



# Young guns aim to bank on their company skills

**FRANCES STEWART**

THEY are younger and wealthier, but what really sets serial entrepreneurs apart from other business owners is that they come to grips with the skills needed to run a company rather than relying on the skills needed in a specific industry.

The findings come from the Small Business Owners' Report, compiled for the Commonwealth Bank by independent researchers Investment Trends. The report is based on a survey of 1266 people last September.

Investment Trends principal Mark Johnston said the research analysed the traits of business owners, who had run three or more companies, to identify how they differed from other business owners.

"The research found serial entrepreneurs tended to start out younger than other business owners and were considerably wealthier," he said.

The most significant difference, however, was that serial entrepreneurs were more likely to establish a business in a sector in which they did not have previous experience.

"By their third business, more serial entrepreneurs owned businesses that operated in fields that were unrelated to the field of their previous paid employment," Mr Johnston said.

The survey found 56 per cent of first-time business owners operated in a field in which they were previously employed, compared with just 30 per cent of serial entrepreneurs.

"This indicates the key experience of serial entrepreneurs increasingly focuses on successfully running a business rather than on leveraging their existing technical skills and knowledge," Mr Johnston said.

Commonwealth Bank's executive general manager for local business banking, Symon Brewis-Weston, said his contact with clients, who had owned more than three businesses, showed they understood many of the subtleties involved in running a business.

"There is a greater role in local business communities for people with this kind of experience to provide leadership to other business owners," he said.