

# Journal of International Entrepreneurship

## Call for Papers for a Special Issue on the Internationalization of Family Firms (FSMEs)

**Deadline for submissions: June 7th, 2012**  
**Publication of the Special Issue: Early 2013**

### Guest Editors:

**Tanja Kontinen** and **Arto Ojala**, Jyväskylä University School of Business and Economics, Finland

Family firms form the majority of all firms around the world: about 85% of all the firms in the EU and USA (IFERA, 2003) and an even a greater proportion in the developing countries are family-owned. The family is the original economic unit: all other economic organizations are derived from it (Schulze & Gedajlovic, 2010). As recently as the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, all businesses were family-owned: the presence of the family in the business was taken for granted. Hence, there was no need to label a business as a family business. The world has changed dramatically since those times, not least because of globalization, but family firms are still of great importance to any economy.

Management researchers are particularly positive about family governance (Schulze & Gedajlovic, 2010). The unification of ownership and management enables the CEO to make opportunistic investments and rely on intuition (Gedajlovic et al., 2004). Hence, family firms have the potential to adapt to changing environments, launch products and enter markets that investor-controlled or managerially-led firms are unable to address (Dyer & Whetten, 2006). In adverse economic conditions, family firms have been found to sustain more profitable businesses than firms with other ownership structures (Sirmon & Hitt, 2003).

So far, scholars in international entrepreneurship, international business and family business have studied the internationalization of family-owned firms to only a limited extent (Kontinen & Ojala, 2010). Recently, however, there has been a call for international entrepreneurship research to expand its coverage beyond early and rapidly internationalizing firms (Dimitratos & Jones, 2005; Young et al., 2003). Research on the internationalization processes of family-owned firms is capable of responding to this need.

The internationalization of family firms is commonly characterized as slow and avoiding risk (Graves & Thomas, 2008; Kontinen & Ojala, 2010). In a similar way to internationalization among international new ventures (Oviatt & McDougall, 1994), family-owned firms generally internationalize with limited resources (Gallo & Pont, 1996). Based on existing studies on family firm internationalization, it appears that the internationalization of family firms mainly follows a stepwise process, and hence, that the Uppsala model of internationalization is applicable (Claver et al., 2008; Graves & Thomas, 2008). However, some family firms may internationalize rapidly to several different countries, especially after a generational change (Graves & Thomas, 2008), becoming "born-again global" firms. Also "born global" family firms have been discovered (Kontinen, in press).

## Research topics:

- Internationalization pathways of family firms
- Foreign market entry of family firms
- Networks configurations in the internationalization family and non-family firms
- Born global features of family firms
- International opportunity recognition and opportunity development of family firms
- Comparative studies between the internationalization of family and non-family firms
- Entrepreneurial orientation in the internationalization of family firms
- The effect of generational change on the internationalization of family firms
- Market and entry mode selection of family firms
- The role of "family capital" as social capital on internationalization of family firms
- The differential impact of family governance structure in family firms

Authors are not limited to the above topics. Both conceptual and empirical papers are welcome.

## Guidelines for submissions:

- All papers will be subjected to double blind review
- Author guidelines are available at: <http://www.springer.com> =>Instructions for Authors
- Papers should be submitted via the online manuscript system (select the correct special issue from the drop-down menu during submission)
- For more information, contact Tanja Kontinen ([tanja.kontinen@jyu.fi](mailto:tanja.kontinen@jyu.fi)) or Arto Ojala ([arto.k.ojala@jyu.fi](mailto:arto.k.ojala@jyu.fi))

## References:

- Claver, E., Rienda, L. & Quer, D. 2008. Family firms' risk perception: Empirical evidence on the internationalization process. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development* 15 (3), 457-471.
- Dimitratos, P. & Jones, M.V. 2005. Future directions for international entrepreneurship research. *International Business Review* 14 (2), 119-128.
- Gallo, M.A. & Pont, C.G. 1996. Important factors in family business internationalization. *Family Business Review* 9 (1), 45-59.
- Gedajlovic, E., Lubatkin, M.H. & Schulze, W.S. 2004. Crossing the threshold from founder management to professional management: a governance perspective. *Journal of Management Studies* 41, 899-912.
- Graves, C. & Thomas, J. 2008. Determinants of the internationalization pathways of family firms: An examination of family influence. *Family Business Review* 21 (2), 151-167.
- IFERA 2003. Family Businesses Dominate. *Family Business Review* 16 (4), 235-240.
- Kontinen, T. in press. Biohit: a global, family-owned company embarking on a new phase. *Entrepreneurship Theory & Practice*.
- Kontinen, T. & Ojala, A. 2010. The Internationalization of Family Businesses: A Review of Extant Research. *Journal of Family Business Strategy* 1 (2), 97-107.
- Oviatt, B.M. & McDougall, P.P. 1994. Toward a theory of international new ventures. *Journal of International Business Studies* 25 (1), 45-64.
- Schulze, W.S. & Gedajlovic, E.R. 2010. Whither Family Business. *Journal of Management Studies* 47 (2), 191-204.
- Sirmon, D.G. & Hitt, M.A. 2003. Managing resources: Linking unique resources, management, and wealth creation in family firms. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice* 27 (4), 339-358.
- Young, S., Dimitratos, P. & Dana, L-L. 2003. International Entrepreneurship Research: What Scope for International Business Theories? *Journal of International Entrepreneurship* 1 (1), 31-42.