that entrepreneurial behavior is “passionate, full of emotional energy, drive, and spirit” (p. 7-8).

Love of one's work – similar to need for achievement – might bring positive as well as negative consequences for the entrepreneur's health. On the one hand, being able to do what one loves surely brings a lot of pleasure and satisfaction. Higher job satisfaction among the self-employed has been consistently proven in several European countries (Blanchflower & Oswald, 1998; Blanchflower, 2000; Frey & Benz, 2003a), in Canada (Finnie et al., 2003) as well as in the United States (Kawaguchi, 2002; Hundley, 2001).

On the other hand, passionate entrepreneurs tend to focus on their business – and their business only. For many entrepreneurs, “confusion exists in their minds about where their business lives end and their personal lives begin” (Boyd & Gumpert, 1983, p. 52). Even though entrepreneurs are constantly surrounded by people (employees, customers, accountants, consultants, lawyers etc.), they are often isolated, lonely individuals. Long working hours prevent entrepreneurs from connecting with family and friends (Boyd & Gumpert, 1983), thus seriously threatening their social and – as a consequence – their physical health (see also Chapter 2.3.3, “Social Health”). Individuals that encounter social isolation face greater mortality risks from several infectious, neoplastic, and cardiovascular diseases (Costa & Kahn, 2008; Durkheim, 1897; Pearlin, 1985); feelings of social isolation may even lead to alterations in the activity of genes that drive inflammation, the first response of the immune system (Cole et al., 2007).

## **3.2 The Entrepreneur's Job and its Impacts on Health**

Various characteristics of the entrepreneur's job affect the entrepreneur's physical, mental as well as social health.

### **3.2.1 Job Control, Autonomy & Freedom**

Being one's own boss implies almost unlimited decision autonomy, freedom of choice in the tasks to do, time schedule flexibility, utilization as well as the development of skills (European Commission, 2004). Other positive features of self-employment include accountability only to oneself, potential for greater financial rewards and prerequisites, the opportunity to face interesting challenges, and a feeling of achievement and pride (Akande, 1994; Begley & Boyd, 1987; Rodgers & Rodgers, 1989; Timmons, 1978). In 1970, Collins & Moore studied 150 entrepreneurs and described them as "tough, pragmatic people driven by needs of independence and achievement, seldom willing to submit to authority".

Those who feel empowered rather than helpless typically live more happily, and cope better with stress (Campbell, 1981; Larson, 1989). High job control enables the creation of a less threatening and more rewarding work environment (Ganster, 1989), allowing decisions that are tailored to requirements of a specific situation rather than simply following directions from others (Grebner et al., 2010). Several studies have shown that job control positively predicts performance (Bond & Bunce, 2003; Bond & Flaxman, 2006; Humphrey et al., 2007).

One of the key attractions of entrepreneurship appears to be the high degree of independence that it allows – the freedom from constraints associated with employment in a formal, bureaucratic organization (Chay, 1993; Eden, 1975; Yusuf, 1995). According to Frey & Benz (2003b), autonomy is not valued because it leads to better instrumental outcomes (such as higher income) but rather as a good decision-making procedure itself. Considering job satisfaction a useful approximation for the utility from work, entrepreneurs value the opportunity to be independent and self-determined as an important non-pecuniary work benefit.

### **3.2.2 Long Working Hours**

Bygrave & Zacharakis (2010) characterize entrepreneurs as determined, committed and dedicated individuals that are willing to work tirelessly to realize their vision. Eager to build and grow a business, workaholic behaviors are commonly



observed in self-employed individuals and entrepreneurs (Snir and Harpaz, 2006).

Previous studies have shown that entrepreneurs work 20% longer than wage-earners (Eden, 1975). Andersson (2008) concluded based on the Swedish Level-of-Living Survey that self-employed individuals work on average ten hours extra per week; once they change their status to wage-earners, the former self-employed can reduce their working time by ten hours per week. Technological advances have facilitated working from home or outside the office, which has contributed to an increase in hours worked (Golden & Figart, 2000). As reported by Brett & Stroh (2003), men tend to work more as they seem to find more rewards in their job with hours worked significantly connected with job involvement and intrinsic satisfaction.

Working long hours may have positive (self-actualization, a sense of achievement, work enjoyment) as well as negative reasons (avoid failure, deal with employment insecurity). Applied to the entrepreneur's health, some individuals may work longer because they genuinely love their job (see Chapter 3.1.3) and derive pleasure from succeeding at what they are doing, thus enriching their quality of life (Tucker & Rutherford, 2005). This can be described as a "constructive, highly committed, achievement-oriented style" (Porter, 2004). On the other hand, an entrepreneur may also work in a "compulsive, perfectionist fashion, driven to achieve perfectionistic standards". Such individuals react with hostility and resentment when faced with criticism, or when they fail to meet their superhuman standards. Another negative reason for working long hours is the attempt to avoid failure in combination with existential fears (Mitra, 2009). As overachievers (see Chapter 3.1.1) with the determination – and the habit – to win, entrepreneurs are particularly scared to lose.

Choosing to work long hours as opposed to being forced or pressured to work long hours is likely to affect the entrepreneur's physical as well as mental health (Burke & McAteer, 2007). How many hours an individual decides to work involves weighing costs (less sleep, less social life, less time for leisure activities) against the benefits (autonomy, doing what one loves, potential income, recognition). Entrepreneurs with good social support (see Chapter 2.3.3) may be able to deal with the costs of long working hours better. These individuals enjoy working more as they experience benefits from working longer hours (work is fun and exciting, more potential income).

Even though working longer hours may increase one's competitiveness in the short-term, it is not sustainable and may become counterproductive in the longer term,

as increased stress could impact the individual's physical as well as mental health (Burke & McAteer, 2007). Possible adverse health outcomes include increases in blood pressure and heart rate (Buell & Breslow, 1960; Uehata, 1991; Iwasaki et al., 1998), sleep deprivation and lack of recovery (Defoe et al., 2001; Ala-Mursjula et al., 2002), poor psychological health (Sparks et al., 1997; Borg & Kristensen, 1999; Kirkcaldy et al., 2000), excessive fatigue (Rosa, 1995) as well as burn-out (Barnett et al., 1999). Several studies have also linked longer working hours with a higher amount of errors and accidents (Schuster & Rhodes, 1985; Gander et al., 2000; Nachreiner et al., 2000; Loomis, 2005), more work-family conflicts (Galambos et al., 1995; Crouter et al., 1999; Crouter et al., 2001), greater irritability (Kluwer et al., 1996; Geurts et al., 1999; Grzywicz & Marks, 2000) combined with poor lifestyle habits such as heavy smoking, poor diet, and lack of exercise (Moruyama et al., 1995).

### **3.2.3 Emerging Organization: What makes it different?**

Significant differences exist between working in an emerging company versus an established business:

First of all, entrepreneurship can be described as a process of “emergence“. According to Gartner et al. (1992), emerging organizations are characterized by equivocal realities that the speech and actions of entrepreneurs render unequivocal. For this reason, entrepreneurs are less likely to participate in routine activities but tend to operate at a faster pace, with greater fragmentation (Casson, 2000). There is no fixed “job description“ for an entrepreneur, the entrepreneur is expected to do whatever is needed at the moment: this could range from signing deliveries, writing PR releases, editing websites and negotiating with suppliers, to hiring new interns, creating balance sheets, painting the office or working on a new corporate strategy. For this reason, Lazear (2004) calls entrepreneurs “jacks-of-all-trades to some extent“. Not only are they (part-)owner and manager of a business, entrepreneurs are also required to wear many other hats in the process of creating a new business. At least some basic understanding of to-be-outsourced areas is necessary in order to hire staff and make suitable decisions. As a consequence, entrepreneurs have to be generalists that possess a wide variety of skills (p. 208).

Second, from a financial point of view, emerging companies are usually more strapped for cash than established businesses. A corporation could survive extended periods of losses while a startup might go under (Stedt, 2013), entrepreneurs thus

have to be very frugal throughout. Very often, besides owning a certain amount of shares/stocks, entrepreneurs pay themselves no – or a very low – salary to cover their basic necessities. As it is with any stock situation, this gamble might or might not pay off, leading to a state of constant insecurity (Jamal, 1997) and stress.

Third, most entrepreneurs in emerging businesses work in a small team with a flat hierarchy. Such a structure enables quick decisions, quick actions as well as quick results. There are very few policies or procedures in place, entrepreneurs often must stop to create their own (Stedt, 2013). Small teams enable all team members to take responsibility from day one, and everybody is directly accountable for his or her work. For many entrepreneurs, this might be the greatest motivation there is. Sheldon (2013) writes in this regard:

To be cut off from relying on others to provide for you will undoubtedly surface skills and a determination that you didn't know you had. At a startup, that natural wish to be self-sustainable is magnified and multiplied, triggering the do-or-die attitude that is often the difference between success and failure.

At the same time, working in small teams in an emerging enterprise also brings drawbacks. Staff members cannot receive the kind of formal mentorship they would get in a big corporation. As an example, an entrepreneur cannot rely on marketing directors with decades of marketing experience to teach them the tricks of the trade; everybody is required to learn on their own in an emerging business (Sharef, 2013). Moreover, more responsibilities inevitably also bring more emotional pressure. Working in an emerging business typically requires longer working hours and a greater sense of urgency (Stedt, 2013).

### 3.3 The Entrepreneur's Health: Attempt at an Integrated Framework

As no models of the entrepreneur's health exist in this nascent field of research, the author attempts to create her own hypothesized model as a foundation for the present study.

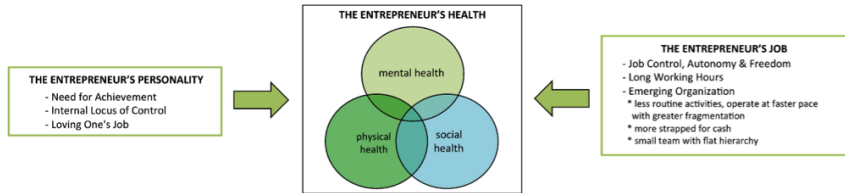


Figure 1: Suggested Integrated Framework of the Entrepreneur's Health

At the core of the model is Badura's (1993) holistic health definition based on which health consists of a physical, a mental as well as a social sphere that all affect and blend into one another. Both the entrepreneur's personality characteristics as well as characteristics of the entrepreneur's job impact the entrepreneur's health.

It has to be highlighted that the perceived impacts of the personality as well as job characteristics are subjective and thus personal to each individual. While need for achievement might push some entrepreneurs to excel, it might prevent other from letting go of unsuccessful entrepreneurial endeavors (Mitra, 2009). Some entrepreneurs might find daily life full of rapid changes and fragmented tasks exhilarating, others might be frustrated or even burnt out by it. Some entrepreneurs feel energized – physically and mentally – due to the inspirations they get through their constant learnings, others might be overstrained by the role overload (Landy & Conte, 2010) required by their job. Some entrepreneurs might not mind living a frugal lifestyle in order to pursue their dreams; others might have invested all their savings and need to raise a family, experiencing a much higher level of stress as a consequence.

## 4. Method

### 4.1 Research Design and Empirical Methodology

For this exploratory study in a nascent field of research, grounded theory in combination with multiple case studies was applied.

#### 4.1.1 Grounded Theory

Grounded theory is an evolving qualitative research method that has first emerged in the 1960s as a result of Glaser and Strauss's sociological research (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Charmaz, 2000). Their goal was to develop a theory "that had grab, would fit the data, and would work in the real world" (Walker & Myrick, 2006, p. 548). Unlike the logico-deductive approach of critical rationalism ("Kritischer Rationalismus"), researchers using grounded theory do not develop a theory prior to methodically seeking out evidence to verify or falsify their hypotheses (Popper, 1935). Instead, grounded theory researchers set out to collect data before systematically developing a theory based on the data gathered (Dey, 1999). Grounded theory is therefore both method (process) as well as result (theory) at the same time (Flick, 2007, p. 476).

At the core of grounded theory is the data analysis process: In a first step, the analyst codes all empirical data. In a second step, he categorizes the data, uses memos to track the analysis and develops theoretical ideas (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In the words of Dey (1993), "we break down data in order to classify it, and the concepts we create or employ in classifying the data, and the connections we make between these concepts, provide the basis of a fresh description" (p. 30). By combining "the explicit coding procedure of the first approach and the style of theory development of the second" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 102), grounded theory – also known as the "method of constant comparison" – is able to "mesh the best of both processes" (Walker & Myrick, 2006, p. 548).

As this study explores a nascent field of research, grounded theory allows us to remain "theoretically flexible", thus enabling the detection of novel ideas (Eisenhardt, 1989). Unlike other methods of qualitative social research, grounded theory is primarily targeted at the generation of new theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

### 4.1.2 Case Study Approach

Grounded theory studies are approached in various manners; however, the case study approach is one of the most commonly chosen and widely understood (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 1984). The case study is a research strategy, which is considered adequate when answering research questions that ask ‘how’ and ‘why’. The investigator’s goal is to expand and generalize theories (analytic generalization), not to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalization). Case studies are therefore generalizable to theoretical propositions, not to populations or universes (Yin, 1989, p. 21). According to Gomm et al. (2000), a case study “refers to research in considerable depth” as it enables the collection of large amounts of information across a wide range of dimensions, while social surveys gather only a relatively small amount of data from each case (p. 3). The purpose of a case study is not to reflect “a complete or accurate rendition of actual events”, instead, “its purpose is to establish a framework for discussion and debate” (Yin, 1989, p. 14).

According to Benbasat et al. (1987), case studies are adequate when the phenomenon of interest is not well explained by established theory and cannot be studied outside its natural setting. Because the health of entrepreneurs is still a nascent field of study, and because entrepreneurial behavior must always be observed in its natural setting, the case approach to grounded theory was chosen for this thesis. Following Eisenhardt (1989), a multiple case design allowed us to observe entrepreneurial behavior, while collecting and recording data that corresponded to these behaviors. By using multiple sources of evidence, converging lines of inquiry could be developed and a broader range of historical, attitudinal as well as observational issues could be addressed. By this means, potential problems of construct validity could also be addressed as multiple measures of the same phenomenon were provided (Yin, 1989, p. 97). This type of methodology has been valuable in increasing the field’s understanding of various phenomena such as how the entrepreneurial process is influenced by founders’ previous work experience (Baucus & Human, 1994), which typologies can be used to describe entrepreneurial behavior (Stinchfield et al., 2013), or the effects of trust when entrepreneurial firms are being acquired (Graebner, 2009).

## 4.2 Sample

The aim of this study was not the representative capture of all possible variations, but to gain a more in-depth understanding of entrepreneurial behavior, thus facilitating the development of analytical frames or concepts (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). For this purpose, a theoretical sampling method was applied.

This thesis focused only on male entrepreneurs under the age of 35 in Switzerland. Recruitment of only male entrepreneurs to this pilot study was selected to reduce variability introduced by gender differences (Burman & Margolin, 1992). Ivancevich & Matteson (1980) found that individuals respond differently to various stressors as a function of roles determined partly on the basis of their gender. The age limit of 35 was chosen as UNESCO defines “youth” as “every person between ages of 15 and 35” (UNESCO, 2013).

The eight research subjects were identified through personal recommendations as well as referrals: In a first instance, prospective entrepreneurs within the Swiss branch of Sandbox – an exclusive network of so-called “overachievers” under the age of 30 – were approached. Sandbox was founded in May 2009 and is “the foremost global community of extraordinary young achievers” that “already have an impressive impact at a very young age, no matter in what field or industry”. Already in their twenties, these young people “run their own businesses, drive forward organizations, take over leadership roles, do cutting-edge research or political work, create art, write books or build social enterprises”. According to the website of Sandbox (2011), “sandboxers love to exceed everyone’s expectation with their passion, their curiosity and their ambitions”. In the next step, respondents of successful contacts were asked for names of other eligible young entrepreneurs – inside or outside of the Sandbox network. This snowballing technique (Eisenhardt, 1988; Farmer et al., 2011) proved to be very useful in gaining access to more test subjects.

The sampling frame was purposefully chosen because the lifestyles, achievements and ambitions of these “overachievers” (Robbins, 2007) are very likely to affect their health in one or several ways. Especially these extraordinary young talents need to recognize their own health as a crucial resource for success so that they do not end up burnt-out by the time they reach their thirties.

Of course, there are methodological concerns about bias in the sample as well as limitations to extending the findings beyond the survey. However, as representative

generalizations were not the aim of this study, this approach seemed most adequate as it was able to offer useful insights into a group of entrepreneurs deemed difficult to reach. This deliberate, personal attempt to build rapport as well as trust can be crucial for strengthening the validity of research (Arksey & Knight, 1999). In fact, Marshall and Rossman (2011) defined interviews as “intimate encounters that depend on trust” which is why “building trust – albeit time bound – is important” (p. 145).

In order to protect the confidentiality of the interview subjects, they remained anonymous and carried aliases throughout the study.

### **Definition of entrepreneurship in the present study**

For the purpose of this study, an entrepreneur is defined as one who is the founder, owner and manager of a service, retail, wholesale or manufacturing business. To achieve the principal purpose of profit and growth, the entrepreneur will employ strategic management practices while being driven by innovative behavior (Carland et al., 1984).

Table 1 gives a brief overview of the respondents in terms of their personal background, qualifications as well as their work experience.

The age of the respondents in this sample ranged from 26 to 34 years old, the average being 29 years. Half of the entrepreneurs were Sandbox members. 50% were single; three were in a relationship and one person was married. All respondents were very well educated: seven out of eight entrepreneurs possessed a Bachelor’s Degree, three entrepreneurs successfully completed a Master’s Degree while one proband was about to complete his MBA. Out of the seven respondents with an university degree, five had studied at (multiple) top universities around the world. Two entrepreneurs had pursued a commercial apprenticeship, one had further added advanced training in IT to his profile. Besides Daniel who did not have any work experience when he started his first company at age 16 (he gained 4 years and 10 months of work experience afterwards inbetween his companies), all respondents had worked for many years before starting their first business; the average work experience was around 4 years and 3 months.



| Entrepreneur | Age | Education  | Work Experience  | Additional Persons Interviewed                           |
|--------------|-----|--|--|--|
| Alex         | 31  | B.A. Business Administration<br>M.A. Finance & Accounting                | Internships & part-time jobs in banking, insurance and consulting (2 years total), project manager in consulting (4 years)                           | – Business Partner<br>– Employee<br>– Friend             |
| Ben          | 34  | MSc in Civil Engineering   | Civil engineer & project manager in five major companies (10 years total)  | – Business Partner 1<br>– Business Partner 2<br>– Friend |
| Chris        | 26  | B.A. Business Administration   | Part-time job at Institute for Young Enterprises (2 years total), various internships and projects in consulting/public management/IT (1 year total) | – Girlfriend<br>– Business Partner<br>– Best Friend      |
| Daniel       | 28  | B.A. Business Administration<br>MBA (not graduated yet)                  | No work experience before first start-up; various internships in banking, IT and airline industry (1 year 10 months total); consultant (3 years)     | – Roommate<br>– Friend<br>– Business Partner             |
| Emil         | 27  | Commercial Apprenticeship<br>B.A. Visual Communications                  | Two internships (7 months total), freelance designer (6 years, 3 years experience before first start-up)   | – Friend<br>– Brother<br>– Business Partner              |
| Fabian       | 31  | B.A. Banking & Finance   | Various internships & part-time jobs in auctioning, manufacturing and private equity (2 years 7 months total)  | – Business Partner<br>– Brother<br>– Friend              |
| Gabriel      | 28  | B.A. Business Administration<br>M.A. Strategy & International Management | Volunteering Hungary (1 year), various internships & part-time jobs in consulting, consumer goods & retail (2.5 years total)                         | – Business Partner<br>– Employee<br>– Friend             |
| Hugo         | 27  | Commercial Apprenticeship<br>Advanced Training in IT                     | Credit management (2 years), internship Google (3 months), private banking (3 years)   | – Business Partner<br>– Employee<br>– Friend             |

Table 1: Personal Background of Respondents

What is remarkable is the scope of experiences these young entrepreneurs had gathered prior to embarking on their entrepreneurial path. Besides their demanding studies, five entrepreneurs (Alex, Chris, Daniel, Fabian & Gabriel) had spent several years interning and working around the world. This extraordinary drive and ambition is highly characteristic of overachievers (Robbins, 2007) as described in

### Chapter 3.1.1.

The range of industries, in which the eight young entrepreneurs operate, was also rather impressive. Altogether, they have started 36 companies before having reached the age of 35. Fabian held the record with 16 companies founded over the past decade; all remaining subjects were also serial entrepreneurs across industries except Chris and Hugo who have both focused on one company. The average age for the set-up of the first company was 24.125 years.

Attributes such as freedom, autonomy, locus of control, flexibility, self-fulfillment as well as dissatisfaction as an employee were mentioned the most as reasons for entrepreneurship. Half of the ventures were self-financed while the other half were partially self-financed. All entrepreneurs had at least one business partner, and with the exception of Emil, all respondents worked with full-time and/or part-time employees.

Half of the ventures were profitable with profits ranging from CHF 7000 (Emil) to CHF 2 Mio. (Alex) per year. One business had not been launched yet (Daniel), another business was generating revenues but not profits (Gabriel), and the concept of the biotech company was to develop its assets until they could be sold (Chris). Fabian was the only entrepreneur with a loss of CHF 20 000 last year but according to him, this was part of the strategy as his holding invests all profits into new ventures in order to avoid taxes.

Table 2 displays a summary of the respondents' background, the industries in which they are active, the amount of ventures they have launched/are currently managing, their business partners/employees as well as their annual profit.

| Name    | Why Entrepreneurship ?  | Age (Age when first venture was launched) | Industries                           | Number of companies currently managed (Number of Companies launched) | Financing (sf = self funded, if = investor funded) | Staff (ft = full-time, pt = part-time)           | Total Annual Profit of Ventures (CHF) |
|---------|---|---|--------------------------------------|--|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| Alex    | hates having a boss, opportunity, freedom, autonomy   | 31 (28)                                   | tourism, publishing, PE, medical     | 3 (5)  | sf   | 3 business partners; 20 ft & 10–30 pt staff      | 2 Mio.                                |
| Ben     | freedom, flexibility, locus of control, was unfulfilled as employee                                 | 34 (32)                                   | real estate, vacation rental         | 2 (4)  | sf   | 2 business partners; 1 ft & 2 pt staff           | 200 000                               |
| Chris   | enjoys starting initiatives, freedom, flexibility, likes challenges, wants to contribute to society | 26 (23)                                   | biotech                              | 1 (1)  | partially sf, partially if                         | 4 business partners; 4 ft staff                  | none                                  |
| Daniel  | flexibility, self-fulfillment   | 28 (16)                                   | IT, luxury lingerie                  | 1 (3)  | partially sf, partially if                         | 1 business partner; 1 ft & 3 pr staff, 2 interns | none (launch soon)                    |
| Emil    | freedom, locus of control, own project  | 27 (24)                                   | design, publishin                    | 2 (2)  | sf   | 1 business partners                              | 7 000                                 |
| Fabian  | bad employee, hates bureaucracy, freedom, locus of control, enjoys kicking off projects             | 31 (21)                                   | IT, electronic commerce services     | 5 (16)   | 3 sf, 1 partially & 1 entirely if                  | 1 business partner, 7 ft staff                   | – 20 000 (no profit is plan)          |
| Gabriel | self-fulfillment, locus of control, autonomy, most important: freedom                               | 28 (25)                                   | electronic commerce, online services | 2 (4)  | partially sf, partially if                         | 1 business partner; 1 ft & 4 pt staff, 1 intern  | none                                  |
| Hugo    | didn't like previous job, locus of control, freedom   | 27 (24)                                   | high-end private concierge           | 1 (1)  | sf   | 1 business partner; 1 ft & 6 pt staff            | 50 000                                |

Table 2: Background of Respondents

## **4.3 Data Collection**

A case study, according to Gomm et al. (2000), “refers to research in considerable depth” (p. 3). The purpose of the case study is not to reflect “a complete or accurate rendition of actual events”, instead, “its purpose is to establish a framework for discussion and debate” (Yin, 1989, p. 14).

For this exploratory study of young entrepreneurs, an innovative multi-method approach was applied. By collecting large amounts of information across a wide range of dimensions, this approach offered a more comprehensive picture of the entrepreneur’s health, thus allowing a better understanding of the various variables involved. By using multiple sources of evidence, converging lines of inquiry could be developed and a broader range of historical, attitudinal as well as observational issues could be addressed (Yin, 1989).

Many established guides on qualitative and case research suggest that validity is amplified when multiple data sources are used (e.g. Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Yin, 1984; Eisenhardt, 1989). Combining different methods for data collection also allows for “triangulation” – one set of findings from one method of data might be contradicted or backed up by findings from another method of data collection (Wisker, 2007). As an example, one entrepreneur might feel very healthy (self-report) but the medical check-up might show various risk factors the individual was not aware of. Another entrepreneur might not think the switch to entrepreneurship has affected his health (interview with entrepreneur) but the people surrounding him might disagree (three interviews with entrepreneur’s key informants).

### **4.3.1 Self-Report**

Over the past years, the subjective appraisal of present health status has emerged as “a robust and distinctive indicator of future health outcomes” (Franks et al., 2002). Self-reports have been a cornerstone to influential health studies and surveys such as the National Health Interview Survey, the Medical Outcomes Study or the RAND Health Insurance Experiment. According to Schnittker (2005), self-rated health has numerous desirable empirical qualities: First, it offers an excellent prediction of mortality and is often independent of a wide array of disease-specific indicators (Ferraro & Farmer, 1999). Self-rated health further helps to anticipate treatment behavior and is crucial to evaluating patient outcomes. In addition, researchers have linked a positive rating of self-health status prospectively to health outcomes including physical function (Idler & Kasl, 1995) and mortality (Hays,

Schoenfeld, Blazer & Gold, 1996). Positive ratings of subjective health have also been associated with better psychological well-being (Benjamini et al., 1999).

The Short Form-36 Health Survey (SF-36), a generic multi-dimensional health status measure, was used to assess the overall state of health (Kazis et al., 1998). SF-36 was developed for use as a survey of health status (Ware et al., 1974) and includes 36 items measuring eight domains of health: physical functioning, role limitations due to physical problems, social functioning, bodily pain, general mental health, role limitations due to emotional problems as well as vitality. All scores are transformed into 0-100 (100 being the best health state, lower scores implying poorer health), while the two summary scales each have a mean of 50 together with a standard deviation of +/- 10.

The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) was then applied in order to evaluate social health. MSPSS is a validated 12-item instrument designed to assess perceptions about support from family, friends or the significant other (Zimet et al., 1988; Zimet et al., 1990; Canty-Mitchell & Zimet, 2000). The items are divided into factor groups relating to the source of support, with scores ranging from 1 to 7 (the higher the score, the higher the level of perceived support).

### **4.3.2 Comprehensive Medical Check-Up**

To complement the self-reports, all entrepreneurs underwent an extensive medical check-up conducted by Dr. Nikolaus Linde in Zurich or in St.Gallen. Dr. Linde is a Swiss beauty doctor and an international aesthetics expert with several clinics across Switzerland. He was formally trained in surgery, internal medicine, anesthesia, angiology and especially aesthetic medicine. Dr. Linde is a Member of the Swiss Association for General Medicine (Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Allgemeinmedizin).

### **4.3.3 Semi-structured Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews – with the entrepreneur as well as people surrounding the entrepreneur – were used to gain further insights. Applying qualitative data is useful for generating theory “when the phenomenon being studied is new or previously uninvestigated”; qualitative data then allows for the capturing of individuals’ lived experiences and interpretations in an open-ended, vivid and nuanced way (Graebner et al., 2012, p. 277).

As a research method, the interview is an adequate approach when there is a need to attain highly personalized data and the possibility for supplementary, probing questions (Gray, 2004). Particularly if health is considered as not merely a state but “the result of a series of processes in which the individual interacts with other people and the environment” (MacIntosh et al., 2007, p. 207), semi-structured interviews will allow the captivation of more in-depth information.

All the interviews were recorded; at the same time, additional notes were taken. Before each interview, respondents were reassured about the confidential nature of the data.

During the semi-structured interviews, the entrepreneurs were asked closed as well as open-ended questions regarding the following topics:

- Personal & business background
- How important is health to the entrepreneurs? How do they manage their own health?
- What specific issues of their function as entrepreneurs impact their (physical, mental, social) health?
- Do they actively cope with (potential) threats to their health, and if so, how?
- Recommendations for fellow entrepreneurs in Switzerland

## **4.4 Data Analysis**

### **4.4.1 Self-Report**

All eight respondents received an individual link to an online SF-36 survey (see Appendix A) that they were asked to fill out. Once the raw data was collected, a computerized database (MS Excel) was set up to score the measures.

Subtly different instructions exist for the scoring of SF-36. This thesis followed the RAND (2013) instructions: In a first step, pre-coded numeric values were recoded per the scoring key given in Table 3. Each item was scored on a 0 to 100 range so that the lowest possible score was set at 0 and the highest possible score was set at 100. Scores represented the percentage of total possible score achieved; the higher the score, the more favorable the perceived health state of the respondent was.

| Item Numbers                    | Change original response category ...  | ... to recoded value of          |
|---------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| 1, 2, 20, 22, 34, 36            | 1 →<br>2 →<br>3 →<br>4 →<br>5 →        | 100<br>75<br>50<br>25<br>0       |
| 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 | 1 →<br>2 →<br>3 →                      | 0<br>50<br>100                   |
| 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19      | 1 →<br>2 →                             | 0<br>100                         |
| 21, 23, 26, 27, 30              | 1 →<br>2 →<br>3 →<br>4 →<br>5 →<br>6 → | 100<br>80<br>60<br>40<br>20<br>0 |
| 24, 25, 28, 29, 31              | 1 →<br>2 →<br>3 →<br>4 →<br>5 →<br>6 → | 0<br>20<br>40<br>60<br>80<br>100 |
| 32, 33, 35                      | 1 →<br>2 →<br>3 →<br>4 →<br>5 →        | 0<br>25<br>50<br>75<br>100       |

Table 3: SF-36 Recoding Items (adapted from RAND, 2013)

In a second step, translated items were averaged together to create the 8 mean average scale scores. Table 4 lists the items averaged together to create each scale.

| Scale                                      | Number of Items | Alter Recoding Per Table 3, Average The Following Items: |
|--|-----------------|--|
| Social functioning                         | 2               | 20 32  |
| Role limitations due to physical health    | 4               | 13 14 15 16  |
| Role limitations due to emotional problems | 3               | 17 18 19   |
| Physical functioning                       | 10              | 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12                                   |
| Pain                                       | 2               | 21 22  |
| General health                             | 5               | 1 33 34 35 36  |
| Energy/Fatigue                             | 4               | 23 27 29 31  |
| Emotional well-being                       | 5               | 24 25 26 28 30   |

Table 4: SF-36 Averaging Items to form Scales (adapted from RAND, 2013)

The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) is a validated 12-item instrument designed to assess perceptions about support from family, friends or the significant other (Zimet et al., 1988; Zimet et al., 1990; Canty-Mitchell & Zimet, 2000). The items are divided into factor groups relating to the source of support, with scores ranging from 1 to 7 (the higher the score, the higher the level of perceived support). All eight entrepreneurs received an individual link to an online MSPSS survey (see Appendix A) that they were asked to fill out. Once the raw data was collected, a computerized database (MS Excel) was also set up here to score the measures. As the sample was too small for a factor analysis, items were averaged together to create the 21 mean average scores.

#### **4.4.2 Comprehensive Medical Check-Up**

In a first step, Dr. Linde performed a general medical and neurologic full body check-up. A complete blood count (CBC) and blood analysis (hematology, liver and kidney values, blood sugar and blood lipids, inflammation parameter, thyroid values) was then paired with a urinalysis, as well as a chest x-ray if deemed necessary. Dr. Linde further discussed the respondents' functional health (including sleep behavior, nutrition/weight, annual sick leave, potential drug/alcohol/nicotine/caffeine intake, athletic activities, back/neck pain and sexual performance) in order to identify potential stress factors. The entrepreneurs' functional health was then rated on a scale from 0 to 8, with 8 indicating perfect functional health. Dr. Linde based his rating on average values of a "normal, healthy, male individual" within the same age group.

#### **4.4.3 Semi-structured Interviews**

In order to "create rich descriptions and understandings of social life" (Walker & Myrick, 2006, p. 549), data analysis in qualitative research manages language, words, and the meanings they imply (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The goal of qualitative data analysis is to organize and reduce the data around categories or essences, which can then evolve into models, patterns or theories (Walker & Myrick, 2006).

Coding is one way to explore, categorize and label data (Patton, 2002). In grounded theory, coding is a "fundamental analytic process used by the researcher" (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 12), as it is what moves researchers from transcript to theory. As Walker & Myrick (2006) put it: "Coding is an iterative, inductive, yet reductive process that organizes data, from which the researcher can then construct themes,



essences, descriptions, and theories.”

For the purposes of this research, the data gathered was coded and analyzed using ATLAS.ti. ATLAS.ti is a so-called “QDA software” (qualitative data analysis software), a tool often used for supporting the process of qualitative data analysis as it helps researchers to uncover and systematically analyze complex phenomena hidden in unstructured data (Lewins et al., 2007). As Friese (2012) has stated in this context:

Software frees you from all those tasks that a machine can do much more effectively, like modifying code words and coded segments, retrieving data based on various criteria, searching for words, integrating material in one place, attaching notes and finding them again, counting the numbers of coded incidences, offering overviews at various stages of the project, and so on (p. 1).

Furthermore, Friese (2012) argued that a carefully conducted, computer-assisted qualitative data analysis can also raise the validity of research results – “especially at the conceptual stage of an analysis”.

In a first step, the complete data of this project – including self-reports, health assessments by a doctor as well as all interview transcripts with the entrepreneur and his environment – was prepared as an ATLAS.ti project file, a so-called “HU” (hermeneutic unit). Based on the scheme shown in Figure 2, all data was coded using both open and in-vivo codes. In ATLAS.ti, open coding simply indicates the creation of new codes while in-vivo codes are more aligned with the principles of grounded theory, as they are “concepts using the actual words of research participants rather than being named by the analyst” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 65). In-vivo codes are especially useful when collecting ideas at the beginning of the coding process (Friese, 2012, p. 73). Once the data was coded, it was sorted and structured. This analytical process – also known as axial coding – is called “linking codes” in ATLAS.ti.

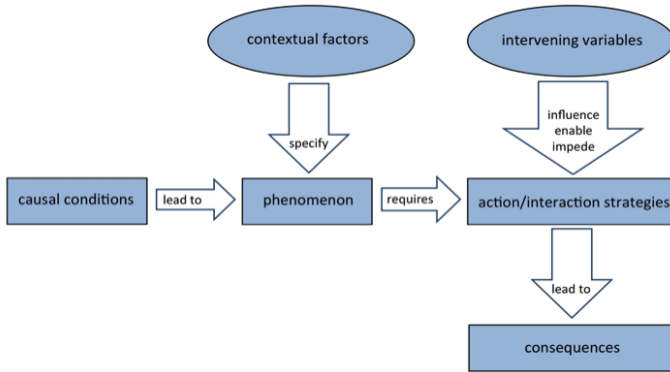


Figure 2: Own Illustration, based on Strauss & Corbin (1996) and ATLAS.ti

In a next step, two types of analyses were conducted: First, key concepts were identified and extracted for each of the eight entrepreneurs through coding and writing up case summaries. In a second step, concepts were then analyzed and compared across multiple cases (Eisenhardt, 1989; Patton, 1990). Performing both within-case as well as cross-case analysis allowed for a more thorough investigation of the relevance, accuracy and importance of emergent patterns and themes (Graebner, 2004; Stinchfield et al., 2013).

In a last step, codes, categories and subcategories were connected with the goal of discovering processes, patterns, sequences or relations that might lead to the generation of new theory (Smit, 2002, p. 70). Networks were used to build theoretical models within ATLAS.ti, the researcher then tried to build a conceptual or logical relationship between nodes. She organized codes, catalogued ideas, weighed and evaluated the importance of concepts, and finally tried to visualize the often-complex relations between findings (Lewins et al., 2007).

Figure 3 depicts a summary of the entire research process.

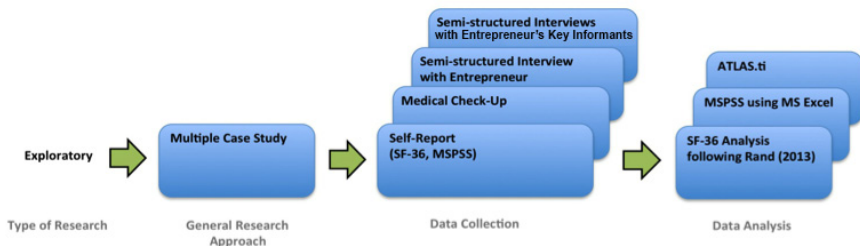


Figure 3: Research Process

## 5. Single Case Analysis

### 5.1 Alex

#### 5.1.1 Background

Alex (Sandbox member) is 31 years old, single, and possesses a B.A. in Business Administration as well as a MSc in Finance & Accounting. Throughout his studies (in Switzerland, Singapore, China and the UK), Alex had worked for various major banks and consulting companies around the world (two full-time years in total). After his studies, he joined a big international consulting company as a project manager for four years, working on assignments all over Europe. Alex started his entrepreneurial path four years ago with his best friend; together, they create and sell unique travel guides. He then set up his own private equity company and two medical consulting enterprises with other business partners. Most recently, Alex launched a high-end private clinic for addiction treatment. In total, he has started five companies and is currently managing three. He has three business partners, 20 full-time employees and about 10-30 part-time staff members. All his ventures are self-financed, and he currently makes an annual profit of CHF 2 Mio.

#### 5.1.2 Online Surveys

Alex displays an average total score of 85.555 of a possible 100 points in the SF-36 online survey, thus reporting the second highest overall state of health out of all respondents.

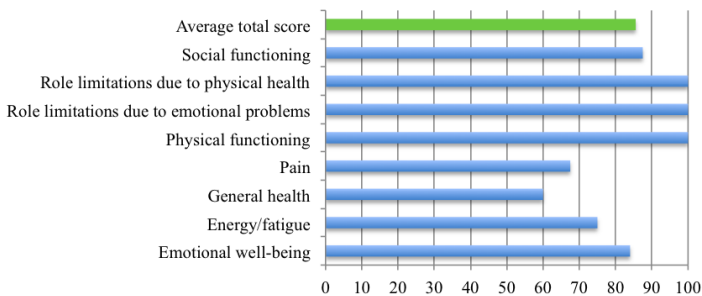


Figure 4: SF-36 Alex

As of the perceived social support, Alex’s self-reported scores are also among the highest in the group. On a range from 0 to 7, he rates the support he gets from friends as 5.75, from family as 4.5 and from a significant other as 6.25. His total perceived score of support according to MSPSS is therefore 16.5 out of a 21 total.

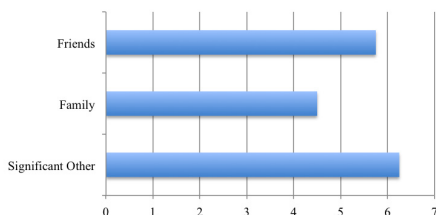


Figure 5: MSPSS Alex

### 5.1.3 Medical Check-Up

The medical check-up confirms Alex’s perceptions of his own health: The physician declares him as anamnesticallly “very healthy“ with no symptoms of stress. On a scale from 0 to 8 to describe functional health, Alex receives a score of 7.71 – the highest score of all entrepreneurs.

### 5.1.4 Interview with Alex

Alex defines health as “feeling good physically and mentally, absence of pain and anything that bothers you“. Working (among others) in the medical field, he makes health an overall priority:

Health is the most important thing as it is the foundation of everything else. Money, status, hobbies, food etc... none of these things can be enjoyed if you are not healthy. If you are not healthy, there is always a strain that you carry with yourself.

In a business context, the same principle applies. The health of your staff is the foundation of everything else. In every business, there are always key people. If these people are not around because of an illness, it can be strongly felt in every aspect of daily business. This also goes for non-key people: Performance always correlates directly with health.

Employees are encouraged to try parts of the offered program (biochemical restoration) themselves, so that they a) know what the company offers to their clients,

and b) get to profit directly from the tips of medical experts regarding their own health.

As of how his job as an entrepreneur impacts his physical, mental and social health, Alex says:

**Physical health:** More freedom to plan my days, thus can e.g. pin in regular gym sessions. Also, because of our medical business, I get to profit from all our services first hand. I did several medical check-ups and know exactly what I should do/eat, and what should be avoided. I take various vitamins/supplements, and get regular massages as well as acupuncture sessions.

**Mental health:** I feel less stressed even though I don't work less, and life hasn't become more safe. I don't have to justify my actions anymore, it is definitely easier to deal with clients than with a boss. There is more motivation, you know why you're doing something and what for. The regular massages and acupuncture sessions also help me unwind. Because of my freedom, I regularly take time off inbetween clients to relax. As an example, I try to go diving as much as I can.

**Social health:** I have the luxury to work with my family as well as a few close friends. Also, even though I am very busy at the moment, everybody knows it's only temporary. It is important for me to keep in close contact with my friends – who are all busy people, by the way.

When asked about his workload and working hours, Alex admits that during his busiest times, he would work 16 hours per day, up to 112 hours per week. However, on average, he probably works 60-70 hours per week including evenings and weekends. He tries to sleep 7 hours every night, and rarely gets to spend time with family or friends (maybe 2 hours per week). Working with his mother and a close friend makes the situation easier. Alex also rarely has any time for himself but he tries to compensate for it by regularly taking time off in-between clients. As his business is project-based, there are always “easy weeks“ without clients when he can leave for a few weeks to go diving, traveling or visiting friends.

Alex identifies the kind of stress he experiences as positive stress. At the same time, he acknowledges that “it could go either way for entrepreneurs“:

If you are a successful entrepreneur and you're making a lot of money, there is a lot of motivation and you are very happy even if you are working crazy hours. But if you are somebody who works like crazy but you are not making money, accumulating more debts every day while worrying about your reputation, then you probably suffer from a lot of distress. In this case, it would be much better if you were an employee with a fixed salary.

Alex does not experience stress often anymore; if it happens, he tries to find the source of the stress and solve it immediately. Also, knowing that his stressful phases are only temporary (e.g. if there is an important client for a few weeks) helps him in the coping process. Having launched a private, high-end clinic for addiction treatment, his team teaches clients how to deal with stress in a proactive way, Alex is therefore very familiar with stress prevention tactics from the best experts in the field. He names the following three crucial points to prevent stress:

- (1) Food supplements & healthy eating habits: As an example, I take Omega3 and 5-HTP. 5-HTP is an amino acid that leads to a low serotonin level in the body, thus keeping the stress level down and making the individual more happy. Eating in the right way affects our well-being 1:1. It takes laboratory tests to see what we really need, and what should be avoided.
- (2) Sleep on a regular basis, and sleep enough.
- (3) Sports.

### **5.1.5 Interviews with Key Informants of Alex**

Alex's business partner (who is also his best friend), one of his employees (a close friend) as well as a good friend have all agreed to be interviewed.

All three respondents mention Alex's unhealthy previous lifestyle as a consultant:

Alex had a very unhealthy lifestyle as a consultant, and he gained a lot of weight during this time. He also seemed exhausted and unhappy in his job, once the initial excitement of traveling a lot, always staying at fancy hotels, dealing with important clients etc. wore off. (business partner)

His business partner further mentions that Alex had suffered from various stress-related physical issues in the past such as sudden loss of vision or strong tensions/pain. Even though Alex was aware of his unhealthy lifestyle, he was not able to change it due to fixed job requirements (e.g. he could not sleep more, he could not avoid late-night dinners with clients etc.).

