

International  
Small Business  
Journal



## CALL FOR PAPERS

### **SPECIAL ISSUE: *In Search of the Next Growth Episode: How Firms Catalyse and Sustain Periods of High Growth***

#### **Guest Editors:**

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#### **Introduction Background and Focus of the Special Issue:**

This special issue invites scholars to submit high quality submissions advancing theoretical knowledge and empirical evidence on the mechanisms and processes that catalyse and sustain growth in small organisations. Few small firms grow and even fewer, demonstrate 'high growth', which in itself is subject to variable and contested definitions. One such example being that a high growth firm has at least 10 employees, and achieves 20% growth on average per annum, for a minimum period of three years.

It is noted however, that for most firms, growth is volatile and occurs in episodes; accordingly, predicting how and when a firm will grow is challenging with a complex relationship between firm-level capabilities, growth outcomes and the performance of an economy. Alternative perspectives have developed regarding how small firms achieve growth including 'random growth', 'punctuated growth' and 'strategic growth'. There is also a need to understand how firms may rebound from and display resiliency towards critical socio-economic events (e.g., the coronavirus pandemic). These warrant greater attention with this Special Issue aiming to contribute to these analyses.

## Themes to be Addressed

This Special Issue seeks to encourage scholars to continue the shift from 'how much' to 'how' firms grow by calling for a broad palette of contexts and analyses which might span industry context through to cultural expectations. Contemporary interest in high growth firms remains central, while language begins to shift to 'scale-ups' and 'scaling' processes. The challenges of scaling organisations, though frequently explored in policy and practice, remain under researched. This potentially opens new avenues of opportunity as scholars investigate the specific limits of firm growth, whether they be managerial or reliant on other resources and capacities within and outside the firm.

## Example Questions

The following are indicative but not an exhaustive list of questions that scholars could use to inform their research on this important topic, focusing on how, where and when growth occurs.

- How should we define 'growth', 'scaling' and how they differ?
- What are the orientations, mechanisms and strategies that lead a firm to catalyse and sustain growth episodes?
- How can we deal with the duality of randomness and strategy to explain firm growth?
- How do we take account of the wide array of factors that influence growth?
- How do we account for the diversity in trajectories firms take as they grow?
- How do entrepreneurs' cognitive processes shape growth including the psychological dimension (e.g., the influence and interplay of confidence and failure) and the process by which managers help firms develop dynamic capabilities?
- How do entrepreneurs undertake resource orchestration to access and configure resources to achieve growth?
- How do support infrastructures and ecosystems enable and facilitate growth?
- How do firms recover and renew growth trajectories post socio-economic crisis?

We particularly encourage approaches that deliver greater explanatory power including, yet not limited to, longitudinal, qualitative, ethnographic, contextually sensitive and in-depth explorations of the micro processes of growth.

The deadline for submission of papers is 28 February 2021. The journal submission site will be open for submissions from 8 February 2021. The Special Issue is scheduled to be published in

June 2022. Papers must be original and comply with ISBJ submission guidelines. Please refer <http://isb.sagepub.com/> for submission guidelines and a link to the on-line submission system. In the online system please ensure you submit your paper within Manuscript Type: 'Special Issue: In Search of the Next Growth Episode'.

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