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Better Entrepreneur: Bruce Wayne or Tony Stark? (Part II)

By: [Jake Kilroy](#) | December 19, 2008 9:51 AM
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Two days ago, I wrote a [blog](#) about Batman and Ironman.

Or at least the businessmen underneath the armor. Who was the better entrepreneur, Bruce Wayne or Tony Stark? Which company was better, Wayne Enterprises or Stark Industries?

I wanted to know. So I asked three of my friends to weigh in on Wednesday.

Now, I'd like to compare their perspective and insight to the reason and logic of an all-star panel of actual entrepreneurs

and financial experts.

Alone, they are presidents, founders, professors and directors, but together, they are... ***The Panel of Truth & Justice!***

The Panel of Truth & Justice:

- **Patricia Greene**, Professor in Entrepreneurship at Babson College
- **Christine Moriarty**, President of MoneyPeace, Inc.
- **Rohan Hall**, Founder/CEO of rSitez Inc. and Creator of a social networking site for Ironman
- **John "JT" Taddeo**, Creator of Zoom Suit, founder of Voodoo Tiki and Co-Owner of restaurant with Adam West
- **Michele Harris**, President of Smarti Solutions
- **Laurent Duperval**, President of Duperval Consulting, Inc.
- **Eric Papp**, President of Generation Y Results-Based Consulting LLC
- **Drew Stevens PhD**, President of Stevens Consulting Group
- **Brian Moriarty**, Associate Director for Communications at the Business Roundtable Institute for Corporate Ethics
- **Dayman [absent]**, Fighter of the Nightman, Champion of the Sun, Master of Karate and Friendship to Everyone

I'm not going wrap up anything at the end of each question, like I did in my last blog. I did not quote everyone for every question. Also, there are more gray areas considered here and more experience to consider. I made sure that each member of The Panel of Truth & Justice was quoted for 5 out of the 7 questions, because The Panel of Truth & Justice also stands for equality. And hope. And dreams. And sometimes, foreign cinema.

To the questioooooooooons!

1. Which company would you prefer to work for?

"Stark Industries. I am a tech guy and Tony has more cool stuff than Bruce. To work for an interesting and innovative company, Stark Industries seems to be the winner. To work with a stable company, Wayne Enterprises wins. It's like Google vs. Microsoft. Both good companies, but going

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at different speeds." - *Rohan*

"I'd work for Wayne Enterprises. Bruce Wayne is a hands-off CEO. He trusts his people and lets them do their job. This is shown in the way he treats Lucius Fox." - *Eric*

"In would entirely depend on what you did in the company and what you wanted from it. WayneCorp is probably the kinder, gentler company. After all, in one of the movies, the press announce that there will be profit-sharing for employees and Bruce Wayne also has the factory manager's family receive full benefits on his 'suicide,' although he is reminded that it is not company policy. The culture at Stark looks quite different with Obadiah yelling at his scientist, although to be fair, he was under a bit of strain at the moment. But, even so, seems like they would be quite different cultures. Bruce seems to respect people in general. Tony, not so much. So for where to work, I'd go with Bruce." - *Patricia*

"Based upon the end of the Ironman film, it looks like Tony might be getting into the energy business, but in the short term, the bulk of Stark International's incoming \$21 billion a year is clearly attributed to weapons sales. The same thing day in and day out can get awfully monotonous for a high impact executive. I hate cash cows. Give me start-ups, launch phases and a board so far at their wits' end that they're willing to stay out of my way and 'rubber stamp' what a sacred cow would consider unbelievable. At Wayne Enterprises, with her hundreds of sectors across a dozen industries, I'd find enough problematic, underperforming and in need of revamping companies and divisions to keep me challenged and busy for a lifetime." - *JT*

2. Who would you rather have as your business partners?

"Being partners with Bruce and his widely horizontally integrated Wayne Enterprises would offer an unprecedented degree of control and synergy that would allow business and marketing plans to be implemented swift and powerfully." - *JT*

"Bruce Wayne. With Tony Stark, it's all about Tony. I feel I would constantly be in a battle with him and I'm not sure he's open to listening. Bruce Wayne, while broody and moody, you can reason with. He'll listen and won't do the opposite, just to do the opposite. I wouldn't like him as a friend though, because emotionally, it would be too draining." - *Laurent*