These negative health experiences as an employee in combination with Alex's new medical project have provided the steppingstone for a completely different lifestyle. According to the three respondents, Alex is now making his health a priority:

He has had many medical tests done, goes to the gym on a regular basis, only eats healthy food and started taking vitamins as well as supplements. All three women praise Alex's discipline when it comes to healthy living. The employee recounts an occasion when Alex attended a concert with her

and four other women; after the concert, all five girls ate pizza while Alex was eating a “fitness plate” (grilled meat with salad).

All three respondents describe Alex as very healthy and very health-conscious. According to the business partner, Alex is not someone to laugh off physical issues as “probably nothing” – if he feels something is not right with his body, he will take it seriously and have it examined by a professional immediately.

As of how Alex’s job as an entrepreneur impacts his physical, mental and social health, all three respondents agree that the impacts have been positive throughout.

| <b>Respondent</b> | <b>Physical Health</b>  | <b>Mental Health</b>  | <b>Social Health</b>  |
|-------------------|---|---|---|
| Business Partner  | has much more freedom, can organize time (e.g. go to gym) as he wants; takes care of himself much better; positive gains of new business (medical check-ups, vitamins, supplements, healthy food); quit “work hard, party harder” lifestyle | knows he will get what he puts into business; motivation/commitment is different; very passionate about his job; gets a lot of enjoyment from working; can pick who he wants to work with (often works with family/friends) | same; has always been very active but always takes time for loved ones                  |
| Employee          | positive gains of new business (medical check-ups, vitamins, supplements, healthy food); can organize time (e.g. go to gym) as he wants   | more flexibility, can make time for small breaks during the day or go on vacations whenever he wants; much happier  | same; actively takes time for people he cares about                                     |
| Friend            | positive gains of new business (medical check-ups, vitamins, supplements, healthy food)   | freedom; can pick who he wants to work with (often works with family/friends); passion; having a lot of fun & enjoyment   | not a lot of time for social life but works in a great team with close friends & family |

Table 5: How Entrepreneurship affects Alex’s Health

Alex’s working hours are estimated at 70 (friend) to 90 (employee) hours per week. The employee explains in this context:

In our business, we guarantee 24h availability for clients which is why working times never completely stop. We would often work from 8.30am until 11pm, Alex would also work on weekends. Even when he wasn’t working, he had to be available which adds additional stress.

As of social time, it is estimated to be between 5-8 hours per week. However, to relativize these numbers, all respondents mention Alex's habit to get away in-between projects: "(...) then again, he might go on a diving trip next week when things are quieter, or he might work from the beach for a few months" (business partner). As claimed by his friend, Alex "can work from anywhere in the world as long as he has Internet", she therefore assumes that "he works as much as he 'has to'". The employee confirms that Alex likes to "disappear for a weekend", and she has also found another source of social support: "(...) let's say he was quite 'active' in the dating scene". His business partner further mentions that Alex's friends are all used to seeing each other irregularly due to their individual busy schedules. However, thanks to social media, "it never feels like you're actually separated as you're constantly talking". She adds another crucial insight:

Alex has always been superbusy with various projects at the same time. He used to be a professional athlete, and he also plays piano on a semi-professional level. When we were in university, he was involved in student initiatives, doing internships, organizing parties, traveling the world, learning new sports etc. Afterwards, as a consultant, he often worked nightshifts and weekends. He is naturally a very active person always looking for where to go and what to do next, it's in his genes.

Even though Alex seems to appear stressed once in a while, it is believed to be positive stress (vs. negative stress as an employee previously). The friend describes the stress as "'self-chosen', positive stress" and "exciting, because he knows that things are moving forward". This type of eustress seems to affect and inspire the entire team: "I would say that Alex – together with the rest of the team – experiences positive stress, as everything is always very exciting and moving forward quickly. You feel like you're part of something special!" (employee)

All in all, Alex is described as a balanced person:

Well, according to "normal people", Alex definitely works too much but for him, it seems to be the perfect amount as he loves what he is doing. He is happy and healthy, and that's what's really important! (friend)

The employee mentions again how their business is very much impacted by "phases". Even though Alex is very busy, he can regularly take time off in-between clients. Also, whenever possible, the entire team profits from in-house offers such as massages, or have their own personal chef cook for them. She emphasizes that despite the workload, they always have a lot of fun. As an entrepreneur herself, Alex's business partner has a different approach to the entire balance discourse:



Personally, as entrepreneurs, I don't think we distinguish between "work" and "not work". We work because we enjoy it.

I think Alex is now in the privileged position to choose what he wants to do, when he wants to do it. So whenever he feels that something is "out of balance", he can easily restore the balance. This is something he wasn't able to do as an employee before, as his lifestyle was much more controlled by the requirements of his previous job.

## **5.2 Ben**

### **5.2.1 Background**

Ben is 34 years old, single, and has a MSc in Civil Engineering. Prior to starting his own business, Ben had worked as a civil engineer and later on project manager in five major companies across Europe for close to ten years. Changing jobs every one to two years, Ben grew restless and could not find any fulfillment. His cousin – an entrepreneur – encouraged him to start selling and buying properties in London with friends. From buying real estate, Ben then moved into vacation rentals. He has started four businesses (importing bean bags from Brazil, e-commerce, carpet-cleaning, real estate) in the meanwhile and is currently managing two: one long-term rental business and one short-term rental business. Ben owns six properties and manages 15; most of his properties are in the UK. He has two business partners, one full-time and two part-time staff members. Furthermore, he has access to a "huge supply chain" which includes a few hundred people (cleaning companies, decorators, electricians etc.) to keep overhead costs as low as possible. All his ventures are self-financed, and his annual profit is around GBP 150 000 (approximately CHF 220 000).

### **5.2.2 Online Surveys**

Ben displays an average total score of 86.805 of the maximum 100 points in the SF-36 online survey, thus reporting the highest overall state of health out of all respondents.

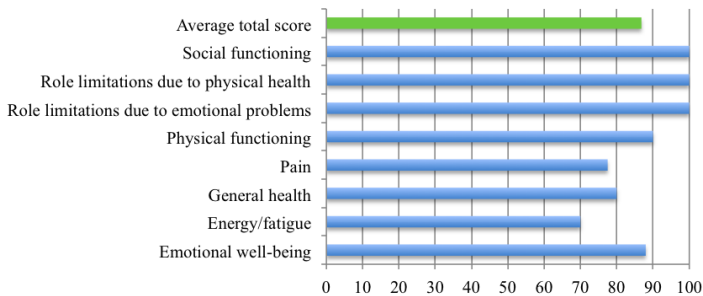


Figure 6: SF-36 Ben

As of the perceived social support, Ben’s self-reported scores are also among the highest in the group. On a range from 0 to 7, he rates the support he gets from friends as 4.75, from family as 5.75 and from a significant other as 6. His total perceived score of support according to MSPSS is therefore 16.5 out of a 21 total, the same as Alex.

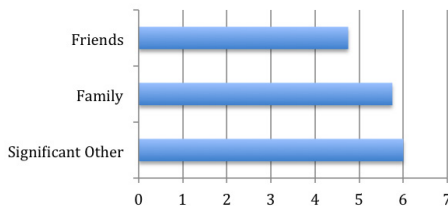


Figure 7: MSPSS Ben

### 5.2.3 Health Check-Up

The medical check-up confirms that Ben is in very good health conditions. On a scale from 0 to 8 to describe functional health, Ben receives a score of 7.57. The only worry expressed by the physician concerns Ben’s nicotine intake: He smokes 10-20 cigarettes per day, has tried to quit a few times in the past and claims that he wants to quit again. The physician warns that nicotine abuse could be a potential stress factor thus needs attention.

### 5.2.4 Interview with Ben

To Ben, health is “when all your mental and physical functions work to perfection“. He started his entrepreneurial activities with a personal development phase:

After ten years of corporate life, he could not find fulfillment in his previous job anymore. His greatest influence at that time was his entrepreneurial cousin, who started showing Ben “a different way of doing things and living“. Together, they attended a lot of self-development seminars and conferences. Ben’s lifestyle went from partying every night, a lot of alcohol, fast food and very little sleep, to a raw food diet, 5-6 small meals a day, fresh juices, regular workouts as well as meditation.

Around the same time, Ben – who used to be a professional skateboarder – discovered kitesurfing and “immediately became hooked“:

I had to find more time for kitesurfing! This is when I decided that I needed more flexibility about when to wake up, when to work etc. I decided that I wanted to be more in charge of my time and my life.

Health is now a priority for Ben, in his personal life as well as in his business:

I used to take my health for granted but started to become more and more aware that a bad lifestyle “messes you up“. I’m now working on making my well-being a priority so that I can continue to enjoy life.

Business is all about thinking and acting, so having me around is key to the functioning of my business. When I’m not healthy, even if I’m present, I won’t be able to negotiate deals in the same way.

Ben also mentions that he truly loves and cares about the people that work for him. He talks to them regularly about healthy nutrition, treats them to massages/juices/salads and tells them not to work in the evening or on weekends. He set up his business in a way so that there are always two people that can do the same job; that way, both people can alternately take time off. Ben emphasizes that offering a good quality of life to his employees is very important to him.

Ben does not think that the way one manages one’s health depends on the job so much as on the person. According to him, “I can have disciplined weeks as an entrepreneur or an employee“. At the same time, he agrees that there are certain job-related factors that affect the entrepreneur’s physical, mental and social health in a unique way:

**Physical health:** Because I have much more freedom as an entrepreneur, I am in full control of my days. It is therefore easier for me to plan in regular muay thai, kitesurfing or massage sessions.

**Mental health:** I am much happier and balanced now.

**Social health:** Not much different than before. You never have time, you take time.

When asked about workload and working hours, Ben sees big changes that have occurred over the last few years. In the first two years, he used to work 10 hours a day, sometimes 6-7 days per week. Now that he has managers that run his daily business, he works 2-3 days per week, around 8 hours each. Sleep is very important to him: "I don't function if I don't sleep enough". Social life is also crucial, as "social life gives sense to life". Ben has always had his friends around who he would usually meet 1-2 times (at least 8 hours) per week, even during his busiest times.

What is special about Ben, out of all eight entrepreneurs, is that he has managed to completely run his business over internet, with local managers in place. He is currently mostly based in Asia, where he spends a few months each on different exotic islands kitesurfing and thaiboxing. Ben now has 4-5 full days of leisure time per week, this allows him to take care of himself and his health in a completely different way. As an example, in order to relax and prevent stress, Ben goes for regular massages "at least once a week, sometimes even 1-2 times per day". It is unlikely that any of the other entrepreneurs in this sample would be able to do the same. Other stress prevention tactics include working out regularly, meditating and making sure he gets sufficient "alone" time (at least a full hour per day) in order to unwind before meeting anybody. During this "me" time, he exercises (not in a group), showers, shaves, plays music or meditates in order to take his mind off work.

Ben states that he has always made sure that he can "get away regularly to kitesurf and relax on the beach". In his first business, he would make big profits and fly away immediately afterwards. In his second business, his work would be impacted by seasons, allowing him to take a few months off during low season.

All in all, Ben's job seems quite pleasant. Despite cases when he might have "difficult clients or tough deadlines", Ben experiences 80% positive stress.

### **5.2.5 Interviews with Key Informants of Ben**

Two of Ben's business partners (both are also friends) and another close friend have agreed to be interviewed.

All three people describe Ben's switch to entrepreneurship as a positive one. According to business partner 2, Ben has become "much sharper, stronger, more goal-oriented and more relaxed towards life". Business partner 2 adds: "He can now

spend his days doing whatever he wants, e.g. going on long holidays or working from the beach”. With both business partners, Ben often talks about health issues, such as how to lead a balanced life, which sports to try, or when to take time off from operational management. Once in a while during busy periods, they also tell each other to “unplug and relax” (business partner 2).

All respondents consider Ben healthy and health-conscious. As of how Ben’s job as an entrepreneur impacts his physical, mental and social health, all three respondents agree that the impacts have been positive throughout.

| <b>Respondent</b>  | <b>Physical Health</b>                                     | <b>Mental Health</b>   | <b>Social Health</b>  |
|--------------------|--|--|---|
| Business Partner 1 | has more time for sports he loves                          | facing challenges himself without the “support” of an employer has made him stronger; loves what he does; full control of his time/life/work | more time to develop relationships; risk that interactions are limited to “not very intellectually demanding people”, lack of intellectual stimulation? |
| Business Partner 2 | freedom (to plan work-outs); no more commuting = more time | doesn’t have to obey orders anymore, is his own boss; less pressure  | freedom to attend whatever social events he wants   |
| Friend             | less fatigue; higher energy                                | happy; less stress; less pressure; more freedom to be creative; full control of his days   | new partnerships & opportunities; more time for himself and social life   |

Table 6: How Entrepreneurship affects Ben’s Health

The only potential downside business partner 1 sees is the fact that Ben’s interactions are now mostly limited to “not very intellectually demanding people” as he works a lot with cleaners, handymen etc. He wonders if Ben is therefore still getting enough “intellectual stimulation” in his daily work environment.

Ben’s working hours are estimated at 40 (friend) to 60 (business partner 2) hours per week. As of social time, it is estimated to be between 8-10 hours a week.

When it comes to the stress Ben experiences at work, the opinions differ. While business partner 1 states that “Ben experiences positive stress that gives him additional energy”, business partner 2 as well as the friend both think that Ben experiences a mix of eustress and distress:

Ben is often stressed. Sometimes eustress when setting up new ventures or managing teams, sometimes distress mainly related with HR, team failures or difficult costumers. The ratio between eustress and distress is probably 60:40. (business partner 2)

Out of three respondents, only one person thinks that Ben has “definitely” found the right balance between work and “not work”. The other two are not sure whether he has found the balance yet but believe that he is “on the right track”.

All respondents admitted during the interviews that they are unsure about Ben’s current lifestyle, as they have not seen him in more recent months.

## **5.3 Chris**

### **5.3.1 Background**

Chris (Sandbox member) is 26 years old, in a relationship, and did his B.A. in Business Administration. Having always enjoyed starting initiatives, Chris has been active all his life. He worked part-time for the Institut für Jungunternehmen (Institute for Young Enterprises) for several years, spent four months in Chile as a project manager of a business incubator, did an internship with a consulting company, worked for an information technology company in Seattle/San Francisco and organized entrepreneurship workshops in South Africa mandated by the Swiss State Secretariat for Education and Research prior to launching his own biotech start-up in the field of cancer treatment. Chris met a lot of entrepreneurs through his work at the Institut für Jungunternehmen (Institute for Young Enterprises) and was inspired by their work; he then met his business partner in Boston and decided to go for it. There are five founding members, while Chris is the CEO. Besides three employed founders, four post-docs are full-time staff members; the venture further works very closely with advisers, university partners, laboratories as well as a scientific advisory board. All five founders invested a total of CHF 100 000, the remaining CHF 3 Mio. were raised from six individual investors. As with most biotech companies, there are no revenues. The goal is to develop the technology until the assets can be sold.

### 5.3.2 Online Surveys

Chris displays an average total score of 80 of a possible 100 points in the SF-36 online survey, thus placing himself in the middle range of all respondents in terms of self-reported overall health.

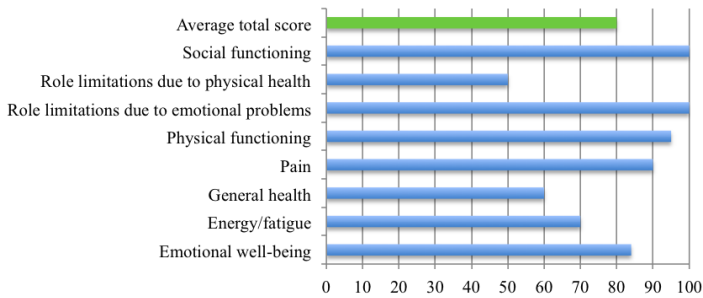


Figure 8: SF-36 Chris

The full mark for the dimension of “social functioning” in SF-36 is further reflected in Chris’ perception of social support. On a range from 0 to 7, Chris rates the support he gets from friends as 6, from family as 5.75 and from a significant other as 7. His total perceived score of support according to MSPSS is therefore 18.75 out of a 21 total – the highest reported score in this group of entrepreneurs.

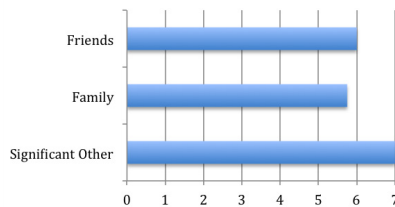


Figure 9: MSPSS Chris

### 5.3.3 Health Check-Up

The medical check-up shows that Chris is (still) considered healthy but needs to pay attention to several physical occurrences such as skin irritations during stressful phases or irregular heart beats. All these conditions are considered stress symptoms, thus need to be taken seriously. On a scale from 0 to 8 to describe functional health, Chris receives a score of 6.42.

### 5.3.4 Interview with Chris

Chris has always enjoyed starting initiatives. With his father being a science teacher, and his brother studying at the ETH (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology), Chris grew up being fascinated by the link between business and science. It is therefore his wish to “do something meaningful for society and create something of value to people in general“. Having been a professional swimmer competing on national level in the past, Chris loves challenges and the sense of achievement once something has been achieved.

To Chris, health is “to feel good physically and mentally“ as well as “to find an inner balance, and to be able to do the things one likes to do“. Having started his biotech venture at age 23, he never thought about his health as a resource for the business until he began to experience physical problems. Chris also admits that health is not a topic discussed at work; even the neurosurgeon in the team does not live a healthy lifestyle as he operates 15 hours every day and smokes a lot.

As of how his job as an entrepreneur impacts his physical, mental and social health, Chris says:

**Physical health:** I need a lot of sports to be able to function well. Ever since I became an entrepreneur, I just don’t have the time anymore for physical activities because my world revolves around the business. After three years of permanent stress, my body started to show signs of exhaustion: I had skin irritations for a while, and I also had back pain. I think that these issues are linked to the pressure I put on myself.

**Mental health:** Once I became an entrepreneur, I was much happier because I was working on my project and following my own vision. On the other hand, as I am a perfectionist, there is also much more pressure from within. I used to be a professional athlete, so the competitive spirit is definitely in me. It is therefore very difficult for me to get detached from work now. Before, as an employee, I did my job but at the end of the day, somebody else was responsible. Now, I am the one in charge and responsible. Even when I’m not working, I’m still working in my head. I cannot leave things behind when I leave the office, I take my challenges and problems everywhere I go.

**Social health:** On the one hand, a lot of networking events and conferences, so you meet a lot of people, and you have a big social network. On the other hand, there is less time for your family & friends. I live with my girlfriend on the weekend but I have less time during the week for friends.

Chris estimates his working hours to be around 60-70 hours per week including evenings and a few hours on the weekend. He tries to sleep 7 hours every night but



it is not always possible. There are times when Chris is only able to sleep 5-6 hours per night, he will then try to make up for the lack of sleep on the weekend. Work also permits him from having an active social life. Chris lives with his girlfriend in Zurich during weekends while working in Geneva from Monday to Friday. Besides the time spent with her, he estimates around 4 hours per week for other friends or family. Chris has another 5-10 hours per week for himself but he prefers social time to alone time as he gets “more energy from being with other people“.

When asked about the type of stress he experiences, Chris shares:

In the beginning, it was mostly eustress. As time went by, there was also a lot of distress.... (communication issues within the team, lack of coordination etc.). I would say that the long-term stress is eustress while the short-term stress linked to single events is distress.

Once stressed out, Chris tries to talk to people in his surroundings including his personal coach. In his opinion, this is the best way to find solutions to problems. He also likes to go out with friends or do sports to clear his mind. These statements in combination with his highest score of perceived social support (MSPSS) seem to confirm that Chris is embedded in strong social networks that not only offer constant support, but that he also actively approaches for support.

### **5.3.5 Interviews with Key Informants of Chris**

Chris’ business partner, his best friend as well as his girlfriend have all agreed to be interviewed.

When asked whether Chris’ lifestyle has changed ever since he became an entrepreneur, his best friend does not consider the changes job-related but age-related:

Yes it has, but not sure whether the lifestyle change is necessarily linked to becoming an entrepreneur... or simply to becoming older. We used to swim every day, and we used to be very active boy scouts... but people become older, and priorities change. We both have a different lifestyle now that allows us to e.g. go to nice restaurants. Also, we used to spend a lot of time on weekends but we don’t anymore as he has a girlfriend now.

On the other hand, his business partner and his girlfriend both see job-related lifestyle changes. According to his girlfriend, Chris went from competitive sports to almost no sports. There was not one hour when he was not checking his emails; even in bed, after the lights were out, Chris was still reading and replying to emails. She talks about “a lot of internal pressure”; as the company was his “baby”, Chris

felt “responsible for everything”. His business partner, an established entrepreneur himself, sees the main difference in having a lot of responsibilities Chris would not have as an employee:

Being an entrepreneur means that you have to take decisions that affect not only you, but also your company and your employees. Working in a stressful environment in a large organization can also be difficult, I agree, but you never jeopardize the life and employment of your team. This is very different in a start-up.

Even though all three respondents describe Chris as (still) healthy and also health-conscious, they agree that he has been neglecting his own health. His business partner identifies a weight gain over the past two years that he thinks might be caused by stress. His girlfriend pictures Chris as health-conscious, “which is why he knows that he needs to make serious changes now, because everything is becoming overwhelming...”

As of how Chris’ job as an entrepreneur impacts his physical, mental and social health, all three respondents agree that the impacts have been mostly negative.

| <b>Respondent</b> | <b>Physical Health</b>  | <b>Mental Health</b>  | <b>Social Health</b>                                     |
|-------------------|---|---|--|
| Business Partner  | put on weight; stress; constant pressure; no time for gym or healthy meals  | a lot of stress; pursues his dreams   | little time for social contacts besides work             |
| Best Friend       | less time for physical activities; skin irritations; unrhythmical heartbeat; permanent stress                       | much more responsibilities (take care of staff); pressure; long working hours; unfocused; can’t detach from work                            | little leisure time; little time for “friends back home” |
| Girlfriend        | from competitive sports to no sports (no time); skin irritations; irregular heartbeats; exhaustion; a lot of stress | responsibilities; role overload; excited in the beginning but became tired and inefficient as time went by; issues falling asleep sometimes | no time left for social contacts                         |

Table 7: How Entrepreneurship affects Chris’ Health

Chris’ working hours are estimated at 60 (best friend, business partner) to 90 (girlfriend) hours per week. While his girlfriend considers hours spent at home replying to work emails also as “working hours”, Chris counts solely the time spent at the

office. His best friend also mentions that when estimating working hours, he did not include time Chris spends traveling to or for work:

He would often travel 4-5x a week between Geneva and Zurich for meetings. Even if he was chatting with friends on the train or reading the news, it is still a 3h trip each time that is not really “quality time“.

Social time is then rather restricted; it is estimated to be between 6 (girlfriend, business partner) and 10 (best friend) hours per week.

All three respondents state in unison that Chris started the venture feeling a lot of eustress that then slowly changed into distress. According to his business partner, Chris is “often stressed”, and it would “appear in his way of talking (usually a lot faster)”. He does not believe that Chris “faces burn-out” but is sure that occupational stress must have had an impact on Chris’ private life.

All three respondents further agree that Chris is not balanced. As stated by his girlfriend, Chris didn’t need a balance in the beginning, because “everything was so exciting”. However, as time went by, Chris became more and more exhausted. He realized himself that he needed to make changes in order to find a balance. For his business partner, not being balanced might be an integral part of being an entrepreneur; it is an experience that he also went through himself:

No (Chris has not found the right balance). Neither did I. Young entrepreneurs often find it difficult to balance work and private life. It is particularly true in fields where “youth“ is not seen as a strength.

## **5.4 Daniel**

### **5.4.1 Background**

Daniel is 28 years old, in a relationship, has a B.A. in Business Administration (exchange semester in Mexico) and is currently pursuing a MBA at an Ivy League school in the US. He did several internships with a major international bank (four months), a communication & strategy consulting company (six months) as well as an airline business in Colombia (one year). After college, Daniel joined one of the most prestigious international consulting companies as a consultant for three years. He started his own entrepreneurial endeavors at age 16 when he launched a web development company that he managed for five years. After launching three companies in the past, Daniel is currently focusing on one. His most recent start-

up creates dessor made from real 24 carat gold. In this business that is partially financed through seed investors, Daniel has one business partner, one full-time employee, three part-time employees and two interns. As the official launch has not taken place yet, there is no profit at this stage.

### 5.4.2 Online Surveys

Daniel displays an average total score of 82.777 of a possible 100 points in the SF-36 online survey, thus placing himself in the mid-range of all respondents in terms of self-reported overall health.

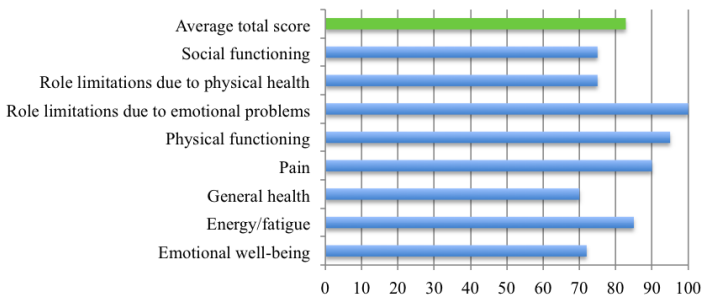


Figure 10: SF-36 Daniel

As of the perceived social support, Daniel's self-reported scores are also in the mid-range. On a range from 0 to 7, Daniel rates the support he gets from friends as 6, from family as 3 and from a significant other as 7. His total perceived score of support according to MSPSS is therefore 16 out of a 21 total.

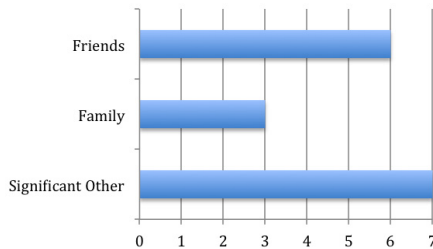


Figure 11: MSPSS Daniel

### 5.4.3 Health Check-Up

According to the medical check-up, Daniel is (still) considered healthy. On a scale from 0 to 8 to describe functional health, Daniel receives a score of 6.43. With a BMI of 25.5, he is slightly overweight as a normal BMI (healthy weight) ranges from 18.5 to 25. Furthermore, the physician showed concern regarding Daniel's alcohol intake which is clearly on the high side and might lead to potential physical consequences in the future.

### 5.4.4 Interview with Daniel

Daniel is a serial entrepreneur who launched his first business at age 16. Despite having had various corporate jobs in the past, he enjoys being an entrepreneur as it allows him to be more flexible, feel more autonomous and be more in control of his time.

Daniel defines health as “a long-term goal of a healthy, functioning body“. At the same time, health is also “a mindset, a lifestyle“ in which healthy nutrition plays a crucial role. Daniel claims that health is important to him:

Without health, nothing works. It is a prerequisite; once you're not healthy, you will immediately feel the impacts on all aspects of life. At the same time, health is essential but not sufficient. You might be healthy but your business might not be.

As of how his job as an entrepreneur impacts his physical, mental and social health, Daniel says:

**Physical health:** no difference

**Mental health:** much better due to more autonomy and more freedom, more motivation

**Social health:** similar but different. When I was working for a company, many of my work colleagues became good friends. As an entrepreneur, the circles I move in have become much more eclectic and more interesting. I now have to actively look for new connections while contacts (as in clients, other work colleagues etc.) were handed to me before.

In general, Daniel believes the entrepreneur's health to be more volatile as entrepreneurship brings more ups and downs, “with extreme situations inbetween that might impact your existence“. Having investors and employees also brings a lot more responsibilities.

Daniel estimates his working hours to be around 40-50 hours per week. He tries to sleep 7 hours every night, and he reserves a lot of time for social life (around 30 hours per week) as well as himself (5-10 hours per week).

As for the type of stress he experiences at work, Daniel describes it as “70% positive and 30% negative“. Negative stress arises when he is not able to change certain things, or when his designer staff is not willing to accept any feedback. Once stressed, Daniel tries to distract himself – e.g. by having dinner with friends – until he is calm again.

#### **5.4.5 Interviews with Key Informants of Daniel**

Daniel’s roommate, his friend as well as his business partner have agreed to be interviewed.

When asked whether Daniel’s lifestyle has changed ever since he became an entrepreneur, all three respondents answer with a clear “no”. His roommate says in this context:

No, he has always been an entrepreneur. I think you cannot learn to be an entrepreneur, you’re either an entrepreneur at heart or you are not. There are certain things that just have to be in your blood.

Even though all three respondents describe Daniel as (still) healthy, he is not considered a health-conscious person. His business partner explains:

I think as of now, Daniel is still healthy. He is also conscious that he is NOT health-conscious. He doesn’t do any sports, he parties and drinks a lot, and sometimes he doesn’t sleep enough. He just recently lived on a “salmon-vodka diet“, I think this shows a glimpse of his lifestyle.

His roommate confirms the party lifestyle but adds: “However, he seems totally fine. He doesn’t seem tired, and he doesn’t seem to experience any physical issues.”

As of how Daniel’s job as an entrepreneur impacts his physical, mental and social health, the respondents don’t see a lot of differences to Daniel’s previous life as a consultant, and if there are any differences, most of them are considered positive.

| <b>Respondent</b> | <b>Physical Health</b>  | <b>Mental Health</b>   | <b>Social Health</b>   |
|-------------------|---|--|--|
| Roommate          | same (used to be consultant); more freedom to plan in gym             | more responsibilities; pressure; satisfaction; freedom; full control of days; own boss   | same; still manages to maintain a busy social life                             |
| Friend            | more healthy because happier (correlation physical and mental health) | more money; happier; positive stress; optimism; pursues dreams; full control of days; sense of achievement; respect for entrepreneurs in society | more difficult to maintain; constant presence at work; difficult to plan ahead |
| Business partner  | more freedom; flexibility   | more freedom; less structure; less guidelines  | same; always had a very active social life                                     |

Table 8: How Entrepreneurship affects Daniel’s Health

His business partner thinks that Daniel’s health does not depend on his career choice but on how much he parties: “He currently goes out 4-5 nights a week; two of these nights he will stay out until anytime between 3 and 7am, the other nights until at least midnight or 1am. Of course, his lifestyle is definitely not sustainable in the long-term...”. His business partner also shares that health is not a topic addressed at work and confesses: “At our age, we don’t really value health, we just take it for granted”. Health is only talked about when they occasionally swear to “never drink again” after a long night out.

Daniel’s working hours are estimated at 60 to 70 hours per week. Having an active social life seems to be a very important part of Daniel’s life, it is estimated to be between 20 hours (roommate, friend) and 35 hours (business partner) per week.

All three respondents state that they have never seen Daniel stressed. His roommate describes him as “excited a lot”, while his friend says:

He is stressed sometimes, but it is always positive stress. He gets more creative when he is stressed, and he works well under pressure.

All three respondents also agree that Daniel is perfectly balanced. His roommate shares:

I think he's living the life he wants to live, and he therefore feels perfectly balanced. I am often amazed at his energy, as he really has non-stop energy. When he worked as a consultant, he would come home every day around midnight or 1am but he was still able to fly somewhere for the weekend to party (where he slept even less). Now he is doing his MBA at an Ivy League university in the US, he runs another start-up successfully and he still parties every day.

According to his friend, who has known him for 16 years, Daniel has always been superactive and always “needs to do something”. If Daniel is not able to work for two weeks, “he becomes very difficult”. His business partner states in this context:

It's not about the hours that you work but about how you feel while working. The quality is much more important than the quantity. If you spend most of your life on something that you're passionate about, it doesn't feel like “work“. If the same amount of hours would go into something that is “shit“, the situation would be very different.

Daniel will always do something that he loves, thus he will always combine life & work.

His business partner raises another crucial point: As both of them are still doing their MBA, the start-up is considered one of their projects. They both invested some money and their leisure time – time that they probably would not have spent in a more productive way anyways – over the past year. Of course, they want the start-up to become successful... but their lives do not depend on it.

## **5.5 Emil**

### **5.5.1 Background**

Emil (Sandbox member) is 27 years old, single, and received his B.A. in Visual Communications after having completed a commercial apprenticeship beforehand. He did two internships (five months + two months) and has been working as a freelance designer for the past six years. His first entrepreneurial project started three years ago as a study project which then turned into a professional publishing company; he later launched a second business selling unique fonts. Emil is currently managing both companies together with his business partner, they do not have any employees but work with various designers. Both ventures have been self-financed and showed a profit of CHF 7000 last year (expected profit this year CHF 15 000-20 000).



### 5.5.2 Online Surveys

Emil displays an average total score of 84.305 of a possible 100 points in the SF-36 online survey, thus placing himself in the top 3 of all respondents in terms of self-reported overall health.

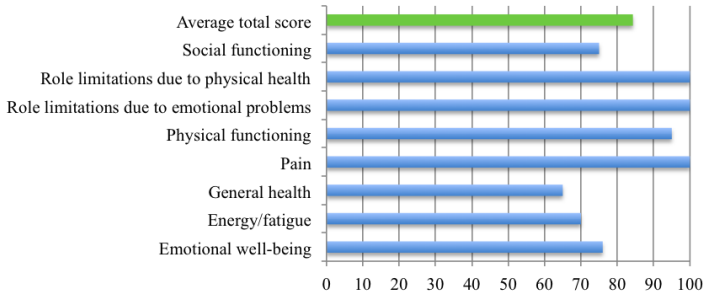


Figure 12: SF-36 Emil

As of the perceived social support, Emil’s self-reported scores are in the lower half of the group. On a range from 0 to 7, he rates the support he gets from friends as 5.75, from family as 4.5 and from a significant other as 5.75. His total perceived score of support according to MSPSS is therefore 15.5 out of a 21 total.

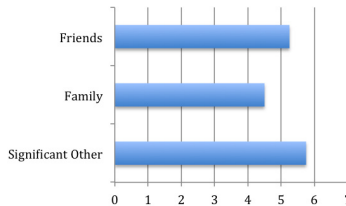


Figure 13: MSPSS Emil

### 5.5.3 Health Check-Up

The medical check-up shows that Emil is in good health conditions. On a scale from 0 to 8 to describe functional health, Emil receives a score of 7. The physician does not detect any factors that could provide evidence for stress.

#### 5.5.4 Interview with Emil

Emil has been a freelancer for the past six years and launched his first business three years ago. During his interview, he mentions that he sees himself more as a freelancer than an entrepreneur. After he finished his studies, his life has started to take on a more regular rhythm. The publishing business as well as the “fonts business“ are both extensions of his freelance activities, Emil therefore does not think that his lifestyle has changed ever since he has become an entrepreneur.

Emil defines health as “to not be sick, to be fit, to be able to run and catch a train“. Health is gradually playing a more and more important role in his life:

Health is becoming more important to me. I become older, and I’m aware that I have to take care of my health in order to live the life that I want. I had a pneumothorax two years ago which is basically a hole in your lungs, I stopped smoking afterwards. For the first time in my life, I had to spend 10 days at the hospital as a patient... that really got me thinking.

Health is not discussed at his company which he manages together with a co-founder.

As of how his job as an entrepreneur impacts his physical, mental and social health, Emil says:

**Physical health:** neutral. I just went biking yesterday for three hours, it is my freedom to work out whenever I want, this is not possible for an employee. It is probably different for “hardcore entrepreneurs“ that have to sit around all day.

**Mental health:** I’m very happy.

**Social health:** also very positive. I meet a lot of new people through work and can expand my circles. I have always been a freelancer, I like the flexibility. If I want to meet somebody for coffee in the afternoon, I do that, and then I keep on working when I get home. That’s the way I work, I work when I want to work.

In terms of workload and working hours, Emil admits that he is very lazy and tries to work as little as possible. Having very low living costs, he can survive well on a weekly work pensum of around 30 hours. Emil needs to sleep at least 8 hours every night; he never uses an alarm clock as sleep is very important to him. Social time is also quite generous as Emil reserves around 15 hours every week for friends and family, he then has around 2-3 hours every day for himself.

According to Emil, stress is always negative. Sometimes he has tight deadlines,

some other times there is a lot of pressure. However, this is unrelated to being an entrepreneur as there is always external and internal pressure. In order to avoid stress, besides trying to work as little as possible, Emil creates realistic deadlines. For him, stress is “the most efficient tool to work better“.

### 5.5.5 Interviews with Key Informants of Emil

Emil’s friend, his brother as well as his business partner have all agreed to be interviewed.

All three respondents think that Emil’s lifestyle has changed for the better, but most of them don’t think the changes are connected to him becoming an entrepreneur. Both his friend and his brother link the changes to finishing school and starting to work freelance. His brother sees a second large change occur when Emil started going to an office instead of working at home. His business partner believes that the success Emil has had based on his own initiatives has given him more self-confidence and happiness.

When it comes to Emil’s health, the respondents differ in their opinions. While his friend thinks he is healthy and health-conscious, his brother and his business partner do not agree completely. According to his business partner, Emil is socially and mentally healthy but should engage in more physical activities and become more health-conscious. His brother considers Emil a somewhat health-conscious individual who has started to do more exercises and eat better in the past 18 months:

Do I consider him healthy? Hard to say, because it always depends whom I’m comparing him to. Compared to the average (or median) western adult: yes, he’s healthy. Compared to the median 27 year old: probably on the slightly unhealthy side. But: He doesn’t smoke (anymore), he doesn’t drink that much, he’s only slightly overweight, and he gets at least some regular exercise.

As of how Emil’s job as an entrepreneur impacts his physical, mental and social health, all three respondents see no impact or a positive impact.

| Respondent | Physical Health             | Mental Health                        | Social Health                                  |
|------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| Friend     | more freedom to plan in gym | full control of days/ work; own boss | flexibility; can see friends whenever he wants |

| <b>Respondent</b> | <b>Physical Health</b>                     | <b>Mental Health</b>   | <b>Social Health</b>   |
|-------------------|--|--|--|
| Brother           | flexibility; time for sport during the day | cannot detach from work  | same; always had large networks & flexibility                    |
| Business Partner  | same                                       | happier; more self-confidence; very optimistic; a lot of responsibility; periods of unhealthy stress | flexibility; can see friends whenever he wants; more self-esteem |

Table 9: How Entrepreneurship affects Emil’s Health

Here as well, the question could have been about Emil’s job as a freelancer and the impacts on his health – the answers would probably have been the same.

Emil’s working hours are estimated to be around 35 to 50 hours per week. His brother explains in this context:

Strict work hours (means: really concentrated on the work): maybe 35?

Normal work hours (means: working like average workers in most other jobs, where “everyone” spends some time on facebook, reading twitter or texting etc): maybe 50

All respondents believe that Emil has “a lot” of leisure time to spend with family and friends, his brother estimates at least 15 hours of social time per week.

When it comes to stress, his friend – who is also a graphic designer – states that in the design field, everybody is planning their work according to a finish point so there is always a certain level of stress. She would describe it as eustress. His brother does not see Emil stressed often. He would define the stress as distress but does not think this stress is related to being an entrepreneur. Emil’s business partner agrees that Emil is rarely distressed and usually “remains calm due to his generally very pragmatic mindset”. Furthermore, because Emil has a business partner, they can discuss problems together and share responsibilities to cope with stress.

When it comes to balance, the general impression is that Emil needs to draw stricter lines between “work” and “non-work”. His friend thinks that it is hard to keep a balance when somebody is starting a business but in Emil’s case, she thinks that he has found a good balance for himself. Emil’s brother and business partner both disagree in this point. According to his business partner, the fact that Emil is always working on the computer where he has constant internet access could be a problem: “It is pretty hard to turn your attention completely from work as the line between work and non-work seems to be very blurry more often than not”. Emil’s brother

supports this view:

I think this is in general an unsolved problem, as you will never have a real work-life balance... especially not as a freelancer or entrepreneur. There are always new or unexpected situations that force you to adapt and find a new balance.

In Emil's case, it's not bad, but I'd recommend an even stricter separation between work time and leisure time. If you work, then work very concentrated on the task at hand and don't let "the rest of the internet/real life" distract you. And if you're done with work for the day (or for the moment at least), then really enjoy the time off.

## **5.6 Fabian**

### **5.6.1 Background**

Fabian (Sandbox member) is 31 years old, single, and completed his B.A. in Banking & Finance. Prior to starting his first business, he did an internship in China (4 months), was occupied at Sotheby's (9 months) and worked part-time in Private Equity (1.5 years). Despite the will of his father – an established entrepreneur himself – who advised Fabian not to become an entrepreneur but lead a stable life instead, Fabian started his first company at age 21. After studying in China for one year, Fabian's first venture collaborated with major Swiss companies, providing guest services to their Chinese visitors or clients in Switzerland. Fabian has started 16 companies (all in the fields of e-commerce) ever since and currently manages five within a holding structure together with a business partner. All in all, Fabian's holding employs seven full-time employees. Three ventures are self-financed, one is partially financed and another one completely financed by investors. For the last year, the holding showed a loss of CHF 20 000. However, according to Fabian, this is the general business strategy in order to avoid taxes. As soon as one business is profitable, the profit will immediately be put into the creation of a new venture. Fabian is very active in the Swiss start-up scene and has started investing himself.

### **5.6.2 Online Surveys**

Fabian displays an average total score of 62 of a possible 100 points in the SF-36 online survey, thus reporting the lowest overall state of health out of all respondents.

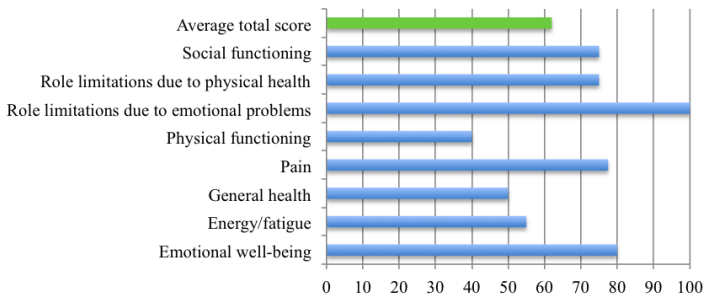


Figure 14: SF-36 Fabian

As of the perceived social support, Fabian’s self-reported scores are the second lowest in the group. On a range from 0 to 7, Fabian rates the support he gets from friends as 5.25, from family as 5 and from a significant other as 4.5. His total perceived score of support according to MSPSS is therefore 14.75 out of a 21 total.

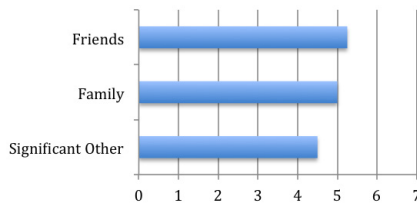


Figure 15: MSPSS Fabian

### 5.6.3 Health Check-Up

The medical check-up proves Fabian to be healthy but at least 12kg overweight with a BMI of 29.1. The normal BMI range goes from 20 to 25, everything above 25 is considered overweight with a BMI over 30 being obese. Despite having lost 12kg in the past five months, Fabian’s weight is still very close to being obese.

On a scale from 0 to 8 to describe functional health, Fabian receives a score of 7 – mostly thanks to the drastic measures he has taken in the past few months. The physician describes Fabian’s previous health state “more around a 5” and praises Fabian’s commitment to change his lifestyle for the sake of his health.

