UNIVERSITEIT GENT

FACULTY OF **ECONOMICS**
AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
Department of **Management, Innovation and Entrepreneurship**

March 30, 2012

Dear Sir or Madam,

With this letter I would like to apply for the NBER Entrepreneurship Research Boot Camp to be held on July 18-21, 2012 in Cambridge, Massachusetts, US.

I learned about the Boot Camp from the Entrepreneurship Research and Policy Network (ERPN) newsletter and the workshop got my immediate attention. The opportunity to broaden my research knowledge, the possibility to meet interesting people in the entrepreneurial field and the chance to get an intensive learning practice do add a lot of value to both my professional as well as my personal experience.

My PhD started in October 2010 and I am granted a four-year scholarship from Ghent University. I am very well assisted by Prof. Dr. Mirjam Knockaert, who also wrote my recommendation letter.

During my first year and a half as a doctoral student, I followed a number of statistical courses and several seminars in transferable skills, next to attending the Babson College Entrepreneurship Research Conference and the Eden doctoral seminar on Corporate Governance, organized by EIASM. These practices helped me to further develop my ability to process a lot of new information, which will be required in the NBER Boot Camp.

Enclosed, you can find my curriculum vitae and the two-page essay, next to the recommendation letter.

Sincerely yours,
Elien Vandenbroucke

Elien Vandenbroucke

Ghent University
Department of Management, Innovation and Entrepreneurship
Tweekerkenstraat 2
9000 Ghent, Belgium

+32 9 264 35 37

elien.vandenbroucke@ugent.be

CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONALIA

Name	Vandenbroucke
First Name	Elien
Address	Koning Albert I Laan 51
	8370 Blankenberge
Country	Belgium
Mobile	+32 494 04 85 91
E-mail	elien.vandenbroucke@ugent.be

Education

2008-2010	Ghent University – Master in Applied Economics: Business Engineering
	specialization: Operations Management (*Cum laude*)
	master thesis: Project follow-up through Earned Value Management: a case study (*Magna cum laude*)
2005-2008	Ghent University – Bachelor in Applied Economics: Business Engineering
1999-2005	High school, Abbey of Zevenkerken, Bruges – Latin-Mathematics

Additional training

Sep. 2011 – Jan. 2012	cvo Kisp Ghent – evening school
	Advanced photography course digital reflex camera *(Magna Cum Laude)*
Feb. 2011 – Jun. 2012	cvo Kisp Mariakerke – evening school
	Photography course digital reflex camera *(Magna Cum Laude)*

Work experience

2010-current	Ghent University – Doctoral Research on boards in high tech start-ups
	PhD subject: *Investigating the determinants of the contribution of external board members in bridging the resource dependencies and liabilities high-tech start-ups face. Examining the interaction between the top management team and the board and its impact on firm performance..*
	Supervisor: *Prof. Dr. Mirjam Knockaert (mirjam.knockaert@ugent.be)*
	Ghent University: *One of the major universities in the Dutch-speaking region of Europe. It distinguishes itself as a socially committed and pluralistic university in a broad international perspective. (Slogan: Dare to think.)*
2004-2009	summer job: animator on playground *Speelberge*, Blankenberge, Belgium
	Leadership, cooperation, social skills, team player, creativity exploration

Personal experience

2011-current Active member of Leo District 112a

Program for the youth of Lions International

Leo = leadership, experience and opportunity

- *2011-current: secretary*
- *2011-current: co-chair of the organizing team of NASOC, the largest annual event where all the Belgian Leo Clubs meet*

2005-current Active member of Leo Club Oostende

- *2006-2009: responsible for the social activities*
- *2010-current: treasurer*
- *2011-current: vice-president*

2008-2011 Youth movement: Scouts Blankenberge, Belgium

Monitor and treasurer

Leadership, social skills, team player, commitment, coordinating events, creativity, communication and meeting skills

Language knowledge

Dutch mother tongue

English very good knowledge of spoken and written English

French good knowledge of spoken and written French

German basic knowledge

Computer knowledge

Microsoft Office very good knowledge

SPSS good knowledge

R and Stata basic knowledge

Eviews and Java basic knowledge

Conferences and seminars

Mar. 2012 Brussels, Belgium – Eden doctoral seminar on Corporate Governance

Jun. 2011 Syracuse, NY – Babson College Entrepreneurship Research Conference

Dec. 2010 Oslo, Norway – Research seminar on academic and social entrepreneurship

Nov. 2010 Ghent, Belgium – EVA Europe Conference

Conference where I presented my master thesis: investigating the use of earned value management in practice.

