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Ever since Sim Wong Woo was a young boy, certain personality traits marked him as a potential entrepreneur. Improvising with board games and his fascination of music that began with a harmonica showed substantive prospects for independency. Furthermore, Sim was renowned for “*his tendency to color outside the lines*” and his aspirations to make a computer “sing”.

Sim believes in balance: “*you have to balance chaos with structure*” (Kiran 2004:03) which coincides with Kirby’s (2003) understanding of the main psychological characteristics of an entrepreneur. These include a risk-taking ability, need for achievement, locus of control, and a desire for autonomy, creativity, opportunism and intuition. These entrepreneurial characteristics are revealed by Sim who “*longed for a fun-filled work environment*”. (Kiran 2004:03)

As we review his approach to tasks (taking into account his failure of the Cubic CT and subsequent move to the Game Blaster), we can identify him with Kirby’s concept of an innovator (2003). He always approaches tasks from an unusual angle such as attempting to make a computer sing which is not logical, disciplined or precise.

After identifying the different types of entrepreneur, of which there are many, it can be acknowledged that Sim appears to display traits of a number of categories. With the building of the Cubic CT, Game Blaster, Sound Blaster, DVD kits and Nomad Jukebox, Sim may be viewed as a craftsman; he built his business and products from knowledge he gained from technology. He should also be considered a novice entrepreneur, since Thia was his first business.

Sim is a portfolio ideas entrepreneur who believes in continuously introducing new ideas and products, diversifying ideas and questioning his market. He displays persistence when products such as the Cubic CT don’t sell. However, he is also realistic and willing to make a calculated risk, exercising inner control to ‘pull’ effort on a product when required. Creativity dominates his technology firm that continues to experience a steady increase in growth potential. Links to both a high potential venture and a Gazelle firm (due to high investor interest and investment and high growth factors) greatly influenced revenue of \$658 million in 1994 due to sales of the Sound Blaster.

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Furthermore, Sim is a change-oriented individual who displays great visionary leadership. When Chay Kwong Soon and Ng Kai Wa left Sim, he changed the management of the company. He was determined to push forward into the future, and he identified the market as moving forward. (Kiran 2004), Consequently, Sims ventured into more diversified products such as DVDs.

Sim identifies with individuals who go through the creative problem solving process presented by Lumsdaine and Binks (2003). He observed the market, studied the problem, defined the answer, synthesised his ideas and then implemented his product at exactly the right time: *“The Sound Blaster was a success because Sim sensed what the market wanted and introduced the product at the right time”*. (Kiran 2004:04) Sim evidently followed the advice of Back Choi who recommended in 1993 that: *“In order to make decisions, individuals must have an understanding about any given situation, and hold this idea with sufficient confidence to follow the course of action it suggests”*.

Both Burns (2001) and Hisrich & Peters (2002) agree that not all personal character traits that influence learning and behaviour in entrepreneurs are born. Most of these traits evolve or are formed over time. Sim’s characteristics and patterns of behaviour include the ability to take calculated risks, such as the development of the Cubic CT and Sound Blaster – some good some not so good and locus of control. Sim believes that his own progression and the growth of his company is up to him; when his partners left it truly was a desire for autonomy. Sim takes ownership of his own decisions and values his individualism and freedom. When he visited the US to promote the Sound Blaster, he believed in himself.

Intuition plays an important part in Sim’s traits. He has the ability to sense when an idea is not going to work. For example, instead of introducing the Cubic CT to the market as he initially planned, he reverted to other products in order to make himself and his company more successful. Timmins (1999:224) believes that *“successful entrepreneurs are adaptive and resilient”*, which explains Sim’s determination to continue. Other identifiable traits that he displayed, especially during his venture to the US, include: a sense of value, self-confidence, independence, courage, persistence, reliability and tenaciousness. All of these traits are identified by Lumsdaine and Binks as key attributes of an entrepreneur. The author

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believes that Sim's intuition and lateral thinking spurred him to introduce the Sound Blaster to the US market and refuse to give up on it. This is also a result of the "dominant" right side of his brain¹ (controlling emotional, intuitive and spatial functions) clearly focusing on his entrepreneurial opportunities that were "*at the heart of the creative process*" (Kirby 2003:139).

Moreover, it is necessary to mention Sim's culture and how this affects his entrepreneurial behaviour. It also affects his ability to interact and sell his products to people of other cultures such as the United States where he launched the Sound Blaster. Clear differences exist between the United States and Asia through Hofstede's four dimensions: Individualism vs Collectivism, Power Distance and Uncertainty Avoidance. This means that greater ambiguity, personal choice and preference for flexibility and the development of analytical skills are all associated to the character traits of entrepreneurs. Consequently, these traits are believed to have benefited Sim when he travelled to America to set up the subsidiary and introduce the Sound Blaster to the American market.

¹ Refers to the left, right brain with Kirby (2004)