## 5.6.4 Interview with Fabian

Fabian started his first company at age 21, against his father's will. His father – who is an entrepreneur himself – did not want his children to choose the entrepreneurial path as “there is no steady income, you're always on the go, rarely at home, and there are so many ups and downs... like a rollercoaster“. Nonetheless, Fabian has launched and built 16 companies in the last decade and is now an established entrepreneur.

For Fabian, health is “a life without issues and restrictions“. His lifestyle has changed a lot in all aspects, he is “in a constant process to change for the better“. When Fabian was younger, time was not an issue – it is now his most valuable possession. Not only does he try to run his businesses with minimal resources, he also took minimalism to his private life:

As an example: I don't have a lot of things anymore, I have pretty much everything with me that I need. Within 30 seconds, I could pack for a three months trip. I threw away most of my cutlery, I now have four forks and knives. In 99.9%, I only need a fork. When I have a date, I need two sets of cutlery. I might have a small dinner with three friends and use my entire cutlery. As soon as there are more than four people, I might as well throw a party, and then everybody can use plastic cutlery. Minimalism also regarding food and drinks: I only drink pure water and espresso now.

Also, I used to be quite fashion-conscious. Now I only own white and blue shirts. My business partner used to drive a Porsche, now he doesn't drive anymore. Isn't it strange that a single person lives in a 3.5 rooms apartment, when this person is working all day long, sits in one room for 15min and sleeps 8h in the other room? Isn't this a waste of resources? I would never buy a villa, even if I had millions. Simplicity and minimalism are key, the entire mindset has to change.

For a long time, Fabian did not realize the importance of health (which is also visible in his SF-36 and medical check-up results). According to him, “bad health is part of being cool, the 'work hard, play harder' mentality reflects this“. A few months ago, Fabian watched a TED talk about a doctor who was able to cure her own multiple sclerosis through nutrition – this really got him thinking:

Ever since then, I've changed my lifestyle. I am extremely disciplined during the week, and extremely excessive (partywise = little sleep, a lot of alcohol) on weekends. I try to do 50-60min of cardio every day, I ride my bike and I walk 1-2h on weekends. I drink a lot of water, espresso, green tea and coke zero. Food-wise, I eat salad, chicken, meat, vegetables, nuts and not too many carbs. I have a weakness for maltesers but I now re-package

one bag into four smaller bags, so I can eat one for each day. I have lost 12kg since last December this way. I really want to make major changes this time as I have always had a lot of ups and downs with my body. I used to be skinny, then I started to eat everything at any time... too much pizza, french fries etc... and I gained 24kg. I lost the weight, and I gained it again. A vicious cycle.

Fabian's business partner played a major role in this health transition. He is a health fanatic, a personal trainer and a triathlon competitor who works out every day for 1.5 hours and only eats vegetables, white meat, nuts as well as fruits. He often talks about health issues at work, forcing Fabian to listen and to reflect upon his own health.

As of how his job as an entrepreneur impacts his physical, mental and social health, Fabian says:

**Physical health:** Is often neglected; we entrepreneurs tend to sit too much, eat too much processed food and spend too much time in front of the computer. However, I think investment bankers, consultants etc. have a similar lifestyle.

**Mental health:** Is probably similar to an employee (I'm still thinking bankers as I used to study Banking & Finance). On the one hand, you work a lot, you might often be unfocused and there is permanent stress. On the other hand, you can develop yourself further, you have a lot of freedom and you can pursue your dreams. There is a study that showed that most people die in the first and the 65th year of their lives. After retirement, many people don't see a purpose for living anymore. People want to be inspired, they need to have something to do. Entrepreneurs are in constant need of inspirations and problems that they can solve.

**Social health:** My social health is probably better now. Entrepreneurs have to be able to network and sell; I am always in touch with employees, clients, investors, collaboration partners etc. Maybe my social interactions don't focus on my family or previous friends, but nonetheless, I feel socially very healthy.

When asked about his workload and working hours, Fabian lists a very detailed and structured daily plan that he adheres to five days per week. He also works on weekends, but usually around 3-4 hours on Saturdays and 6-7 hours on Sundays. His weekly workload adds up to approximately 70 hours. Fabian tries to sleep at least 7 hours every night, sometimes he also adds an afternoon nap. Social time with family or friends is generously calculated at around 20 hours per week. As for time for himself, Fabian admits that he used to not reserve any time for himself but



now tries to take at least 3 hours per week.

Fabian identifies the kind of stress he experiences as a mix of positive and negative stress. If he goes to bed and cannot “switch off” the stress, it must be distress. Distress usually occurs when the existence (of Fabian as an entrepreneur, the company or the employees) is affected; these issues can usually not be solved within a day. Fabian actively tries to prevent stress by planning well in advance: “My agenda is sacred, my emails are sacred; I use a lot of tools. Nobody is superman, nobody can do everything alone.” If he is stressed, he tries to write down all the negative thoughts to get them out of his head.

### **5.6.5 Interviews with Key Informants of Fabian**

Fabian’s business partner, his brother as well as a good friend have all agreed to interviews.

All three of them mention that Fabian’s lifestyle has not changed much ever since he became an entrepreneur as he has always had a “very active” and “thrifty” lifestyle. According to his brother, Fabian has become more flexible over the years, and his networks have expanded drastically. At the same time, Fabian’s lifestyle as well as his health are subordinate to his job. His friend adds that Fabian used to be quite fit (“in the context of his general biological disposition”) but then gained 20+kg of which he has lost 10-12kg again in the past months. However, Fabian’s friend does not think that these developments are linked to being an entrepreneur.

All three respondents agree that Fabian has become healthier as well as more health-conscious in recent months but is not quite there yet. His brother says in this context:

On a scale from 1 to 10, I would give him a 5 or a 6. He used to completely neglect his physical health but things are getting better now. Ever since that YouTube video, he started to cook himself and eat a lot of vegetables... so he’s working on becoming more healthy and health-conscious.

His business partner adds that Fabian needs to loose another 15kg; he also smokes and drinks regularly, and does not watch his nutrition as much as he should.

As of how Fabian’s job as an entrepreneur impacts his physical, mental and social health, the respondents give mixed replies.

| Respondent       | Physical Health   | Mental Health   | Social Health  |
|------------------|---|---|--|
| Business Partner | more freedom (e.g. to plan in gym)  | own boss; no company politics/inefficiencies etc.; self-inflicted stress                            | more difficult; takes coordination; a lot of time alone; unpredictable schedule                      |
| Friend           | same  | satisfaction; entrepreneurship requires a lot of mental strength & determination, made him stronger | gets to interact with even more people   |
| Brother          | difficult to maintain; no structure; health is not a priority as long as “everything works”; not athletic anymore | happier; self-fulfillment; passion  | easier to maintain; social network has expanded drastically; less time for family & previous friends |

Table 10: How Entrepreneurship affects Fabian’s Health

Fabian’s working hours are estimated to be between 50 (friend, business partner) to 60 (brother) hours per week. Social life is considered “very important” (friend) for Fabian and estimated to be between 5 to 15 hours per week. According to his brother, most of Fabian’s business meetings are also with friends, as “many of his collaboration partners have become friends in the meanwhile”.

All three respondents describe the kind of stress that Fabian might experience as mostly eustress. His brother states that Fabian is “always full of energy”, and he has never seen him stressed in a negative way. While his friend fully agrees, his business partner shares that Fabian rarely experiences distress. However, if he is stressed, he usually starts to talk a lot and loses focus.

All in all, Fabian is described as a balanced person. His business partner talks about a “process” and adds: “The amount of time he spends working is probably the same but he is able to handle stress much better.” According to his brother, Fabian has found a balance between “work” and “not work” but still has a “coordination problem”:

Health is not completely integrated in his daily life yet. He should fix appointments for sport in his agenda, and he should move more in general instead of sitting in front of his computer all day. He has to actively fight his excess weight.

## 5.7 Gabriel

### 5.7.1 Background

Gabriel is 28 years old, married, and in the possession of a B.A. in Business Administration as well as a M.A. in Strategy & International Management. Prior to starting his first company, he volunteered for one year in Hungary, worked part-time in consulting (1 year and 5 months) and did three internships (4 months in Germany, 6 months in China, another 3 months in Germany). In the months leading to the completion of his Master's Degree, Gabriel actively looked for ideas on what he could be doing next. He went to several recruiting events, took part in consulting weekends and attended a few start-up events. It was at one of those start-up events where he met his business partner, and they very quickly decided to start their own company. In the past three years, they have set up four companies with two business concepts; for each business concept, there is a company in Germany and a separate one in Switzerland. They gave up one business concept (online restaurant booking) after six months and are now managing two companies with the same business concept (online store for customized shirts). There is one full-time employee, four part-time employees and one intern supporting them. The venture is financed through crowd-funding, an University in Germany as well as a Chamber of Commerce. Even though the business had revenues of CHF 100 000 last year, it is not making profit yet.

### 5.7.2 Online Surveys

Gabriel displays an average total score of 70.555 of a possible 100 points in the SF-36 online survey, thus reporting the second lowest overall state of health out of all respondents.

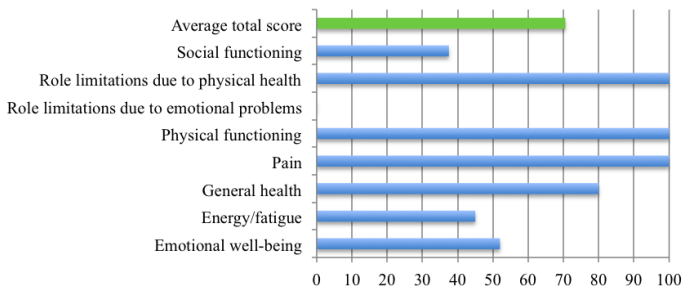


Figure 16: SF-36 Gabriel

As of the perceived social support, Gabriel’s self-reported scores are the lowest in the entire group. On a range from 0 to 7, Gabriel rates the support he gets from friends as 5, from family as 2 and from a significant other as 3.5. His total perceived score of support according to MSPSS is therefore 10.5 out of a 21 total.

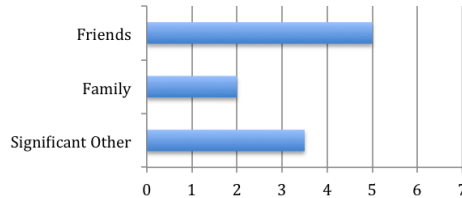


Figure 17: MSPSS Gabriel

### 5.7.3 Health Check-Up

According to the medical check-up, Gabriel shows the lowest health score of all entrepreneurs. On a scale from 0 to 8 to describe functional health, he receives a score of 6.14. The physician considers Gabriel’s fitness per se “average“ but is worried about other factors such as exhaustion, trouble falling asleep, irregular unhealthy meals etc. that might lead to serious health problems in the future.

### 5.7.4 Interview with Gabriel

For Gabriel, the dive into entrepreneurship also implied “a jump away from being a student“:

Suddenly, you have to get up in the morning. Why do students get up at 6pm? Because Migros closes at 6.30pm. As a student, there are busy periods before exams but besides those, everything is quite relaxed. You have your routine, you have a lot of time for sports, and you can party a lot.

Once Gabriel became an entrepreneur, these times were definitely over. Suddenly, he had two companies and employees, there was a lot of pressure and he had to deliver results as quickly as possible.

It’s not just a pretty business plan anymore, this is real. Raising funds, creating a website, writing and implementing marketing strategies, generating a cash flow etc. etc. It was a huge adjustment for me.

I slept very little in the beginning. The time I now spend in front of the

computer is fivefold, I probably work 14h in front of a screen every day. I barely go anywhere; sometimes, when I go to a social event such as my grandmother's birthday last week, I cannot follow conversations anymore because my thoughts automatically wander back to the business. I'm not present anywhere else, I always think about the company... and I have to. If I don't think about it, who else will?

Gabriel defines health as "your body is fit enough to support all your mental activities, no physical or mental restrictions". Ever since having become an entrepreneur, Gabriel has gained 5-7kg. He tries to fight the excess weight as physical health is very important to him, but the work-out he does (regular water polo) does not seem enough to balance all the time he spends sitting. Gabriel states during the interview: "I really want to get my body back". According to him, his mental health is important for the company but his physical health directly links to his mental health, "there is an interdependence between both". A certain degree of physical health is therefore a prerequisite in order to be efficient. Nonetheless, health is not a topic discussed at work. As Gabriel and his business partner have become friends in the meanwhile, they might say to each other "I'm going for a run" or "I need to clear my mind" but that is as far as their health-concerned conversations will go.

As of how his job as an entrepreneur impacts his physical, mental and social health, Gabriel says:

**Physical health:** In theory, I am in control of my time so it is my decision if I want to focus on my health or not. In practice, business comes first, so I cannot work out 5x a week because I will be missing too much work time that way. Employees are able to plan better, they can work out every day but they cannot go to the gym at 2pm. I can go to the gym at 2pm but I don't, because I have a company to run. So even though you are free, the freedom is different. It's a question of setting priorities, everybody has the same amount of time available.

**Mental health:** My job requires 80-90% of my mental resources, there is not much left at the end of the day. I have to be present at all times, take charge of my employees and avoid making mistakes... if something doesn't go well, I'm constantly asking myself "what could I have done better or different?". I can always find mistakes, I can always find things I need to improve. Of course, depending on your job, you also have a lot of pressure such as in banking or consulting; e.g. in consulting, it's "up or out". However, there are always periods where you can relax and unwind, be it on weekends or inbetween projects. As an entrepreneur, you can never completely "unplug". Also, our opportunity costs are very high. For the longest time, we worked without a salary.

**Social health:** I didn't handle my social health well. In Switzerland, I am

completely alone, we communicate over phone and skype. There are not too many interactions. During the week, it is simply impossible for me to meet people as I don't have time. I try to see friends and family on evenings and during the weekend, though.

When asked about his workload and working hours, Gabriel estimates at least 70 hours per week including evenings and weekends. He tries to sleep 7-8 hours every night, but admitted during his medical check-up to the physician that he often has problems falling asleep as he is constantly thinking about business issues. Including regular water polo practice and time spent with his wife, Gabriel estimates social time of around 20 hours per week. He also tries to take 1 hour every day for himself, roughly 10 hours per week.

Gabriel feels very stressed. In the beginning, he experienced mostly eustress which then gradually turned into mostly distress:

I think we were quite naive in the beginning; we had a lot of ideas and wanted to realize all of them. I never had a lot of social support, not even from the family.

This lack of social support is also reflected in his very low MSPSS score of 10.5 out of a 21 total. Gabriel admits that he is too reactive when it comes to stress – he should do more to prevent stress in the first place. When he is stressed, he usually takes a few minutes to calm down, to identify the stress factors and to break down his work into smaller tasks that are more manageable. In the evenings, Gabriel likes to sit on the sofa and read, preferably something that does not have anything to do with work. Sometimes, he likes to lie by himself on the terrace. Sometimes, he drinks a glass of whiskey. Gabriel also enjoys watching soccer as he does not have to “think anything“ and can thus “completely unwind for two hours“.

### **5.7.5 Interviews with Key Informants of Gabriel**

Gabriel's business partner, one of his employees and a good friend have all agreed to be interviewed.

Both his business partner and his friend mention drastic changes in Gabriel's lifestyle ever since he has become an entrepreneur. According to his friend, Gabriel needs to plan everything far in advance as there is less structure in a start-up. Due to various irregular cycles at work, Gabriel's personal life, his sleeping patterns as well as his meal times are all subordinate to his job. In addition, Gabriel has more responsibilities and more financial pressure; his entire quality of life has changed

together with his priorities. For his business partner, the main differences in Gabriel’s lifestyle are linked to more pressure and more stress. Entrepreneurial stress is very different than student stress, as it is constant. Furthermore, the entrepreneur always has to do “20-30 things at the same time”.

All three respondents describe Gabriel as a health-conscious individual that “takes care of himself, does sports and eats healthy food” (friend). While both his business partner and his friend also consider Gabriel healthy, his employee replied to the question whether Gabriel is healthy with a clear “no”.

As of how Gabriel’s job as an entrepreneur impacts his physical, mental and social health, all three respondents agree that the impacts have been mostly negative.

| <b>Respondent</b> | <b>Physical Health</b>  | <b>Mental Health</b>   | <b>Social Health</b>  |
|-------------------|---|--|---|
| Business Partner  | in theory; more freedom (e.g. to go running in the afternoon), in practice: work is priority; can’t leave staff | difficult; can never detach; worries; fear of failure; pressure; own boss; control; freedom; happier; more fulfilled | more difficult; too much work, priorities change  |
| Friend            | worse; less time, your own interests follow the needs of the business   | much better; freedom; control  | neglected due to other priorities   |
| Employee          | difficult to maintain; constant pressure; other priorities  | difficult; responsibilities; pressure; entrepreneurs define themselves through their business                        | very difficult; most of energy and time goes into business, no time left for other things |

Table 11: How Entrepreneurship affects Gabriel’s Health

Gabriel’s working hours are estimated at 60+ (employee) to 90 (friend) hours per week. Social time with family and friends is therefore very limited; his business partner estimates around 6 hours every week including water polo, not including the time Gabriel spends with his wife every day. His employee estimates the time Gabriel spends with his family and friends (including the time spent at home with his wife) to be around 10-15 hours, his friend’s estimation is slightly higher at 15-20 hours.

All respondents consider Gabriel “very stressed”. While his friend thinks the stress is “70% positive, 30% negative”, the employee thinks the distribution of eustress versus distress is “50:50”. According to his business partner, the type of stress Ga-

briel experiences is solely distress: “He is sometimes moody and almost ‘defeated’. There is a lot of pressure, we are all afraid of failure.”

None of the respondents consider Gabriel balanced:

No, there is too much work. Gabriel knows that he is not spending enough time with other people, but the pressure is too big, there is no other way right now. (business partner)

Nevertheless, both the friend and the employee notice improvements in this regard:

He knows that there has to be a balance but he is not balanced. He feels too committed to the business to say ‘no’ once in a while. It is getting better though, it used to be more extreme in the past... (employee)

## **5.8 Hugo**

### **5.8.1 Background**

Hugo is 27 years old, in a relationship, and has completed a commercial apprenticeship in combination with advanced training in IT. Before launching his company, Hugo spent two years working for a credit management company, did an internship with Google (3 months) and worked in private banking for three years. Unhappy with his monotonous banking job, he started a high-end, private concierge service company three years ago. He has one business partner, one full-time and six part-time staff members. The venture is self-financed and exhibits an annual profit of CHF 40 000-60 000.

### **5.8.2 Online Surveys**

Hugo displays an average total score of 78.194 of a possible 100 points in the SF-36 online survey, thus placing himself in the lower mid-range of all respondents in terms of self-reported overall health.



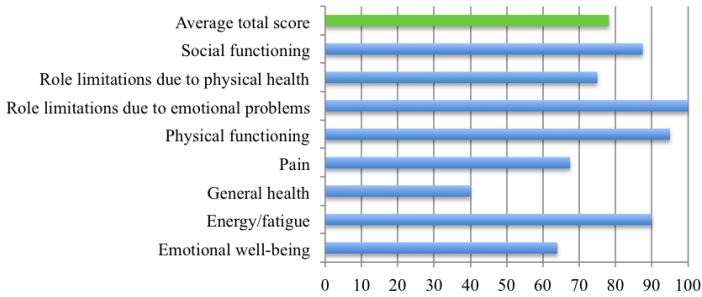


Figure 18: SF-36 Hugo

As of the perceived social support, Hugo’s self-reported scores are among the highest in the group. On a range from 0 to 7, he rates the support he gets from friends as 5.75, from family as 5.5 and from a significant other as 5.75. His total perceived score of support according to MSPSS is therefore 17 out of a 21 total.

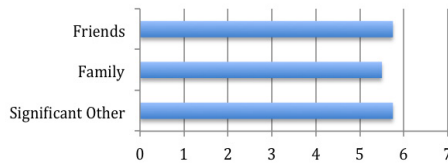


Figure 19: MSPSS Hugo

### 5.8.3 Health Check-Up

According to the medical check-up, Hugo is in very good health conditions with no symptoms of stress. On a scale from 0 to 8 to describe functional health, Hugo receives a score of 7.57.

### 5.8.4 Interview with Hugo

Hugo shares in his interview that he used to be very unhappy in his previous corporate job, he felt like a “number“ and a “marionette“. The culture was unpleasant, and he could not find any fulfillment there. Once he launched his own venture, a lot of things have changed:

I used to be sick more often – ever since I’ve become an entrepreneur three years ago, I’ve been sick once. I have a lot more motivation, I feel like there

have only been positive changes. There was a lot of external pressure at the bank, their expectations were simply not realistic. I didn't feel comfortable, I felt observed, and I didn't like my team. I think all these negative impacts on my mental health back then affected my physical health: I was sick a lot, I had headaches all the time, and I felt weak. I was making a lot of money and to compensate my miserable time at work, I partied a lot. There was a lot of alcohol and little sleep.

As an entrepreneur, Hugo has a lot of freedom now and is able to do whatever he wants, whenever he wants. He goes on vacations more often and does not have to ask first, if he is allowed to go on vacation. Whenever he can, Hugo flies to Dubai where he can relax the best. He does not party anymore and rarely drinks alcohol, Hugo says in this context: "I don't need it anymore." At the same time, this newly-found freedom comes at a price: "I have a 24h job now. As our business is global, I often talk to people in Singapore in the middle of the night... but that's part of the concierge service."

Hugo defines health as "no suffering, no pain; to feel good". Health is "quite important" for Hugo – as the "head of the business", he has to be fit. He wants to be part of "everything", which can be "a problem at times".

As of how his job as an entrepreneur impacts his physical, mental and social health, Hugo shares double sided consequences of entrepreneurship:

**Physical health:** Sometimes I have back pain because I sit so much; however, generally speaking, I would say my physical health has improved.

**Mental health:** I am much more motivated, I can sleep better, and I feel better because I can help other people. In my previous job, I didn't think all the things I was forced to do were ethically speaking correct... but I had to do them. I don't have these issues anymore. Both of our dogs are at our office, so I can simply leave the office for a one hour walk during the day, it's wonderful! Also, I like how I can change my priorities whenever I have to. As an example, my father was recently at the hospital for a longer period, and I was able to visit him every day from 3pm to 8pm. I was available via email but not via phone, and everything worked out fine. I wouldn't be able to do this as an employee. However, at the same time, sometimes I have existential fears. I didn't have them before, but I guess they're linked to the responsibilities of being an entrepreneur... I really want to leave Switzerland and move to Dubai.

**Social health:** I find it much better. My best friends don't live in Switzerland. Now that I'm an entrepreneur, I can skype with them during the day, this was not possible at the bank, everything was blocked. Also, it's easier for me to meet up with friends in London, Dubai and Germany. I can take

a few days off and combine business with pleasure, there are always things you can do in each city business-wise.

When asked about his workload and working hours, Hugo estimates 12 hours per day, 7 days per week – leading to a total of around 84 weekly hours. With his particular type of business, 24 hours availability is expected; clients from Asia or the US might call in the middle of the night with a request. Hugo lives with his girlfriend and spends most of the time with her as well as their dogs, he has an extra 4-6 hours per week for family and other friends. As for time for himself, Hugo guesses around one hour per day.

Hugo identifies the kind of stress he experiences as a 50:50 mix of positive and negative stress. Every time he gets a request, it “pushes” him to find solutions for the client. At the same time, there is distress when Hugo does not know how things will continue for his company, whether he will be able to find more clients or pay his staff.

Whenever Hugo feels stressed, he goes for a walk with his dogs. He listens to music and tries to unwind.

### **5.8.5 Interviews with Key Informants of Hugo**

Hugo’s business partner, one of his employees as well as a friend all agreed to be interviewed. Their opinions differ greatly throughout the interviews.

When asked whether Hugo is healthy and health-conscious, none of the respondents is able to offer a clear answer. His friend says “yes and no to both”; even though Hugo “doesn’t have physical issues per se besides sweat attacks”, he does not seem “very healthy”. Hugo started to take the supplement 5-HTP a while ago, which “seems to have helped a little in the coping of stress”. His friend further adds that Hugo’s girlfriend – who is a vegetarian – forces him to eat healthy food at home but it is not believed that Hugo himself makes his health a priority. According to his employee, Hugo is healthy but not health-conscious. His business partner also says “partially yes to both”. In his opinion, Hugo could take better care of himself both sport-wise as well as nutrition-wise.

As of how Hugo’s job as an entrepreneur impacts his physical, mental and social health, the responses are rather critical.

| <b>Respondent</b> | <b>Physical Health</b>             | <b>Mental Health</b>   | <b>Social Health</b>  |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|--|---|
| Business Partner  | very difficult;<br>often neglected | more responsibilities;<br>a lot of things will be<br>done for you as em-<br>ployee, now you have<br>to manage everything<br>yourself incl. your<br>health; role overload | more difficult; less<br>time; difficult to plan,<br>work is unpredictable           |
| Friend            | same                               | worse; pressure;<br>strain; a lot of denial  | same; doesn't have<br>a lot of friends and<br>mostly spends time<br>with girlfriend |
| Employee          | no difference to<br>being employee | negative impact;<br>a lot of pressure;<br>responsibilities   | no difference; likes<br>to be at home with<br>girlfriend and dogs                   |

Table 12: How Entrepreneurship affects Emil's Health

While Hugo paints a rather positive picture of how entrepreneurship impacts his health, his environment seems to mostly focus on the negative aspects – his friend even goes as far as calling Hugo to be in “a lot of denial“.

The three respondents give rather different replies when asked about Hugo's working hours. His business partner estimates between 70-80 hours per week, his employee guesses 40-50 hours and his friend stands somewhere in the middle with his statement that Hugo works “not more than 8 hours a day, so 56 hours per week”. All respondents mention that Hugo works in the evening as well as on the weekend.

As of stress, the business partner states that there is definitely a lot of stress in the concierge business as there are a lot of bookings and a lot of short-term changes. He describes their job as being similar to a broker: As the market changes hourly, the concierge has to be able to react upon alterations rapidly. Furthermore, there are no time limits in a global market. Some bookings come in the middle of the night from clients in Asia or the Americas, and the concierge has to act immediately. With regard to the distribution of eustress and distress, his business partner shares Hugo's perception:

I would say it is a mix of eustress and distress, with the positive stress being more important. You are your own boss, and you have the freedom to do whatever you want to do. At the same time, there are always factors that you cannot control. Sometimes, certain things don't work out because the service provider messes up, but in the eyes of your clients, it's your fault. So you then have to apologize and explain yourself, even though you didn't do anything wrong... these moments are clearly moments of distress.

Hugo's employee does not see him stressed a lot, but when he is, she would describe it as distress. According to her, Hugo "panics when he sees a problem, and instead of facing the problem, he runs away from it, hoping that it will solve itself". She considers this Hugo's "biggest issue". His friend sees another crucial point: In his opinion, most of Hugo's stress comes from his personal life and not his business. Business-wise, Hugo has not "had a break-through yet" so "there is a lot of strain in this regard". What surprises Hugo's friend the most is how much time Hugo takes for himself: "I'm not sure whether it is procrastination or repression of problems; either way, his negative stress definitely doesn't come from working too much."

As for whether Hugo is a balanced person, the responses again go into different directions. His employee thinks "it seems to be right for him", while both his friend and his business partner disagree. The business partner mentions that there are still many things Hugo needs to learn, one example is to put away the smartphone during meals:

The problem is that these things quickly become a habit: You're always staring at your phone, because you're worried that there might be a request. However, most of the time, you're looking at things that are not important (e.g. FB), and you're not present in real life.

His friend sees a completely different issue, he thinks that Hugo "needs to work more, or work smarter". In this friend's opinion, Hugo does not know how to sell himself, and "he's not proactive". Furthermore, "you cannot criticize him, if you do, he will ignore you". The friend's criticism does not end here:

In my opinion, he needs to get his priorities straight. It often feels like his girlfriend and their dogs come before everything else, this is of course not sending the right kind of message to your employees...

## 6. Cross-Case Analysis

### 6.1 Self-Report

#### 6.1.1 SF-36

The Short Form-36 Health Survey (SF-36) is a generic multi-dimensional health status measure used to assess the overall state of health (Kazis et al., 1998). Figure 20 displays the SF-36 scores of all eight entrepreneurs. Ben reported the highest health values with a total of 86.805, while Fabian recorded the lowest SF-36 scores with a total of 62 on a scale from 0 to 100.

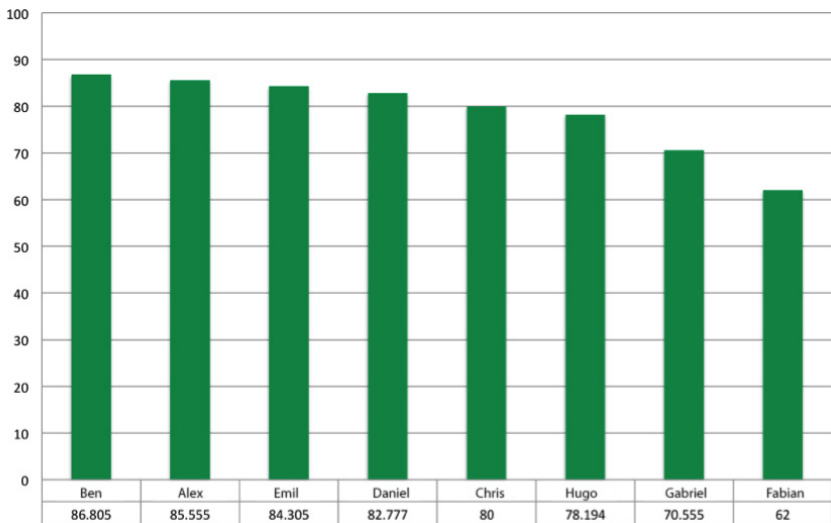


Figure 20: Overview SF-36 Scores of all Entrepreneurs

It has to be highlighted that SF-36 measures are relative and therefore personal to each individual. If e.g. the statement was “my health is excellent”, and the individual was supposed to choose between “definitely true”, “mostly true”, “don’t know”, “mostly false” as well as “definitely false”, it always depended on who the respondent was comparing himself with in this precise moment. If an entrepreneur worked in a clinical setting (such as Alex), he might have a different understanding of “excellent health” versus somebody who worked in an “unhealthy” work envi-

ronment where one does not consider oneself “that bad” in comparison (e.g. Chris who worked with a workaholic business partner as well as a neurosurgeon who was operating 15 hours per day and smoking non-stop).

There are no normative values about what makes ‘good’ or ‘bad’ SF-36 scores (Rand Health, 2013). Taking this into account, it is easy to see that a higher SF-36 score indicates a better, self-perceived health status.

### 6.1.2 MSPSS

The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) is a validated 12-item instrument designed to assess perceptions about support from family, friends or the significant other (Zimet et al., 1988; Zimet et al., 1990; Canty-Mitchell & Zimet, 2000). The respondents in this study perceived most support from a significant other, closely followed by friends. Family support seemed to be slightly lower in comparison.

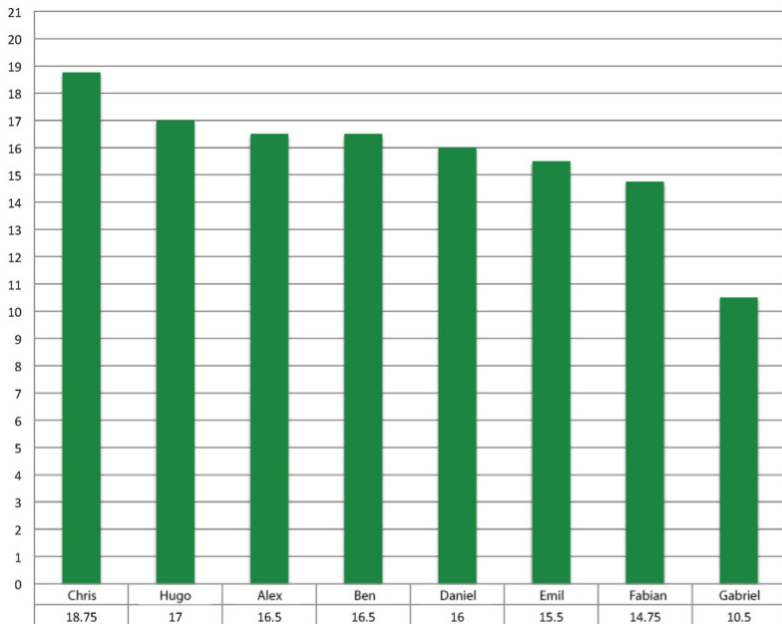


Figure 21: Overview MSPSS Scores of all Entrepreneurs

As can be seen in Figure 21, Chris reported the highest MSPSS measures with 18.75 total while Gabriel scored the lowest total of 10.5 out of a maximum of 21. On a range from 0 to 7, Gabriel rated the support he gets from friends as 5, from family as 2 and from a significant other as 3.5. Interestingly, Fabian – who showed the second lowest MSPSS scores – together with Gabriel were both also at the very bottom for their SF-36 measures thus potentially confirming a link between social support and health.

## 6.2 Comprehensive Medical Check-Up

According to Dr. Linde’s medical examinations, all respondents were in (very) good physical general conditions. Figure 22 shows a summary of all respondents.

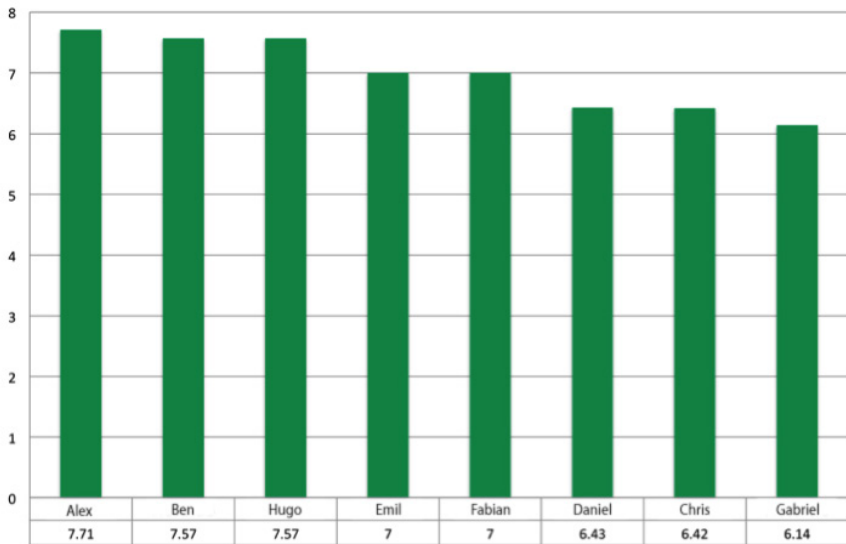


Figure 22: Overview Medical Check-Up Scores of all Entrepreneurs

None of the entrepreneurs showed pathological deviations in routine laboratories. Nevertheless, despite anamnestic health, several probands exhibited stress factors as well as negative health determinants:



Two entrepreneurs (Daniel and Fabian) were overweight, with Fabian being close to obese. Two other entrepreneurs (Chris and Gabriel) were still in a normal weight zone but admitted to having gained substantial weight (5-7kg) since having embarked on their entrepreneurial journey. Both Gabriel and Hugo stated that their meals were irregular and needed to be fast due to a constant lack of time.

Several entrepreneurs had a rather high alcohol, nicotine or caffeine intake. Daniel partied 4-7x per week including alcohol, often until 4-7am. Fabian described his own weekends as “excessive” with a lot of partying, alcohol and very little sleep. Ben smoked up to 20 cigarettes every day but planned to quit (again).

As for athletic activities, most entrepreneurs would like to do more sports but could not seem to find time. Chris and Gabriel seemed to suffer most under this fact as both of them used to be athletes, they were also the ones that had gained substantial weight in the past few years. In addition, both Chris and Gabriel complained about additional stress factors such as skin irritations (Chris), irregular heart beats (Chris), neck pain (both), sleeping problems (both) as well as difficulties concentrating (both).

### **6.3 Semi-structured Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews – with the entrepreneur as well as individuals surrounding the entrepreneur – enabled the gaining of further insights. As a research method, the interview is an adequate approach when there is a need to attain highly personalized data and the possibility for supplementary, probing questions (Gray, 2004). Particularly if health is considered not merely a state but “the result of a series of processes in which the individual interacts with other people and the environment” (MacIntosh et al., 2007, p. 207), semi-structured interviews will allow the captivation of more in-depth information.

All interviews were administered over Skype at a time the interviewee deemed convenient. The interviews with the entrepreneurs lasted between 45 and 120 minutes, while the interviews with their environment were shorter at 15 to 50 minutes per person. Out of 32 interviews, 28 were conducted in German and 4 in English. Being able to express themselves in their native language helped the respondents to open up. Before each interview, respondents were reassured about the confidential nature of the data.

All the interviews were recorded; at the same time, additional notes were taken.

During the semi-structured interviews, the entrepreneurs as well as their environment were asked closed as well as open-ended questions regarding the following topics:

- (1) Personal & business background
- (2) How important is health to the entrepreneurs?  
How do they manage their own health?
- (3) What specific issues of their function as entrepreneurs impact their (physical, mental, social) health?
- (4) Do they actively cope with (potential) threats to their health, and if so, how?
- (5) Recommendations for fellow entrepreneurs in Switzerland

The full questionnaires as well as all replies can be found in Appendix C.

The data was then broken down into smaller units to reveal their characteristic elements. In a next step, common emerging themes were analyzed.

### **6.3.1 The Perception of (the Entrepreneur's) Health**

Most entrepreneurs – as well as their environment – had a very vague idea of health and its key dimensions. When asked to give a definition of health, responses varied greatly, ranging from “a life without issues and restrictions“, to “not to be sick, to be fit, to be able to run and catch a train“ or “all your mental and physical functions work to perfection“. In addition, health was often described from a negative point of view; comments such as “no physical or mental restrictions“, “no physical problems“ or “nothing hurts“ were quite common, thus emphasizing a pathological side of health. Most interviewees considered health a combination of physical and mental health as can be seen in Figure 23. The numbers indicate how often a certain term was mentioned by interviewees when asked about their personal definition of health.

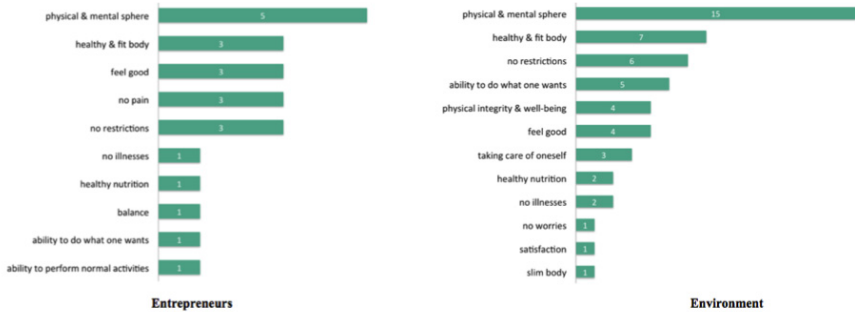


Figure 23: Definitions of Health

When asked to define the three spheres of health, a full range of responses was given. Physical health might imply “to be able to do sports for up to 1h“, “nothing hurts“ or “all your organs work normally“. Supporting the findings of Müller et al. (2012), there was a significant overlap between the perception of physical health and the previously given definitions of general health in the present study. Mental health was mostly described as “feeling good“, “to be happy“, “to be mentally stable“, “no depressions“, “absence of stress“, or “to be in peace with oneself“. The majority of interviewees had never heard the term “social health” before; the guesses went from “whether an individual functions well within society, whether this person obeys social rules“ to “maybe when I don’t have to be annoyed, because other people keep interrupting me?“.

Although the general definitions of health and well-being seemed rather vague, there were a few more refined responses. The business partner of Alex replied:

**Physical health:** Have a healthy body. Free of illnesses, free of chronic pain, being “fit“ and able to do whatever one wants without any physical restrictions.

**Mental health:** Have a healthy mind. Free of mental illnesses, depression, chronic stress or burn-out.

**Social health:** Have a healthy social network. Social health also links to physical health (e.g. athletic friends encourage more physical activities) as well as mental health (e.g. a life partner can help take off mental strain by listening and offering comfort). In fact, all these different aspects of health probably affect each other.

Other respondents also linked the different aspects of health. Alex' friend mentioned that while mental health affects physical health, social health affects mental as well as physical health. Hugo's employee commented that having a good social environment with a solid support system directly impacts physical and mental health.

Even though the respondents knew this study would be about the entrepreneur's health, most of them had never thought about the definition of health, and what it meant to them. When asked about the definition of health, at least half of the entrepreneurs' first reaction was "oh, good question", or "I never thought about this". The older the entrepreneurs, the more comprehensive their replies were. This finding supports the claim that metacognitive knowledge – as in the entrepreneur's self-knowledge – tends to increase with age (Kuhn, 2000).

### **6.3.2 Workload and Activities**

Entrepreneurs are often described as determined, committed and dedicated individuals that are willing to work tirelessly to realize their vision (Bygrave & Zacharakis, 2010). Various previous studies have affirmed the entrepreneurs' tendency to work long hours (e.g. Snir & Harpaz, 2006; Golden & Figart, 2000; Eden, 1975; Andersson, 2008; Brett & Stroh, 2003).

On average, the entrepreneurs in this sample worked 59.25 hours per week. This number includes Ben who only worked 16-24 hours ever since having hired managers to run his daily business, as well as Emil who worked 30 hours per week as he described himself as "very lazy" and trying to "work as little as possible". The remaining six entrepreneurs worked an average of 70+ hours per week – with a maximum of up to 112 hours weekly (Alex). All respondents worked in the evening and on weekends.

Some of the entrepreneurs had regular working hours, e.g. Fabian who had a very rigorous daily schedule (get up between 5.30-6.00, emails, jogging 6.30-7.30, work without emails 8.00-11.00, emails 11.00-12.00, lunch, 13.30-15.30 work without emails, 15.30-18.00 emails, 18.00-21.00 dinner & business-related reading, 21.00-22.30 work with tv in the background). Such a fixed, detailed daily plan was not feasible for other entrepreneurs, as their activities were more characterized by brevity and fragmentation. The amount of activities that took place outside of regular working hours (such as networking events, exhibitions, travel etc.) further added to the workload. According to his friend, Chris often traveled 4-5x a week between

Geneva and Zurich for meetings. Even if Chris did not consider the 3 hours on the train “working hours” as he was able to chat with friends or read the news, it could not be considered “quality time”.

In general, work is confirmed to dominate the lives of the entrepreneurs profoundly – a clean separation between work and nonwork is almost impossible. This is especially true in the service industry, where clients expect “24h availability, 7 days a week” (Alex and Hugo). Even if Alex was not working, he had to be available which added additional stress. As a private concierge company operating in the high-end global market, Hugo often received phone calls in the middle of the night and was expected to react to requests immediately. As reported by his business partner, Hugo “never puts the phone down, never”.

Technological advances have not only facilitated but also rapidly increased hours worked (Golden & Figart, 2000). As Alex explained, “some employees might take work home, but we entrepreneurs tend to take our work everywhere with us”. In the case of Chris, his girlfriend stated: “There was not one hour when he wasn’t checking his emails. Even in bed, after the lights were out, he would still check his emails.” Emil’s business partner saw a similar pattern with Emil who was always working with constant internet access: “It is pretty hard to turn your attention completely from work as the line between work and non-work seems to be very blurry more often than not”.