Publications

Paper under review Second round – Science and Public Policy

"Unraveling the need for innovation support services in new technology based firms: the impact of commercialization strategy."

Side projects

Dec. 2011 – current	European Commission project, in collaboration with Idea Consult *"Exchange of good policy practices promoting the industrial uptake and deployment of Key Enabling Technologies"*
Mar. 2012	Start Academy: business plan competition for students *Member of the jury during the semi finals*

PhD Courses

Courses on statistics

Apr. 2012 (current)	Ghent University – Structural equation modeling
Mar. 2011 – Apr. 2011	Ghent University – Applied linear regression *(Summa cum laude)*
Feb. 2011	Ghent University – Causal mediation analysis *(Cum laude)*

Transferable skills

Mar. 2012	Ghent University – Workshop Networking skills *(no exam)*
Mar. 2012	Ghent University – Workshop Communication skills *(no exam)*
Feb. 2011 – May 2011	Ghent University – Advanced academic English: writing skills *(Cum laude)*
Dec. 2010	Ghent University – Workshop Quality research skills *(no exam)*

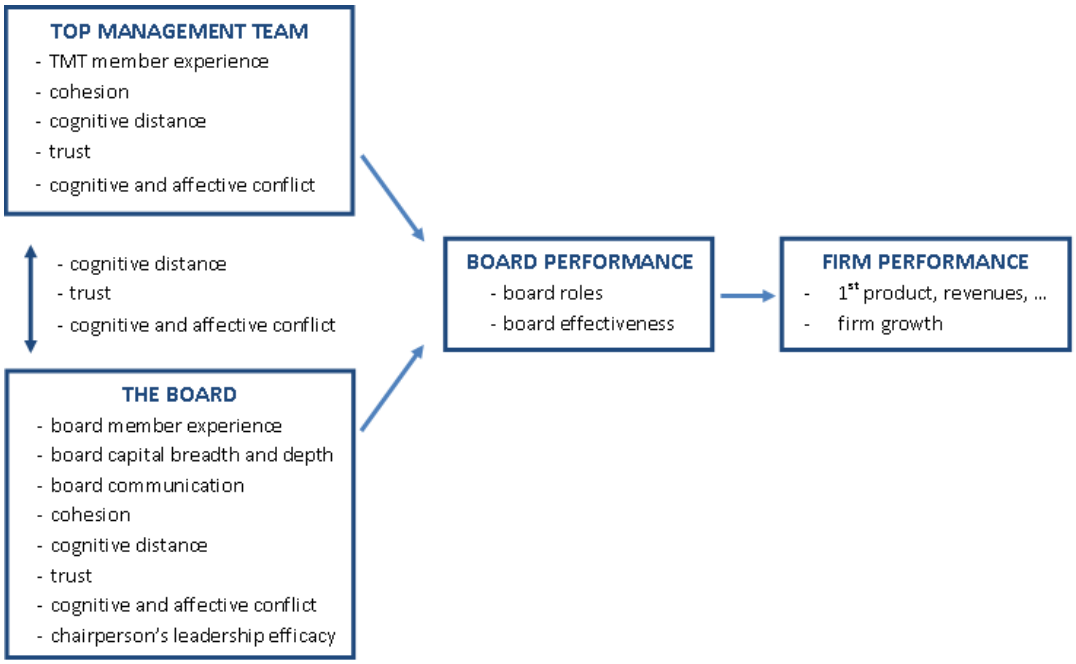
The role of outside board members in high tech start-ups.

