Legitimacy is relevant for entrepreneurial ventures given that these organizations need to attract resources for growth. Thus entrepreneurs commonly engage in communication activities that seek to influence audiences' judgment of their firms' legitimacy. The main purpose of this doctoral research has been to develop a rich understanding of how entrepreneurs strive to legitimate their firms. Revealed in this dissertation are the discursive strategies employed by entrepreneurs in pursuit of their organizations' legitimacy. These strategies are based on both the verbal and the visual modes of communication. Furthermore, the study shows that a tension between distinctiveness and similarity underlies the challenges faced by entrepreneurs when pursuing the legitimacy of their organizations, and sheds light on these challenges. Below are some of the insights this study reveals.

**Pursuing legitimacy implies both conformity and distinctiveness**
To be judged as plausible, organizations must follow the norms of their industry. In particular, firms should be aligned with what is considered as appropriate or credible. At the same time, and importantly, organizations must show that they are distinctive from others in the industry. This distinctiveness is essential to convince others of the value of the organization and its activities.

**Stories are especially adequate to explain the legitimacy of an organization**
Stories are especially well suited to bringing together different ideas and arguments and to giving these meaning. Moreover, a story format commonly facilitates the engagement of audiences and helps to make memorable the ideas presented. Thus a story format is particularly adequate to explain a firm's activities and to convince others of its legitimacy.

**Particular communication strategies can help claims of legitimacy**
Particular discursive strategies seem to provide an especially adequate format for claiming legitimacy. Firstly, ideas can be presented as rational, emphasizing logical arguments. Secondly, entrepreneurs can relate their arguments to values, highlighting the moral dimension of their endeavours. Thirdly, the activities of a firm can also be presented as natural. Finally, examples can be invoked to sustain the legitimacy claims. Together, these communication strategies offer different ways for entrepreneurs to organize and communicate their ideas in order to convince others of their organizations' legitimacy.

**Visual communication is relevant in legitimation**
Compared to language-based texts, visuals offer the opportunity to communicate in more implicit ways, and to influence by suggestion, for example. Also, visuals are particularly relevant to express messages that are not intended to be verbalized and to demonstrate facts in a more immediate way that in verbal language.

**Legitimacy should be pursued over time**
It is not only important for an organization to become regarded as legitimate by key audiences, it is also critical that organizations continue to be evaluated as such over time. Industries’ settings will change as time passes, and so the criteria to access legitimacy will also change. Furthermore, organizations often modify their strategies and their activities over time and so earlier claims can become misaligned with new and changed circumstances. Hence, the communication through which entrepreneurs pursue legitimacy has to be revised and adjusted over time in order to continue to be relevant and to ensure that legitimacy is maintained.