Working long hours may have positive as well as negative reasons. Leaving Ben and Emil out (who do not work long hours), four out of six entrepreneurs seemed to choose long working hours as opposed to being forced or pressured to work long hours. These entrepreneurs appeared to genuinely love what they do (see Chapter 3.1.3) and enjoy themselves. Furthermore, Alex, Daniel and Fabian were described as “having always been very active”. As the business partner of Alex stated:

Alex has always been superbusy with various projects at the same time. He used to be a professional athlete, and he also plays the piano on a semi-professional level. When we were in university, he was involved in student initiatives, doing internships, organizing parties, traveling the world, learning new sports etc. Afterwards, as a consultant, he often worked nightshifts and weekends. He is naturally a very active person always looking for where to go and what to do next, it’s in his genes.

Daniel’s friend, who has known Daniel for 16 years, made a similar statement:

I have been with him when he wasn't able to work for two weeks, he becomes very difficult. He is superactive and always needs to do something, it's his nature.

### **6.3.3 Impacts on the Entrepreneur's Physical Health**

The entrepreneur's physical health is affected by both positive as well as negative factors.

#### **Positive Effects on the Entrepreneur's Physical Health**

As shown in Figure 24, positive impacts of entrepreneurship, positive personal lifestyle choices, a high level of health importance/awareness as well as health-conscious influencers have all been perceived to benefit the entrepreneur's physical health.

Positive impacts of entrepreneurship on physical health were mostly ascribed to the freedom to plan. It seemed easier to schedule gym sessions or regular massages as the entrepreneur was in full control of his days (see Chapter 3.1.2, "Internal Locus of Control"). Another positive impact mentioned was the option to work whenever and from wherever the entrepreneur wished. No more long daily commutes during rush hour, no more fixed working hours from eight to five.

However, most of the positive effects on the entrepreneur's physical health seemed unrelated to the entrepreneur's job. Eight interviewees mentioned that entrepreneurship made no difference in an individual's health status as being healthy was mostly about making the right choices. Ben said in this context:

Generally speaking, the way you manage your health doesn't depend on whether you're an employee or an entrepreneur. I can have disciplined weeks as an entrepreneur or an employee, so it's down to the person.

Positive lifestyle choices were largely responsible for an individual's physical health. These included frequent sport sessions, healthy nutrition supported by additional supplements if necessary, sufficient sleep, low alcohol/caffeine/nicotine intake, regular massages and acupuncture, as well as no more "work hard, party harder" lifestyle.

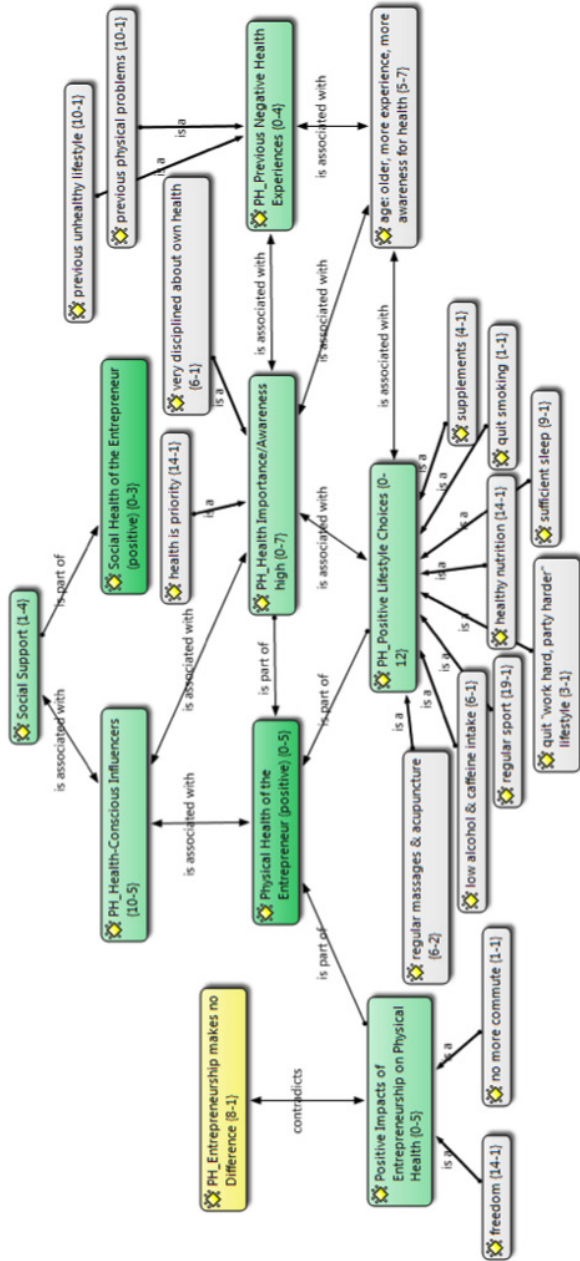


Figure 24: Positive Effects on the Entrepreneur's Physical Health

Positive lifestyle choices were closely associated with personal health importance/awareness, which was again associated with previous negative health experiences as well as health-conscious influencers. Several entrepreneurs emphasized the importance of discipline when it comes to managing one's own health:

It takes a lot of self-discipline for a healthy lifestyle. You have to structure your life, and plan regular time slots for your family, sport, hobbies etc. If you don't mark these slots in your calendar and make them a priority, you will never stop working. (...) If I don't make these active decisions to not work, everything will always be overtaken by work. (Alex)

High health importance/awareness often came with previous negative health experiences. As mentioned in Chapter 6.4.6, self-knowledge generally increases with age and experience (Kuhn, 2000). Many interviewees attributed previous physical problems as well as a previous unhealthy lifestyle to the entrepreneur's present high level of health awareness.

Health-conscious influencers that actively give support also play a crucial role. Alex worked in a health business where he was constantly surrounded by doctors and world-class therapists. Ben's cousin had not only inspired Ben to start his own ventures, but also encouraged him to attend self-development workshops, meditation sessions and raw food courses. Working every day with a former personal trainer and active triathlete, it was almost impossible for Gabriel not to reflect upon his own health. These examples illustrate that the social environment (see also Chapter 6.4.5, "Social Health") has a major impact on the way an individual perceives and manages his own health (Costa & Kahn, 2008). Friends can help to provide physical, cognitive and economic assistance, health information as well as the peer pressure needed to re-enforce good health habits (Aizer & Currie, 2004).

### **Negative Effects on the Entrepreneur's Physical Health**

Whereas positive effects on the entrepreneur's physical health were mostly attributed to beneficial personal choices, negative impacts of entrepreneurship seemed to play a greater role among negative effects on the entrepreneur's physical health. As can be seen in Figure 25, negative impacts comprised lack of exercise, too much sitting, unhealthy nutrition, lack of balance, lack of structure, neglect of health in favor of the business as well as lack of sleep. As a result, the entrepreneurs experienced a range of negative physical consequences, including weight gain, skin irri-



tations, irregular heartbeats, physical exhaustion, sweat attacks, sleeping problems and neck/back pain. These negative effects on the entrepreneur's physical health were also closely associated with negative effects on the entrepreneur's mental health (see Chapter 6.4.4).

A major factor that appeared to impact a young entrepreneur's health – or any young professional's health, in that matter – is the common social notion that cool people have to “work hard, and party harder“. Negative lifestyle choices including excessive partying, a high alcohol/caffeine/nicotine intake as well as a generally unhealthy lifestyle are often celebrated among the young who simply take health for granted. It is not uncommon to compete within one's circles who can drink more, or who can get more crazy.

This observation has been made by several respondents throughout the interviews. According to Fabian, bad health was “part of being hip, part of living the life of a bon vivant“. He described himself as “very disciplined” during the week and “excessive” (with partying) on the weekend. Daniel's business partner mentioned that Daniel's health did not depend on whether he was an entrepreneur or a consultant but on how much he partied:

He currently goes out 4-5 nights a week; two of these nights he will stay out until anytime between 3 and 7am, the other nights until at least midnight or 1am. Of course, his lifestyle is definitely not sustainable in the long-term...

According to Daniel's business partner, Daniel was “very conscious that he is NOT health-conscious“. Daniel did not do any sports, partied and drank a lot, recently lived on a “salmon-vodka diet“, and sometimes did not get enough sleep. His business partner confessed: “At our age, we don't really value health, we just take it for granted.” While these entrepreneurs were all socially very healthy, – which has many positive effects on an individual's physical and emotional well-being (e.g. Jehn & Shah, 1997; Gersick et al., 2000), – the beliefs shared within their social circles (e.g. “cool people have to work hard, and party harder”) combined with peer pressure often led to negative lifestyle choices.

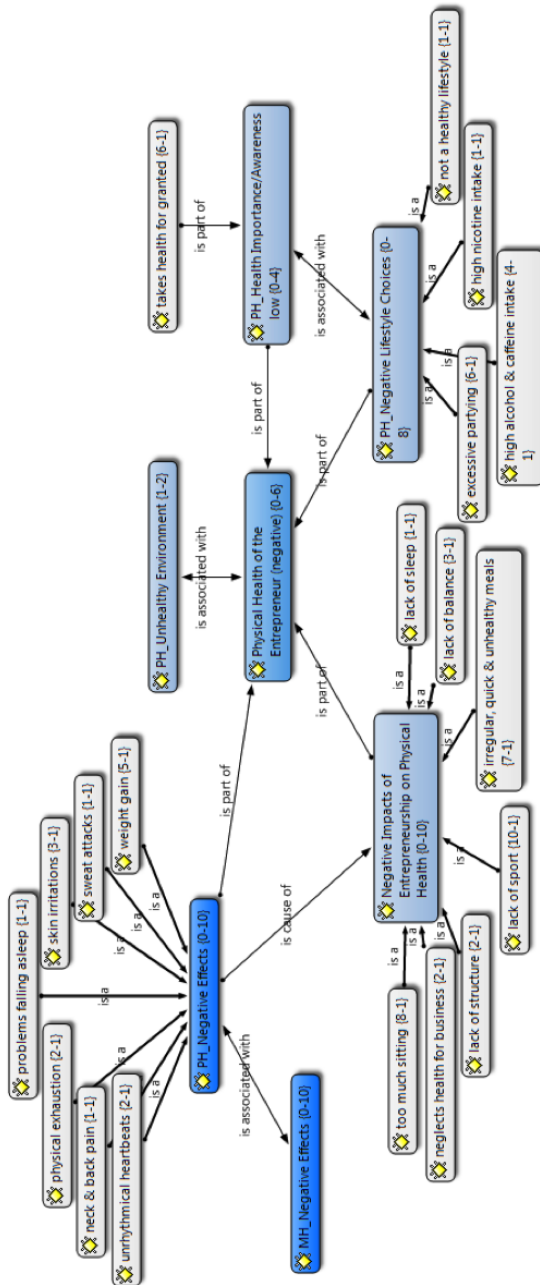


Figure 25: Negative Effects on the Entrepreneur's Physical Health

Partying could also function as a potential coping mechanism when faced with stress: Hugo hated his previous job and was sick a lot. In his opinion, his weak physical health was a result of all the mental strain and the negative stress. In order to compensate the miserable time at work, he partied. Ben shared this sentiment:

If you are free to manage your time, you don't have to party as much anymore. Life is the way you want it to be, so you don't have to "rebel" anymore to "let off steam".

### **6.3.4 Impacts on the Entrepreneur's Mental Health**

Most respondents seemed to share the notion that the mental health of an entrepreneur was affected in a unique way. In the words of Chris' business partner:

Health is a combination of physical health and mental health. The second being more important in my opinion (and something I find particularly difficult to achieve myself as an entrepreneur).

Reviewing the list of mentioned positive as well as negative effects of entrepreneurship on the individual's mental health, both lists contain almost twice as many items as compared to the lists of influences on physical or social health. It can thus be concluded that out of the three pillars of health, mental health might play the most important role for entrepreneurs.

### **Positive Effects on the Entrepreneur's Mental Health**

Looking at Figure 26, it becomes clear that the most frequently mentioned (37 times) positive impact of entrepreneurship on mental health was job control, autonomy & freedom. Being one's own boss implied almost unlimited decision autonomy, freedom of choice in the tasks to do, time schedule flexibility, accountability only to oneself, utilization, development of skills as well as greater financial rewards and a feeling of achievement (see also European Commission, 2004; Akande, 1994; Begley & Boyd, 1987). Hugo brought up the unpleasant culture at his former workplace that negatively affected his mental health, which then had a negative impact on his physical health. Being his own boss allowed Hugo to run his business in a way that he believed was right, without being forced to represent things he did not believe in.

The benefits of being free and in full control of their lives have been highlighted by all entrepreneurs:

You can do what you want to do, whenever you want to do it. To me, the most important thing is to have freedom and autonomy. I want to be in control of my life and my time. (Gabriel)

As mentioned by Fabian's business partner, the freedom to do what one wants enabled more efficiency as one did not have to "deal with annoying bosses, inefficiencies, company politics etc." This is in line with researchers who claim that a high degree of independence allows an individual to be free from constraints associated with employment in a formal, bureaucratic organization (Chay, 1993; Eden, 1975; Yusuf, 1995). Job control, autonomy & freedom also linked to other positive impacts mentioned such as the ability to create one's own work environment (work with family and friends), sense of achievement and more money.

The second most frequently mentioned (32 times) positive impact of entrepreneurship was loving one's job. It was clearly apparent that all entrepreneurs in this sample genuinely loved their work – despite long working hours, distress as well as all the challenges they were confronted with on a daily basis. Throughout the personal interviews, all respondents talked about the fulfillment and satisfaction they got from building and managing their own business. Daniel's business partner elaborated on the importance of doing what one loves:

It's not about the hours that you work but about how you feel while working. The quality is much more important than the quantity. If you spend most of your life on something that you're passionate about, it doesn't feel like "work". If the same amount of hours would go into something that is "shit", the situation would be very different.

Job control, autonomy & freedom and loving one's job have all been associated with other positive impacts of entrepreneurship such as more commitment & motivation (mentioned 15 times), less pressure, less stress as well as more balance. Alex claimed that he experienced a lot less stress, "despite not working less". Even though he worked up to 112 hours per week, he felt completely balanced but acknowledged "it could go either way for entrepreneurs":

If you are a successful entrepreneur and you're making a lot of money, there is a lot of motivation and you are very happy even if you are working crazy hours. But if you are somebody who works like crazy but you are not making money, accumulating more debts every day while worrying about your

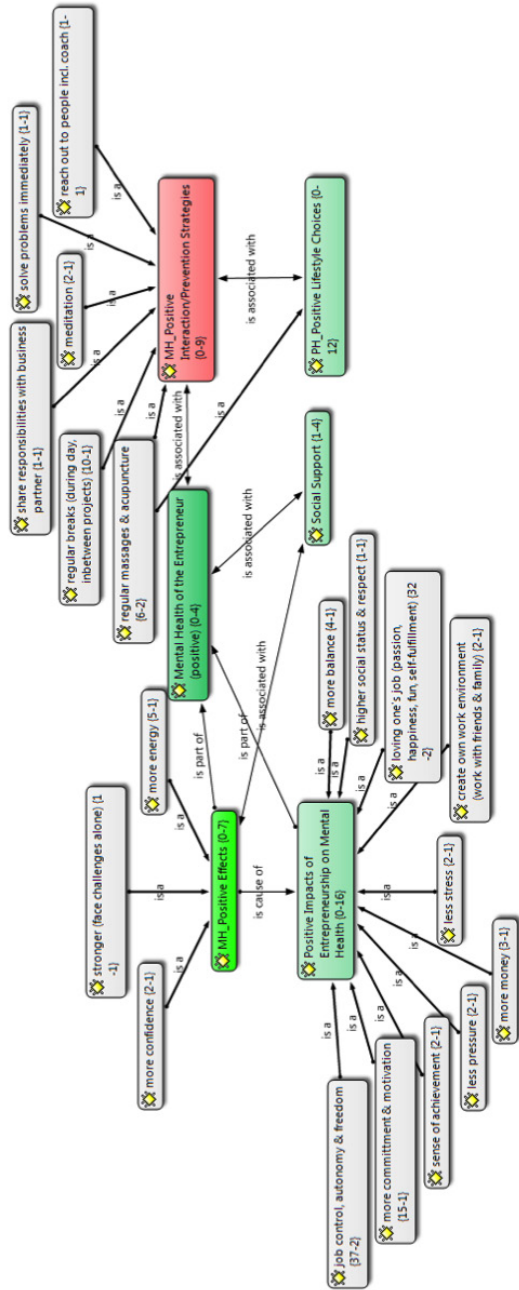


Figure 26: Positive Effects on the Entrepreneur's Mental Health

reputation, then you probably suffer from a lot of distress. In this case, it would be much better if you were an employee with a fixed salary.

Fabian's business partner considered entrepreneurial stress different as it was "self-inflicted", thus "much easier to endure". The older and more experienced an entrepreneur was (Alex, Ben and Fabian), the less stress he seemed to face (see also Chapter 6.4.6).

This research supports Baron et al. (2013) who claim that entrepreneurs often experience low, not high, levels of stress from high levels of psychological capital. Because individuals select careers or occupations they are attracted to, they tend to be above average in their capacity to cope with stress (Fine et al., 2012). Moreover, according to Baron et al. (2013), these stress-reducing effects of psychological capital have proven to be stronger for older than younger entrepreneurs.

Positive impacts of entrepreneurship caused positive effects such as more energy, more confidence and more mental strength. In addition to entrepreneurship-related impacts, mental health was also affected by positive interaction/prevention strategies. These strategies included regular massages or acupuncture, regular breaks (during the day/inbetween projects), meditation, immediate problem-solving as well as reaching out to people when faced with difficulties. Positive interaction/prevention strategies were closely associated with positive lifestyle choices (see Chapter 6.4.3).

Last but not least, the entrepreneur's mental health was associated with social support.

### **Negative Effects on the Entrepreneur's Mental Health**

The mental health of entrepreneurs was described as more volatile in comparison to employees; as Fabian stressed, there "are a lot more ups and downs". As shown in Figure 27, the most frequently mentioned (15 times) negative impact of entrepreneurship on mental health was the permanent pressure. This factor was closely linked to a huge amount of responsibilities, fear of failure/existential fears, long working hours and the entrepreneur's inability to detach:

In theory, I am in control of my time so it is my decision if I want to focus on my health or not. In practice, business comes first, so I cannot work out 5x a week because I will be missing too much work that way. (...) So even though you are free, the freedom is different. It's a question of setting priori-

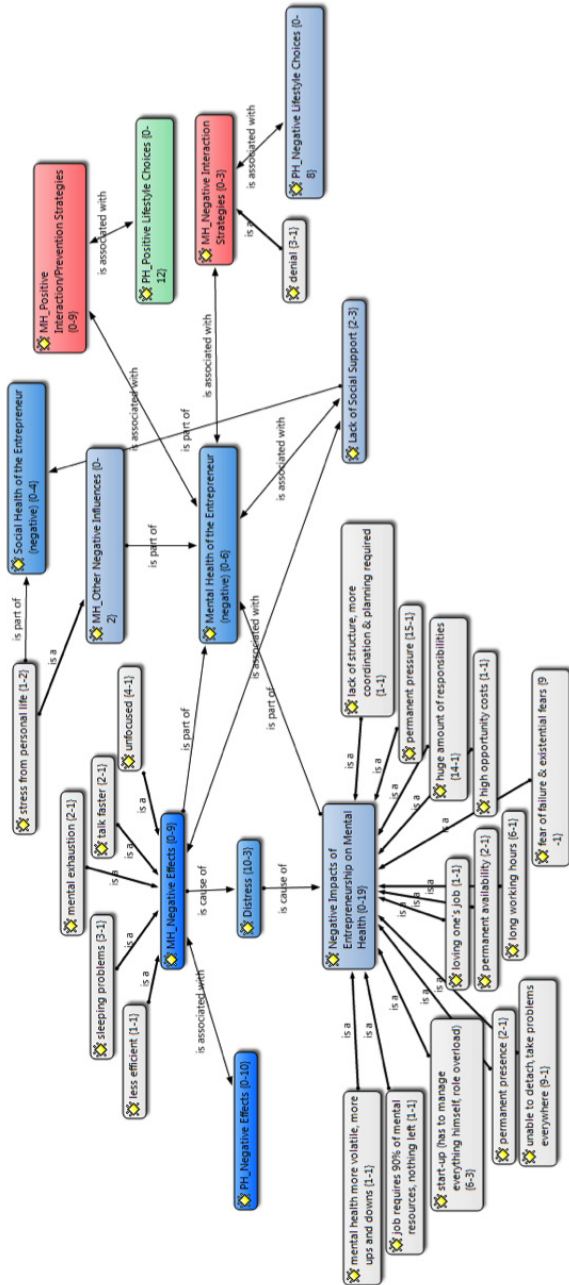


Figure 27: Negative Effects on the Entrepreneur’s Mental Health

ties, everybody has the same amount of time available. (Gabriel)

As outlined in Chapter 6.4.6, the business stage of the venture played a major role: lack of structure in an emerging organization, permanent presence/availability paired with high opportunity costs contributed negatively to the entrepreneur's mental health. As Gabriel stated:

My job requires 80-90% of my mental resources, there is not much left at the end of the day.

Permanent negative impacts of entrepreneurship inevitably led to distress that caused negative effects on the individual's mental health. Several entrepreneurs complained about lack of focus, sleeping problems, mental exhaustion and lower efficiency. Negative effects on mental health were very closely associated with negative effects on physical health. Besides the negative impacts of entrepreneurship, the entrepreneur's mental health was also affected by other negative influences such as stress from the individual's personal life or lack of social support.

Positive and negative interaction strategies played a crucial role in preventing and/or coping with negative impacts on the entrepreneur's mental health. Positive measures such as regular breaks or massages helped the individual relax and develop more mental strength in order to prevent or cope with negative influences. Negative personal strategies on the other hand worsened the mental status quo as the individual either denied his problems, or turned to negative lifestyle choices such as alcohol or nicotine as coping mechanisms.

### **6.3.5 Impacts on the Entrepreneur's Social Health**

Even though ten interviewees stated that the entrepreneur's social health was irrespective of his career choice, positive and negative effects of entrepreneurship on an individual's social health have been mentioned.

#### **Positive Effects on the Entrepreneur's Social Health**

Figure 28 illustrates the positive effects on the entrepreneur's social health. Most entrepreneurs have drastically expanded their social networks. They have met a lot of interesting people and had the chance to improve their social skills. At the same time, being one's own boss allowed for more freedom and control. The entre-



preneur had the flexibility to meet or skype with friends at any time and was free to create his own work environment (which may also include friends and family members). In addition to these entrepreneurship-specific impacts, being embedded in a supportive environment further contributed to the entrepreneur's social health.

Various writers highlight the positive effects of strong social relationships on an individual's physical and emotional well-being (Jehn & Shah, 1997; Gersick et al., 2000). In this study, Emil was described as having gained more confidence after some initial success with his business. Hugo was not comfortable in his previous work environment where he felt observed at all times. He mentioned former social circles that "were not good for me", because "we didn't share the same values". Having created a new social setting, Hugo felt much more relaxed and content. These examples confirm that social networks can heavily influence health in a positive as well as a negative manner through both biological and social pathways (Costa & Kahn, 2008).

### **Negative Effects on the Entrepreneur's Social Health**

As of negative impacts of entrepreneurship on social health, lack of time for family and friends was the most mentioned aspect as can be seen in Figure 29. Long working hours (see Chapter 6.4.4) were the norm; in the case of Gabriel, he spent most of these hours working alone. As Gabriel mentioned during his interview, he "had never had a lot of social support, not even from the family"; his reported MSPSS score of 10.5 out of 21 total was by far the lowest score in the entire sample.

Lack of social support has integral effects on an individual's well-being and health (e.g. Caplan et al., 1975; Karasek & Theorell, 1990a; Kahn & Byosiene, 1992). It is further associated with an unhealthy lifestyle, lack of exercise as well as an increased risk for overweight – Gabriel reported all these symptoms.

Various entrepreneurs brought up the difficulty to plan social activities outside of work because of their unpredictable schedules. Fabian's business partner commented:

Social life becomes a little more difficult as it takes a certain amount of coordination. If you work in a company, social life just "happens". There are company events, and you often go for meals/drinks with your colleagues. Once you are your own boss, you spend a lot of time with yourself alone

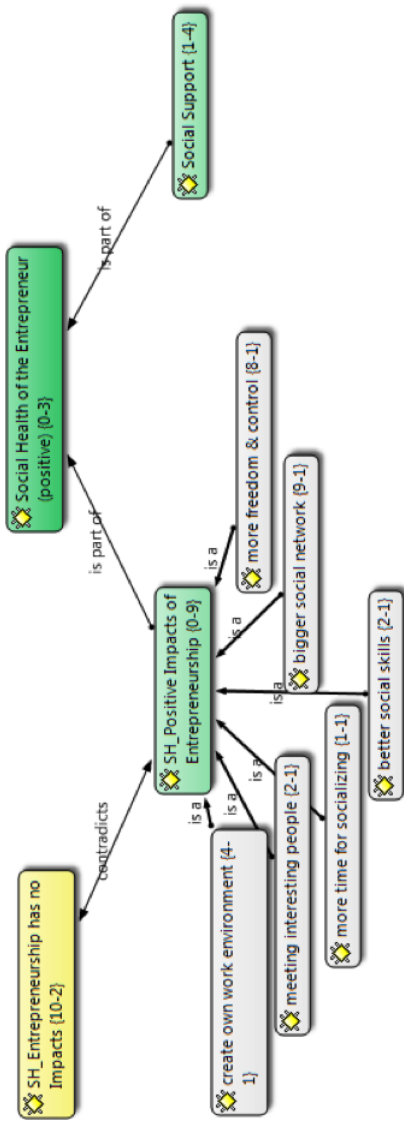


Figure 28: Positive Effects on the Entrepreneur's Social Health

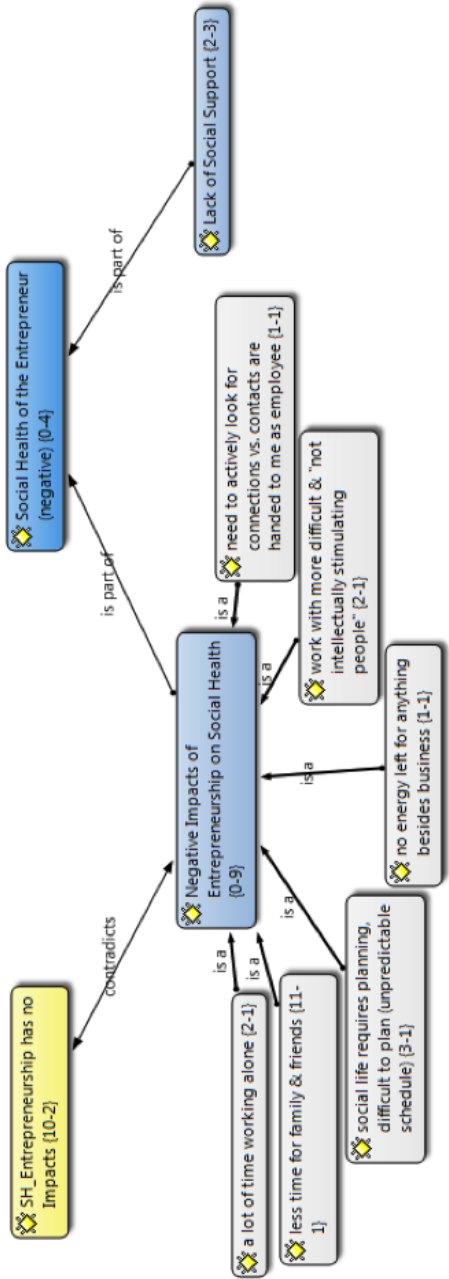


Figure 29: Negative Effects on the Entrepreneur's Social Health

in your house. Also, your schedule is not predictable. If you want to meet friends, you have to plan but you cannot always plan.

According to Daniel, in comparison to his previous job as a consultant, his social health was “similar but different“. Before, many of his work colleagues had become good friends that he would also spend time with in the evenings or on weekends. Now, the circles in which he moved had become “much more eclectic and interesting“. At the same time, Daniel was suddenly exposed to working with people from all walks of life:

As a consultant, the people you meet tend to be more “rational“; I am now dealing with a lot of people with design backgrounds such as photographers or lingerie designers... you cannot really talk with them, they seem to live in their own world, and they are so stubborn!

In addition, Daniel had to actively look for contacts and connections. Working as a consultant previously, a lot of contacts – as in clients, work colleagues, experts etc. – were handed to him.

Other entrepreneurs also reported differences in their social lives. Both Chris and Fabian explained that on the one hand, they were attending a lot of networking events and conferences, so they were able to meet a lot of people and build a big social network. On the other hand, there was less time available for family as well as friends. Nevertheless, Fabian felt “very socially healthy“.

### **6.3.6 Entrepreneurship-specific Impacts on the Entrepreneur’s Health**

The general (physical, mental and social) health of entrepreneurs was perceived to be affected by several entrepreneurship-specific factors: the business type, business stage, whether there was a profit as well as experience. Figure 30 displays a summary of the perceived impacts of entrepreneurship on general health.

#### **Business Type**

The industry the entrepreneur was operating in, the characteristics of the venture as well as whether the entrepreneur’s existence depended on the business all had an impact on general health.

Alex worked in the high-end health industry where his daily business revolved

around healthy living and well-being. He was surrounded by doctors and therapists as well as patients that needed help due to past negligence of their health. As a consequence, Alex had a completely different awareness for health and placed high importance on balanced nutrition, regular exercise as well as active stress prevention. Both he and his environment mentioned how the lessons learned through his health business have changed his life.

Besides the emphasis on health, Alex' business was project-based. There were periods, when he had to work up to 112 hours per week in order to make sure every wish of his VIP clients would be fulfilled. However, once a project was finished, Alex was able to take a few weeks off before the next project would start. Ben was in a similar situation. When he used to sell properties, he would work for several months until he was able to "flip" an apartment. Afterwards, he would fly somewhere for a few months to kitesurf. When Ben started with his rental apartment business, he would work long hours during high season and move to a beachhouse in Brazil during low season. Ben was the only entrepreneur in the sample who was able to manage his business completely remotely.

This kind of lifestyle would not work in the private concierge business. Hugo had to be available for requests 24/7, 365 days per year. There were no time limits as he operated in a global market; some bookings or requests might come in the middle of the night (when it was evening in North America or morning in Asia), and Hugo had to act immediately. For this reason, he could never put down his phone, thus was unable to ever completely "unplug".

In addition to the industry or the characteristics of a business, another crucial factor was whether an entrepreneur depended on the venture to provide for his existence. For Emil, his design enterprises were an extension of his job as a freelancer. He had been a freelancer for the past six years and would remain a freelancer no matter what would happen to his design ventures. Daniel built his current luxury lingerie company while earning his MBA in New York, as his business partner stated:

Our situation is different as we are still doing our MBA on the side. We basically threw in a little bit of cash each and invested our leisure time that we probably wouldn't have spent in a more productive way anyways. Of course, we want the company to be successful but it's not like our life depends on it.

Daniel planned to focus on his lingerie enterprise until at least the end of the year; if worst came to worst, he could always return to consulting.

The situation was very different for Gabriel or Fabian. Both derived the only in-

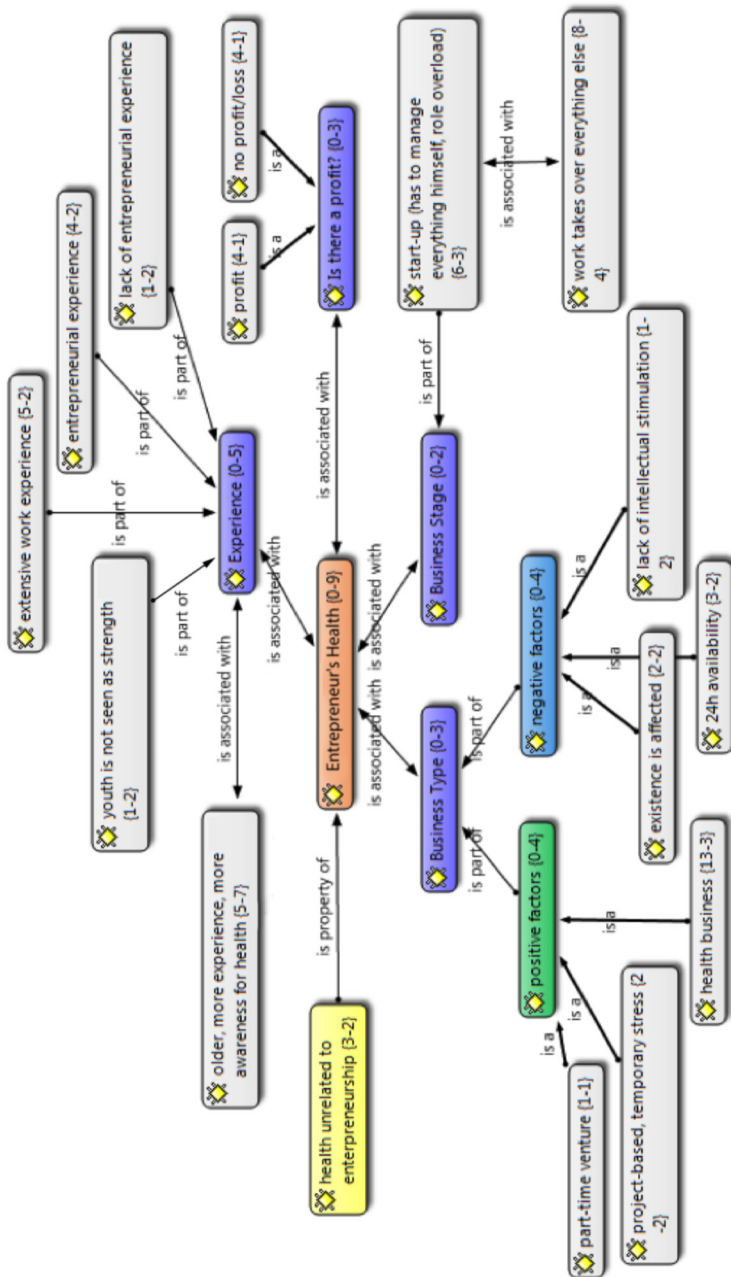


Figure 30: Entrepreneurship-specific Impacts on the Entrepreneur's Health

come from their companies, business failure would thus have a significant impact on their personal lives.

## **Business Stage**

Empirical research has shown that the entrepreneurs' behavior changes over time as they move their ventures to different stages (e.g. Hambrick & Crozier, 1985; McCarthy et al., 1990). In an emerging organization, entrepreneurs are less likely to participate in routine activities but tend to operate at a faster pace with greater fragmentation (Casson, 2000). Permanent uncertainty and a high failure rate among small enterprises force the entrepreneur into "a state of constant struggle requiring high investment of their emotional and physical resources" (Jamal, 1997, p. 49). Further concerns include personal sacrifices, the burden of responsibility as well as the loss of psychological well-being (Akande, 1994; Boyd & Gumpert, 1983; Boyd & Webb, 1982; Loscocco & Leicht, 1993). According to Hunter & Thatcher (2007), all these stressors may reduce the founding entrepreneur's subjective well-being, which then again is related to low task performance, negative work-related attitudes as well as reduced personal health.

Gabriel jumped from being a graduate student and intern directly into his first business with investors as well as employees. Being the "jack-of-all-trades" to some extent (Lazear, 2004), Gabriel was under permanent pressure:

I have to be present at all times, take charge of my employees and avoid making mistakes... if something doesn't go well, I'm constantly asking myself "what could I have done better/different?". I can always find mistakes, I can always find things I need to improve. Of course, depending on your job, you also have a lot of pressure such as in banking or consulting; e.g. in consulting, it's "up or out". However, there are always periods where you can relax and unwind, be it on weekends or inbetween projects. As an entrepreneur, you can never completely "unplug".

Having had to work the longest time without a salary, he was bearing high opportunity costs while facing serious existential fears. Both Gabriel and his business partner admitted that they submit their lives to the needs of their business:

In theory, we have more freedom and can e.g. go running in the afternoon, if we want to. In practice, this just doesn't happen. Work is priority... and the other people in your company are also working, you can't leave them.

(Gabriel's business partner)

I barely go anywhere; sometimes, when I go to a social event such as my grandmother's birthday last week, I cannot follow conversations anymore because my thoughts automatically wander back to the business. I'm not present anywhere else, I always think about the company... and I have to. If

I don't think about it, who else will? (Gabriel)

Fellow start-up entrepreneur Chris shared similar problems detaching from work: According to his girlfriend, Chris put an immense amount of pressure on himself as his company was "his baby". There was not one hour when he was not checking his emails; "even in bed, after the lights were out, he was still checking his emails". His best friend noticed that Chris was often unfocused: "Sometimes, you're in the middle of a sentence, and he suddenly starts ignoring you because he has just received an email." Chris admitted that he had difficulties detaching:

Before, as an employee, I did my job but at the end of the day, somebody else was responsible. Now, I am the one in charge and responsible. Even when I'm not working, I'm still working in my head. I cannot leave things behind when I leave the office, I take my challenges and problems everywhere I go.

Not only are founding entrepreneurs responsible for the strategy, actions, and success of their companies, they must also take into consideration the well-being of many stakeholders including employees, suppliers, investors as well as their families and friends (Baron et al., 2013, p. 7). Hugo's business partner raised a crucial point: As an employee, a lot of things will be taken care of. Companies often offer health benefits such as free gym memberships, massages, etc. Entrepreneurs on the other hand must manage their own health whilst having less time as they are expected to fulfill many roles at once. This is in line with Becker (1993) who writes that an entrepreneur has to produce and sustain his "own human capital" in the form of health, knowledge, skills and values by investing in education, training as well as medical care.

## **Profitability**

Various conceptual models have confirmed the relation between financial stability and subjective well-being (e.g. Veenhoven, 1991; Ahuvia & Friedman, 1998). Understandably, an entrepreneur struggling to keep his company alive is more likely to report negative effects of entrepreneurship on his health in comparison to an



entrepreneur, who is (financially speaking) successful in his ventures.

In this study, only half of the entrepreneurs were making a profit; out of those who did, Emil was able to show an annual profit of CHF 7000 while Hugo estimated a profit around CHF 40 000-60 000. In both cases, this “profit” also covered the salary of the entrepreneur (who lived in Zurich, a city known for its high living costs). As Gabriel stated, his choice to become an entrepreneur was linked with high opportunity costs. For a very long period, he and his business partner had to work without a salary, leading to a state of constant insecurity (see also Jamal, 1997) and stress.

At the same time, being forced to operate with minimal resources also pushed the entrepreneurs to stay creative and keep their organizations very lean with low fixed costs. Several worked with interns, part-time staff as well as freelancers that could be activated upon demand. As for Fabian, not only did he learn to manage his businesses with minimal resources, he also took minimalism to his personal life:

I don't have a lot of things anymore, I have pretty much everything with me that I need. Within 30 seconds, I could pack for a three months trip. I threw away most of my cutlery, I now have four forks and knives. (...) I used to be quite fashion-conscious. Now I only own white and blue shirts. (...) Simplicity and minimalism are key, the entire mindset has to change.

## **Experience**

Not only were Alex and Ben the oldest and the healthiest entrepreneurs, they also displayed the highest profits (CHF 2 Mio. per year for Alex, CHF 200 000 per year for Ben) and seemed most content with their jobs as well as their lives. After 6 (Alex) respectively 10 years (Ben) of work experience, both started up at a comparatively older age (28 for Alex, 32 for Ben). Having had more time to learn skills, manage teams or build a network was not the only advantage; having spent up to 10 years working in a high-paid position further enabled these two to build a comfortable “financial cushion“ that a) allowed them to step into markets younger entrepreneurs would not be able to enter due to a lack of capital (e.g. real estate), and b) provided a certain “safety net“ in case their venture would not take off immediately.

Looking at the bottom results of the medical check-ups, both Chris and Gabriel showed serious stress factors. While Chris was the youngest respondent in the sample at age 26, Gabriel was only slightly older at age 28. Both were founding

entrepreneurs and had started their venture at 23 (Chris) respectively 25 (Gabriel), with comparatively less work experience, more or less straight from university. Both entrepreneurs were not profitable, even though Chris' biotech company could not be profitable as it did not sell any products or services. Gabriel was definitely under a lot of financial pressure as he had not been able to pay himself a salary for a long time: Having married three years ago, he felt not only responsible for his employees and his company but also for his family.

According to Kuhn (2000), presumably older individuals – through accumulated life experience – are likely to have developed a more accurate understanding of their knowledge, skills and abilities, thus exhibiting a broader recognition of the pressures inherent to specific vocational opportunities as well as the levels of stress they are able or willing to tolerate. In addition, experienced entrepreneurs may react less to adversity as they have already developed start-up skills in the past (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2008). Lack of entrepreneurial experience was mentioned several times as a negative impact on entrepreneurial health, as Gabriel described his starting-up phase:

Suddenly, you have two companies. You have employees, there is a lot of pressure and you have to deliver results... fast. It's not just a pretty business plan anymore, this is real. Financing, website, writing and implementing marketing strategies, you need a cash flow etc. etc. It was a huge adjustment for me.

In retrospective, Gabriel believed that he had been “quite naïve” in the beginning: “We had a lot of ideas and wanted to realize all of them”. For more established entrepreneurs such as Alex, Ben or Fabian, launching a new venture had become standard procedure. They already knew how to set up a legal company, who to contact for the logo, what to put in the contract, and where to find programmers or interns. They already understood their respective markets and had experience building a strong team. They already possessed an invaluable network of investors that provided them not only with funding but also with expertise and connections. Experience – both previous work as well as entrepreneurial experience – is therefore a substantial influence on the entrepreneur's health.

## 6.4 Overall Analysis and Framework

### 6.4.1 Self-Report vs. Medical Check-Up

This thesis used multiple sources of evidence in order to develop converging lines of inquiry and address a broader range of historical, attitudinal as well as observational issues (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 1989). At the same time, multiple data sources also amplify validity (e.g. Glaser & Strausser, 1967; Yin, 1984) and allow for “triangulation” – one set of findings from one method of data might be contradicted or backed up by findings from another method of data collection (Wisker, 2007).