My research topic focuses on the board of directors in early stage high tech companies. Literature on the composition of the board of directors has almost exclusively been centered on large companies. There is little known about the role of the board of directors in start-ups, especially high tech start-ups. I elaborate on the determinants of the contribution of external boards in bridging the resource dependencies and liabilities these high tech start-ups face. In addition I would also like to investigate the interaction between the board and the top management team, as both entities have mostly been looked at separately. My study will include, amongst others, items related to trust, conflict, cognitive distance and the human and social capital of the board and members. Consequently, I would like to provide further understanding on how and when board-team interaction affects high tech start-up performance. This research potentially contributes to entrepreneurship and corporate governance literatures.

Summarized, the following general research questions can be deducted:

1. How does the top management team interaction affect the board's role?
2. How does board involvement affect firm performance?

During my first PhD year, I have made a literature review and defined a research model (see below). I just finished the first draft of my questionnaire and I have started looking up the secondary data on the businesses belonging to my sample of Belgian early stage high-tech firms. I also sat together with the members of my PhD advisory committee (Deniz Ucbasaran, Herman Van Den Broeck and Yves Fassin) and I have incorporated their interesting feedback.



Research model

At this stage, I just started with the face-to-face interviews with both the CEO and the board chair, which is a positive contribution since most literature has only questioned the CEO. Additionally, the other team and board members will receive a short online survey, as it is important to question respondents with different perspectives. Moreover, this can be a basis for a comparison study.

The NBER Entrepreneurship Research Boot Camp as a great added value.

As my preliminary model is defined, it feels like the perfect moment to attend the NBER Entrepreneurship Research Boot Camp. Participating in the workshop will offer me many networking and experience sharing opportunities and it will provide me with some valuable feedback to finalize my model before the data collection really takes off. Moreover, I will gain a better insight into the entrepreneurship research field, its methods and the most important theories. This is very important in framing my research questions. I will also be able to meet interesting and prominent researchers, which may contribute to both my personal and professional development. Likewise, I look forward to get together with the other doctoral students, as I am eager to learn, result-oriented and a socially engaged person.

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to apply for the Boot Camp, as I am convinced that it will be a great added value for the further development of my doctoral research.

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March 30, 2012

Dear Sir or Madam,

As the supervisor of PhD candidate Elien Vandenbroucke, I want to recommend her for the NBER Entrepreneurship Research Boot Camp to be held in Massachusetts, US, on July 18-21, 2012.

Elien started her PhD studies at Ghent University, Belgium, in October 2010 and has been granted a four-year scholarship (Ghent University, BOF – *Special Research Fund*). She has so far developed a research model for her study on the role of boards in early stage high tech companies. She has further built a database of Belgian high tech firms, and compiled a first version of her questionnaire. The data collection – consisting of interviews with the CEO and an online survey for the other board and team members – started this Spring.

The work Elien has done up to now shows dedication to her research. First, the study requires multiple respondents per company (250 firms in total), which are not easily persuaded to participate in research (such as board members, CEOs and board chairs), and which have to be interviewed during face-to-face meetings. So far, all of the companies contacted are participating in the investigation, which indicates Elien's perseverance and hard work. She has further elaborated on contacts with researchers in Sweden (Circle, Jonas Gabrielsson) who will most probably duplicate the research in their country, providing opportunities for a more representative dataset for Europe, collaboration opportunities, and joint publications.
During her PhD studies, Elien proved to be eager to learn, committed to her research and hard-working. She has shown her excellent communication and networking skills just as good writing skills. The latter was confirmed while we wrote a first paper together, which is currently in a second review round at Science and Public Policy. While this paper is not much connected to her current research, it was initiated by Elien as she was willing to learn about the academic publication process. While she enjoyed writing this first paper from a learning perspective, she has since then only focused on her doctoral project and she is keen to submit her PhD work to the top journals.

Attending the NBER Entrepreneurship Research Boot Camp would be very useful to her to get more familiar with the leading research topics, theories and methodologies in the entrepreneurship field, just as building a network of people engaged in this research discipline. Given that she has shown determination and enthusiasm during the first year and a half of her PhD studies I believe that she will be an asset to the doctoral group during the boot camp.

Please contact me if any further information is required.
Best regards,
Mirjam

Prof. Dr. Mirjam Knockaert
Ghent University
Department of Management, Innovation and Entrepreneurship
Tweekerkenstraat 2
9000 Ghent, Belgium
mirjam.knockaert@ugent.be