

## Chapter 1

# What is a Hunter?

**SINCE THE DAWN OF TIME**, hunters have provided for others. As soon as humans learned how to use a sharp stick, hunting delivered the protein that made them smarter and stronger. Every advance in society, from basic shelter to written language, was first possible because a hunter provided the nourishment that allowed others to organize, and eventually to farm.

At first, every man and woman had to hunt for his or her own survival. The emergence of the Hunter, the person in a tribe who specialized in tracking and killing enough game to feed others, defined a critical shift in human development. Hunters had to be focused, pursuing their goals in spite of weather or fatigue. They were creative. As the game learned to be more wary, the Hunter needed to think up new techniques. They were accountable. Hunters knew that what they did meant the survival and prosperity of many others who could not hunt.

### Hunting vs. Farming

Entrepreneurs are the hunters of the 21st century. There are 26 million small businesses (those with fewer than 500 employees) in the United States. Of those, about 9 million have more than one employee. Those 9 million small business owners provide over 60%, and by some government estimates as much as 75%, of all the new job creation in America. They meet payroll for four out of every ten jobs in the nation. That means 3% of the population is delivering the means to work, eat, and play to a huge portion of the wage earners in the largest economy in the world. They are the hunters.

Most books about running a small business ignore this reality. They tell hunters how to be farmers. Hundreds of “management experts” tell you that you are doing it incorrectly. They say that you need to have more systems, more processes, and more management. They tell you to rein in your inspiration and apply analysis to your instincts. They teach that the way to business success is for a hunter to become a farmer.

They are wrong.

Business authors can easily dissect a big corporation where there are hundreds or thousands of well-documented data points. Multiple employees are subjected to the same motivational techniques, receive similar performance evaluations, or have

reward systems designed to reach nearly identical goals. That makes large organizations measurable and renders plenty of material about what works and what doesn't.

On the other hand, an author can't invest his time in a book about a rapidly growing small company, only to stop halfway through with an ending that says, "Then the key salesman quit and sales went downhill from there." As a result, business authors typically write about businesses where information is easily collected, and their conclusions are supported by quantifiable evidence.

There is a problem with using big business models to develop management lessons for small businesses. The success of a small company is determined by how well it satisfies its owners' needs. Successful entrepreneurial businesses are not built by imitating the processes used to manage thousands of people, or by learning how to effectively utilize millions of dollars in resources. Hunters build them.

Managing a large organization is farming. Hunters don't farm; they hunt. They may make farming possible, but they aren't farmers themselves. That is why entrepreneurs buy millions of books on business, and then fail to implement much of the advice in them. It isn't that "business farming" is wrong; management techniques, systems, policies and procedures just aren't what a *hunter* should be doing to build a successful business.

Entrepreneurs create; they don't manage. They build with ideas, not with policy manuals. They solve problems as they arise, because planning will inevitably fail to anticipate the next problem. They make money by being faster and smarter than the forces arrayed against them (and there are many). They don't succeed by carefully charting long-term incremental improvements. That is the province of large corporations.