A cross-case analysis of the entrepreneurs’ self-reports and medical check-ups confirmed that the subjective appraisal of present health status does emerge as a strong indicator of health outcomes (as noted by Franks et al., 2002). Table 13 summarizes the entrepreneurs’ self-report and medical check-up results. Alex and Ben displayed the highest scores for both SF-36 as well as the medical check-up; while Daniel and Emil stayed within the median range for all three categories, Gabriel exhibited the lowest scores. Fabian and Hugo seemed more critical in their self-assessment: their health check-up proved to bring much better results than anticipated. In contrast, Chris showed average SF-36 and the highest MSPSS scores yet he suffered from severe stress symptoms which reflected in his low check-up score.

| Entrepreneur | SF-36 (out of 100) | MSPSS (out of 21) | Check-Up (out of 8) | Comments   |
|--------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------|--|
| Alex         | 85.55              | 16.5              | 7.71**              | very health-conscious: works in health business where he is surrounded by the best doctors/health experts in the world                                     |
| Ben          | 86.80**            | 16.5              | 7.57                | very health-conscious: entrepreneurial path started with “self-improvement path”, lives on the beach now and works remotely about 2 days per week          |
| Chris        | 80                 | 18.75**           | 6.42                | shows severe stress symptoms incl. skin irritations, irregular heartbeats, weight gain & sleeping problems; is aware that he needs to change his lifestyle |

| Entrepreneur | SF-36 (out of 100) | MSPSS (out of 21) | Check-Up (out of 8) | Comments   |
|--------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------|--|
| Daniel       | 82.77              | 16                | 6.43                | slightly overweight, high alcohol intake, parties 4-5 nights per week, currently on “salmon-vodka diet”  |
| Emil         | 84.30              | 15.5              | 7                   | works around 30h per week, sleeps at least 8h every night, good work-life balance, good overall health   |
| Fabian       | 62*                | 14.75             | 7                   | health-conscious: still 12kg overweight but has completely changed his lifestyle (at least during the week, still parties on weekends)               |
| Gabriel      | 70.55              | 10.5*             | 6.14*               | lowest health score of all: serious stress symptoms incl. exhaustion, weight gain, sleeping problems; is aware that he needs to change his lifestyle |
| Hugo         | 78.10              | 17                | 7.57                | very good health condition with no symptoms of stress  |

|   |  |                  |
|---|--|------------------|
| Highest scores overall out of the group |  | ** highest score |
| Median scores out of the group          |  | * lowest score   |
| Lowest scores overall out of the group  |  |                  |

Table 13: Overview Self-Report and Medical Check-Up Results

When opposing SF-36 to medical check-up scores, certain patterns become more apparent as can be seen in Figure 31: In the upper right quadrant, Ben, Alex and Hugo ranked highest in self-assessment as well as actual medical check-up. In contrast (lower left quadrant), Gabriel ranked himself the lowest in self-assessment and also showed the worst check-up results. Daniel and Chris seemed rather optimistic in their self-reports (upper left quadrant), while Fabian assessed his health as worse than the actual evaluation by the doctor. Emil then placed average scores in both SF-36 and the medical check-up.

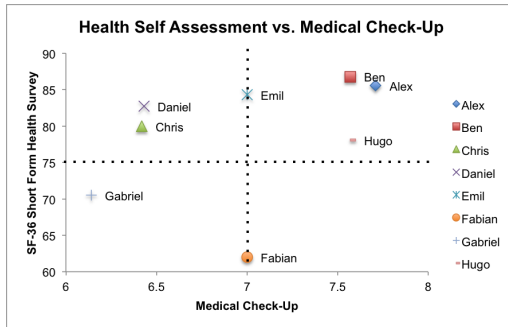


Figure 31: SF-36 vs. Medical Check-Up Results

When comparing MSPSS scores to medical check-ups (see Figure 32), interestingly, the distribution within the quadrants did not seem to change much. Ben, Alex and Hugo were still in the upper right quadrant, while Gabriel stayed in the lower left quadrant. Chris displayed the highest MSPSS score yet also showed the second-lowest check-up result. Daniel joined him in the upper left quadrant with above average MSPSS and low check-up scores, whereas Emil and Fabian remained in the median area for both values.

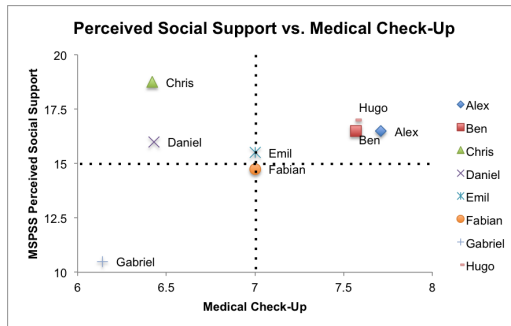


Figure 32: MSPSS vs. Medical Check-Up Results

These findings show that, for the majority of entrepreneurs in this sample, self-perception and reality match. Furthermore, clear associations between SF-36, MSPSS and medical check-up results could be found, confirming a relationship between self-rated health, social support and health outcomes (as previously found by e.g. Ferraro & Farmer, 1999 or Idler & Kasler, 1995).

#### **6.4.2 Self-Report, Medical Check-Up vs. Entrepreneurship-specific Impacts on the Entrepreneur's Health**

Table 14 provides a summary of the entrepreneurs' age, self-report and check-up results as well as their individual business type, business stage, profit and experience situation. The entrepreneurs are ranked by age, going from the oldest (Ben) down to the youngest entrepreneur (Chris). The previous self-report and check-up results are now contrasted to the entrepreneurship-specific factors that impact an entrepreneur's health in order to uncover converging schemes or issues.

This table reveals that the two oldest entrepreneurs Ben and Alex not only shared the highest results in both self-reports and medical check-up, but also the highest profits in the group. Both of them were serial entrepreneurs with plenty of work and entrepreneurial experience prior to starting-up. Both of them were able to take time off regularly due to their specific business model. In fact, Ben was the only entrepreneur in the group who had hired full-time managers to take care of business, allowing him to spend his days kitesurfing and sunbathing on exotic islands.

On the other side of the spectrum, Gabriel showed the lowest values for the self-reports as well as the medical report. Having jumped from being a student directly into his first business with investors as well as employees, Gabriel was under constant pressure. Bearing high opportunity costs while facing serious existential fears, Gabriel completely submitted his life to the needs of the business. Fellow start-up entrepreneur Chris – who was the youngest entrepreneur in the group – shared similar difficulties detaching from work. As a former professional athlete and a perfectionist, Chris took his problems and challenges wherever he went. Despite displaying the highest MSPSS scores of the entire group, Chris suffered from various stress factors that placed him in the bottom two for check-up results. His business partner stated in this context that it was often difficult for young entrepreneurs to find a balance between work and private life, this was “particularly true in fields where ‘youth’ is not seen as a strength”.

| Name (Age)   | SF-36   | MSPSS   | Check-Up | Business Type  | Business Stage | Annual Profit (CHF)   | Experience |                 |
|--------------|---------|---------|----------|--|----------------|-----------------------|------------|-----------------|
|              |         |         |          |  |                |                       | work       | entrepreneurial |
| Ben (34)     | 86.80** | 16.5    | 7.57     | real estate, project-based, works 2-3 days per week (managers take care of daily work) | growth         | 200 000               | x          | x               |
| Alex (31)    | 85.55   | 16.5    | 7.71**   | medical, project-based   | growth         | 2 Mio.                | x          | x               |
| Fabian (31)  | 62*     | 14.75   | 7        | e-commerce (holding of various companies)  | growth         | no profit (voluntary) | x          | x               |
| Daniel (28)  | 82.77   | 16      | 6.43     | luxury lingerie, business is side project (currently full-time MBA student)            | start-up       |                       | x          | x               |
| Gabriel (28) | 70.55   | 10.5*   | 6.14     | e-commerce, existence depends on business  | start-up       |                       | x          |                 |
| Emil (27)    | 84.30   | 15.5    | 7        | graphic design, design business is extension of freelance activities                   | start-up       | 7 000                 | x          |                 |
| Hugo         | 78.10   | 17      | 7.57     | luxury concierge, 24/7 availability, existence depends on business                     | start-up       | 50 000                | x          |                 |
| Chris        | 80      | 18.75** | 6.42     | biotech, existence depends on business   | start-up       |                       | x          |                 |

|   |  |                  |
|---|--|------------------|
| Highest scores overall out of the group |  | ** highest score |
| Median scores out of the group          |  | * lowest score   |
| Lowest scores overall out of the group  |  |                  |

Table 14: Self-Reports and Medical Check-Ups vs. Entrepreneurship-specific Impacts

Besides age, experience and business stage of the venture, the business type also played a major role. Both Daniel and Emil were start-up entrepreneurs with no or very little profit. For Daniel however, his business was only a side project as he was pursuing a full-time MBA. If things did not work out, he always had the option to return to his former lucrative job. Emil's existence also did not depend on his start-up: For him, his design business was an extension of his freelance activities; he still received most of his salary from his work as a freelancer. For these reasons,

unlike Gabriel or Chris, Daniel and Emil were not struggling with existential fears or permanent pressure. As a serial entrepreneur and investor, Fabian was not worried about his existence either. Not being profitable is part of his business strategy: His holding invests all profits into new e-commerce businesses in order to avoid taxation.

### 6.4.3 The Entrepreneur’s Health: An Integrated Framework

Figure 33 depicts the integrated framework on the entrepreneur’s health. As already established in Chapter 2.2, an individual’s health consists of a physical, a mental as well as a social sphere that all affect and blend into one another (Badura, 1993). The causal condition is entrepreneurship; entrepreneurship-specific impacts on the entrepreneur’s health (see also Chapter 6.3.6) include business type, business stage, profitability as well as the individual’s previous work or entrepreneurial experience.

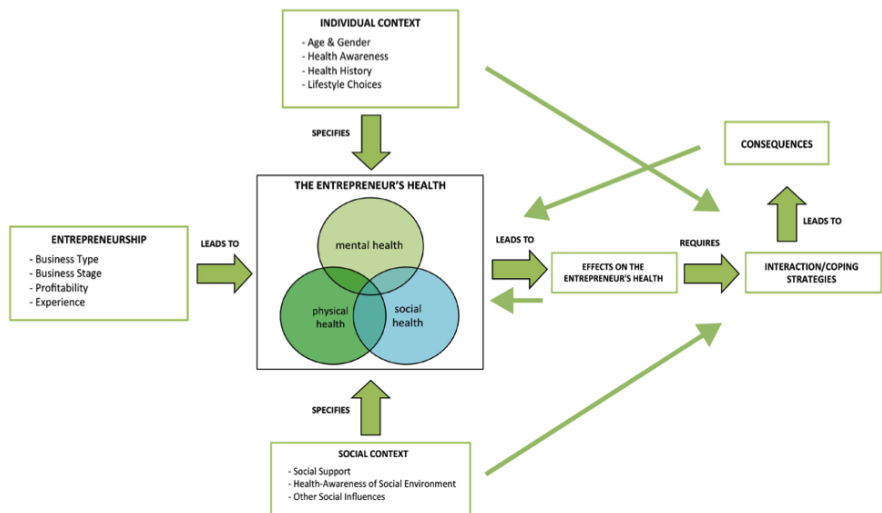


Figure 33: Integrated Framework on the Entrepreneur’s Health

Contextual factors specify the phenomenon: With regards to the entrepreneur’s health, both the individual and the social context play crucial roles. At an individual level, age and gender, personal health awareness, health history as well as lifestyle



choices affect health. As shown in Chapter 6.3.3, these four factors are inextricably intertwined. Age – and the experiences that come with it – often influences an individual’s health awareness based on previous (negative) health experiences. This health awareness then decides which lifestyle choices the individual is going to adopt. At a social level, social support (in general, as well as in terms of entrepreneurship) and the health-awareness of the environment contribute to health. Other social influences may include relationship problems, family conflicts, or the like.

All these impacts in turn influence the entrepreneur’s health: If the effects are positive, they may directly reflect back to the entrepreneur’s health. If the effects are negative, they will require the individual to employ corresponding interaction/coping strategies, which then lead to consequences that will again contribute to the entrepreneur’s health. Which strategies an individual decides to choose depends on the individual as well as the social context.

As an example, in the case of growth-entrepreneur Alex, **entrepreneurship** had positive impacts on his health overall. Having had plenty of work and entrepreneurial experience in the past, his highly profitable core business now revolved around health. Working with the best doctors and therapists on a daily basis helped Alex to better understand what his body really needed. As his work was project-based, Alex was able to take vacations inbetween clients in order to unwind.

Looking at the **individual context**, at age 31, Alex was among the oldest entrepreneurs in the sample. He has spent more time thinking about what health meant, and what it meant to him. Alex used to have a very unhealthy lifestyle as a consultant; after suffering repeated health issues, he decided to make his health a priority. He became very disciplined about his diet, engaged in regular physical activities, quit the “work hard, party harder” lifestyle and made sure he got sufficient sleep. As he stated in his interview, these conscious lifestyle choices also function as deliberate stress prevention tactics.

In a **social context**, Alex moved in a very health-conscious environment as he worked with many doctors and therapists. At the same time, clients who suffered from the consequences of their previously neglected health served as a deterrent and a daily reminder on the importance of health. Alex collaborated with various friends and family members, leading to a high degree of social support.

As Alex only perceived **positive impacts on his health**, the perceived effects were

also positive throughout, which directly **reflected back on his health**. Alex felt less stressed even though he did not work less, and “life hasn’t become more safe”. There was a lot more motivation, and he thoroughly enjoyed the freedom of being self-employed.

On the other side of the spectrum, **start-up entrepreneur** Gabriel displayed the lowest scores across both self-reports and the medical check-up. As his online store for customized shirts did not make any profit, Gabriel was under permanent pressure. Unlike other entrepreneurs (e.g. Daniel or Emil), Gabriel’s entire existence depended on his company, which explains why he submitted his entire life to the needs of the start-up. Having had no previous entrepreneurial experience, Gabriel was overwhelmed from the beginning. As he mentioned himself, he slept very little and the time he spent in front of the computer was now fivefold. Fear of failure kept him from ever taking time off; Gabriel barely went anywhere besides his office, and if he did, his mind would still be at work.

In the **individual context**, Gabriel started his company directly after university at age 25. He was aware of his deteriorating health, yet there was nothing he could do at the moment, as the survival of the company was his first priority. He often ate irregular, unhealthy meals and rarely made time for physical activities.

As Gabriel commented himself, he had never had a lot of **social** support, “not even from my family”. Spending most of his time alone in front of the computer or with his business partner who was equally devoted to work, Gabriel did not live in a health-conscious environment. At the same time, problems in his marriage contributed to additional distress.

All these impacts led to **negative effects** on Gabriel’s **health**. According to the medical check-up, Gabriel showed the lowest health score out of all entrepreneurs. Besides substantial weight gain, Gabriel further complained about sleeping problems, exhaustion, difficulties concentrating, neck pain as well as permanent pressure. As for **interaction/coping strategies**, Gabriel admitted that he was “too reactive”. When he was stressed, he usually took a few minutes to calm down, to identify the stress factors and to break down his work into smaller tasks that seemed more manageable. In the evenings, Gabriel liked to spend some alone time in order to relax. He would read on the sofa, lie on the terrace by himself, drink a glass of whiskey or watch soccer. Nevertheless, all his coping strategies were only able to provide temporary relief.

## 7. Conclusion

### 7.1 Discussion

This thesis aimed at gaining insight into the factors that have an effect on a young entrepreneur's physical, mental and social health. For this purpose, the following five research questions were tackled:

- How important is health to the entrepreneurs?
- How do they manage their own health?
- How does entrepreneurship impact the entrepreneur's health?
- Do they actively cope with (potential) threats to their health, and if so, how?
- Is health a topic that is discussed at work?

The first two research questions are connected: The importance an entrepreneur gives to his health directly determines the way he manages his own health. In this study, health importance was closely associated with age, previous negative health experiences as well as the health importance of one's social environment. The resulting active awareness and prioritization of health then led to according lifestyle choices which had a direct impact on the individual's health. In spite of the general awareness that health is a resource which can influence business performance, only the three oldest entrepreneurs actively managed their health. Besides being very disciplined about regular athletic activities, healthy nutrition and sufficient sleep, they also took regular breaks from work and used frequent massage/acupuncture sessions to unwind. These measures helped the entrepreneurs to both prevent and cope with stress. The five remaining entrepreneurs were all aware of the importance of health but either did not care ("at our age, we don't really value health, we just take it for granted"), or did not make health a priority as business came first. Three start-up entrepreneurs completely submitted their lives to the needs of the business in order to avoid failure.

In addressing the third research question, entrepreneurship was perceived to impact the entrepreneur's (physical, mental, social) health in the following ways:

## **Physical Health**

Being free to plan his days, the entrepreneur was able to schedule regular athletic activities or massages according to his needs. Another positive impact mentioned was the option to work whenever and from wherever the entrepreneur wished. No more long daily commutes during rush hour, no more fixed working hours from eight to five.

Negative impacts on physical health comprised lack of exercise, too much sitting, unhealthy nutrition, lack of balance, lack of structure, neglect of health in favor of the business as well as lack of sleep. As a result, the entrepreneurs experienced a range of negative physical consequences, including weight gain, skin irritations, irregular heartbeats, physical exhaustion, sweat attacks, sleeping problems, and neck/back pain. These negative effects on the entrepreneur's physical health were also closely associated with negative effects on the entrepreneur's mental health.

## **Mental Health**

Job control, autonomy & freedom and loving one's job were the most frequently mentioned benefits of entrepreneurship. They linked to other positive impacts such as the ability to create one's own work environment, sense of achievement, more money, more commitment & motivation, more energy, more confidence, less pressure, less stress as well as more balance. According to the respondents, entrepreneurial stress was different as it was "self-inflicted", thus "much easier to endure". The older and more experienced an entrepreneur, the less stress he seemed to face.

From a negative point of view, the mental health of entrepreneurs was described as being more volatile. Permanent pressure resulted from a huge amount of responsibilities, fear of failure/existential fears, long working hours and the inability to detach. Lack of structure in an emerging organization, permanent presence/availability paired with high opportunity costs further contributed negatively to the entrepreneur's mental health. All these negative impacts of entrepreneurship inevitably led to distress that caused negative effects such as lack of focus, sleeping problems, mental exhaustion and lower efficiency. Negative effects on mental health were very closely associated with negative effects on physical health.

## **Social Health**

Most entrepreneurs have expanded their social networks and improved their social skills, being their own boss further allowed them to create their own work environment and meet with friends at any time.

Lack of time for family and friends was the most mentioned negative impact of entrepreneurship on social health. Long working hours were the norm; various entrepreneurs brought up the difficulty to plan social activities outside of work because of their unpredictable schedules.

Several respondents characterized their social health as “similar but different”. One person had to now actively look for connections; working as a consultant previously, a lot of contacts – as in clients, work colleagues, experts etc. – were handed to him. He also used to spend most of his leisure time with work colleagues, but now the circles in which he moved had become “much more eclectic and interesting”. Several entrepreneurs attended regular networking events, thus were able to meet a lot of people and build a big social network. At the same time, there was less time available for family or friends.

## **General Health**

The general (physical, mental and social) health of entrepreneurs was perceived to be affected by several factors: the business type, business stage, profitability as well as the experience of the entrepreneur.

The business type appeared to be essential: The industry the entrepreneur was operating in, the characteristics of the venture as well as whether the entrepreneur’s existence depended on the business all had a direct impact on health. As the entrepreneurs’ behavior changes over time (e.g. Hambrick & Crozier, 1985; McCarthy et al., 1990), the business stage also played a major role; the two respondents who showed the most distress and the most negative health consequences were both start-up entrepreneurs. Previous work and entrepreneurial experience was therefore perceived to be a major advantage. Last but not least, various conceptual models have confirmed the relation between financial stability and subjective well-being (e.g. Veenhoven, 1991; Ahuvia & Friedman, 1998). Understandably, an entrepreneur struggling to keep his company alive is more likely to report negative effects of entrepreneurship on his health.

As of whether the entrepreneurs actively coped with (potential) threats to their health, the answers differed. The two oldest entrepreneurs seemed most disciplined about a healthy lifestyle, including regular physical activities, sufficient sleep, a balanced diet as well as regular breaks and frequent massage/acupuncture/meditation sessions in order to prevent and cope with stress. Both Emil and Fabian emphasized the importance of planning in order to avoid distress, whereas the remaining entrepreneurs seemed more reactive with respect to threats to their health. When feeling distressed, they would take a walk with dogs (Hugo), talk to people they trust (Chris) or distract themselves (Daniel). Gabriel would try to identify the source of the stress and break his work into smaller tasks that seemed more manageable. In order to relax, he would lay on the terrace, read a book, drink a glass of whiskey or watch soccer.

The last research question then examined whether health as a topic was discussed at work. Despite knowing that health can influence business success, almost none of the ventures had taken any measures to support or encourage preventative health behavior among their employees. The more health-conscious the entrepreneur, the more health as a topic was discussed at work – but not as part of work. With the exception of the health business owner who focused on creating a health-conscious mindset in the work environment, all entrepreneurs occasionally talked about health-related topics as part of making conversation but not as part of an integrated health or wellness program within their company.

According to the medical examinations, all respondents were in (very) good physical health; none of them showed pathological deviations in routine laboratories. Nevertheless, despite anamnestic health, several probands exhibited stress factors and negative health determinants including sleeping problems, weight gain, irregular heartbeats, neck pain, skin irritations as well as difficulties concentrating.

The majority of entrepreneurs had a very vague idea of health and its key dimensions. When asked to give a personal definition of health, most respondents had never thought about a definition, or what health meant to them. As a consequence, responses varied greatly, usually focusing on the physical and mental spheres as well as the pathological side of health. The older the entrepreneur, the better his understanding of himself and his health was. These observations are consistent with studies that have shown that, through accumulated life experience, older entrepreneurs are likely to have developed a more accurate understanding of their knowledge, skills, abilities as well as the pressures inherent to specific vocational

opportunities (Kuhn, 2000).

This study affirms stress to be an indispensable part of entrepreneurship. It is neither exclusively a reaction to unpleasant experiences, nor does it stop being a problem after one achieves financial success (Boyd & Gumpert, 1983). The majority of respondents supported the claim that stress was manifested in a unique way for entrepreneurs (Harris et al., 1999): A huge amount of responsibilities, role overload, lack of structure, long working hours, high opportunity costs as well as fear of failure/existential fears all caused entrepreneurial stress. Permanent pressure, availability and presence prohibited the entrepreneurs to detach; technological advances have not only facilitated but also rapidly increased hours worked (Golden & Figart, 2000). As one person stated, “some employees might take work home, but we entrepreneurs tend to take our work everywhere with us”.

Surprisingly, despite several respondents complaining about clear symptoms of distress as well as various negative mental and physical consequences, all entrepreneurs agreed that the perceived benefits of entrepreneurship on each health dimension always outweighed the costs. Throughout the personal interviews, all respondents talked about the fulfillment and satisfaction they got from building and managing their own business – despite long working hours, permanent pressure as well as the challenges they were confronted with on a daily basis. One entrepreneur claimed that he felt completely balanced and less stressed, “despite not working less“ (up to 112 hours per week in this case). Another entrepreneur started to suffer from skin irritations, irregular heart beats, back pain, loss of concentration and sleeping problems at age 24, yet kept emphasizing that he was much happier because he could work on his own project and follow his own vision. These findings are in line with Boyd & Gumpert’s (1983) study in which the majority of respondents suffered from physical impairments, yet only 2 out of 450 entrepreneurs disagreed that a career in small business would bring satisfaction and self-fulfillment. The older and more experienced an entrepreneur, the less stress he seemed to face. This supports Baron et al. (2013) who claim that stress-reducing effects of psychological capital have proven to be stronger for older than younger entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurship – as a career choice – does impact a person’s health, however, it is only one among many variables. According to the World Health Organization (2014), determinants of health include the social and economic environment, the physical environment, as well as the person’s individual characteristics and behaviors. In addition to these factors, other influences such as income and social

status, education, access to health services, genetics, age and gender are also essential. This thesis has shed light on factors that are unrelated to entrepreneurship yet strongly affect an entrepreneur's health including his social environment, his age and experience, his health awareness as well as his lifestyle choices. While these findings on the determinants of health may not be new, they are unique in the field of entrepreneurship. The few existing studies on the entrepreneur's health have not included any key physical health indicators (e.g. body mass index, blood pressure, cholesterol) or controlled for key determinants of health besides entrepreneurship (e.g. age, education, social and economic environment etc.). The choice to become an entrepreneur has impacts on an individual's health, but it is only a small part of a large and complex picture.

## **7.2 Contribution**

Little is known about the physiological, emotional as well as social effects of owning a business (Boyd & Gumpert, 1983). In order to explore the holistic health of young Swiss entrepreneurs, this work contributes to the fields of entrepreneurship, occupational health and organizational behavior using an innovative multi-method, multiple case study approach. Building such interdisciplinary connections between entrepreneurship and other fields has long been regarded as an important and desirable goal (Baron, 2002).

Unlike the majority of previously conducted research that have in most cases only relied on self-reported perceptions of the entrepreneur's mental health, a more "holistic" view of health comprising physical, mental as well as social spheres was adopted.

While the choice to become an entrepreneur does impact an individual's health, it is only one among many variables. Previous studies in the field of entrepreneurship have directly attributed the entrepreneur's health to his entrepreneurial activities without including any key physical health indicators or controlling for key determinants of health besides entrepreneurship. Health and health behavior are complex constructs that have to be put in context: Overemphasis on entrepreneurship-related explanations may divert attention from other – equally or even more – important determinants of health.

In the integrative framework introduced in this study, the entrepreneur's health is considered the phenomenon to be studied while entrepreneurship represents a



causal condition. Entrepreneurship-specific impacts on health include business type, business stage, profitability as well as the individual's previous work or entrepreneurial experience. Contextual factors then specify the phenomenon: At an individual level, age and gender, personal health awareness, health history as well as lifestyle choices affect health. At a social level, social support, the health-awareness of the environment together with other social influences (which may include relationship problems or family conflicts) contribute to health. All these different types of impacts and their interaction lead to effects on the entrepreneur's health. If the effects are positive, they may directly reflect back to the entrepreneur's health. If the effects are negative, they will require the individual to employ corresponding interaction/coping strategies, which then lead to positive or negative consequences that will again contribute to the entrepreneur's health. Which strategies an individual decides to choose depends on the individual as well as the social context.

Last but not least, the present findings further add to the understanding of entrepreneurial stress, providing deeper insights into the processes, mechanisms and challenges that entrepreneurs face on a daily basis (whilst often undermining their own health and well-being). In spite of clear distress as well as numerous negative mental and physical consequences (see Chapters 6.3.3 and 6.3.4), all entrepreneurs agreed that the perceived benefits of entrepreneurship on each health dimension always outweighed the costs. These findings support Boyd & Gumpert's study (1983) in which the majority of respondents suffered from physical impairments, yet almost all entrepreneurs claimed that a career in small business would bring satisfaction and self-fulfillment. According to Baron et al. (2013), entrepreneurs are above average in their stress tolerance as they have been selected into entrepreneurship by both environmental and self-selective factors. The older the entrepreneur, and the more life experience he has accumulated, the higher his capacity to cope and manage stress effectively seems to be.

### **7.3 Limitations of Research & Outlook**

This study has several important limitations, many of which provide further opportunities for research.

First, the small sample size of only eight entrepreneurs constrains the generalization of the results. It can therefore not be claimed that the observations reflected in this study are representative or typical of entrepreneurs everywhere.

Second, this contribution focuses on the present health status of entrepreneurs and therefore only captures a specific, restricted moment. Further longitudinal, empirical studies are encouraged in order to gather possible changes in the entrepreneur's health over time.

Third, the behavior of the entrepreneurs was not contrasted with another group. Given the importance of age in an individual's perception and dealing of health, it would be of interest to contrast the entrepreneurs' health to the average health status of individuals within the same age group.

Fourth, "the entrepreneur" as such does not exist. Previous writers have often considered entrepreneurs a homogeneous group when really they "come in all sizes, each with his or her own characteristics" (Kets de Vries, 1985). Further research thus needs to examine different groups of entrepreneurs in their respective environments (e.g. start-up entrepreneurs vs. growth entrepreneurs, first-time entrepreneurs vs. serial entrepreneurs, manufacturing entrepreneurs vs. service entrepreneurs, etc.) in order to identify both commonalities and differences that might affect an entrepreneur's health. As suggested by MacIntosh et al. (2007), health is created through the interaction of biological, psychological and organizational processes.

Fifth, results may differ among genders. The recruitment of only male entrepreneurs to this pilot study was selected to reduce variability introduced by gender differences (Burman & Margolin, 1992). Dozens of studies have shown that women, in comparison to men, tend to report lower self-esteem (Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974), and more symptoms of anxiety as well as depression (e.g. Dohrenwend & Dohrenwend, 1974; Weissman & Klerman, 1977). According to Zuckerman (1989), gender may mediate the relationships between stress, self-esteem and mental health. It would therefore be interesting to examine how entrepreneurship impacts the health of female entrepreneurs: Do women manage their health differently in comparison to men? Are female entrepreneurs (physically, mentally, socially) healthier? How do females cope with entrepreneurial stress?

Finally, while this study contains particular health indicators, others have been neglected. As noted by various researchers (Cooper, 2003; Pearce et al., 2004; Bamshad, 2005), differences in health status are often determined by individual lifestyle choices as well as genetic and physiological constitutions. Genetics may encompass both the predisposition to certain diseases or health conditions, as well as the behavior patterns and habits a person internalizes throughout childhood. As an example, genetics may decide in which way an individual copes with conflicts

or stress. Future research might therefore want to include genetic and physiological constitutions in addition to further key health determinants such as education, age, social and economic development etc. in the context of health and entrepreneurship.

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## **Appendix A**

Online Self-Reports: SF-36 & MSPSS

# Appendix A

## SF-36 Health Survey (Questions)

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**PART A: GENERAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**  
(SF-36 Health Survey)

*This first set of questions seeks your views about your health, how you feel and how well you are able to do your usual activities.*

*Please take the time to read and answer each question carefully by crossing the box corresponding to your response. If you are unsure about how to answer a question, please give the best answer you can.*

**A1** In general, would you say your health is:

(Cross  **one** box)

|             |             |        |        |        |
|-------------|-------------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1 Excellent | 2 Very good | 3 Good | 4 Fair | 5 Poor |
|-------------|-------------|--------|--------|--------|

AGH1

**A2** Compared to one year ago, how would you rate your health in general **now**?

(Cross  **one** box)

|  |  |
|--|--|
| 1 Much better now than a year ago      |  |
| 2 Somewhat better now than a year ago  |  |
| 3 About the same as one year ago       |  |
| 4 Somewhat worse now than one year ago |  |
| 5 Much worse now than one year ago     |  |

AGH2

**A3** The following questions are about activities you might do during a typical day. Does your health now limit you in these activities? If so, how much?

(Cross  **one** box on each line)

|   | ACTIVITIES   | Yes, limited a lot | Yes, limited a little | No, not limited at all |
|---|--|--------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| a | Vigorous activities, such as running, lifting heavy objects, participating in strenuous sports | 1                  | 2                     | 3                      |
| b | Moderate activities, such as moving a table, pushing a vacuum cleaner, bowling or playing golf | 1                  | 2                     | 3                      |
| c | Lifting or carrying groceries  | 1                  | 2                     | 3                      |
| d | Climbing several flights of stairs   | 1                  | 2                     | 3                      |
| e | Climbing one flight of stairs  | 1                  | 2                     | 3                      |
| f | Bending, kneeling, or stooping   | 1                  | 2                     | 3                      |
| g | Walking more than one kilometre  | 1                  | 2                     | 3                      |
| h | Walking half a kilometre   | 1                  | 2                     | 3                      |
| i | Walking 100 metres   | 1                  | 2                     | 3                      |
| j | Bathing or dressing yourself   | 1                  | 2                     | 3                      |

AGH3A

AGH3B

AGH3C

AGH3D

AGH3E

AGH3F

AGH3G

AGH3H

AGH3I

AGH3J

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**A4** During the past 4 weeks, have you had any of the following problems with your work or other regular daily activities as a result of your physical health ?

(Cross  **one** box on **each** line)

|   |   | YES                        | NO                         |       |
|---|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------|
| a | Cut down the amount of time you spent on work or other activities                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | AGH4A |
| b | <u>Accomplished less</u> than you would like  | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | AGH4B |
| c | Were limited in the kind of work or other activities  | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | AGH4C |
| d | Had <u>difficulty</u> performing the work or other activities (for example, it took extra effort) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | AGH4D |

**A5** During the past 4 weeks, have you had any of the following problems with your work or other regular daily activities as a result of any emotional problems (such as feeling depressed or anxious) ?

(Cross  **one** box on **each** line)

|   |   | YES                        | NO                         |       |
|---|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------|
| a | Cut down the amount of time you spent on work or other activities | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | AGH5A |
| b | <u>Accomplished less</u> than you would like                      | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | AGH5B |
| c | Didn't do work or other activities <u>as carefully</u> as usual   | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | AGH5C |

**A6** During the past 4 weeks, to what extent has your physical health or emotional problems interfered with your normal social activities with family, friends, neighbours, or groups ?

(Cross  **one** box)

|                                       |                                     |                                       |  |                                      |      |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Not at all | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Slightly | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Moderately | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Quite a bit | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Extremely | AGH6 |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|------|

**A7** How much bodily pain have you had during the past 4 weeks ?

(Cross  **one** box)

|   |                                      |                                 |                                     |                                   |  |      |
|---|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 No bodily pain | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Very mild | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Mild | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Moderate | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Severe | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 Very severe | AGH7 |
|---|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|------|

**A8** During the past 4 weeks, how much did pain interfere with your normal work (including both work outside the home and housework) ?

(Cross  **one** box)

|                                       |                                     |                                       |  |                                      |      |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Not at all | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Slightly | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Moderately | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Quite a bit | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Extremely | AGH8 |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|------|

**A9** These questions are about how you feel and how things have been with you during the past 4 weeks. For each question, please give the one answer that comes closest to the way you have been feeling.

How much of the time during the past 4 weeks:

(Cross  one box on each line)

|   |   | <i>All of the time</i>     | <i>Most of the time</i>    | <i>A good bit of the time</i> | <i>Some of the time</i>    | <i>A little of the time</i> | <i>None of the time</i>    |       |
|---|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-------|
| a | Did you feel full of life?  | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3    | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5  | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 | AGH9A |
| b | Have you been a nervous person?                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3    | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5  | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 | AGH9B |
| c | Have you felt so down in the dumps that nothing could cheer you up? | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3    | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5  | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 | AGH9C |
| d | Have you felt calm and peaceful?                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3    | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5  | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 | AGH9D |
| e | Did you have a lot of energy?                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3    | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5  | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 | AGH9E |
| f | Have you felt down?   | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3    | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5  | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 | AGH9F |
| g | Did you feel worn out?  | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3    | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5  | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 | AGH9G |
| h | Have you been a happy person?                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3    | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5  | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 | AGH9H |
| i | Did you feel tired?   | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3    | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5  | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 | AGH9I |

**A10** During the past 4 weeks, how much of the time has your physical health or emotional problems interfered with your social activities (like visiting friends, relatives, etc)?

(Cross  one box)

|                            |                      |       |
|----------------------------|----------------------|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | All of the time      | AGH10 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | Most of the time     |       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | Some of the time     |       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | A little of the time |       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | None of the time     |       |

**A11** How TRUE or FALSE is each of the following statements for you?

(Cross  one box on each line)

|   |  | <i>Definitely True</i>     | <i>Mostly True</i>         | <i>Don't know</i>          | <i>Mostly False</i>        | <i>Definitely False</i>    |        |
|---|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------|
| a | I seem to get sick a little easier than other people | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | AGH11A |
| b | I am as healthy as anybody I know                    | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | AGH11B |
| c | I expect my health to get worse                      | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | AGH11C |
| d | My health is excellent                               | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | AGH11D |



# Appendix A

## SF-36 Health Survey (Responses)

| Row labels                                 | Alex         | Daniel       | Fabian    | Gabriel      | Ben          | Emil         | Hugo         | Chris     |
|--|--------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|
| Emotional well-being                       | 84           | 72           | 80        | 52           | 88           | 76           | 64           | 84        |
| Energy/Fatigue                             | 75           | 85           | 55        | 45           | 70           | 70           | 90           | 70        |
| General Health                             | 60           | 70           | 50        | 80           | 80           | 65           | 40           | 60        |
| Pain                                       | 67.5         | 90           | 77.5      | 100          | 77.5         | 100          | 67.5         | 90        |
| Physical functioning                       | 100          | 95           | 40        | 100          | 90           | 95           | 95           | 95        |
| Role limitations due to emotional problems | 100          | 100          | 100       | 0            | 100          | 100          | 100          | 100       |
| Role limitations due to physical health    | 100          | 75           | 75        | 100          | 100          | 100          | 75           | 50        |
| Social functioning                         | 87.5         | 75           | 75        | 37.5         | 100          | 75           | 87.5         | 100       |
| <i>Average total score</i>                 | <i>85.55</i> | <i>82.77</i> | <i>62</i> | <i>70.55</i> | <i>86.80</i> | <i>84.30</i> | <i>78.19</i> | <i>80</i> |

Table 1: SF-36 Average Values

| Question | Alex                           | Daniel                         | Fabian                              | Gabriel                            | Ben                            | Emil                           | Hugo                                | Chris                          |
|----------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1        | good                           | very good                      | good                                | very good                          | very good                      | good                           | good                                | very good                      |
| 2        | about the same as one year ago | about the same as one year ago | somewhat better now than a year ago | somewhat worse now than a year ago | about the same as one year ago | about the same as one year ago | somewhat better now than a year ago | about the same as one year ago |
| 3        | No, not limited at all         | Yes, limited a little          | Yes, limited a lot                  | No, not limited at all             | Yes, limited a little          | Yes, limited a little          | No, not limited at all              | Yes, limited a little          |
| 4        | No, not limited at all         | No, not limited at all         | Yes, limited a lot                  | No, not limited at all             | No, not limited at all         | No, not limited at all         | No, not limited at all              | No, not limited at all         |
| 5        | No, not limited at all         | No, not limited at all         | Yes, limited a little               | No, not limited at all             | No, not limited at all         | No, not limited at all         | No, not limited at all              | No, not limited at all         |
| 6        | No, not limited at all         | No, not limited at all         | Yes, limited a little               | No, not limited at all             | No, not limited at all         | No, not limited at all         | No, not limited at all              | No, not limited at all         |

| Question | Alex                   | Daniel                 | Fabian                 | Gabriel                | Ben                    | Emil                   | Hugo                   | Chris                  |
|----------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 7        | No, not limited at all | No, not limited at all | Yes, limited a little  | No, not limited at all | Yes, limited a little  | No, not limited at all | Yes, limited a little  | No, not limited at all |
| 8        | No, not limited at all | No, not limited at all | Yes, limited a little  | No, not limited at all | No, not limited at all | No, not limited at all | No, not limited at all | No, not limited at all |
| 9        | No, not limited at all | No, not limited at all | Yes, limited a lot     | No, not limited at all | No, not limited at all | No, not limited at all | No, not limited at all | No, not limited at all |
| 10       | No, not limited at all | No, not limited at all | Yes, limited a little  | No, not limited at all | No, not limited at all | No, not limited at all | No, not limited at all | No, not limited at all |
| 11       | No, not limited at all | No, not limited at all | No, not limited at all | No, not limited at all | No, not limited at all | No, not limited at all | No, not limited at all | No, not limited at all |
| 12       | No, not limited at all | No, not limited at all | No, not limited at all | No, not limited at all | No, not limited at all | No, not limited at all | No, not limited at all | No, not limited at all |
| 13       | No                     | No                     | No                     | No                     | No                     | No                     | Yes                    | No                     |
| 14       | No                     | No                     | No                     | No                     | No                     | No                     | No                     | Yes                    |
| 15       | No                     | No                     | Yes                    | No                     | No                     | No                     | No                     | No                     |
| 16       | No                     | Yes                    | No                     | No                     | No                     | No                     | Yes                    | No                     |
| 17       | No                     | No                     | No                     | Yes                    | No                     | No                     | No                     | No                     |
| 18       | No                     | No                     | No                     | Yes                    | No                     | No                     | No                     | No                     |
| 19       | No                     | No                     | No                     | Yes                    | No                     | No                     | No                     | No                     |
| 20       | Not at all             | Slightly               | Slightly               | Quite a bit            | Not at all             | Slightly               | Not at all             | Not at all             |
| 21       | Mild                   | Very mild              | Very mild              | No bodily pain         | Very mild              | No bodily pain         | Mild                   | Very mild              |
| 22       | Slightly               | Not at all             | Slightly               | Not at all             | Slightly               | Not at all             | Slightly               | Not at all             |
| 23       | Most of the time       | Most of the time       | None of the time       | A good bit of the time | A good bit of the time | Most of the time       | Most of the time       | Most of the time       |
| 24       | A little of the time   | A little of the time   | A little of the time   | A good bit of the time | None of the time       | Some of the time       | Some of the time       | A little of the time   |
| 25       | None of the time       | A little of the time   | –                      | A little of the time   | None of the time       | None of the time       | Some of the time       | None of the time       |
| 26       | A good bit of the time | Some of the time       | Most of the time       | Some of the time       | Most of the time       | A good bit of the time | A good bit of the time | Most of the time       |
| 27       | A good bit of the time | Most of the time       | A good bit of the time | A good bit of the time | A good bit of the time | A good bit of the time | Most of the time       | Most of the time       |
| 28       | None of the time       | A little of the time   | A little of the time   | Some of the time       | A little of the time   | A little of the time   | A good bit of the time | A little of the time   |

| <b>Question</b> | <b>Alex</b>          | <b>Daniel</b>        | <b>Fabian</b>        | <b>Gabriel</b>         | <b>Ben</b>           | <b>Emil</b>          | <b>Hugo</b>          | <b>Chris</b>           |
|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| 29              | A little of the time | None of the time     | A little of the time | A good bit of the time | A little of the time | Some of the time     | None of the time     | A little of the time   |
| 30              | Most of the time     | Most of the time     | Most of the time     | Some of the time       | Most of the time     | Most of the time     | All of the time      | Most of the time       |
| 31              | A little of the time | A little of the time | A little of the time | Most of the time       | A little of the time | A little of the time | None of the time     | A good bit of the time |
| 32              | A little of the time | A little of the time | A little of the time | Some of the time       | None of the time     | A little of the time | A little of the time | None of the time       |
| 33              | Definitely false     | Definitely false     | Mostly false         | Definitely false       | Definitely false     | Mostly false         | Mostly true          | Mostly false           |
| 34              | Mostly true          | Definitely true      | Don't know           | Definitely true        | Definitely true      | Don't know           | Don't know           | Don't know             |
| 35              | Mostly true          | Mostly true          | Mostly true          | Don't know             | Don't know           | Mostly false         | Don't know           | Don't know             |
| 36              | Don't know           | Don't know           | Don't know           | Mostly true            | Mostly true          | Mostly true          | Mostly false         | Don't know             |

Table 2: SF-36 Individual Responses

# Appendix A

## MSPSS Survey (Questions)

**Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support** (Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet & Farley, 1988)

Instructions: We are interested in how you feel about the following statements. Read each statement carefully. Indicate how you feel about each statement.

Circle the "1" if you **Very Strongly Disagree**

Circle the "2" if you **Strongly Disagree**

Circle the "3" if you **Mildly Disagree**

Circle the "4" if you are **Neutral**

Circle the "5" if you **Mildly Agree**

Circle the "6" if you **Strongly Agree**

Circle the "7" if you **Very Strongly Agree**

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |     |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|
| 1. There is a special person who is around when I am in need.           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | SO  |
| 2. There is a special person with whom I can share my joys and sorrows. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | SO  |
| 3. My family really tries to help me.                                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Fam |
| 4. I get the emotional help and support I need from my family.          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Fam |
| 5. I have a special person who is a real source of comfort to me.       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | SO  |
| 6. My friends really try to help me.                                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Fri |
| 7. I can count on my friends when things go wrong.                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Fri |
| 8. I can talk about my problems with my family.                         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Fam |
| 9. I have friends with whom I can share my joys and sorrows.            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Fri |
| 10. There is a special person in my life who cares about my feelings.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | SO  |
| 11. My family is willing to help me make decisions.                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Fam |
| 12. I can talk about my problems with my friends.                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Fri |

The items tended to divide into factor groups relating to the source of the social support, namely family (Fam), friends (Fri) or significant other (SO).

### References

- Canty-Mitchell, J. & Zimet, G.D. (2000). Psychometric properties of the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support in urban adolescents. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 28, 391-400.
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- Zimet, G.D., Powell, S.S., Farley, G.K., Werkman, S. & Berkoff, K.A. (1990). Psychometric characteristics of the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 55, 610-17.