"Definitely Bruce Wayne. He was a stronger, more stable personality and maintained control of his company, filled with solid, trustworthy businessmen. Tony Stark was a temperamental and instable CEO." - *Michele*

"I would prefer to work with Tony. I like his energy and drive, as well as his refusal to quit. Tony works business from the gut and I like that, as it resembles my persona." - *Drew*

"I'd partner with Bruce Wayne. I think he would be easier to get along with than Tony. Tony would be overbearing and would want everything done his way. He is a one man band. Bruce believes in partnerships. This is evident with him and Alfrd." - *Eric*

"As an inventor, Stark is much more of a rock star than Wayne. Despite, Stark's appeal, Wayne would be a better business partner. Stark has lost his company a number of times, often due to his own foibles, such as his alcoholism. Wayne is more of a wise enabler who brings out the best in others." - *Brian*

"Working with Tony, pre-life-altering experience, would always be exciting, but you know you'd take a royal amount of abuse. Partnering with Bruce would most likely be milder as he hides in his public persona. He keeps his widler side for Batman. While pursuing risk is only an entrepreneurial stereotype, Tony's risk-taking is evident in both os his personas, while Bruce saves his for Batman. On this one, I'd go with Tony." - *Patricia*

"Bruce as a partner would be fabulous. He is not just the son of an entrepreneur, he is one in his own right. He is a hard worker and a gentleman, both qualitates in a respected business partner. Also, Bruce is more appealing because he is better looking." - *Christine*

"Wayne, because the Wayne businesses seems to be more diversified in various industries and are run more smoothly. There is Wayne Tech for alien technologies, Wayne Biotech for healthcare, Wayne Foods, Wayne Shipping, Wayne Steel, Wayne Aerospace, Wayne Chemicals, etc.

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WayneCorp has been around since the 17th Century and is well-managed, so being a business partner with Bruce Wayne is not such a bad deal. Tony Stark, on the other hand, is like a mad genius. Very exciting highs and very fast lows." - *Rohan*

3. Who is the most grounded to his entrepreneurial roots?

"Neither are founders, but both are builders. Tony is the most evident inventor and prior to his conversion, explicitly true to the roots of his company. Bruce seems less about the business and more about how he uses his wealth to help. And, depending upon which Batman it is, and I'm partial to the Michael Keaton version, to be a humanitarian, hosting seriously great charity events that are then usually robbed. For this one, I'm with Bruce." - *Patricia*

"The Wayne Family Foundations are an important part of Bruce Wayne entrepreneurial activities. The soup kitchens and other organizations they fund keep them in contact with people who are disadvantaged and ill, the very people some of his company's divisions are meant to serve. This helps keep his firm grounded in a moral purpose." - *Brian*

"Tony Stark was more grounded to his entrepreneurial roots. He created his ultimate technology product through his own ingenuity from practically nothing. He created Iron Man as a product extension from defense technology he was already selling. The product created competition in the market, which forced him to make product improvements. This led to a better product, landed him government contracts and increased Stark Industries' market share." - *Michele*

"The typical entrepreneur will have his hand in everything and is constantly pushing in unknown and new directions. Tony Stark does that with the constant reinvention of his company. From munitions to consulting to other endeavors, he adapts, changes quickly and shows remarkable resiliency." - *Laurent*

"When you get right down to it, Tony is 51% Steve Wozniak and only 49% Steve Jobs, while Bruce is 100% Bill Gates, circa 1990. He takes no prisoners, and if there's even a chance you'll be a worthy competitor tomorrow, he buys you and Netscape out today. So, based upon the 'comic book' version of business, finance and entrepreneurship, most of the time written by guys that have exactly zero experience in these disciplines and don't have 20 bucks in their pocket, Bruce is far more entrepreneurial." - *JT*

4. Who had a better strategy for building up his company?

"Bruce Wayne had a better strategy for building his company. He had the vision and foresight to get involved in ground-breaking areas and new markets with significant growth opportunities, including healthcare, ecological foods and alternative fuels. He diversified his risk." - *Michele*