# Appendix A

## MSPSS Survey (Responses)

| Question                         | Alex | Daniel | Fabian | Gabriel | Ben  | Emil | Hugo | Chris | <i>Average total</i> |
|----------------------------------|------|--------|--------|---------|------|------|------|-------|----------------------|
| 1                                | 6    | 7      | 6      | 3       | 7    | 6    | 6    | 7     | 6                    |
| 2                                | 5    | 7      | 4      | 3       | 6    | 6    | 6    | 7     | 5.5                  |
| 3                                | 6    | 2      | 6      | 2       | 6    | 5    | 6    | 5     | 4.75                 |
| 4                                | 6    | 3      | 5      | 2       | 6    | 4    | 4    | 6     | 4.5                  |
| 5                                | 7    | 7      | 5      | 3       | 6    | 5    | 5    | 7     | 5.625                |
| 6                                | 5    | 6      | 5      | 3       | 5    | 5    | 6    | 6     | 5.125                |
| 7                                | 7    | 5      | 6      | 5       | 5    | 6    | 6    | 6     | 5.75                 |
| 8                                | 4    | 4      | 5      | 2       | 6    | 4    | 6    | 6     | 4.625                |
| 9                                | 6    | 7      | 5      | 6       | 4    | 5    | 6    | 6     | 5.625                |
| 10                               | 7    | 7      | 3      | 5       | 5    | 6    | 6    | 7     | 5.75                 |
| 11                               | 2    | 3      | 4      | 2       | 5    | 5    | 6    | 6     | 4.125                |
| 12                               | 5    | 6      | 5      | 6       | 5    | 5    | 5    | 6     | 5.375                |
| <i>Average Significant other</i> | 6.25 | 7      | 4.5    | 3.5     | 6    | 5.75 | 5.75 | 7     | 5.71875              |
| <i>Average Family</i>            | 4.5  | 3      | 5      | 2       | 5.75 | 4.5  | 5.5  | 5.75  | 4.5                  |
| <i>Average Friends</i>           | 5.75 | 6      | 5.25   | 5       | 4.75 | 5.25 | 5.75 | 6     | 5.46875              |

Table 3: MSPSS Individual Responses / Average Values

## **Appendix B**

### Medical Check-Ups

# Appendix B

## Medical Check-Ups

NL | Dr. med.  
Nikolaus Linde

Name: Alex  
Alter: 31

### Anamnese:

Nach eigenen Angaben gesund, sportlich und fit.  
Erkrankungen: Migräne, nimmt deshalb Betablocker (sollten demnächst abgesetzt werden).  
Bekannter Mitralklappenprolaps, keine Medikation. Leichte Laktose-Intoleranz.

Aktuelle Medikation: Inderal, 1x täglich 40mg. Supplemente wie Omega3, 5-HTP und Vitamine.

### Funktionelle Gesundheit

#### Schlaf

Schläft täglich 8 Stunden, regelmässig, keine Ein- oder Durchschlafstörungen.

| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |

#### Essen/Gewicht

Ausgeglichenes, gesundes Essverhalten; kein Über- oder Untergewicht.

| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |

#### Krankheitstage (AUF) pro Jahr

Keine, vielleicht einmal pro Jahr kleine Erkältung; AUF 0-1 Tage pro Jahr.

| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |

#### Medikamenteneinnahme Psychopharmaka, Alkoholgenuss

Keine Einnahme irgendwelcher psychomodulierender Substanzen. Selbst Kaffee und Alkohol nur sehr selten.

| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |

### Sport

Treibt regelmässig Sport. Möchte gerne noch ein wenig mehr, hat früher Leistungssport getrieben.

|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |   |

### Rücken-/Nackenbeschwerden

Kommt vor, aber selten.

|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |   |

### Sexualleben

Problemlos, keine stressbedingten Probleme.

|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |

**Durchschnittswert Score für diesen Probanden: Score 7.71**

### Erklärung Score Werte

*Score Wert von 0 bedeutet schlechte funktionelle Gesundheit (z.B. schwerste Schlafstörungen etc.),*

*Score 8 bedeutet hervorragende funktionelle Gesundheit ohne Krankheit oder stressbedingte Probleme.*

## Gesundheitscheck:

Körperliche Untersuchung:

185 cm 78 kg BMI 22.8

Blutdruck: 130/ 80, HF 44

Athletischer normaler Körper ohne Auffälligkeiten. Perkutorisch unauffällig, auskultatorisch unauffällig (bis auf bekannten Mitralklappenklick). Neuro o.B..

## Blutlaborwerte:

Im Routinelabor unauffällige Werte ohne pathologische Abweichungen.

Zusammenfassung:

Alex ist anamnestisch (besonders auch auf Nachfrage nach funktionellen Gesundheitsdaten) als sehr gesund einzuschätzen. Faktoren wie sie für Stress typisch sind, lassen sich nicht nachweisen.



Name: Ben  
Alter: 34

## Anamnese:

Nach eigenen Angaben gesund, sportlich und fit.  
Keine Erkrankungen oder Medikation.

## Funktionelle Gesundheit

### Schlaf

Schläft täglich mindestens 7 Stunden.

| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |

### Essen/Gewicht

Begann Unternehmertum mit einer Phase der Selbstentwicklung, deshalb: Sehr gesunde Ernährung (raw food, wenig Kohlenhydrate, jeden Tag 1x Salat, viele Früchte), 5-6 Mahlzeiten am Tag. Konstantes Gewicht.

| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |

### Krankheitstage (AUF) pro Jahr

0

| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |

### Medikamenteneinnahme Psychopharmaka, Alkoholgenuss

10-20 Zigaretten pro Tag (versucht aufzuhören). Max. 1 Glas Alkohol & 1 Espresso pro Tag.

| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |   |   |

### Sport

Sehr regelmässig, mind. 2-3x die Woche (Thai Boxing, Kitesurfing). War früher Leistungssportler.

|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |

### Rücken-/Nackenbeschwerden

Keine. Die meiste Zeit in Bewegung (Häuser anschauen, Wohnungen besichtigen etc.), sitzen auf Gymnastikbällen vor Computer.

|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |

### Sexualleben

Problemlos, keine stressbedingten Probleme. Einzige Probleme vielleicht von zu viel Sex, Unternehmertum scheint attraktiv zu sein für Frauen. Kann auch nicht mit einer Frau zusammen sein, da ganze Aufmerksamkeit in Business; braucht Abwechslung.

|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |   |

**Durchschnittswert Score für diesen Probanden: Score 7.57**

### Erklärung Score Werte

Score Wert von 0 bedeutet schlechte funktionelle Gesundheit (z.B. schwerste Schlafstörungen etc.), Score 8 bedeutet hervorragende funktionelle Gesundheit ohne Krankheit oder stressbedingte Probleme.

## Gesundheitscheck:

Körperliche Untersuchung:

177 cm 74 kg BMI 23.6

Blutdruck & Herzfrequenz: normal

Athletischer normaler Körper ohne Auffälligkeiten. Perkutorisch unauffällig, auskultatorisch unauffällig. Neuro o.B..

## Blutlaborwerte:

Im Routinelabor unauffällige Werte ohne pathologische Abweichungen.

Zusammenfassung:

Proband in hervorragender AZ und EZ, lediglich vielleicht beginnende Stressfaktoren wie Nikotinabusus.

Name: Chris  
Alter: 26

## Anamnese:

Nach eigenen Angaben gesund, einigermassen sportlich und fit. Hat sich früher, vor 3-4 Jahren fitter gefühlt, da er regelmässiger trainierte. Der Proband wies während ein paar Wochen, als er unter besonders grossem Stress stand, Hautirritationen auf, die sich durch kleine Eiterblasen im Gesicht äusserten. Nach der stressigen Phase verschwanden diese von selbst wieder. Zudem beklagt sich der Proband über einen manchmal irregulären Herzrhythmus.

Keine bekannten Erkrankungen oder Medikation.

## Funktionelle Gesundheit

### Schlaf

Schläft täglich 5-6 Stunden unter der Woche (an Wochenenden 8-10 Stunden), teilweise Ein- oder Durchschlafstörungen.

| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|       |   |   |   |   |   | X |   |   |   |

### Essen/Gewicht

Mehrheitlich ausgeglichenes, gesundes Essverhalten; kein Über- oder Untergewicht.

| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |   |

### Krankheitstage (AUF) pro Jahr

Vielleicht ein paar Tage pro Jahr kleine Erkältung; AUF 0-3 Tage pro Jahr.

| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |   |

### Medikamenteneinnahme Psychopharmaka, Alkoholgenuss

Keine Einnahme irgendwelcher psychomodulierender Substanzen. Täglich mehrmals Kaffee (2-6 Espresso), dosierter Alkoholgenuss (2-3 Tage wöchentlich).

| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |   |   |

**Sport**

Treibt ca. 1 Mal pro Woche Sport. Möchte gerne mehr, hat früher Leistungssport getrieben (6-8 Trainingseinheiten pro Woche).

|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |   |   |

**Rücken-/Nackenbeschwerden**

Rücken in Ordnung, manchmal Nackenbeschwerden (aufgrund von vielen Stunden vor PC).

|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |   |   |

**Sexualleben**

Problemlos, keine stressbedingten Probleme.

|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |

**Durchschnittswert Score für diesen Probanden: 6.42**

*Erklärung Score Werte*

*Score Wert von 0 bedeutet schlechte funktionelle Gesundheit (z.B. schwerste Schlafstörungen etc.), Score 8 bedeutet hervorragende funktionelle Gesundheit ohne Krankheit oder stressbedingte Probleme.*

## Gesundheitscheck:

Körperliche Untersuchung:

180 cm 73 kg BMI 22.5

Blutdruck: 60/122

Athletischer normaler Körper ohne Auffälligkeiten. Perkutorisch unauffällig, auskultatorisch unauffällig. Neuro o.B..

## Blutlaborwerte:

Im Routinelabor unauffällige Werte ohne pathologische Abweichungen.

Zusammenfassung:

Chris ist anamnestisch (noch) als gesund einzuschätzen, klare Symptome von Stress (Hautirritationen, irregulärer Herzrhythmus etc.) sind jedoch ersichtlich und rufen zur Vorsicht auf.

Name: Daniel  
Alter: 28

## Anamnese:

Nach eigenen Angaben gesund und einigermassen fit.

Erkrankungen: Keine bekannte Erkrankungen.

Aktuelle Medikation: Keine. 1x im Monat Hyboprophen gegen Kopfschmerzen.

## Funktionelle Gesundheit

### Schlaf

Nie Schwierigkeiten, 6-7h jede Nacht.

|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |   |

### Essen/Gewicht

Isst nicht zu viel. Qualität des Essens ist mittelmässig (nicht besonders gesund, nicht besonders ungesund). Leichtes Übergewicht (BMI von 25.5).

|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|       |   |   |   |   |   | X |   |   |   |

### Krankheitstage (AUF) pro Jahr

Keine. 2x kleine Erkältung, höchstens 2 Krankheitstage pro Jahr.

|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |   |

### Medikamenteneinnahme Psychopharmaka, Alkoholgenuss

Raucht nicht, trinkt 4-7x die Woche Alkohol (Ausgang), 1-2x sehr viel. Trinkt keinen Kaffee, nur Tee.

|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|       |   |   |   |   |   | X |   |   |   |

**Sport**

Befürworter von Sport, aber macht keinen. Ab und zu schnelles Gehen, 1-2x die Woche.

|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |   |   |

**Rücken-/Nackenbeschwerden**

Rücken in Ordnung, manchmal Nackenbeschwerden (aufgrund von vielen Stunden vor PC).

|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |   |

**Sexualleben**

Problemlos, keine stressbedingten Probleme.

|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |

**Durchschnittswert Score für diesen Probanden: 6.43**

*Erklärung Score Werte*

*Score Wert von 0 bedeutet schlechte funktionelle Gesundheit (z.B. schwerste Schlafstörungen etc.), Score 8 bedeutet hervorragende funktionelle Gesundheit ohne Krankheit oder stressbedingte Probleme.*

## Gesundheitscheck:

Körperliche Untersuchung:

176 cm 79 kg BMI 25.5

Blutdruck & Herzfrequenz normal.

Normaler Körper ohne Auffälligkeiten. Perkutorisch unauffällig, auskultatorisch unauffällig. Neuro o.B..

## Blutlaborwerte:

Im Routinelabor unauffällige Werte ohne pathologische Abweichungen.

Zusammenfassung:

Proband ist anamnestisch (noch) als gesund einzuschätzen. Ein leichtes Übergewicht ist nachweisbar, zudem Vorsicht bei evtl. übermäßigem Alkoholkonsum.

Name: Emil  
Alter: 27

## Anamnese:

Nach eigenen Angaben gesund, sportlich und fit.  
Keine Erkrankungen oder Medikation.

## Funktionelle Gesundheit

### Schlaf

Schläft täglich mindestens 8 Stunden, regelmässig, keine Ein- oder Durchschlafstörungen.

| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |

### Essen/Gewicht

Meistens ausgeglichenes, gesundes Essverhalten; kein Über- oder Untergewicht.

| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |   |

### Krankheitstage (AUF) pro Jahr

Manchmal; AUF 7 Tage pro Jahr.

| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |   |   |

### Medikamenteneinnahme Psychopharmaka, Alkoholgenuss

Keine Einnahme irgendwelcher psychomodulierender Substanzen. Kaffee 3 Tassen am Tag, Alkohol 2-3x pro Woche.

| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |   |

### Sport

Treibt wenig Sport, möchte gerne ein wenig mehr.

| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |   |   |

### Rücken-/Nackenbeschwerden

Kommt vor, aber selten.

|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |   |

### Sexualleben

Problemlos, keine stressbedingten Probleme.

|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |

**Durchschnittswert Score für diesen Probanden: Score 7**

### Erklärung Score Werte

Score Wert von 0 bedeutet schlechte funktionelle Gesundheit (z.B. schwerste Schlafstörungen etc.),  
Score 8 bedeutet hervorragende funktionelle Gesundheit ohne Krankheit oder stressbedingte  
Probleme.

## Gesundheitscheck:

Körperliche Untersuchung:

177cm 74 kg BMI 23.6

Blutdruck: 133/88, HF 70

Athletischer normaler Körper ohne Auffälligkeiten. Perkutorisch unauffällig, auskultatorisch unauffällig. Neuro o.B..

## Blutlaborwerte:

Im Routinelabor unauffällige Werte ohne pathologische Abweichungen.

Zusammenfassung:

Emil ist anamnestisch (besonders auch auf Nachfrage nach funktionellen Gesundheitsdaten) als gesund einzuschätzen. Faktoren wie sie für Stress typisch sind, lassen sich nicht nachweisen.



Name: Fabian  
Alter: 31

## Anamnese:

Nach eigenen Angaben (mittlerweile) gesund, sportlich und fit.  
Keine Erkrankungen oder Medikation.

## Funktionelle Gesundheit

### Schlaf

Schläft täglich 7-8 Stunden, regelmässig, keine Ein- oder Durchschlafstörungen.

|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |

### Essen/Gewicht

Ausgeglichenes, gesundes Essverhalten; isst nur noch Gemüse und Fleisch. Starkes Übergewicht (BMI von 29.1), Gewicht seit Weihnachten um 12kg reduziert.

|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|       |   |   |   |   |   | X |   |   |   |

### Krankheitstage (AUF) pro Jahr

Keine; AUF 1 - 2 Tage pro Jahr.

|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |   |

### Medikamenteneinnahme Psychopharmaka, Alkoholgenuss

Keine Einnahme irgendwelcher psychomodulierender Substanzen. Selten Kaffee, am Wochenende regelmässig viel Alkohol.

|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |   |   |

### Sport

Treibt vermehrt regelmässig Sport, versucht 5x die Woche Cardio.

|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |

### Rücken-/Nackenbeschwerden

Kommt vor, aber selten.

|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |   |

### Sexualleben

Problemlos, keine stressbedingten Probleme.

|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |

**Durchschnittswert Score für diesen Probanden: Score 7**

### Erklärung Score Werte

Score Wert von 0 bedeutet schlechte funktionelle Gesundheit (z.B. schwerste Schlafstörungen etc.),  
Score 8 bedeutet hervorragende funktionelle Gesundheit ohne Krankheit oder stressbedingte  
Probleme.

## Gesundheitscheck:

Körperliche Untersuchung:

174cm 88 kg BMI 29.1

Blutdruck: 128/72, HF 50

Leicht adipöser, normaler Körper ohne Auffälligkeiten. Perkutatorisch unauffällig, auskultatorisch unauffällig. Neuro o.B..

## Blutlaborwerte:

Im Routinelabor unauffällige Werte ohne pathologische Abweichungen.

Zusammenfassung:

Fabian ist anamnestisch (besonders auch auf Nachfrage nach funktionellen Gesundheitsdaten) als gesund einzuschätzen. Der Proband führte ein Leben mit beginnenden Stressfaktoren wie schlechten Essgewohnheiten, unregelmäßigem Schlaf, kein Sport, Alkoholexzessen etc. (Score ca. 5) bis Weihnachten. Infolge eines Triathleten als neuer Geschäftspartner stellte der Patient in den letzten Monaten sein Leben komplett, bis auf ein Übergewicht sind alle seine Parameter nun im Normbereich.

Name: Gabriel  
Alter: 28

## Anamnese:

Nach eigenen Angaben gesund, sportlich und einigermaßen fit.  
Keine Erkrankungen oder Medikation.

## Funktionelle Gesundheit

### Schlaf

Schläft täglich mehr als 7 Stunden, regelmässig; leichte Einschlafstörungen (Gedanken um Firma).

| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|       |   |   |   |   |   | X |   |   |   |

### Essen/Gewicht

Unregelmässig, muss schnell gehen, unbefriedigend; kein Über- oder Untergewicht.

| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|       |   |   |   |   |   | X |   |   |   |

### Krankheitstage (AUF) pro Jahr

Keine; AUF 0-3 Tage.

| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |   |

### Medikamenteneinnahme Psychopharmaka, Alkoholgenuss

Keine Einnahme irgendwelcher psychomodulierender Substanzen. Alkohol selten, Kaffee regelmässig.

| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |   |   |

### Sport

Treibt mässig Sport (ca. 1-2x die Woche), möchte gerne mehr.

| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |   |   |

### Rücken-/Nackenbeschwerden

Kommt vor, viele Stunden vor PC.

| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |   |   |

### Sexualleben

Problemlos, keine stressbedingten Probleme.

| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |

**Durchschnittswert Score für diesen Probanden: Score 6.14**

*Erklärung Score Werte*

*Score Wert von 0 bedeutet schlechte funktionelle Gesundheit (z.B. schwerste Schlafstörungen etc.),  
Score 8 bedeutet hervorragende funktionelle Gesundheit ohne Krankheit oder stressbedingte  
Probleme.*

## Gesundheitscheck:

Körperliche Untersuchung:

179cm 67 kg BMI 23.6

Blutdruck: 131/ 84, HF 70

Athletischer normaler Körper ohne Auffälligkeiten. Perkutorisch unauffällig, auskultatorisch unauffällig. Neuro o.B..

## Blutlaborwerte:

Im Routinelabor unauffällige Werte ohne pathologische Abweichungen.

Zusammenfassung:

Gabriel ist anamnestisch (besonders auch auf Nachfrage nach funktionellen Gesundheitsdaten) als durchschnittlich fit einzuschätzen. Faktoren wie sie für Stress typisch sind, beginnen das Leben des Probanden zu verändern: zu wenig Sport, unregelmässiges schlechtes Essverhalten, Einschlafstörungen (Gedanken an das Geschäft).

Name: Hugo  
Alter: 27

## Anamnese:

Nach eigenen Angaben gesund, sportlich und fit.  
Erkrankungen: Ekzeme, seit einem Jahr nicht mehr. Manchmal Schweißanfälle.

Aktuelle Medikation: Keine. 5-HTP & Omega3 Supplemente.

## Funktionelle Gesundheit

### Schlaf:

Schläft täglich 8 Stunden, regelmässig, keine Ein- oder Durchschlafstörungen.

| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |

### Essen/Gewicht

Unter der Woche im Office keine Zeit, deshalb schnelle Mahlzeiten (e.g. Salat & Saft). Abends vegetarisch, da Freundin Vegetarierin. Am Wochenende ab und zu gutes Fleisch. Kein Über- oder Untergewicht.

| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |

### Krankheitstage (AUF) pro Jahr

Keine; AUF 0-1 Tage pro Jahr.

| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |

### Medikamenteneinnahme Psychopharmaka, Alkoholgenuss

Kein Alkohol. Kein Kaffee, während Mittagessen einen Espresso.

| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |

**Sport**

Keinen, geht regelmässig mit Hunden laufen.

|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |   |   |

**Rücken-/Nackenbeschwerden**

Kommt vor, aber selten.

|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |   |

**Sexualleben**

Problemlos, keine stressbedingten Probleme.

|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Score | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | X |

**Durchschnittswert Score für diesen Probanden: Score 7.57***Erklärung Score Werte*

*Score Wert von 0 bedeutet schlechte funktionelle Gesundheit (z.B. schwerste Schlafstörungen etc.),  
Score 8 bedeutet hervorragende funktionelle Gesundheit ohne Krankheit oder stressbedingte  
Probleme.*

**Gesundheitscheck:**

Körperliche Untersuchung:

178 cm 75 kg BMI 23.7

Blutdruck &amp; Herzfrequenz: normal

Athletischer normaler Körper ohne Auffälligkeiten. Perkutorisch unauffällig, auskultatorisch unauffällig. Neuro o.B..

**Blutlaborwerte:**

Im Routinelabor unauffällige Werte ohne pathologische Abweichungen.

Zusammenfassung:

Sehr guter AZ und EZ, ohne Hinweise für Stress.

## **APPENDIX C**

### Interviews

## **Questionnaire Entrepreneur**

### Personal Background

- Age:
- Educational Background:
- (Prior) Work Experience:
- Relationship Status:

### Entrepreneurial Experience

- How would you describe your own personality?
- Why are you an entrepreneur?
- When did you start your first company? Why?
- How many companies have you started/do you currently manage?
- How many employees/business partners do you have?
- Is your business backed by investors, or did you finance it yourself?
- Annual profit?

### Entrepreneurship & Health

- How do you define health?
- What do you understand under physical, mental & social health?

#### **Physical health:**

#### **Mental health:**

#### **Social health:**

- How has your lifestyle changed ever since you became an entrepreneur?
- How important is your health to you/as a resource for your business?
- Is health a topic that is discussed at your work (with investors, co-founders, employees)?
- In what ways do you think your job as an entrepreneur (as opposed to an employee) impacts your physical, mental & social health?



**Physical health:**

**Mental health:**

**Social health:**

- Are you stressed sometimes, and if so, would you describe the stress as eustress (positive stress) or distress (negative stress)?
- Do you actively cope with threats to your health (e.g. stress)? If so, how?
- How many hours do you work per week?
- What are your recommendations to fellow entrepreneurs?

## **Questionnaire Business Partner/Employee/Friend**

- How long have you been working with Entrepreneur X? How long have you known Entrepreneur X?
- How would you describe the personality of Entrepreneur X?
- How do you define health?
- What do you understand under physical, mental and social health?

### **Physical health:**

### **Mental health:**

### **Social health:**

- (Is health a topic that is addressed at work?)
- Do you think X's lifestyle has changed ever since he became an entrepreneur? If so, how?
- In what ways do you think X's job as an entrepreneur (as opposed to an employee) impacts his physical, mental & social health?

### **Physical health:**

### **Mental health:**

### **Social health:**

- Is X stressed sometimes, and if so, would you describe the stress as eustress (positive stress) or distress (negative stress)?
- Do you consider X a health-conscious individual? Do you consider X healthy?
- How many hours does X work per week? (estimate)
- Do you think X has found the right balance between work and "not work"?

## Alex

### Personal Background

- Age: 31
- Educational Background:  
B.A. in Business Administration, MSc in Finance & Accounting
- (Prior) Work Experience:  
various part-time jobs and internships in major banks as well as consulting companies across the globe, Project Manager at a big international consulting company for 4 years with assignments all over Europe
- Relationship Status: single

### Entrepreneurial Experience

- How would you describe your own personality?

Driven, eager to learn, entrepreneurial, want to be in control.

- Why are you an entrepreneur?

I became an entrepreneur by chance but – once you are an entrepreneur, you stay an entrepreneur. I hate having a boss, and I love the freedom to do whatever I want, whenever I want.

- When did you start your first company? Why?

My best friend and I started our first company four years ago. She was traveling the world, had a business idea and called me from Singapore. I immediately said yes.

- How many companies have you started/do you currently manage?

I have started 5 companies and officially manage 3.

- How many employees/business partners do you have?

I have 3 major business partners, one for each company that I officially manage. We have about 20 full-time and 10-30 part-time staff members.

- Is your business backed by investors, or did you finance it yourself?

All self-financed.

- Annual profit?

Around 2 Mio. CHF.

### Entrepreneurship & Health

- How do you define health?

Feeling good physically and mentally, absence of pain and anything that bothers you.

- What do you understand under physical, mental & social health?

**Physical health:** no pain, physical well-being, not having to take medicine... all these things cannot be taken for granted

**Mental health:** to be able to lead a normal life in a healthy, social environment; not to be inhibited by own's own psyche... again, cannot be taken for granted, there are a lot of crazy people out there

**Social health:** to be able to possess healthy, enriching social contacts (friendships, relationships, business contacts) that offer support – this is essential for private and business success

- How has your lifestyle changed ever since you became an entrepreneur?

I feel less stressed even though I don't work less, and life hasn't become more safe. I don't have to justify my actions anymore, it is definitely easier to deal with clients than with a boss. There is more motivation, you know why you're doing something and what for.

- How important is your health to you/as a resource for your business?

Health is the most important thing as it is the foundation of everything else. Money, status, hobbies, food etc... none of these things can be enjoyed if you are not healthy. If you are not healthy, there is always a strain that you carry with yourself.

In a business context, the same principle applies. The health of your staff is the foundation of everything else. In every business, there are always key people. If these people are not around because of an illness, it can be strongly felt in every aspect of daily business. This also goes for non-key people: Performance always correlates directly with health.

- Is health a topic that is discussed at your work (with investors, co-founders, employees)?

Yes, but I work in a medical business, focusing on health. We always encourage employees to try parts of the program (biochemical restoration) themselves, so

everybody knows what we are doing. That way, employees get tips directly from doctors and medical experts.

- In what ways do you think your job as an entrepreneur (as opposed to an employee) impacts your physical, mental & social health?

**Physical health:** More freedom to plan my days, thus can e.g. join in regular gym sessions. Also, because of our medical business, I get to profit from all our services first hand. I did several medical check-ups and know exactly what I should do/eat, and what should be avoided. I take various vitamins/supplements, and get regular massages as well as acupuncture sessions.

**Mental health:** The regular massages and acupuncture sessions also help me unwind. Because of my freedom, I regularly take time off inbetween clients to relax. As an example, I try to go diving as much as I can.

**Social health:** I have the luxury to work with my family as well as a few close friends. Also, even though I am very busy at the moment, everybody knows it's only temporary. It is important for me to keep in close contact with my friends – who are all busy people, by the way.

- Are you stressed sometimes, and if so, would you describe the stress as eustress (positive stress) or distress (negative stress)?

Definitely positive stress in my case.

However, I think it could go either way for entrepreneurs. If you are a successful entrepreneur and you're making a lot of money, there is a lot of motivation and you are very happy even if you are working crazy hours. But if you are somebody who works like crazy but you are not making money, accumulating more debts every day while worrying about your reputation, then you probably suffer from a lot of distress. In this case, it would be much better if you were an employee with a fixed salary.

- Do you actively cope with threats to your health (e.g. stress)? If so, how?

Stress is a topic that we deal with in a proactive way. It is an important aspect when it comes to the treatment of our clients, so we know a lot of prevention tactics from the best experts in this field. There are three points for me in this regard:

- 1) Food supplements & healthy eating habits: As an example, I take Omega3 and 5-HTP. 5-HTP is an amino acid that leads to a low serotonin level in the body, thus keeping the stress level down and making the individual more happy. Eating in the right way affects our well-being 1:1. It takes laboratory tests to see what we really need, and what should be avoided.
- 2) Sleep on a regular basis, and sleep enough.
- 3) Sport.

I'm not stressed out often anymore but if it happens, I try to find the source of the stress and solve it immediately. Sometimes, there is a problem that needs to be addressed. Sometimes, if there is a lot of work, just do it or get additional support. Usually, it's temporary stress (e.g. if there is an important client for a few weeks), so you always know it will be over soon.

- How many hours do you work per week?

During our busiest times, I was working 16h every day, so up to 112h a week. However, on average, I work probably 60-70h. We always have "easy" weeks inbetween without clients where I can also get away for 1-2 weeks.

- What are your recommendations to fellow entrepreneurs?

It takes a lot of self-discipline for a healthy lifestyle. You have to structure your life, and plan regular time slots for your family, sport, hobbies etc. If you don't mark these slots in your calendar and make them a priority, you will never stop working. Some employees might take work home, but we entrepreneurs tend to take our work everywhere with us.

It is very, very important to schedule small "islands" to unwind. If I come home from a day full of meetings, I have 4h. I can eat dinner, read some emails and go through a few reports, but I still feel stressed. I have to say "finished", switch off my computer, put my phone on silent... and that's when I can relax, that's when I truly feel "free".

If I don't make these active decisions to not work, everything will always be overtaken by work.

## **Business Partner Alex**

- How long have you been working with Alex? How long have you known Alex?

We have launched our current company three years ago but we have been best friends for 11 years and have been working on various projects (e.g. we used to run a regional social initiative together) for the past 8 years.

- How would you describe the personality of Alex?

He is very driven, reliable, has a very entrepreneurial business mindset, needs a lot of freedom, likes to be “in charge” and loves life.

- How do you define health?

Health is when both your body and your mind are balanced.

- What do you understand under physical, mental and social health?

**Physical health:** Have a healthy body. Free of illnesses, free of chronic pain, being “fit” and able to do whatever one wants without any physical restrictions.

**Mental health:** Have a healthy mind. Free of mental illnesses, depression, chronic stress or burn-out.

**Social health:** Have a healthy social network. Social health also links to physical health (e.g. athletic friends encourage more physical activities) as well as mental health (e.g. a life partner can help take off mental strain by listening and offering comfort). In fact, all these different aspects of health probably affect each other.

- Is health a topic that is addressed at work?

Rarely. However, it is an issue that we both take very seriously on a personal level. We try to go on regular vacations, and often take days off (whenever we need and can) to unwind. As we share the same mentality regarding work/life balance, we never have any issues in this regard. Nobody feels bad for “disappearing” for a little while, quite the contrary. Whenever we find a nice new place for a retreat, we share the information and encourage the other person to try it as well.

- Do you think the lifestyle of Alex has changed ever since he became an entrepreneur? If so, how?

Alex had a very unhealthy lifestyle as a consultant, and he gained a lot of weight during this time. He also seemed exhausted and unhappy in his job, once the initial excitement of traveling a lot, always staying at fancy hotels, dealing with important clients etc. wore off.

However, I think that e.g. his eating habits would have changed anyways, even if he wouldn't have started his own business. I don't think he started a healthier lifestyle because he became an entrepreneur; he started a healthier lifestyle because he knew he had to make serious changes. Becoming an entrepreneur, especially in the medical field, probably made these changes easier.

Besides the issues mentioned, I don't think that the lifestyle of Alex has changed a lot in the past years ever since he became an entrepreneur. Alex has always been superbusy with various projects at the same time. He used to be a professional athlete, and he also plays the piano on a semi-professional level. When we were in university, he was involved in student initiatives, doing internships, organizing parties, traveling the world, learning new sports etc. Afterwards, as a consultant, he often worked nightshifts and weekends. He is naturally a very active person always looking for where to go and what to do next, it's in his genes.

- In what ways do you think Alex' job as an entrepreneur (as opposed to an employee) impacts his physical, mental & social health?

**Physical health:** Because he has much more freedom, he can now organize his time the way he wants, whenever he wants. This allows him to go to the gym on a regular basis. Because of the business he is in, Alex has had several medical check-ups in the past months and has started to take various vitamins, supplements etc. He has been very disciplined about eating healthy food, and he quit the "work hard, party harder" lifestyle. He takes care of himself much better now.

**Mental health:** He knows that he will get whatever he puts into the business. When he was a consultant, no matter how hard he worked, he wouldn't have been able to directly profit as he was working on a more or less fixed salary. This is of course different now. He is working like crazy but his companies are his "babies", and he knows that his hard work will directly translate to more profit for him. The motivation and commitment is therefore completely different. He is very passionate about what he is doing and gets a lot of enjoyment out of it.

Also, if you are the boss, you can pick your employees, and most of them are or become friends. Alex and I are best friends, he also works with another friend and his family members in his clinic venture. This probably makes a big difference as you cannot pick your colleagues or your boss in a company that belongs to somebody else.

**Social health:** I don't see a difference here. Alex really cares about the people that are important to him, and he also had phases as a consultant when he wasn't able to see his family & friends as much as he wanted to. Of course he is superbusy at times, but so are we all.



- Is Alex stressed sometimes, and if so, would you describe the stress as eustress (positive stress) or distress (negative stress)?

He is stressed sometimes but it is positive stress now versus negative stress as an employee.

- Do you consider Alex a health-conscious individual? Do you consider Alex healthy?

Alex is definitely much healthier now than before. He gained a lot of weight as a consultant, and even though he knew his lifestyle was unhealthy, he couldn't change it due to job requirements (e.g. he couldn't sleep more, he couldn't avoid late-night dinners with clients etc.). Because of the stress and his strong migraine, there were several occasions in the past when he had physical issues such as sudden loss of vision or strong tensions/pain somewhere in his body.

I do think that Alex is a very health-conscious person, especially with his parents both working in the medical field. He takes his health very seriously and is not one of those people that say "ah no, that's probably nothing, I won't see a doctor". If Alex feels something is not right with his body, he will make it a priority.

Ever since he started his clinic project, he has become even more health-conscious, and I am quite impressed how disciplined he has been in the past year. He started a rigid diet about a year ago, works out on a regular basis, rarely drinks alcohol etc. He seems to have a lot more energy than before, and he also seems a much better balanced & happy individual in general.

- How many hours does Alex work per week? (estimate)

It highly depends. There are always periods when you have more or less work. He is superbusy at the moment as he is building up a new business (from what I hear, he is working almost every day, all day; maybe 80h per week?), and I haven't seen him in a while... but then again, he might go on a diving trip next week when things are quieter, or he might work from the beach for a few months.

- Do you think Alex has found the right balance between work and "not work"?

Personally, as entrepreneurs, I don't think we distinguish between "work" and "not work". We work because we enjoy it.

I think that Alex is now in the privileged position to choose what he wants to do, when he wants to do it. So whenever he feels that something is "out of balance", he can easily restore the balance. This is something he wasn't able to do as an employee before, as his lifestyle was much more controlled by the requirements of his previous job.

## **Employee Alex**

- How long have you been working with Alex? How long have you known Alex?

I've been working with Alex for 4.5 months, but we've been friends for the past 8 years.

- How would you describe the personality of Alex?

He is a good leader, very professional, ambitious and smart.

- How do you define health?

Your body works, you're satisfied, and there's a balance in your life.

- What do you understand under physical, mental and social health?

**Physical:** if your body is working as it should, if you have illnesses

**Mental:** if you have mental illnesses or stress

**Social:** (guessing) Maybe if you have problems in your social surroundings? Maybe when you are anxious around other people?

- Is health a topic that is addressed at work?

As our business is in the medical field, the health topic is always present. Whenever we talk about certain cases, we automatically reflect on our own health and well-being, so that e.g. we don't end up like some of our clients – it really is a wake-up call sometimes.

- Do you think the lifestyle of Alex has changed ever since he became an entrepreneur? If so, how?

A lot. He completely broke himself as a consultant: A lot of fast food, long hours in front of the computer, little sleep, a lot of partying... He realized himself that it was too much, and he knew something had to change.

Maybe he is going into the other extreme now. He had many medical tests done and takes various vitamins, supplements etc. I remember one time after a concert with five women, all five women ate pizza, and Alex had a "fitness plate" (meat with salads or vegetables). He really is very disciplined.

- In what ways do you think Alex' job as an entrepreneur (as opposed to an employee) impacts his physical, mental & social health?

**Physical health:** Also because of the industry we are in, Alex is now making his health a priority. As he can organize his time himself, he makes sure to go to the

gym on a regular basis. He knows exactly what he needs to do for his body: For example, due to his allergies, he shouldn't consume wheat, eggs or milk. He has been very disciplined in this regard which is also why he feels a lot better now. Even when he cannot resist temptation, he will e.g. pick dark chocolate vs. milk chocolate as it is the healthier alternative.

**Mental health:** Similar to what I just said. Because Alex has more flexibility as an entrepreneur, he can make time for small breaks during the day or take a few weeks off between clients to relax, and take his mind off business. Also, he is much happier now, this definitely makes a big difference.

**Social health:** Alex does not have a lot of time for his social contacts but I don't think it was different before when he was a consultant. However, he actively makes time for people he cares about so I don't think people notice a difference now versus before.

- Is Alex stressed sometimes, and if so, would you describe the stress as eustress (positive stress) or distress (negative stress)?

In our type of business, a certain level of stress cannot be completely avoided. However, I would say that Alex – together with the rest of the team – experiences positive stress, as everything is always very exciting and moving forward quickly. You feel like you're part of something special.

- Do you consider Alex a health-conscious individual? Do you consider Alex healthy?

I think Alex is a healthy individual: He has good skin, good hair... he looks good. He is definitely very health-conscious, much more than before.

- How many hours does Alex work per week? (estimate)

In our business, we guarantee 24h availability for clients which is why working times never completely stop. We would often work from 8.30am until 11pm, Alex would also work on weekends. Even when he wasn't working, he had to be available which adds additional stress. I would say that he worked between 80-90h then.

When Alex had some back issues for a while, he started with acupuncture and massages. He also realized that everything became too much for him alone, so he hired an intern. Things have been much better ever since, we are now able to leave around 7pm or 8pm.

- Do you think Alex has found the right balance between work and "not work"?

As far as possible, yes. Many factors are out of his hands as the client is king. However, he knows that he needs a certain balance. Alex is often traveling, and he regularly takes 1-2 weeks off inbetween clients.

Also, I have to add that our business is very much impacted by “phases“, and everybody knows it. Whenever one project is over, or whenever we are less busy, we can profit from our in-house offers such as massages, or have our own chefs cook for us. It is a lot of work but at the same time always a lot of fun!

## Friend Alex

- How long have you known Alex?

We have been friends for 5 years.

- How would you describe the personality of Alex?

Very driven, business-oriented, smart, the "leader" type.

- How do you define health?

To take care of oneself, to find a balance between body and mind, general well-being without pain or worries.

- What do you understand under physical, mental and social health?

**Physical:** if everything is okay, if a person does any sports and eats healthy food, can be judged "from the outside"

**Mental:** if a person feels good; mental health also affects physical health

**Social:** if there is a stable environment and support system, social health also affects mental and physical health

- Do you think the lifestyle of Alex has changed ever since he became an entrepreneur? If so, how?

A lot. When he was a consultant, he would constantly work until midnight or longer. As he was required to be at the office all the time, he usually got take-away or fast food. There was a lot of pressure, and he wasn't happy. He didn't like having other people tell him what he needed to do and when.

He has much more freedom now. Because his business revolves around health, he has also given health a different value. Even though he still works a lot, he makes sure that he works out on a regular basis, he takes supplements such as Omega3, and he eats more healthily.

I have to add that Alex has always been a busy person with tons of projects. It's not like he used to be lazy, and suddenly turned into an entrepreneur. Because he is more flexible now, he can take small breaks whenever he needs one. This can be a few hours on a certain day, or a weekend where he completely switches off. He believes in his venture, and he gets to work with family and friends. Alex really enjoys building his "baby" step by step, and he gets to meet a lot of interesting people. He seems to have a lot of fun now, he didn't seem to have fun before.

- In what ways do you think Alex' job as an entrepreneur (as opposed to an employee) impacts his physical, mental & social health?

**Physical health:** As mentioned before, because his business revolves around health, he is making his own health a priority. He works out, eats healthy food and takes several supplements to feel better.

**Mental health:** He has a lot of freedom now. He can pick who he wants to have in his team, and he gets to spend his days building a project that he is passionate about with his family & friends. Also, he is having a lot more fun and really enjoys what he is doing.

**Social health:** He might not have a lot of time for social life but he works in a great team with close friends and his family, I think this makes a big difference.

- Is Alex stressed sometimes, and if so, would you describe the stress as eustress (positive stress) or distress (negative stress)?

If he is stressed, it is “self-chosen“, positive stress, and it is exciting because he knows that things are moving forward.

- Do you consider Alex a health-conscious individual? Do you consider Alex healthy?

He was not healthy as an employee. He is healthy now.

He used to eat whatever he wanted, he used to “indulge“ much more without considering any consequences which is also a reason why he would have regular migraine attacks.

At one point, he realized that he needed to change his lifestyle. Especially when he started his medical venture, he made radical changes. He is very consequent now, goes to the gym on a regular basis and eats what he is supposed to/can eat vs. what he wants to eat. Due to these changes, he rarely suffers from migraine anymore and has a lot more energy.

- How many hours does Alex work per week? (estimate)

Difficult to estimate. When he works, he works 16h a day but then suddenly, he will disappear for two days or two weeks. He says that he can work from anywhere as long as he has internet, so I assume that he works as much as he “has to“. On average, I would guess around 12h every day, 6 days a week... so maybe a total of around 70h per week.

- Do you think Alex has found the right balance between work and “not work“?

Well, according to “normal people“, Alex definitely works too much but for him, it seems to be the perfect amount as he loves what he is doing. He is happy and healthy, and that’s what’s really important!

## **Ben**

### Personal Background

- Age: 34
- Educational Background: Master's Degree as Civil Engineer
- (Prior) Work Experience

I have worked as a Civil Engineer and later on as a Project Manager in 5 companies since graduation and prior to starting my own business.

- Single? Relationship?

Very single, with a very active dating life.

### Entrepreneurial Experience

- How would you describe your own personality?

Eager to learn, ambitious. I like to think out-of-the-box, I like to win, I like to make money, I like to have fun.

- Why are you an entrepreneur?

I think it was meant to be. In the past, I was changing jobs every 1-2 years, and I couldn't find any fulfillment. My cousin is an entrepreneur, and he influenced me a lot along the way. He showed me a different way of doing things and living. We started going to a lot of seminars and conferences together – which I truly enjoyed.

Around the same time, I also discovered kitesurfing and immediately became hooked. I had to find more time for kitesurfing! This is when I decided that I needed more flexibility about when to wake up, when to work etc. I decided that I wanted to be more in charge of my time and my life.

- When did you start your first company? Why?

I started selling and buying properties with friends, I later moved into vacation rentals.

Every year, I have a few projects that I want to try, and I then stick to the winners. Some of the projects have had success, others have failed. I have done everything from importing bean bags from Brazil, to e-commerce, to running a carpet-cleaning company (I like clean carpets).

- How many companies have you started/do you currently manage?

I started four businesses and currently manage two: one long-term rental business and one short-term rental business. I own 6 properties and manage 15, most of them are in the UK.

- How many employees/business partners do you have?

Two business partners in two joint-ventures. I employ three staff members: one person full-time, and two people part-time. Furthermore, I have access to a huge supply chain which includes a few hundred people (cleaning companies, decorators, electricians etc.) to keep overhead costs as low as possible.

- Is your business backed by investors, or did you finance it yourself?

I had a lot of joint-ventures in the beginning. We would buy a property, flip it and re-invest the profit. I later realized that I needed to focus more on earning passive income. If I renovate, refurbish and sell a property, I can only make money once. However, if I renovate, refurbish and rent out an apartment, I can make money continuously.

- Annual profit?

In the first year, we made 40 000 pounds profit before tax; it is now around 150 000 pounds per year.

### Entrepreneurship & Health

- How do you define health?

All your mental & physical functions work to perfection.

- What do you understand under physical, mental & social health?

**Physical:** all your organs work normally

**Mental:** your mental functions work normally; your reasoning, feelings and emotions are regulated

**Social:** whether an individual functions well within society, whether this person obeys social rules

- How has your lifestyle changed ever since you became an entrepreneur?

I started my entrepreneurial activities with a personal development phase: I was very much into a healthy lifestyle back then. I would attend raw food courses, eat 5-6 small meals every day, drink a lot of fresh juices, work out, meditate etc. So yes, my lifestyle changed completely from partying every night, a lot of alcohol, fast food and very little sleep.

I have always been a free spirit and very active, but compared to when I was employed, I now travel much more and enjoy more free time. I have always been



fairly ambitious so have always been in constant competition with myself. I want to get better and better; this was true in a corporate setting and is still true now.

But when is it enough? I try to not be too harsh on myself anymore but to learn how to appreciate and celebrate what I already have. There is always a dualism between materialistic needs and spiritual needs, the challenge for me is to find a golden medium. Instead of constantly thinking about myself, I now try to think more about giving back to my family, friends, the environment, charities etc.

- How important is your health to you/as a resource for your business?

I used to take my health for granted but started to become more and more aware that a bad lifestyle “messes you up“. I’m now working on making my well-being a priority so that I can continue to enjoy life.

Business is all about thinking and acting, so having me around is key to the functioning of my business. When I’m not healthy, even if I’m present, I won’t be able to negotiate deals in the same way. As an example, every time I quit smoking, I have about 50% more energy. I perform better, I have much more oxygen. I recently stopped drinking alcohol, and I will quit smoking for good. Once you stop one bad habit, it becomes empowering.

- Is health a topic that is discussed at your work (with investors, co-founders, employees)?

I truly love and care about the people that work for me, I want to offer them a good quality of life. In my business, there are always two people that can do the same job so that they can alternately take time off.

I constantly tell my staff not to work in the evening or on weekends, and I treat them to massages on a regular basis. There is one girl in my team who is always on a diet, I sometimes bring her salads or juices and try to talk to her about healthy nutrition.

- In what ways do you think your job as an entrepreneur (as opposed to an employee) impacts your physical, mental & social health?

Generally speaking, the way you manage your health doesn’t depend on whether you’re an employee or an entrepreneur. I can have disciplined weeks as an entrepreneur or an employee, so it’s down to the person.

However...

**Physical health:** Because I have much more freedom as an entrepreneur, I am in full control of my days. It is therefore easier for me to plan in regular muay thai, kitesurfing or massage sessions.

**Mental health:** I am much happier and balanced now.

**Social health:** Not much different than before. You never have time, you take time.

- Are you stressed sometimes, and if so, would you describe the stress as eustress (positive stress) or distress (negative stress)?

Most of the time positive stress. Of course, you might have difficult clients or tough deadlines sometimes, then you experience negative stress. However, I would say about 80% positive stress.

- Do you actively cope with threats to your health (e.g. stress)? If so, how?

I try to prevent it. As a prevention and a way to unwind, I work out (thai boxing, kitesurfing) and I have massages (sometimes even 1-2x a day but at least 1x a week). Meditation is also an important part of my life, I took meditation courses in the past and try to meditate 15-20 minutes on a regular basis.

I try to always “unwind“ before meeting anybody after work. I reserve at least 1h just for myself. During this “me“ time, I exercise, shower, shave, play music, meditate... and take my mind off work.

Also, I make sure that I get away regularly to kitesurf and relax on the beach. In my first business, I would make big profits and fly away immediately afterwards. In my second business, we would have busy periods but I would then take a 1-2 months vacation in low season. I now have property managers taking care of daily business, and I work about 2-3 days a week.

Another important factor: If you are free to manage your time, you don't have to party as much anymore. Life is the way you want it to be, so you don't have to “rebel“ anymore to “let off steam“.

- How many hours do you work per week?

Used to work around 10h a day, sometimes 6-7 days a week. Now maybe 2-3 days a week, maybe 8h each?

- What are your recommendations to fellow entrepreneurs?

Make health a priority, and keep it a priority. Always, from the day you start-up. Otherwise, you spend your health making money, and then you spend your money trying to get your health back.

If you're not healthy, you cannot enjoy the ride.

## **Business Partner Ben**

- How long have you been working with Ben? How long have you known Ben?

I have known Ben for five years, and we have been working together for three years.

- How would you describe the personality of Ben?

Very ambitious, smart, social, and a little crazy.

- How do you define health?

Physical ability to perform all regular tasks and normal movements of the human body, as well as mental balance.

- What do you understand under physical, mental and social health?

**Physical health:** Physical ability to perform all regular tasks and normal movements of the human body.

**Mental health:** Ability to deal with regular day-to-day tasks and challenges human beings face during their lives, in a balanced way. Additionally, the strength to deal with stressful periods is also a sign of good mental health in my opinion.

**Social health:** Ability to interact with other people and maintain good relationships.

- Is health a topic that is addressed at work?

Yes. We often discuss health issues such as how to lead a balanced life, which sports to try, or when to take time off from operational management.

- Do you think Ben's lifestyle has changed ever since he became an entrepreneur? If so, how?

Yes, definitely. He has become much sharper, stronger, more goal-oriented and more relaxed towards life.

- In what ways do you think Ben's job as an entrepreneur (as opposed to an employee) impacts his physical, mental & social health?

He can now manage his time and his own life the way he always dreamt about.

**Physical health:** He has more time to practice sports regularly, the ones he loves.

**Mental health:** The fact that he has to face challenges himself without the “support” of an employer has definitely made him stronger. Also, he loves what he is doing and is in full control of his time/life/work.

**Social health:** Socially, he gained a lot by having time to develop the relationships he prefers. On the other hand, maybe there is a risk that his interactions are mostly limited to “not very intellectually demanding people” (as he works a lot with handymen, cleaners etc.) so there might be a lack of “intellectual stimulation”? Also, because there is less exposure to regular “office life”, Ben sometimes has difficulties with people that are not immediately doing whatever that he wants.

- Is Ben stressed sometimes, and if so, would you describe the stress as eustress (positive stress) or distress (negative stress)?

In general, Ben experiences positive stress that gives him additional energy.

- Do you consider Ben a health-conscious individual? Do you consider Ben healthy?

Yes, he is healthy and health-conscious. He goes for regular massages, does a lot of sports (surfing and martial arts), pays a lot of attention to the food he is eating, and he is trying to quit smoking.

- How many hours does Ben work per week? (estimate)

Maybe 50-60 hours.

- Do you think Ben has found the right balance between work and “not work“?

I’m not sure if yet, but I think he is on the right track.

## **Business Partner 2 Ben**

- How long have you been working with Ben? How long have you known Ben?

We started working together 1.5 years ago but we have been friends for 17 years.

- How would you describe the personality of Ben?

Many interests, driven, demanding, smart.

- How do you define health?

To have your body and mind in good condition in order to overcome daily challenges.

- What do you understand under physical, mental and social health?

**Physical health:** to be in good shape, strong and full of energy

**Mental health:** to be able to remain calm during stressful and challenging times

**Social health:** have a good behavior within a social setting, to like people and to be liked

- Is health a topic that is addressed at work?

Yes, we often tell each other to "unplug" and relax.

- Do you think Ben's lifestyle has changed ever since he became an entrepreneur? If so, how?

Definitely. He can now spend his days doing whatever he wants, e.g. going on long holidays or working from the beach.

- In what ways do you think Ben's job as an entrepreneur (as opposed to an employee) impacts his physical, mental & social health?

It allows him to escape the rat race, do what he likes and work whenever and wherever he wants.

**Physical health:** As he has a lot of freedom and doesn't have to commute anymore, he can plan in regular work out sessions.

**Mental health:** He doesn't have to obey orders anymore and is his own boss. This takes away a lot of pressure.

**Social health:** Because of his freedom, he is able to attend whatever social events he wants.

- Is Ben stressed sometimes, and if so, would you describe the stress as eustress (positive stress) or distress (negative stress)?

Ben is often stressed. Sometimes eustress when setting up new ventures or managing teams, sometimes distress mainly related with HR, team failures or difficult costumers. The ratio between eustress and distress is probably 60:40.

- Do you consider Ben a health-conscious individual? Do you consider Ben healthy?

Yes to both. He knows how important it is to unplug the switch, although his ambitions keep him from doing it completely. He is very health-conscious, though. He eats healthy food, does a lot of sports, has regular massages etc.

- How many hours does Ben work per week? (estimate)

Around 50 hours.

- Do you think Ben has found the right balance between work and “not work“?

Definitely.

## Friend Ben

- How long have you known Ben?

We met three years ago.

- How would you describe the personality of Ben?

Very smart, international, fun, social, full of ideas, ambitious.

- How do you define health?

The body functions the way it should.

- What do you understand under physical, mental and social health?

**Physical health:** to be free of physical illnesses, to have a good level of functionality and strength

**Mental health:** absence of stress, work pressure

**Social health:** to be able to interact, communicate and relate with other people

- Do you think Ben's lifestyle has changed ever since he became an entrepreneur? If so, how?

Don't know, he was already an entrepreneur when I met him.

- In what ways do you think Ben's job as an entrepreneur (as opposed to an employee) impacts his physical, mental & social health?

**Physical health:** Less fatigue and higher energy. Ben was not happy as an employee, the switch to entrepreneurship seems to have opened new doors and partnerships for him.

**Mental health:** Less stress for sure. Less pressure, and more freedom to be creative.

**Social health:** Much better. Ben has more time for himself and his social life now as he is in full control of his days.

- Is Ben stressed sometimes, and if so, would you describe the stress as eustress (positive stress) or distress (negative stress)?

Yes, both positive and negative stress.

- Do you consider Ben a health-conscious individual? Do you consider Ben healthy?

Yes to both.

- How many hours does Ben work per week? (estimate)

Not sure, maybe around 40 hours.

- Do you think Ben has found the right balance between work and “not work“?

No, not yet. But he has improved a lot in the past years!



## Chris

### Personal Background

- Age: 26
- Educational Background: B.A. in Business Administration
- (Prior) Work Experience

I have always enjoyed starting initiatives. Prior to becoming an entrepreneur, I worked part-time in the Institut für Jungunternehmen (Institute for Young Enterprises) for a few years, I spent four months in Chile as a Project Manager of a Business Incubator, I did an internship with Roland Berger Strategy Consultants, I was responsible for market analysis as well as business development in Seattle/San Francisco for an information technology company, and I organized entrepreneurship workshops in South Africa mandated by the Swiss State Secretariat for Education and Research.

- Single? Relationship?

In a relationship.

### Entrepreneurial Experience

- How would you describe your own personality?

Very competitive (used to be an athlete), ambitious, many interests, international, perfectionist tendencies, like to be in charge of initiatives.

- Why are you an entrepreneur?

I have always been fascinated by the link between business and science. My brother studied at the ETH (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology) and my father is a science teacher, they have both given me a lot of inputs in this regard.

I want to do something meaningful for society and create something of value to people in general. I want to have a lot of freedom in the creation process, and I like to be very flexible in a small team that allows for maximum efficiency as well as quick decisions. The creation process then becomes fun!

I used to be a professional swimmer competing on national level, so I really love challenges and the sense of achievement once you have achieved something.

- When did you start your first company? Why?

Officially in Summer 2009. Through my work at the Institut für Jungunternehmen (Institute for Young Enterprises), I met a lot of entrepreneurs, and I also got to work with entrepreneurs for my bachelor thesis. I met my business partner in Boston, and we then decided that we wanted to build a company together.

- How many companies have you started/do you currently manage?

Currently one but I have also helped some other start-ups along the way, and I was asked by investors if I want to take a role in other projects.

- How many employees/business partners do you have?

There are five founders, and three of us are employed. We also have four post-docs, and we work with a board of advisors. Our venture is closely connected to our advisors, university partners, laboratories as well as our scientific advisory board.

- Is your business backed by investors, or did you finance it yourself?

We five founders have invested CHF 100 000 in total. We then raised almost 3 Mio. from six individual investors. Some of our advisors have become investors in the meanwhile.

- Annual profit?

There are no revenues as with most biotech companies. You develop your technology until you can sell the assets to somebody who will invest even more.

### Entrepreneurship & Health

- How do you define health?

To feel good physically and mentally. To find an inner balance, and to be able to do the things one likes to do.

- What do you understand under physical, mental & social health?

**Physical health:** body is fit, nothing hurts, movements are easy

**Mental health:** to be able to have a “free head”

**Social health:** probably to be able to have and build good social relationships?

- How has your lifestyle changed ever since you became an entrepreneur?

As a consultant, I was less happy as I was somebody else’s slave. The projects I was doing were not my own projects, and the company’s goals were not my own personal goals. I am much happier now.

- How important is your health to you/as a resource for your business?

I never thought about my health as a resource for the business, I wasn’t conscious about the importance of my health until I started to experience physical issues.

- Is health a topic that is discussed at your work (with investors, co-founders, employees)?

Not really. The neurosurgeon in our team doesn't have a healthy lifestyle either, he operates 15h every day and smokes a lot.

- In what ways do you think your job as an entrepreneur (as opposed to an employee) impacts your (physical, mental, social) health?

**Physical health:** I need a lot of sports to be able to function well. Ever since I became an entrepreneur, I just don't have the time anymore for physical activities because my world revolves around the business. After three years of permanent stress, my body started to show signs of exhaustion: I had skin irritations for a while, and I also had back pain. I think that these issues are linked to the pressure I put on myself.

**Mental health:** Once I became an entrepreneur, I was much happier because I was working on my project and following my own vision. On the other hand, as I am a perfectionist, there is also much more pressure from within. I used to be a professional athlete, so the competitive spirit is definitely in me. It is therefore very difficult for me to get detached from work now. Before, as an employee, I did my job but at the end of the day, somebody else was responsible. Now, I am the one in charge and responsible. Even when I'm not working, I'm still working in my head. I cannot leave things behind when I leave the office, I take my challenges and problems everywhere I go.

**Social health:** On the one hand, a lot of networking events and conferences, so you meet a lot of people, and you have a big social network. On the other hand, there is less time for your family & friends. I live with my girlfriend on the weekend but I have less time during the week for friends.

- Are you stressed sometimes, and if so, would you describe the stress as eustress (positive stress) or distress (negative stress)?

In the beginning, it was mostly eustress. As time went by, there was also a lot of distress.... (communication issues within the team, lack of coordination etc.). I would say that the long-term stress is eustress while the short-term stress linked to single events is distress.

- Do you actively cope with threats to your health (e.g. stress)? If so, how?

When I am stressed out, I try to talk to people in my surroundings including my personal coach. In my opinion, this is the best way to find solutions to problems. I also try to go out with friends or do sports to take my mind off things.

- How many hours do you work per week?

Around 60-70h per week.

- What are your recommendations to fellow entrepreneurs?

You have to consciously make health a priority. We tend to expect a lot from ourselves – sometimes too much. It really is important to create a balance, and get away from daily business once in a while in order to see the whole picture.

## **Business Partner Chris**

- How long have you been working with Chris? How long have you known Chris?

I have known him for three years and worked with him for the past two years.

- How would you describe the personality of Chris?

Very smart and driven... a leader.

- How do you define health?

Health is a combination of physical health and mental health. The second being more important in my opinion (and something I find particularly difficult to achieve myself as an entrepreneur).

- What do you understand under physical, mental and social health?

**Physical:** being fit, not too much outside of norm in terms of weight/capacity to do sports

**Mental:** being able to disconnect, and enjoy moments of quietness

**Social:** never heard this before, maybe the ability to have a stable social environment

- Is health a topic that is addressed at work?

Not really.

- Do you think the lifestyle of Chris has changed ever since he became an entrepreneur? If so, how?

Being an entrepreneur means that you have to take decisions that affect not only you, but also your company and your employees. Working in a stressful environment in a large organization can also be difficult, I agree, but you never jeopardize the life and employment of your team. This is very different in a start-up.

- In what ways do you think Chris' job as an entrepreneur (as opposed to an employee) impacts his physical, mental & social health?

**Physical health:** In the two years that we worked together, I noticed that Chris put on some weight. He was very skinny when we first met but then gained more and more weight. This might be linked to the stress and the constant pressure, he probably also didn't have the time to work out or prepare healthy meals for himself.

**Mental health:** There is a lot of stress obviously, but at the same time something that he needs to continue as the business is his personal vision. It's something that he wants and truly believes in.

**Social health:** Little time for social contacts besides work.

- Is Chris stressed sometimes, and if so, would you describe the stress as eustress (positive stress) or distress (negative stress)?

I think Chris was often stressed. It would appear in his way of talking (usually a lot faster), at least this is what I sensed. In the early days (when things were going well) it was a positive stress. But over time – with more difficulties and tension – this became more negative.

I don't think Chris faced burn-out but the stress I mention must have had an impact on his private life.

- Do you consider Chris a health-conscious individual? Do you consider Chris healthy?

I think he is healthy, not sure about health-conscious. He might neglect his own health for the health of his business. As mentioned before, he put on some weight in the two years that we have been working together... I cannot guarantee this is linked with his job but I think it could be caused by stress.

- How many hours does Chris work per week? (estimate)

60+ hours.

- Do you think Chris has found the right balance between work and “not work“?

No. Neither did I. Young entrepreneur often find it difficult to balance work and private life. It is particularly true in fields where “youth“ is not seen as a strength.

## **Best Friend Chris**

- How long have you known Chris?

I have known him for 14 years, we have been best friends ever since we were 14 years old.

- How would you describe the personality of Chris?

Competitive (we used to swim together), ambitious, smart, eager to learn.

- How do you define health?

You are not physically restricted in any way. You have full freedom to do whatever you want... activities, sports, etc.

- What do you understand under physical, mental and social health?

**Physical:** fitness, to do what you want without physical restrictions

**Mental:** no depression, to be capable at work and able to sleep at night, to be the way you have always been ever since you were a teenager

**Social:** never heard this before; guess that this means whether one can interact naturally in a social environment, and whether one can have healthy social relationships/friends?

- Do you think the lifestyle of Chris has changed ever since he became an entrepreneur? If so, how?

Yes it has, but not sure whether the lifestyle change is necessarily linked to becoming an entrepreneur... or simply to becoming older. We used to swim every day, and we used to be very active boy scouts... but people become older, and priorities change. We both have a different lifestyle now that allows us to e.g. go to nice restaurants. Also, we used to spend a lot of time on weekends but we don't anymore as he has a girlfriend now.

- In what ways do you think Chris' job as an entrepreneur (as opposed to an employee) impacts his physical, mental & social health?

**Physical health:** He still seems fit, I don't see a big difference when we do sports together. However, I also know that he has less time for physical activities now, even though he really needs sport to feel good. He also had some skin irritations for a while, and a few months ago, he complained about an unrhythmical heartbeat... I think these symptoms are all due to the permanent stress he's going through.

**Mental health:** An entrepreneur definitely carries much more responsibilities; once you have employees, you have to take care of them. There is a lot of

pressure. The working hours are also different, Chris started to work a lot more. He is a single-tasker anyways, he can only focus on one thing at a time, this is something we often joke about. It has gotten worse though: Sometimes, you're in the middle of a sentence, and he suddenly starts ignoring you because he has just received an email. He seems unfocused sometimes when we meet, I guess he's probably still thinking about an issue he had at work that day.

**Social health:** As he lives with his girlfriend on weekends, they would spend time together on a regular basis; she gives him a lot of support. We still see each other about once a week or once every two weeks, we had a "jour fixe" for a long time. Maybe that's also linked to the fact that we both moved to the French-speaking part of Switzerland at the same time, not sure we would have seen each other that much otherwise. I don't think he sees his other friends from back home a lot, he really doesn't have a lot of leisure time anymore.

- Is Chris stressed sometimes, and if so, would you describe the stress as eustress (positive stress) or distress (negative stress)?

I think it's a mix of positive and negative stress. Especially in the beginning, there was a lot of excitement, and therefore a lot of positive stress. As time went by, there were also more challenges and problems, leading to negative stress.

- Do you consider Chris a health-conscious individual? Do you consider Chris healthy?

Yes, Chris is healthy. Whenever we swim nowadays, he is still able to "keep up", and I have not heard of any illnesses or other physical issues.

He is also health-conscious: He doesn't smoke, doesn't drink much and eats on a regular basis in a healthy way. He does not take many risks, and he sleeps enough according to my standards.

Not sure whether my standards are generally applicable, though. I consider 6h perfect as I get "quality sleep", don't know whether Chris gets sufficient "quality sleep"...

- How many hours does Chris work per week? (estimate)

Probably between 60 and 70h a week, including a few hours on the weekend. However, this does not include the time he's traveling to or for work. He would often travel 4-5x a week between Geneva and Zurich for meetings. Even if he was chatting with friends on the train or reading the news, it is still a 3h trip each time that is not really "quality time".

- Do you think Chris has found the right balance between work and "not work"?

No, there is no balance, and Chris knows this. He clearly works too much, I consider 50-55h more "normal" for executives or entrepreneurs.



## Girlfriend Chris

- How long have you known/been with Chris?

I have known him for eight years, we have been together for four years.

- How would you describe the personality of Chris?

Very responsible, ambitious, smart and devoted once he has committed to something.

- How do you define health?

You feel good, you can do whatever you want with your body and your head.

- What do you understand under physical, mental and social health?

**Physical:** your body feels good, and you don't have to be worried; you can do whatever you want

**Mental:** to be in "peace" with yourself

**Social:** to spend time with family and friends, to take care of your contacts and share information

- Do you think the lifestyle of Chris has changed ever since he became an entrepreneur? If so, how?

He went from competitive sports suddenly to almost no sport.

Furthermore, he was under consistent pressure. There was not one hour when he wasn't checking his emails. Even in bed, after the lights were out, he would still check his emails. There was a lot of internal pressure that he had put on himself. His company was his baby, so he felt responsible for everything.

- In what ways do you think Chris' job as an entrepreneur (as opposed to an employee) impacts his physical, mental & social health?

**Physical health:** As I said before, he went from competitive sports to suddenly no sports. He also had a few physical issues such as skin irritations, irregular heart beats or simply exhaustion because of all the stress.

**Mental health:** When Chris started his company, he had no idea what to expect – which is normal as it was his first company. Of course he would also have responsibilities as an employee but never in the scope that he has now. He doesn't have a leader or a boss, he has to manage everything himself from investor relations to marketing to strategy to administration. It's a huge responsibility!

In the beginning, Chris was superinvolved and completely immersed himself into work as he was so excited about it. After a while, he was still involved but started to see challenges which is why he began to put a certain distance between himself and the job. He has probably worked the same amount of hours in the last few years but he became very tired and less efficient as time went by. Because of all the stress, there were times when he had issues falling asleep or when he wasn't able to solve – not too complicated – problems because he was simply overworked and tired. At the end, everything comes together.

**Social health:** Not a lot of time left for social contacts. We live together on the weekends, but I don't think he is able to spend a lot of time with his friends otherwise...

- Is Chris stressed sometimes, and if so, would you describe the stress as eustress (positive stress) or distress (negative stress)?

In the beginning positive stress; now after three years probably more negative stress.

- Do you consider Chris a health-conscious individual? Do you consider Chris healthy?

He has always been physically healthy. We went trekking in Nepal two years ago and climbed 5500m in one week, he was completely fine. However, Chris knows that he needs a lot of physical activities to feel good. He thought he could do without but he soon realized he cannot. I do think that he is a health-conscious person which is why he knows that he needs to make serious changes now, because everything is becoming overwhelming...

- How many hours does Chris work per week? (estimate)

I would say from 8.00 in the morning until midnight, every day from Monday to Friday. Less on weekends, maybe 3h each day. All in all between 80 and 90 hours per week.

- Do you think Chris has found the right balance between work and "not work"?

I think he now knows that he has to put a stronger emphasis on finding a balance.

In the beginning, he didn't need a balance because everything was so exciting. However, in the second year, he had three weeks of military service and was forced to work at the same time. He was so exhausted and literally "destroyed" afterwards. This is when he realized that he had to make changes to his status quo: He got support from outside (e.g. advice, mentoring), built a stronger team, adapted certain processes etc. but still, he wasn't able to do more sports as he simply couldn't find time.

## **Daniel**

### Personal Background

- Age: 28
- Educational Background:  
B.A. in Business Administration, MBA
- (Prior) Work Experience:  
Various internships in banking (4 months), communication & strategy consulting (6 months) and with an airline business in Colombia (1 year). Worked for three years as a consultant with one of the most prestigious international consulting companies.
- Relationship Status: in a relationship

### Entrepreneurial Experience

- How would you describe your own personality?

Very entrepreneurial, social, international, in need of constant challenges.

- Why are you an entrepreneur?

Self-fulfillment. I have much more freedom and am flexibler this way.

- When did you start your first company? Why?

I started my first company with 16. I saw that a local political party needed a website, and I decided to provide it.

- How many companies have you started/do you currently manage?

I have started three, I currently manage one start-up that is going to be launched soon.

- How many employees/business partners do you have?

One business partner and six employees (2 interns, 1 full-time, 3 part-time).

- Is your business backed by investors, or did you finance it yourself?

It is partially backed by seed investors, we also put in some money ourselves.

- Annual profit?

None so far, official launch is going to be in a few weeks.

## Entrepreneurship & Health

- How do you define health?

It is a long-term goal of a healthy, functioning body. It is also a mindset, a lifestyle. Healthy nutrition plays a crucial role.

- What do you understand under physical, mental & social health?

**Physical health:** nothing hurts

**Mental health:** life satisfaction, no mental illnesses, self-management skills, to feel "comfortable", to know how to handle emotions

**Social health:** (?) to have friends that one can trust

- How has your lifestyle changed ever since you became an entrepreneur?

It has improved a lot. I'm more flexible, I feel more autonomous and I am in control of my time. Physically speaking, things have probably remained the same but my mental health is so much better now.

In general, being an entrepreneur, your health is probably more volatile because you have more ups and downs, with extreme situations inbetween that might impact your existence. Having employees and investors equals a lot more responsibility.

- How important is your health to you/as a resource for your business?

Without health, nothing works. It is a prerequisite; once you're not healthy, you will immediately feel the impacts on all aspects of life. At the same time, health is essential but not sufficient. You might be healthy but your business might not be.

- Is health a topic that is discussed at your work (with investors, co-founders, employees)?

Not really. We talked about it more at my previous company, when I was still an employee.

- In what ways do you think your job as an entrepreneur (as opposed to an employee) impacts your physical, mental & social health?

**Physical health:** no difference

**Mental health:** much better due to more autonomy and more freedom, more motivation

**Social health:** similar but different. When I was working for a company, many of my work colleagues became good friends. As an entrepreneur, the circles I move in have become much more eclectic and more interesting. I now have to actively

look for new connections while contacts (as in clients, other work colleagues etc.) were handed to me before.

At the same time, I'm exposed to working with people that are more difficult to work with. As a consultant, the people you meet tend to be more "rational"; I am now dealing with a lot of people with design backgrounds such as photographers or lingerie designers... you cannot really talk with them, they seem to live in their own world, and they're so stubborn!

When it comes to meeting friends, I always have time as I can always make time. I can easily meet somebody for coffee in the afternoon, and then go home to work. This is not possible as an employee.

- Are you stressed sometimes, and if so, would you describe the stress as eustress (positive stress) or distress (negative stress)?

I would say 70% positive, and 30% negative. There are sometimes difficult situations in the design business when your staff is not willing to accept any feedback, and you cannot change certain things...

- Do you actively cope with threats to your health (e.g. stress)? If so, how?

Usually not. If I feel stressed, I try to distract myself (by e.g. having dinner with friends) until I'm calm again.

- How many hours do you work per week?

40-50h

- What are your recommendations to fellow entrepreneurs?

Especially for young entrepreneurs, health is often considered a given. However, if you don't care about your health when you're young, you will have problems once you get older... when it might already be too late. Awareness is therefore very important, things such as smoking or overweight can have far-reaching consequences. You have to coordinate and manage yourself.

In the past few months, I have started to write two lists on my phone. One list includes all the things that make me happy, the other list things that don't make me happy. These lists have two advantages:

On the one hand, it is easier to identify where my stress comes from so that I can eliminate it immediately. As an example, I used to read my emails every morning in bed, and if there were issues at work, I would start the day stressed out. I now keep my phone off until after breakfast, when I walk into my office and am ready to work.

On the other hand, when I'm unhappy, I just read the list with things that make me happy, and I immediately feel better. For instance, I like TED talks a lot. When I have a bad day, I just watch a few TED talks and things will quickly lighten up.

## Roommate Daniel

- How long have you known Daniel?

Around 10 years, we've been living together for a year now.

- How would you describe the personality of Daniel?

Supersmart, entrepreneurial, energetic, social, loves to party, a little eccentric, always in a good mood.

- How do you define health?

Physical and mental balance.

- What do you understand under physical, mental and social health?

**Physical health:** not to be sick, no physical limitations (e.g. pain), to be fit and active

**Mental health:** not to have any mental illnesses, to be balanced and happy

**Social health:** first time I hear this; maybe to have a healthy social environment?

- Do you think Daniel's lifestyle has changed ever since he became an entrepreneur? If so, how?

No, he has always been an entrepreneur. I think you cannot learn to be an entrepreneur, you're either an entrepreneur at heart or you are not. There are certain things that just have to be in your blood.

- In what ways do you think Daniel's job as an entrepreneur (as opposed to an employee) impacts his physical, mental & social health?

**Physical health:** not really a difference as he used to be a consultant, working from 7am to midnight every day... but I guess you have more freedom as an entrepreneur, so you are more in control of what you do when in your daily business. This allows you to e.g. plan in gym sessions if you need/want one.

**Mental health:** More responsibilities and more pressure but also more pleasure, more satisfaction and more freedom. You can do what you want, whenever you want, and you decide what you think should be done within your business. If you have a boss, and you totally disagree with his decisions, you still have to execute them. As an entrepreneur, you are your own boss but then again, you are also responsible for all your actions.

**Social health:** Don't think there is a difference between consulting and entrepreneurship. In both situations, you work like crazy and planning social time is difficult. However, Daniel is a genius when it comes to this. He still

manages to fly to Ibiza one weekend and to New York another weekend for pleasure.

- Is Daniel stressed sometimes, and if so, would you describe the stress as eustress (positive stress) or distress (negative stress)?

Never seen him stressed. If he has a bad day, he might be quiet and disappear in his room... which rarely happens. I see him excited a lot, busy and excited. This could count as positive stress, no? He always has some projects that he's working on.

- Do you consider Daniel a health-conscious individual? Do you consider Daniel healthy?

Healthy yes, health-conscious not so much. He parties a lot, drinks a lot of alcohol and doesn't sleep too much... However, he seems totally fine. He doesn't seem tired, and he doesn't seem to experience any physical issues.

- How many hours does Daniel work per week? (estimate)

At least 70h.

- Do you think Daniel has found the right balance between work and "not work"?

I think he's living the life he wants to live, and he therefore feels perfectly balanced. I am often amazed at his energy, as he really has non-stop energy. When he worked as a consultant, he would come home every day around midnight or 1am but he was still able to fly somewhere for the weekend to party (where he slept even less). Now he is doing his MBA at an Ivy League university in the US, he runs another start-up successfully and he still parties every day.

I would never be able to do this.



## Friend Daniel

- How long have you known Daniel?

For the past 16 years, we used to play tennis together.

- How would you describe the personality of Daniel?

Entrepreneurial, driven, out-of-the-box, social, happy.

- How do you define health?

A slim, athletic, balanced body.

- What do you understand under physical, mental and social health?

**Physical health:** a slim, athletic body

**Mental health:** to be able to control one's emotions, to be happy in daily life

**Social health:** never heard this; maybe when I don't have to be annoyed, because other people keep interrupting me?

- Do you think Daniel's lifestyle has changed ever since he became an entrepreneur? If so, how?

No. Being an entrepreneur is not a career choice for him, it's in his blood. He has always been an entrepreneur, he started his first company at age 15.

- In what ways do you think Daniel's job as an entrepreneur (as opposed to an employee) impacts his physical, mental & social health?

**Physical health:** I think entrepreneurs are more likely to be healthy as they are so much happier, I see a strong correlation between mental and physical health. Most depressed people are also physically sick. Also, entrepreneurs tend to have more money, and because they are happier, they will live longer.

**Mental health:** There is a lot of positive stress and optimism. Daniel gets to realize his ideas and is in full control of his days. Also, once you are successful as an entrepreneur, there is this great sense of achievement. You made it financially and socially speaking, being an entrepreneur is highly respected in society.

Daniel is always superhappy anyways, I have never seen him in a bad mood.

**Social health:** Could be more difficult to maintain as an entrepreneur. You have to be constantly present and solve problems when they arrive, difficult to plan ahead.

- Is Daniel stressed sometimes, and if so, would you describe the stress as eustress (positive stress) or distress (negative stress)?

He is stressed sometimes but it is always positive stress. He gets more creative when he is stressed, and he works well under pressure.

- Do you consider Daniel a health-conscious individual? Do you consider Daniel healthy?

On a scale from 1-10, I would probably give him a 6 health-wise. He seems healthy to me.

He knows that he doesn't lead a very healthy lifestyle. When he gains a little weight, he will do sports and abstain from alcohol for one day. That's it.

- How many hours does Daniel work per week? (estimate)

Around 70h.

- Do you think Daniel has found the right balance between work and "not work"?

Definitely. I have been with him when he wasn't able to work for two weeks, he becomes very difficult. He is superactive and always needs to do something, it's his nature.

## **Business Partner Daniel**

- How long have you been working with Daniel? How long have you known Daniel?

We have known each other for the past 2.5 years and started to work together one year ago.

- How would you describe the personality of Daniel?

Driven, smart, a "leader", enthusiastic, fun, social.

- How do you define health?

Health is physical well-being and fitness. Not to have any problems, and not to be sick.

- What do you understand under physical, mental and social health?

**Physical health:** physical fitness

**Mental health:** to be mentally stable and happy, not to have any psychoses or mental issues

**Social health:** (guessing) to be able to function in a social environment, to have friends, to be outgoing

- Is health a topic that is addressed at work?

No. In some rare cases we swear to never drink again when we wake up after a long night partying, but that's it. At our age, we don't really value health, we just take it for granted.

- In what ways do you think Daniel's job as an entrepreneur (as opposed to an employee) impacts his physical, mental & social health?

**Physical health:** As an entrepreneur, you have much more freedom and flexibility. You can therefore set your own schedule and decide if/when you want to work out.

**Mental health:** Again, much more freedom. Less structure, less guidelines.

**Social health:** Not an issue for Daniel. He has always had a very active social life, as an employee and an entrepreneur.

Generally speaking, I don't think Daniel's lifestyle would be a lot different as an employee. I really think his health doesn't depend on his career choice but on how much he parties. He currently goes out 4-5 nights a week; 2 of these nights he will stay out until anytime between 3 and 7am, the other nights until at least

midnight or 1am. Of course, his lifestyle is definitely not sustainable in the long-term...

- Is Daniel stressed sometimes, and if so, would you describe the stress as eustress (positive stress) or distress (negative stress)?

Never stressed, only excited (positive stress?). I have never seen Daniel stressed. He always seems very relaxed and happy.

- Do you consider Daniel a health-conscious individual? Do you consider Daniel healthy?

I think as of now, Daniel is still healthy. He is also conscious that he is NOT health-conscious. He doesn't do any sports, he parties and drinks a lot, and sometimes he doesn't sleep enough. He just recently lived on a "salmon-vodka diet", I think this shows a glimpse of his lifestyle.

- How many hours does Daniel work per week? (estimate)

Difficult to estimate, highly varies. Probably around 60-70h a week.

- Do you think Daniel has found the right balance between work and "not work"?

We had this discussion recently and think a distinction between "work" and "not-work" is the wrong approach. It's not about the hours that you work but about how you feel while working. The quality is much more important than the quantity. If you spend most of your life on something that you're passionate about, it doesn't feel like "work". If the same amount of hours would go into something that is "shit", the situation would be very different.

Daniel will always do something that he loves, thus he will always combine life & work.

Also, I think our situation is different as we are still doing our MBA on the side. We basically threw in a little bit of cash each and invested our leisure time that we probably wouldn't have spent in a more productive way anyways. Of course we want the company to be successful but it's not like our life depends on it.

## **Emil**

### Personal Background

- Age: 27
- Educational Background:

Commercial Apprenticeship, B.A. in Visual Communications

- (Prior) Work Experience:

First apprentice, then intern for 5 months and 2 months each. I've been a freelancer for six years now, I started my company three years ago.

- Relationship Status: single

### Entrepreneurial Experience

- How would you describe your own personality?

Creative, curious, lazy.

- Why are you an entrepreneur?

It happened, it wasn't planned. I enjoy the freedom to do what I want, when I want and how I want it. It is very motivating to work for your own projects.

- When did you start your first company? Why?

My first business was a study project at school, we turned it into a publishing business for fun. We later launched a second business selling unique fonts.

- How many companies have you started/do you currently manage?

1 + 1, I'm also still a freelancer (web design, logo design)

- How many employees/business partners do you have?

We are two founders, there are no employees. We collaborate with other designers and license their fonts.

- Is your business backed by investors, or did you finance it yourself?

Financed ourselves.

- Annual profit?

Last year CHF 7000, this year we expect CHF 15 000-20 000.

## Entrepreneurship & Health

- How do you define health?

To not be sick, to be fit, to be able to run and catch a train.

- What do you understand under physical, mental & social health?

**Physical health:** to not be sick, to have a healthy body that works

**Mental health:** to be happy

**Social health:** to be comfortable in the environment in which I live

- How has your lifestyle changed ever since you became an entrepreneur?

I'm not a student anymore, it has less to do with being an entrepreneur. I have a more regular rhythm, similar to being a freelancer.

- How important is your health to you/as a resource for your business?

Health is becoming more important to me. I become older, and I'm aware that I have to take care of my health in order to live the life that I want. I had a pneumothorax two years ago which is basically a hole in your lungs, I stopped smoking afterwards. For the first time in my life, I had to spend 10 days at the hospital as a patient... that really got me thinking.

I don't do a lot of sports, maybe once every two weeks. I've been a vegetarian for 17 years now. I drink coffee on five days per week, usually two or three cups a day. There are phases when I drink quite a bit of alcohol but there are always weeks when I don't touch alcohol at all.

- Is health a topic that is discussed at your work (with investors, co-founders, employees)?

No.

- In what ways do you think your job as an entrepreneur (as opposed to an employee) impacts your physical, mental & social health?

**Physical health:** neutral. I just went biking yesterday for three hours, it is my freedom to work out whenever I want, this is not possible for an employee. It is probably different for "hardcore entrepreneurs" that have to sit around all day.

**Mental health:** I'm very happy

**Social health:** also very positive. I meet a lot of new people through work and can expand my circles. I have always been a freelancer, I like the flexibility. If I want to meet somebody for coffee in the afternoon, I do that, and then I keep on working when I get home. That's the way I work, I work when I want to work.

- Are you stressed sometimes, and if so, would you describe the stress as eustress (positive stress) or distress (negative stress)?

For me, stress is always negative. Sometimes there is a deadline, sometimes there is pressure. However, this doesn't have anything to do with being an entrepreneur. There is always external and internal pressure. In general, I try to work as little as possible.

- Do you actively cope with threats to your health (e.g. stress)? If so, how?

I try to create deadlines. Stress is the most efficient tool to work better, that's why I need realistic deadlines.

- How many hours do you work per week?

30h. I don't want to work, I like being lazy and I have very low living costs.

- What are your recommendations to fellow entrepreneurs?

To understand what one truly wants. Physical health shouldn't be the priority but the general goal, act towards this goal.

## Friend Emil

- How long have you known Emil?

For 5 years.

- How would you describe the personality of Emil?

Fun, creative, smart.

- How do you define health?

Have a balance in your life that makes you feel good.

- What do you understand under physical, mental and social health?

**Physical health:** Thinking about what you're doing to and with your body. Get enough sleep, drink lots of water, eat fruit and exercise... basic things.

**Mental health:** For me, it's keeping a good balance between work and leisure time, between being responsible and sometimes uncontrolled.

**Social health:** Knowing and enjoying your way around people as well as being able to be very independent.

- Do you think Emil's lifestyle has changed ever since he became an entrepreneur? If so, how?

Not sure if his lifestyle has changed because he became an entrepreneur, or because he became a freelancer in the first place. He has always been very professional regarding his work, and I do think he has become better at socializing over the past years.

- In what ways do you think Emil's job as an entrepreneur (as opposed to an employee) impacts his physical, mental & social health?

**Physical health:** Better, can plan in work-out sessions due to his freedom.

**Mental health:** Better, more in control of his days and his work. He seems like somebody to me who is better in following his own time schedule instead of a regular working pattern.

**Social health:** Better, can see his friends whenever he wants to because of the flexibility of his job.



- Is Emil stressed sometimes, and if so, would you describe the stress as eustress (positive stress) or distress (negative stress)?

In graphic design, it's all about deadlines. We always plan our work according to a finish point which means that there is always stress, but I would describe it as eustress.

- Do you consider Emil a health-conscious individual? Do you consider Emil healthy?

He can be. And yes, I would say he's health-conscious.

- How many hours does Emil work per week? (estimate)

I'm guessing around 50h.

- Do you think Emil has found the right balance between work and "not work"?

In my opinion, it is hard to find the right balance when you're starting your own company, things will stabilize over the years but the beginning is hard. I think that Emil has found a good balance for himself.

## Brother Emil

- How long have you known Emil?

Ever since he was born, I'm his older brother.

- How would you describe the personality of Emil?

Very creative, smart, a little lazy.

- How do you define health?

Did never really think about a formal definition. I'd say something like: "the state of one's body and mind".

- What do you understand under physical, mental and social health?

**Physical health:** the condition a body is in; strength, endurance, no negative long-time problems.

**Mental health:** the state of the mind; "feeling good/well rested". Being in an open/alert mental state.

**Social health:** I don't think I've heard this term before... but I assume it means something like: having a good social network. Feeling accepted. Having close friends. Having honest and open relationships.

- Do you think Emil's lifestyle has changed ever since he became an entrepreneur? If so, how?

It's hard to compare, because before being a freelance-designer, he was a fulltime-student. So of course, his lifestyle has changed. The 2<sup>nd</sup> large change occurred when Emil started working out of a (shared) office instead of working at home.

- In what ways do you think Emil's job as an entrepreneur (as opposed to an employee) impacts his physical, mental & social health?

**Physical health:** flexible awake/sleep patterns (he sometimes works until late at night and sleeps longer), time for (some) sport during the day. Otherwise not much impact.

**Mental health:** cannot really distance himself from work, no strict separation between "now I'm working" and "now I'm not working"

**Social health:** not too much impact. Has a large social network to other designers and is in regular contact with them. And he works in an "office" anyways. Entrepreneurship probably allows him a higher flexibility for meeting friends and going out during the week.

- Is Emil stressed sometimes, and if so, would you describe the stress as eustress (positive stress) or distress (negative stress)?

He's stressed sometimes, but not very often. I'd describe it as distress. Don't think being an entrepreneur has a large influence here (in his specific case).