"Bruce, I think, exemplifies the typical strategist. He is conservative and calculating, taking the time to think issues through." - *Drew*

"Wayne spun out new subsidiaries and kept the company from getting static." - *Christine*

5. Who made the most of his resources?

"Wayne is unusual in his success with an inherited business. Most small businesses do not make it to the third generation due to the second generation's issues with everything from mismanagement to taxes. I believe Wayne made the most of his resources because he did not just feel entitled to his inheritance. He worked to make it better." - *Christine*

"Wayne was orphaned at eight years old when the Waynes were murdered, whereas Stark's parents passed away in an accident after he had already graduated summa cum laude from MIT. A rough start for both young men, but Wayne's rise is a bit more impressive, given his greater vulnerability. That he was able to not only learn to trust others, but to foster trust among divisions of a large multi-national conglomerate is very impressive." - *Brian*

"Tony is definitely the soloist. Bruce, from Alfred to Commissioner Gordon, always knew where to ask and receive resources." - *Drew*

"Both of them had great parents that handed them great companies. Wayne continued the tradition

or building and expanding the company while Stark eventually drank himself to silliness and destroyed his legacy." - *Rohan*

"Stark Industries would probably be much larger had it not gone through successive bankruptcies and resurgences. In that manner, we can say that Wayne Enterprises made better use of their human resources. Stark Industries' reoccurring problems were mainly due to human failure. Tony Stark's inability to control his drinking and surround himself with trustworthy advisors cost him dearly. CEOs and entrepreneurs are only as good as the people that surround them. CEOs need to surround themselves with people who are competent in their field, regardless of whether they agree with them or not. CEOs must respect these advisors' opinions and they must listen. Otherwise, it causes unnecessary friction, which can later cause the types of issues Stark had to deal with." - *Laurent*

6. Who is the better CEO?

"Bruce Wayne." - *Rohan*

"Bruce Wayne." - *Michele*

"I pick Tony. I admire his energy and love for innovation and forward-thinking. In our present society where items and issues appear to have a shelf life of six months or less, Tony is more malleable and quick to change. He is also proactive where Bruce is reactive." - *Drew*

"Tony Stark." - *Laurent*

"Tony Stark. He is more business savvy." - *Eric*

"I think Wayne is the better CEO." - *Brian*

"Bruce Wayne emulates the successful entrepreneur in his life by having passion for what he does, surrounding himself with good people, using technology to his advantage, having a bigger vision than the day to day business operations or just making money, having outside interests, albeit law enforcement, that gives him an outlet beyond work, and overall, he has a balanced approach to life and stays in physically good shape as well as mentally." - *Christine*

"Bruce, either himself or by some proxy, manages to do what many CEOs of huge organizations miss. He manages to keep everyone informed and educated on what is happening company wide to create a synergy between divisions resulting in systems, products and breakthroughs that would slip by many huge conglomerates. How many divisions alone allow him to be Batman? That's an unbelievable level of inter-corporate communication." - *JT*

"If my goal as to 'better CEO' was strictly financial return to stockholders, I'd go with Tony." - *Patricia*

7. Which is the better company?

"As to 'better company,' I'll define that more broadly and go with Bruce." - *Patricia*

"Wayne Enterprises." - *Rohan*

"Wayne Enterprises." - *Michele*

"Wayne Enterprises." - *Laurent*

"Wayne Enterprises. They are more diverse." - *Eric*

"Stark Industries." - *Drew*

"I would need to see the financials to best judge the overall company. That would be objective. Otherwise, I would lean toward my favorite." - *Christine*

"Wayne Enterprises is deeply diversified, even including pharmaceuticals and healthcare, which are fairly recession-proof. Wayne is better suited to weather the coming financial maelstrom. According to the list of Forbes 25 Largest Fiction Companies, Wayne Enterprises has sales in excess of \$31

billion, compared to Stark Industries' \$20.3 billion. However, Tony does it for the most part in one industry, where he appears to be an oligopoly, while Wayne Enterprises is spread across the business map like icing on a Yellow Pages. Could you even imagine the 'W' section of the Gotham Yellow Pages? Wayne, Wayne, Wayne...sheesh!" - *JT*

"Wayne Enterprises is the better company. Forbes seems to agree." - *Brian*

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