- Do you consider Emil a health-conscious individual? Do you consider Emil healthy?

I'd consider him a somewhat health-conscious individual. After I started losing weight and doing more sports over the last 18 month, he took part in this, had more exercise as well and ate somewhat better.

Do I consider him healthy? Hard to say, because it always depends whom I'm comparing him to. Compared to the average (or median) western adult: yes, he's healthy. Compared to the median 27 year old: probably on the slightly unhealthy side. But: He doesn't smoke (anymore), he doesn't drink that much, he's only slightly overweight, and he gets at least some regular exercise.

- How many hours does Emil work per week? (estimate)

Strict work hours (means: really concentrated on the work and no diversions at all): maybe 35?

Normal work hours (means: working like average workers in most other jobs, where "everyone" spends some time on facebook or reading twitter or texting etc): maybe 50

- Do you think Emil has found the right balance between work and "not work"?

I think this is in general an unsolved problem, as you will never have a real work-life balance... especially not as a freelancer or entrepreneur. There are always new or unexpected situations that force you to adapt and find a new balance.

In Emil's case, it's not bad, but I'd recommend an even stricter separation between work time and leisure time. If you work, then work very concentrated on the task at hand and don't let "the rest of the internet/real life" distract you. And if you're done with work for the day (or for the moment at least), then really enjoy the time off.

## **Business Partner Emil**

- How long have you been working with Emil? How long have you known Emil?

I have known him for six years, and we have been working together for the past four years.

- How would you describe the personality of Emil?

Smart, creative, social, entrepreneurial.

- How do you define health?

I define health as living in harmony with both body and mind.

- What do you understand under physical, mental and social health?

**Physical health:** Feeling in touch with your own body, doing sports and having a consciously healthy nutrition.

**Mental health:** Being able to enjoy life and not suffer under stress. Act on free will, not having to contradict or lie to oneself.

**Social health:** Spending my time – both in spare time, at work or while studying – with people I enjoy. People that I understand and that understand me, there should be no pressure or discomfort in interacting with them.

- Is health a topic that is addressed at work?

Yes. It is an office work, there is always the chance of losing touch with your own body. You don't get enough physical exercise from working on your job. Sitting in the same position for a whole day is very harmful, and having no time to get a proper, relaxed lunch is also an issue.

- Do you think Emil's lifestyle has changed ever since he became an entrepreneur? If so, how?

Yes. I think due to some success based on his own initiatives, he has become more self-confident and generally seems happier.

- In what ways do you think Emil's job as an entrepreneur (as opposed to an employee) impacts his physical, mental & social health?

**Physical health:** no difference

**Mental health:** He seems happier and more self-confident. Also, he is very optimistic now, having been able to start a business from 0. On the negative side,

there is also a lot of responsibility which sometimes leads to periods of unhealthy stress.

**Social health:** Because he can work without a fixed schedule, he is able to interact at flexible times. Also here, I think he has more self-esteem now when it comes to social interactions in general.

- Is Emil stressed sometimes, and if so, would you describe the stress as eustress (positive stress) or distress (negative stress)?

In my opinion, he rarely seems distressed and remains calm due to his generally very pragmatic mindset. Also, because we are both equal, and therefore equally responsible partners, we can discuss decisions together and share responsibilities.

- Do you consider Emil a health-conscious individual? Do you consider Emil healthy?

Health-conscious not so much. Healthy: Socially and mentally yes. Physically speaking, I personally think he should engage in more challenging activities.

- How many hours does Emil work per week? (estimate)

Impossible for me to estimate as we have absolutely no fixed working hours whatsoever.

- Do you think Emil has found the right balance between work and “not work“?

Since he always works on his computer, he also always has internet access. It is pretty hard to turn your attention completely from work as the line between work and non-work seems to be very blurry more often than not.

## **Fabian**

### Personal Background

- Age: 32
- Educational Background:  
B.A. in Banking & Finance
- (Prior) Work Experience:  
Internship (4 months) in China, 9 months Sotheby's, Private Equity 1.5 years
- Relationship Status: single

### Entrepreneurial Experience

- How would you describe your own personality?

Entrepreneurial, very social, fun, full of ideas.

- Why are you an entrepreneur?

Because I am a bad employee. I want to do what I want, when I want it. I enjoy kicking off new projects but I am not very precise. There is a lot of bureaucracy in big corporations, and you have to follow a lot of guidelines etc. I don't want all that, I want things to get done, so sometimes, good is good enough. You can't deal with all the details all the time.

- When did you start your first company? Why?

I started my first company with 21. My father is also an entrepreneur but he always told us to not choose the entrepreneurial path, because there is no steady income, you're always on the go, rarely at home, and there are so many ups and downs... like a rollercoaster. Still, here I am.

I started my first business after my year in China. We provided guest services for big Swiss companies that had Chinese visitors or clients in Switzerland. I did this for 2.5 years.

- How many companies have you started/do you currently manage?

I have started 16 companies and currently manage 5 of them (all in the field of e-commerce).

- How many employees/business partners do you have?

I have one business partner. We run 5 companies within a holding structure, the biggest company has 2.8 full-time employees. All in all, we have 7 full-time positions for employees.

- Is your business backed by investors, or did you finance it yourself?

Both. Some are backed by investors, some are self-financed. We currently have one business that is completely paid for by investors, one that is partially paid for by investors and three that we have financed ourselves.

- Annual profit?

We currently have a loss of CHF 20 000. It is our strategy to not have any profit (thus no taxes) but to keep investing in new ventures even though some of our businesses are already profitable.

### Entrepreneurship & Health

- How do you define health?

A life without issues and restrictions.

- What do you understand under physical, mental & social health?

**Physical health:** to be able to do sports for up to 1h

**Mental health:** to be able to “unplug“

**Social health:** never heard this; maybe to be able to listen to other people, to be open to other people?

- How has your lifestyle changed ever since you became an entrepreneur?

My lifestyle has changed a lot, in all aspects. I am in a constant process to change for the better. When I was younger, time was not an issue – it is now my most valuable good. I try to constantly optimize every aspect of my life. Not only do we run our businesses with minimal resources, I also took minimalism to my private life. I'm not a one year entrepreneur, this is what I want to do for the next 50 years.

As an example: I don't have a lot of things anymore, I have pretty much everything with me that I need. Within 30 seconds, I could pack for a three months trip. I threw away most of my cutlery, I now have four forks and knives. In 99.9%, I only need a fork. When I have a date, I need two sets of cutlery. I might have a small dinner with three friends and use my entire cutlery. As soon as there are more than four people, I might as well throw a party, and then

everybody can use plastic cutlery. Minimalism also regarding food and drinks: I only drink pure water and espresso now.

Also, I used to be quite fashion-conscious. Now I only own white and blue shirts. My business partner used to drive a Porsche, now he doesn't drive anymore. Isn't it strange that a single person lives in a 3.5 rooms apartment, when this person is working all day long, sits in one room for 15min and sleeps 8h in the other room? Isn't this a waste of resources? I would never buy a villa, even if I had millions. Simplicity and minimalism are key, the entire mindset has to change.

- How important is your health to you/as a resource for your business?

For a long time, I didn't realize the importance of health. Bad health is part of being cool, the "work hard, play harder" mentality reflects this. I now understand that the healthier I am, the longer I can live. We watched a TED talk a few months ago that was very impressive: A doctor spoke about how she was able to cure her own multiple sclerosis through nutrition – this really got me thinking.

Ever since then, I've changed my lifestyle. I am extremely disciplined during the week, and extremely excessive (partywise = little sleep, a lot of alcohol) on weekends. I try to do 50-60min of cardio every day, I ride my bike and I walk 1-2h on weekends. I drink a lot of water, espresso, green tea and coke zero. Food-wise, I eat salad, chicken, meat, vegetables, nuts and not too many carbs. I have a weakness for maltesers but I now re-package one bag into four smaller bags, so I can eat one for each day. I have lost 12kg since last December this way. I really want to make major changes this time as I have always had a lot of ups and downs with my body. I used to be skinny, then I started to eat everything at any time... too much pizza, french fries etc.... and I gained 24kg. I lost the weight, and I gained it again. A vicious cycle.

As for my health as a resource for our company: We try to build our company in a way so that it functions with or without us. Right now, we are needed for about 70%. Hopefully soon, we won't be needed at all.

- Is health a topic that is discussed at your work (with investors, co-founders, employees)?

Mostly with my business partner, he is a health fanatic who only eats vegetables, white meat, nuts and fruits. He also works out every day for 1.5h and looks like it – strictly muscles, no fat. He talks about health issues a lot, I usually listen.

- In what ways do you think your job as an entrepreneur (as opposed to an employee) impacts your physical, mental & social health?

**Physical health:** Is often neglected; we entrepreneurs tend to sit too much, eat too much processed food and spend too much time in front of the computer. However, I think investment bankers, consultants etc. have a similar lifestyle.



**Mental health:** Is probably similar to an employee; I'm still thinking bankers as I used to study Banking & Finance. On the one hand, you work a lot, you might often be unfocused and there is permanent stress. On the other hand, you can develop yourself further, you have a lot of freedom and you can pursue your dreams.

There is a study that showed that most people die in the first and the 65th year of their lives. After retirement, many people don't see a purpose for living anymore. People want to be inspired, they need to have something to do. Entrepreneurs are in constant need of inspirations and problems that they can solve.

**Social health:** My social health is probably better now. Entrepreneurs have to be able to network and sell; I am always in touch with employees, clients, investors, collaboration partners etc. Maybe my social interactions don't focus on my family or previous friends, but nonetheless, I feel socially very healthy.

- Are you stressed sometimes, and if so, would you describe the stress as eustress (positive stress) or distress (negative stress)?

Yes, sometimes. When I go to bed, and I cannot "switch off" the stress, then it must be distress. Distress usually happens whenever the existence (of myself as an entrepreneur, the company as well as the employees) is affected: Can we pay salaries this month? Can we pay our bills? These issues usually cannot be solved within a day.

- Do you actively cope with threats to your health (e.g. stress)? If so, how?

Good planning is essential. My agenda is sacred, my emails are sacred; I use a lot of tools. Nobody is superman, nobody can do everything alone. Certain things cannot be changed. I try to write negative thoughts down to get them out of my head.

- How many hours do you work per week?

I get up every day between 5.30 and 6.00, reply to emails until 6.30, go jogging for one hour, start working again at 8.00 without emails and do another round of emails between 11.00 and 12.00. I usually have a 1.5h lunch break, work from 13.30-15.30 without emails and from 15.30-18.00 with emails again. I study or read in the evenings, after 21.00 I usually work a little bit more with a movie in the background until probably 22.30. On Saturdays I work 3-4h, on Sundays 6-7h. All in all, I probably work around 70h per week.

- What are your recommendations to fellow entrepreneurs?

Take your health seriously, and find ways to integrate it around your business. It is easy to incorporate sport & healthy nutrition in your daily life, you just have to pull through and stick to it.

## **Business Partner Fabian**

- How long have you been working with Fabian? How long have you known Fabian?

We have known each other for 9 years, have studied together and have now been working together for the past 1.5 years. During this time, we have launched 6-7 businesses (e-commerce, online services) together.

- How would you describe the personality of Fabian?

Business-savvy, driven, smart, social, independent.

- How do you define health?

General well-being, taking care of oneself.

- What do you understand under physical, mental and social health?

**Physical health:** to be fit

**Mental health:** mental resistance to stress, positive attitude in general

**Social health:** to have a stable social life with family & friends

- Is health a topic that is addressed at work?

Yes. I used to be a personal trainer, so health is a topic that is very important to me. Fabian is overweight and didn't do any sports. I would often talk about the things I do and encourage him to take better care of himself as well.

- Do you think Fabian's lifestyle has changed ever since he became an entrepreneur? If so, how?

No, his lifestyle didn't change from student to entrepreneur. He has always been very active.

- In what ways do you think Fabian's job as an entrepreneur (as opposed to an employee) impacts his physical, mental & social health?

**Physical health:** As an entrepreneur, you have much more freedom. As a consequence, you can do whatever you want and be more efficient which allows you to plan in gym sessions.

**Mental health:** As an entrepreneur, you don't have to deal with annoying bosses, inefficiency, company politics etc. Of course, you have a different kind of stress, but this stress is easier to "endure" as it is self-inflicted stress.

**Social health:** Social life becomes a little more difficult as it takes a certain amount of coordination. If you work in a company, social life just “happens”. There are company events, and you often go for meals/drinks with your colleagues. Once you are your own boss, you spend a lot of time with yourself alone in your house. Also, your schedule is not predictable. If you want to meet friends, you have to plan but you cannot always plan.

- Is Fabian stressed sometimes, and if so, would you describe the stress as eustress (positive stress) or distress (negative stress)?

Yes. Usually positive but there are always deadlines etc., then it could be negative. When he is stressed, he starts to talk a lot and he loses focus.

- Do you consider Fabian a health-conscious individual? Do you consider Fabian healthy?

Not completely healthy. He is overweight, and he needs to lose another 15kg... he is working on it. He also smokes and drinks regularly, and he doesn't watch his nutrition as much as he should.

We watched a TED talk a few months ago about multiple sclerosis, and it said how body and brain will suffer due to bad nutrition. I think this video really affected him but I think he's more worried about his brain than his body, he doesn't want to take any risks there. I used to be a personal trainer so Fabian came to me afterwards and asked me to put together a nutrition plan for him, that's what I did. He now takes better care of what he's eating, and he does 20min of cardio every day. He also plays basketball once or twice a week.

- How many hours does Fabian work per week? (estimate)

Probably around 50h, he also works in the evening and on weekends.

- Do you think Fabian has found the right balance between work and “not work“?

Yes. It was a process, but he's more balanced now. The amount of time he spends working is probably the same but he is able to handle stress much better.

## **Friend Fabian**

- How long have you known Fabian?

For 17 years now.

- How would you describe the personality of Fabian?

Bubbly, active, smart, driven, social. A classic entrepreneur.

- How do you define health?

Overall physical and mental well-being.

- What do you understand under physical, mental and social health?

**Physical health:** good fitness, BMI, strength

**Mental health:** clear and positive thinking, no signs of depression or burdensome mindset

**Social health:** well integrated into social structures of family, friends and society

- Do you think Fabian's lifestyle has changed ever since he became an entrepreneur? If so, how?

No. He's always been quite thrifty and active in general. In terms of health, Fabian was quite fit (in the context of his general biological disposition) around 2004/2005 prior to becoming an entrepreneur during his studies. He gained substantial weight 20kg+ after that and has lost about 10-12kg over the past 6 months or so. But this too is unrelated to being an entrepreneur.

- In what ways do you think Fabian's job as an entrepreneur (as opposed to an employee) impacts his physical, mental & social health?

**Physical health:** No correlation.

**Mental health:** Being an entrepreneur requires a lot of mental strength and a strong degree of determination, more so than being an employee. I haven't noticed any deterioration. In fact, I'd say it has made him an even stronger person who seems to be satisfied with what he does.

**Social health:** This has been positive. As an entrepreneur, he gets to interact with even more people which seems positive for his social health.

- Is Fabian stressed sometimes, and if so, would you describe the stress as eustress (positive stress) or distress (negative stress)?

Rather eustress. He doesn't show distress, and I believe he likes to deal with it by himself.

- Do you consider Fabian a health-conscious individual? Do you consider Fabian healthy?

More recently, yes. Before that, rather not. Fabian is becoming more and more healthy, but there is still room for improvement.

- How many hours does Fabian work per week? (estimate)

Difficult to say. 45-50 hours probably.

- Do you think Fabian has found the right balance between work and “not work“?

Yes.

## **Brother Fabian**

- How long have you known Fabian?

All my life, he's my older brother.

- How would you describe the personality of Fabian?

Very active, smart, driven, likes to be in charge.

- How do you define health?

Healthy nutrition, sport, motion plus psychological well-being.

- What do you understand under physical, mental and social health?

**Physical health:** sport and motion

**Mental health:** to feel good, to love oneself, work-life balance, to not overwork

**Social health:** never heard this, maybe how healthy our society is? Or maybe also whether one person has a healthy environment, good networks, relationships etc.

- Do you think Fabian's lifestyle has changed ever since he became an entrepreneur? If so, how?

He has become more flexible, and his networks have expanded drastically. He has kicked off a lot of projects in the past years. His lifestyle is subordinate to his job: As an example, he eats whenever he has time, usually not very healthy food. He has always been very active, so not a lot has changed.

- In what ways do you think Fabian's job as an entrepreneur (as opposed to an employee) impacts his physical, mental & social health?

**Physical health:** It is more difficult to take care of your physical health when you're an entrepreneur. As an employee, there is a clear structure from Monday to Friday, you don't have this structure as an entrepreneur. Fabian also works on the weekend, and health is not a priority as long as "everything works". Fabian used to be quite athletic, then less during his college times and now he doesn't do any sports at all.

**Mental health:** Probably better. Passionate entrepreneurs are happier, they can fulfill themselves.

**Social health:** Is easier to maintain. Through many projects, the social network will expand drastically, Fabian knows a lot of people now. However, at the same time, he has less time for his family and his previous friends.

- Is Fabian stressed sometimes, and if so, would you describe the stress as eustress (positive stress) or distress (negative stress)?

Always full of energy, always very well informed, positive stress. I have never seen him stressed in a negative way.

- Do you consider Fabian a health-conscious individual? Do you consider Fabian healthy?

On a scale from 1 to 10, I would give him a 5 or a 6. He used to completely neglect his physical health but things are getting better now. Ever since that YouTube video, he started to cook himself and eat a lot of vegetables... so he's working on becoming more healthy and health-conscious.

- How many hours does Fabian work per week? (estimate)

60h per week including weekends and evenings

- Do you think Fabian has found the right balance between work and "not work"?

Yes, but he still has a coordination problem. Health is not completely integrated in his daily life yet. He should fix appointments for sport in his agenda, and he should move more instead of sitting in front of his computer all day. He has to actively fight his excess weight.

## **Gabriel**

### Personal Background

- Age: 28
- Educational Background:

B.A. in Business Administration, M.A. in Strategy & International Management

- (Prior) Work Experience:

1 year volunteer work in Hungary, part-time jobs in consulting (1 year and 5 months in total), three internships (4 months in Germany, 6 months in China, another 3 months in Germany)

- Relationship Status: married

### Entrepreneurial Experience

- How would you describe your own personality?

Ambitious, international, love freedom.

- Why are you an entrepreneur?

Self-fulfillment. You can do what you want to do, whenever you want to do it. To me, the most important thing is to have freedom and autonomy. I want to be in control of my life and my time.

- When did you start your first company? Why?

In the months leading to the completion of my Master's Degree, I started to actively look for things I could be doing next. I went to several recruiting events, took part in consulting weekends and also attended a few start-up events.

It was at one of those start-up events where I met my current business partner. We got along great from the beginning, and very quickly decided to start our own company.

- How many companies have you started/do you currently manage?

In the past three years, we have set up four companies with two business concepts. For each business concept, there is a company in Germany and a separate one in Switzerland.

We gave up one business concept (online restaurant booking) after six months. We are now managing two companies with the same business concept, an online store for customized shirts.



- How many employees/business partners do you have?

I have one business partner, one full-time employee, four part-time employees and one intern supporting us.

- Is your business backed by investors, or did you finance it yourself?

Our business is financed through crowd-funding, and we also have institutional support from an University in Germany as well as a Chamber of Commerce.

- Annual profit?

None. We had revenues of CHF 100 000 last year but unfortunately no profit so far.

### Entrepreneurship & Health

- How do you define health?

Your body is fit enough to support all your mental activities. No physical or mental restrictions.

- What do you understand under physical, mental & social health?

**Physical health:** fit, no limitations, physical challenges can be mastered without any problems

**Mental health:** to be able to add up 1+1, not to run away from reality, to be rational

**Social health:** never heard this; maybe to be able to have friends, to be integrated into a social ecosystem, to be balanced, to be able to communicate with other people?

- How has your lifestyle changed ever since you became an entrepreneur?

For me, the jump into entrepreneurship was at the same time a jump away from being a student. Suddenly, you have to get up in the morning. Why do students get up at 6pm? Because Migros closes at 6.30pm. As a student, there are busy periods before exams but besides those, everything is quite relaxed. You have your routine, you have a lot of time for sports, and you can party a lot.

These times are definitely over. Suddenly, you have two companies. You have employees, there is a lot of pressure and you have to deliver results... fast. It's not just a pretty business plan anymore, this is real. Raising funds, creating a website, writing and implementing marketing strategies, generating a cash flow etc. etc. It was a huge adjustment for me.

I slept very little in the beginning. The time I spend in front of the computer is fivefold, I probably work 14h in front of a screen every day. Now I barely go anywhere; sometimes, when I go to a social event such as my grandmother's birthday last week, I cannot follow conversations anymore because my thoughts automatically wander back to the business. I'm not present anywhere else, I always think about the company... and I have to. If I don't think about it, who else will?

- How important is your health to you/as a resource for your business?

I have gained 5-7kg ever since I have become an entrepreneur. I try to fight it as physical health is very important to me, I don't want to neglect it. I still play water polo on a regular basis but it doesn't seem to be enough to balance all the time I spend sitting. I really want to get my body back.

For my company, my mental health is important but my physical health links to my mental health, there is an interdependence between both. In order to be efficient, a certain degree of physical health is a prerequisite.

- Is health a topic that is discussed at your work (with investors, co-founders, employees)?

Not officially. My business partner and I have become friends in the meanwhile, so we talk about things such as "I'm gonna go run for an hour, I need to clear my mind"... but not as part of work.

- In what ways do you think your job as an entrepreneur (as opposed to an employee) impacts your physical, mental & social health?

**Physical health:** In theory, I am in control of my time so it is my decision if I want to focus on my health or not. In practice, business comes first, so I cannot work out 5x a week because I will be missing too much work time that way. Employees are able to plan better, they can work out every day but they cannot go to the gym at 2pm. I can go to the gym at 2pm but I don't, because I have a company to run. So even though you are free, the freedom is different. It's a question of setting priorities, everybody has the same amount of time available.

**Mental health:** My job requires 80-90% of my mental resources, there is not much left at the end of the day. I have to be present at all times, take charge of my employees and avoid making mistakes... if something doesn't go well, I'm constantly asking myself "what could I have done better/different?". I can always find mistakes, I can always find things I need to improve on. Of course, depending on your job, you also have a lot of pressure such as in banking or consulting; e.g. in consulting, it's "up or out". However, there are always periods where you can relax and unwind, be it on weekends or inbetween projects. As an entrepreneur, you can never completely "unplug".

Also, our opportunity costs are very high. For the longest time, we worked without a salary.

**Social health:** I didn't handle my social health well. In Switzerland, I am completely alone, we communicate over phone and skype. There are not too many interactions. During the week, it is simply impossible for me to meet people as I don't have time. I try to see friends and family on evenings and during the weekend, though.

- Are you stressed sometimes, and if so, would you describe the stress as eustress (positive stress) or distress (negative stress)?

Very stressed. In the beginning, it was more eustress, it is now mostly distress. I think we were quite naive in the beginning; we had a lot of ideas and wanted to realize all of them. I never had a lot of social support, not even from the family.

- Do you actively cope with threats to your health (e.g. stress)? If so, how?

I am probably too reactive when it comes to stress, I should do more to prevent it. When I'm stressed, I usually take a few minutes to calm down, to identify the stress factors and to break down my work into smaller tasks that are more manageable.

In the evenings, I like to sit on the sofa and read, preferably something that isn't too demanding and doesn't have anything to do with work. Sometimes, I like to be alone on the terrace. Sometimes, I drink a glass of whiskey. I find watching soccer especially relaxing, I don't have to think anything and can completely unwind for two hours.

- How many hours do you work per week?

70h+

- What are your recommendations to fellow entrepreneurs?

It is important to keep all your lifestrings consisting of relationships, family, friends and career in balance. You can work very hard over a certain time period, but you also have to be able to say "no" once in a while to your company.

Don't put your social relationships or your mental health at risk for the sake of business.

## **Business Partner Gabriel**

- How long have you been working with Gabriel? How long have you known Gabriel?

I have known him for three years, we've been working together for 2.5 years.

- How would you describe the personality of Gabriel?

Hard-working, smart, business savvy, driven.

- How do you define health?

Well-being, absence of physical or mental limitations. Very often, you don't appreciate your health until something isn't okay. Physical integrity.

- What do you understand under physical, mental and social health?

**Physical health:** no restrictions, fit, resilient, strong

**Mental health:** optimism, zest for life

**Social health:** never heard this; maybe not to be moody, to be able to deal with other people in a good way?

- Is health a topic that is addressed at work?

Yes, because we have become friends in the meanwhile, not because we discuss it as part of our business strategy. We talk about things such as "I have to go running again", resolutions or about things that bother us on a personal level.

- Do you think Gabriel's lifestyle has changed ever since he became an entrepreneur? If so, how?

I think the pressure is different. When you're a student, you're stressed during exams but it's only temporary. As an entrepreneur, the stress is constant and you're always doing 20-30 things at the same time. It's a completely different type of stress.

- In what ways do you think Gabriel's job as an entrepreneur (as opposed to an employee) impacts his physical, mental & social health?

**Physical health:** In theory, we have more freedom and can e.g. go running in the afternoon, if we want it. In practice, this just doesn't happen. Work is priority... and the other people in your company are also working, you can't leave them.

**Mental health:** Probably more difficult to maintain. You never really have any time "off"; there are always your worries and your fear to fail. There is a lot of pressure, and nobody can take it off you. At the same time, you're your own boss,

and you can do what you want. You're happier and feel more fulfilled. For me, the positive sides of entrepreneurship still outweigh the negative aspects.

**Social health:** Difficult, depends on what you compare it with (consulting, banking). You can't spend as much time as you want to with your friends. There is too much work, and the priorities change.

- Is Gabriel stressed sometimes, and if so, would you describe the stress as eustress (positive stress) or distress (negative stress)?

Yes, he is very stressed, and I would describe it as distress. He is sometimes moody and almost appears "defeated". There is a lot of pressure, we are all afraid of failure.

- Do you consider Gabriel a health-conscious individual? Do you consider Gabriel healthy?

Yes to both. He plays water polo twice a week, goes jogging, watches what he's eating...

- How many hours does Gabriel work per week? (estimate)

70h

- Do you think Gabriel has found the right balance between work and "not work"?

No, there is too much work. Gabriel knows that he is not spending enough time with other people, but the pressure is too big, there is no other way right now.

## **Friend Gabriel**

- How long have you known Gabriel?

Over 20 years, we used to play water polo together.

- How would you describe the personality of Gabriel?

Very smart, driven, versatile, hard-working, a "good guy".

- How do you define health?

Whether I feel good, without restrictions.

- What do you understand under physical, mental and social health?

**Physical health:** to be fit

**Mental health:** to feel good, to be able to perform, to be happy with oneself, to have a positive attitude

**Social health:** a good social environment, intact contacts

- Do you think Gabriel's lifestyle has changed ever since he became an entrepreneur? If so, how?

There is less structure, and he has to plan everything far in advance. There are a lot of irregular cycles at work that affect his life such as his sleeping patterns, eating times etc. There is more responsibility, more financial pressure and more coordination. The quality of life changes as well as the priorities.

- In what ways do you think Gabriel's job as an entrepreneur (as opposed to an employee) impacts his physical, mental & social health?

**Physical health:** Worse. Less time, priorities change, some things cannot be planned. Your own interests follow the needs of the business.

**Mental health:** Much better. More freedom, more control.

**Social health:** Other priorities, social contacts are neglected. Not because you want to but because it naturally happens.

- Is Gabriel stressed sometimes, and if so, would you describe the stress as eustress (positive stress) or distress (negative stress)?

I would say 70% positive, 30% negative.

- Do you consider Gabriel a health-conscious individual? Do you consider Gabriel healthy?

Both. He takes care of himself, does sports and eats healthy food. We also talk on a regular basis about health topics.

- How many hours does Gabriel work per week? (estimate)

70-90h.

- Do you think Gabriel has found the right balance between work and “not work“?

It's getting better. He didn't have a social life at all before, it's getting better.

## **Employee Gabriel**

- How long have you been working with Gabriel? How long have you known Gabriel?

I have been working with him for 8 months, I have also known him since then.

- How would you describe the personality of Gabriel?

A good leader, hard-working, responsible, ambitious, very demanding on himself.

- How do you define health?

To be physically and mentally fit, to be able to do what you want to do. To be able to perform without restrictions.

- What do you understand under physical, mental and social health?

**Physical health:** nothing hurts

**Mental health:** inner balance, personal and business environment match

**Social health:** to be able to see and take care of one's family and friends, to be able to be there for them

- Is health a topic that is addressed at work?

No.

- Do you think Gabriel's lifestyle has changed ever since he became an entrepreneur? If so, how?

Didn't know him when he wasn't an entrepreneur.

- In what ways do you think Gabriel's job as an entrepreneur (as opposed to an employee) impacts his physical, mental & social health?

**Physical health:** Is much harder to maintain as the entrepreneur is always under pressure. Work has to be done, other things (including health) are not a priority.

**Mental health:** Difficult. A lot of responsibility, a lot of pressure. As an entrepreneur, you define yourself much more through your business than as an employee.

**Social health:** Very difficult. A lot of energy and time goes into your business, you don't really have the energy for other things.



- Is Gabriel stressed sometimes, and if so, would you describe the stress as eustress (positive stress) or distress (negative stress)?

I would say it's 50:50, he is definitely very stressed.

- Do you consider Gabriel a health-conscious individual? Do you consider Gabriel healthy?

Health-conscious yes, he does sports and makes sure he eats the right things etc.  
Healthy no.

- How many hours does Gabriel work per week? (estimate)

60+h

- Do you think Gabriel has found the right balance between work and "not work"?

He knows that there has to be a balance but he is not balanced. He feels too committed to the business to say "no" once in a while. It is getting better though, it used to be more extreme in the past..

## Hugo

### Personal Background

- Age: 27
- Educational Background:

Commercial Apprenticeship, advanced training in IT

- (Prior) Work Experience:

Employee at a credit management company (2 years), internship Google (3 months), private banking (3 years)

- Relationship Status: in a relationship

### Entrepreneurial Experience

- How would you describe your own personality?

International, ambitious, like to help people.

- Why are you an entrepreneur?

I didn't want to be a number and a marionette any longer. The culture at the bank where I used to work was not pleasant, there was a lot of pressure, and a lot of colleagues around me were burnt-out. I couldn't find any fulfillment there, I wanted to be free.

- When did you start your first company? Why?

Three years ago, wanted to do my own thing.

- How many companies have you started/do you currently manage?

Just this one.

- How many employees/business partners do you have?

1 business partner; 1 full-time & 6 part-time employees

- Is your business backed by investors, or did you finance it yourself?

Self-financed.

- Annual profit?

CHF 40 000-60 000

## Entrepreneurship & Health

- How do you define health?

No suffering, no pain. To feel good.

- What do you understand under physical, mental & social health?

**Physical health:** no physical problems

**Mental health:** no pressure, and no worries

**Social health:** to have healthy, social contacts. I had to distance myself from my previous friends, they were not good for me, and we didn't share the same values.

- How has your lifestyle changed ever since you became an entrepreneur?

I used to be sick more often, ever since I've become an entrepreneur three years ago, I've been sick once. I have a lot more motivation, I feel like there have only been positive changes. There was a lot of external pressure at the bank, their expectations were simply not realistic. I didn't feel comfortable, I felt observed, and I didn't like my team. I think all these negative impacts on my mental health back then affected my physical health: I was sick a lot, I had headaches all the time, and I felt weak. I was making a lot of money and to compensate my miserable time at work, I partied a lot. There was a lot of alcohol and little sleep.

As an entrepreneur, I have a lot of freedom and can do what I want, when I want it. I can go on vacations more often, and I don't need to ask somebody else if I'm allowed to go on vacation. That's why I fly to Dubai a lot, that's where I can relax the best. I don't party anymore, and I rarely drink alcohol. I don't need it anymore.

At the same time, I have a 24h job now. As our business is global, I often talk to people in Singapore in the middle of the night... but that's part of the concierge service.

- How important is your health to you/as a resource for your business?

It is quite important. I'm the head of the business, so I have to be fit. I want to be part of everything, which is also a problem at times.

- Is health a topic that is discussed at your work (with investors, co-founders, employees)?

Never.

- In what ways do you think your job as an entrepreneur (as opposed to an employee) impacts your physical, mental & social health?

**Physical health:** Sometimes I have back pain because I sit so much; however, generally speaking, I would say my physical health has improved.

**Mental health:** I am much more motivated, I can sleep better and I feel better because I can help other people. In my previous job, I didn't think all the things I was forced to do were ethically speaking correct... but I had to do them. I don't have these issues anymore. Both of our dogs are at our office, so I can simply leave the office for a one hour walk during the day, it's wonderful! Also, I like how I can change my priorities whenever I have to. As an example, my father was recently at the hospital for a longer period, and I was able to visit him every day from 3pm to 8pm. I was available via email but not via phone, and everything worked out fine. I wouldn't be able to do this as an employee.

However, at the same time, sometimes I have existential fears. I didn't have them before, but I guess they're linked to the responsibilities of being an entrepreneur... I really want to leave Switzerland and move to Dubai.

**Social health:** I find it much better. My best friends don't live in Switzerland. Now that I'm an entrepreneur, I can skype with them during the day, this was not possible at the bank, everything was blocked. Also, it's easier for me to meet up with friends in London, Dubai and Germany. I can take a few days off and combine business with pleasure, there are always things you can do in each city business-wise.

- Are you stressed sometimes, and if so, would you describe the stress as eustress (positive stress) or distress (negative stress)?

I would say 50:50. When I get requests with a deadline, it pushes me to find solutions for our clients. At the same time, there is negative stress when I don't know how things will continue for my company. When I don't know if I will get more clients, or if I can pay my staff.

- Do you actively cope with threats to your health (e.g. stress)? If so, how?

If I'm stressed, I go for a walk – alone. I listen to music. I try to relax.

- How many hours do you work per week?

12hx7days

- What are your recommendations to fellow entrepreneurs?

Try to do more sports, and try to make healthy nutrition an integral part of your lifestyle. Of course it would be more convenient to eat a hamburger on the street, but you have to be strict with yourself. Buy a dog, the dog will take away the stress. You have to go for regular walks, and you have to take care of it... it will help you unwind.

## **Business Partner Hugo**

- How long have you been working with Hugo? How long have you known Hugo?

Around one year.

- How would you describe the personality of Hugo?

Friendly, kind.

- How do you define health?

Healthy nutrition, motion, phases of relaxation.

- What do you understand under physical, mental and social health?

**Physical health:** no pain, to be fit (to be able to climb stairs etc.)

**Mental health:** to be able to remain focused, to clear one's head once in a while

**Social health:** to be able to deal with friends and business partners in an open and honest way, to have a "clean background"

- Is health a topic that is addressed at work?

Yes. We talk about what we should eat, and whether it is healthy. Sometimes we go walking with the dogs. We don't really talk with our staff about health, though.

- Do you think Hugo's lifestyle has changed ever since he became an entrepreneur?

Didn't know him back then.

- In what ways do you think Hugo's job as an entrepreneur (as opposed to an employee) impacts his physical, mental & social health?

**Physical health:** Difficult. Mental health impacts physical health but it is clearly neglected. It is possible to maintain physical health, but very difficult as an entrepreneur.

**Mental health:** More responsibilities. As an employee, a lot of things will be done for you, and companies nowadays often offer health benefits such as free gym membership, Friday home office etc. As an entrepreneur, you have to manage your own health but you have less time. Suddenly, there are a lot of roles that you have to fulfill at once.

**Social health:** More difficult as less time. Some friends are meeting for dinner but you're still at the office. It is very difficult to plan social get-togethers ahead of time as your working hours are unpredictable.

- Is Hugo stressed sometimes, and if so, would you describe the stress as eustress (positive stress) or distress (negative stress)?

There is definitely a lot of stress in the concierge business as we have a lot of bookings and a lot of short-term changes of the bookings. It's similar to being a broker: The market changes constantly, sometimes every hour, and you have to be able to react upon them. Also, there are no time limits as we play in a global market. Some requests or bookings come in the middle of the night (e.g. when it is evening in North America or morning in Asia), and you have to act immediately.

I would say it is a mix of eustress and distress, with the positive stress being more important. You are your own boss, and you have the freedom to do whatever you want to do. At the same time, there are always factors that you cannot control. Sometimes, certain things don't work out because the service provider messes up, but in the eyes of your clients, it's your fault. So you then have to apologize and explain yourself, even though you didn't do anything wrong... these moments are clearly moments of distress.

- Do you consider Hugo a health-conscious individual? Do you consider Hugo healthy?

Partially yes to both. I think he could take care of himself better sport-wise as well as nutrition-wise. He is a hedonist, he cannot refuse things that he likes to eat...

- How many hours does Hugo work per week? (estimate)

We offer our clients 24h availability, 7 days a week. Hugo never puts the phone down, never. He works 10-12h every day, also on weekends, so around 70-80h per week.

- Do you think Hugo has found the right balance between work and "not work"?

Not yet. There are many things that he still needs to learn, e.g. to put away the smartphone during meals. The problem is that these things quickly become a habit: You're always staring at your phone, because you're worried that there might be a request. However, most of the time, you're looking at things that are not important (e.g. FB), and you're not present in real life.

## Friend Hugo

- How long have you known Hugo?

15 months.

- How would you describe the personality of Hugo?

Nice guy but not a typical "entrepreneur".

- How do you define health?

To feel good, physically and mentally. Absence of pain and illnesses, no limitations.

- What do you understand under physical, mental and social health?

**Physical health:** no pain, physical well-being, no medicine

**Mental health:** to be able to lead a normal life, no mental illnesses, to feel good

**Social health:** to be able to have healthy social contacts that offer support

- Do you think Hugo's lifestyle has changed ever since he became an entrepreneur? If so, how?

Don't know, didn't know him before.

- In what ways do you think Hugo's lifestyle as an entrepreneur (as opposed to an employee) impacts his (physical, mental, social) health?

**Physical health:** no difference

**Mental health:** worse; a lot of pressure and strain, a lot of denial

**Social health:** no difference; he doesn't have a lot of friends and he's so absorbed in his relationship with his girlfriend... I don't think things would be different if he would work for a company

- Is Hugo stressed sometimes, and if so, would you describe the stress as eustress (positive stress) or distress (negative stress)?

I think his stress probably comes more from his personal life than his business. Job-wise, he hasn't had a break-through yet, so there is a lot of strain in this regard. He does not buy himself a lot of material things but he takes a lot of time for himself which is very atypical for entrepreneurs. I'm not sure whether it is procrastination or repression of problems; either way, his negative stress definitely doesn't come from working too much.

- Do you consider Hugo a health-conscious individual? Do you consider Hugo healthy?

Yes and no to both. He doesn't have physical issues per se besides sweat attacks, but he just doesn't look very healthy. He started to take 5HTP a while ago, this seems to have helped a little in the coping with stress.

I just don't think that he consciously takes care of himself. His girlfriend is vegetarian, and she forces him to eat healthy food at home... but I don't think he makes his own health a priority.

- How many hours does Hugo work per week? (estimate)

Not more than 8h a day, so 56h per week including the weekend

- Do you think Hugo has found the right balance between work and "not work"?

No. He needs to work more, or work smarter. He doesn't know how to sell himself, and he's not proactive. You cannot criticize him, if you do, he will ignore you.

In my opinion, he needs to get his priorities straight. It often feels like his girlfriend and their dogs come before everything else, this is of course not sending the right kind of message to your employees...



## **Employee Hugo**

- How long have you known Hugo?

1 year

- How would you describe the personality of Hugo?

Smart but easy to be influenced, usually by his girlfriend. Nice person, likes to help.

- How do you define health?

To take care of oneself, mentally and physically. To be balanced.

- What do you understand under physical, mental and social health?

**Physical health:** to work out, to eat healthy food, to get enough sleep/rest

**Mental health:** to feel good, mental health impacts the body

**Social health:** to have a good social environment, to feel support; impacts physical and mental health

- Is health a topic that is addressed at work?

No.

- How do you think Hugo's lifestyle as an entrepreneur (as opposed to an employee) impacts his (physical, mental, social) health?

**Physical health:** Generally speaking, things have changed a lot since he started having a girlfriend. He used to be a little chubby but she watches his health very closely, and she cooks good food for him. She works in the medical field, so she probably has a different kind of awareness than him. However, this doesn't have anything to do with being an entrepreneur. I don't think he cares about his health. He doesn't do any sports, eats irregularly (sometimes not at all) and has sweets as snacks instead of proper meals.

**Mental health:** a lot of pressure, a lot of responsibility; being an entrepreneur probably impacts Hugo's mental health in a negative way

**Social health:** no difference, he wouldn't have an active social life anyways, he likes to be at home with his girlfriend and their dogs

- Is Hugo stressed sometimes, and if so, would you describe the stress as eustress (positive stress) or distress (negative stress)?

Maybe he is, but I don't see him stressed a lot. If he is stressed, it is usually distress. I think he panics when he sees a problem, and instead of facing the problem, he runs away from it, hoping that it will solve itself. That is probably his biggest issue.

- Do you consider Hugo a health-conscious individual? Do you consider Hugo healthy?

Seems healthy but is not health-conscious.

- How many hours does Hugo work per week? (estimate)

40-50h per week.

- Do you think Hugo has found the right balance between work and "not work"?

For him, it seems to be right.

# Curriculum Vitae

## Personal Information

Family Name: Yao  
Date of Birth: 17th of April, 1985  
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First Name: Yuan  
Nationality: Swiss

## Education

September 2009-2014 University of St.Gallen (*PhD in International Business*)  
September 2008-2009 University of St.Gallen (*International Affairs & Governance, M.A.*)  
September 2003-2007 University of St.Gallen (*International Affairs, B.A.*)  
March-July 2007 Graduate Institute of International Studies (*HEI*), Geneva  
February-July 2008 Fudan University, Shanghai (*Sinology*)  
Oktober 2005-2007 University of Zürich (*Sinology*)  
1997-2003 Kantonsschule am Burggraben, Major: *Law & Economics*  
August 2000-June 2001 McCallum High School, Austin TX, USA

## Entrepreneurial Experience

March 2014- Magnolia Consulting Ltd. (*Founder & Director*)  
Jan 2014- The Gentlemen's Clinic AG  
(*Co-Founder, Member of the Board & Director*)  
February 2009- A la Carte Maps GmbH (*Co-Founder & Managing Partner*)

## Teaching Experience

August-December 2012 East China Normal University  
(*Business Professor for "Entrepreneurship"*)  
February 2003-July 2006 Bénédict, Migros Klubschule, Handelsdiplomschule  
HDS, Studienkreis (*German, English and Chinese Teacher*)

## Practical Experience

December 2010- Dr. Linde Aesthetics, Zurich  
(*Business Development/Marketing Consultant*)  
Jun 2013-December 2014 Hosting Professionals, Zurich  
(*Business Development/Marketing Consultant*)  
November 2010-2011 BLU curl yachting, Zug (*Marketing Consultant*)  
March-July 2008 Con Moto Consulting Group, Shanghai (*Project Manager*)  
March-September 2007 Babette Herbert, Málaga & Gstaad (*Personal Assistant*)  
October 06-September 07 MBA-HSG, University of St.Gallen (*Housing Assistant*)  
April 2006-July 2007 Mirella Piasini Law Office, Zürich (*Assistant*)  
February-March 2003 Berit Clinic, Niederteufen  
(*ChinaMed: Medical Assistant & Intercultural Interpreter*)