Entrepreneurial Mindset and Skills

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1. DEFINING ENTREPRENEURSHIP

ABSTRACT

What makes someone a successful entrepreneur? It is important to have strong technology skills or expertise in a certain field, but this is not all it takes for someone to become a successful entrepreneur. Entrepreneurship doesn't necessarily involve starting your own business - you can be considered an "entrepreneur" for your actions within an existing business or organisation. It is up to you to choose and attain the level of entrepreneurship which interests you, whether it means just gaining new skills and attitudes or turning that into capital and/or business.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SPECIFIC ACTION

a). Entrepreneurship - from business to mindset

Level 1. Entrepreneurship = business venture

According to a widely-spread definition, entrepreneurship, in a narrow sense, refers to the act of creating a business to generate profit, by identifying or even creating a need and responding to it by means of the new enterprise. This way of defining the term considers it is tied to the creation, launch and the running of a new business venture, together with the risks involved, in the aim for profit. Hence, it is commonly agreed upon that entrepreneur is almost synonym to businessman.

Level 2. Entrepreneurship = transforming any opportunity into capital

The field of Economics provides us with a broader sense for the term. In this perspective, an Entrepreneur is defined by the ability to find and act upon opportunities in order to transform inventions, technology, or situations into new products and commercially viable innovations.

Early 19th century French economist Jean-Baptiste Say also provided a broad definition of entrepreneurship, saying that it "shifts economic resources out of an area of lower and into an area of higher productivity and greater yield".

Level 3. Entrepreneurship = innovation and social entrepreneurship

One step further and into the realm of the entrepreneurial mind-set, we find that entrepreneurship can also be understood as a special mind-set which allows one to innovate or even revolutionise a specific field, market or industry. According to the Austrian economist Joseph Schumpeter, of the 1930s, an entrepreneur is a person who is willing and able to convert a new idea or invention into a successful innovation. Thus, entrepreneurship beyond economics and beyond businesses is an attitude, a set of characteristics not necessarily transformed in capital.

This is where social entrepreneurship comes in as a business whose main purpose is to bring about positive social change rather than simply make a profit, according to the Macmillan dictionary. The gradual shift towards social entrepreneurship has developed recently and this is becoming the preferred business model of the younger generations who are looking to make a positive change in the world rather than simply gain profit.

There are definitions of entrepreneurship for every level and it is still argued if the term should be bound to a certain type of business or it should allow for a broader

spectrum of meanings. However, some definitions can apply to the whole spectrum, from company owner to a certain mindset, such as the one given by Professor Howard Stevenson, who teaches entrepreneurship studies at Harvard Business School, according to whom "entrepreneurship is the pursuit of opportunity beyond resources controlled". This phrase can be considered a broad-spectrum definition since it conjures key elements of entrepreneurship: being able to find opportunity where others perceive a problem; taking risks; being creative, and open-minded in finding resources beyond what is already controlled.

We can summarise our conclusion by quoting from an article in Forbes Magazine, which says 'We are all entrepreneurs. It's a mind-set, not a business model.

In the following sections, we will pin down the specific traits needed and actions one has to undertake in order to become more entrepreneurial and, eventually, an entrepreneur - whether he is creator, manager, owner or employee of a company.

b). The Business Model Canvas vs. The Business Plan

Once you have decided to launch a startup, the fastest way to get from idea to action should start with working on your very own Business Model Canvas. If, on the other hand, you are at the point where you need to get to a next stage with an already existing business, then you should look into developing a business plan, which is much more complex. For the initial stage however, the Business Model Canvas is one of the easiest and fastest ways to give you a clear view of what your business would look like and it can serve as reference throughout the process of launching a startup.

The Business Model Canvas

This *is a strategic tool*, invented by entrepreneur and author Alexander Osterwalder in 2010, which now is being used by companies all over the world. *It consists of a one page business plan, a very visual and concise outline of 9 key elements of a business venture*, which are the following (according to Enterprising Oxford):

- **1.Customer Segments:** Who are the customers? What do they think? See? Feel? Do?
- **2.Value Propositions:** What's compelling about the proposition? Why do customers buy, use?
- **3.Channels:** How are these propositions promoted, sold and delivered? Why? Is it working?
- **4.Customer Relationships:** How do you interact with the customer through their 'journey'?
- **5.Revenue Streams:** How does the business earn revenue from the value propositions? **6.Key Activities:** What uniquely strategic things does the business do to deliver its proposition?
- **7.Key Resources:** What unique strategic assets must the business have to compete? **8.Key Partnerships:** What can the company not do so it can focus on its Key Activities? **9.Cost Structure:** What are the business' major cost drivers? How are they linked to revenue?

You have to consider each of these nine building blocks from the MBC and here is a

two minute video which will help you understand and learn how to fill in the canvas.

The Business Plan

A business plan is defined as a written document describing the nature of the business, the sales and marketing strategy, and the financial background, and containing a projected profit and loss statement, according to Entrepreneur Encyclopedia. This formal document comprises all the critical aspects of a new or existing company, it serves as reference for periodical evaluation and basis for growth. It can also serve as an argumentative document in order to get investors. This is usually a complex formal statement which implies a research period and a considerable amount of time and knowledge.

As this is a formal document, there are <u>standard templates</u> you can use and, usually, these cover **7 to 10 of the following sections of content**:

- **1. Executive Summary:** the company's mission statement, along with a short description of its products and services.
- **2.** Company Description: key information about your business, goals and customers, provided value and niche.
- **3.** Market Analysis: data and statistics about the history and future of the niche, how your company will fit into it. In addition, you'll have to provide details about the consumers you'll be marketing to.
- **4. Competitive Analysis:** a clear comparison of your business to your direct and indirect competitors.
- 5. Management and Organization
- 6. Products and Services
- 7. Marketing Plan
- 8. Sales Strategy
- **9. Request for Funding** (if this plan is aimed at getting investment)
- 10. Financial Projections

Here is a <u>2 minute video</u>, from Harvard Business Review, on how to write a great business plan.

ACTION TYPE (*)

Simple actions that can be implemented immediately without requiring an investment.

CONNECTED ACTIONS

Note: The actions of this module can be implemented one by one. However, for optimum results, it is recommended to implement as many as possible.

- Action 2. Personal Characteristics
- Action 3. Interpersonal Characteristics
- Action 4. Critical and Creative Thinking Skills
- Action 5. General Practical Skills
- Action 6. Field Specific Skills
- Action 7. The Power of Branding

TIME REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT A SOLUTION AND WHEN POSSIBLE ASSOCIATED COST

Researching and understanding the terminology and completing the canvas should take a couple of days. The resources are widely available online and, up to a certain level of learning, they are free of charge.

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE PART OF THE SOLUTION

<u>Positive:</u> Facilitating comprehension around terminology and a practical tool to get you started.

<u>Negative:</u> The Business Model Canvas is not a final product, but rather a work in progress so it needs to be acknowledged as such. The Business Plan requires considerable time and research.

ESTIMATED EXPLOITATION

A better understanding of the specifics of the business field is mandatory for any successful enterprise. It also constitutes the starting point and a first stage.

ICT COMPETENCE

Basic

ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS

Intermediate

WEBSHOP LEVEL

n/a

INFORMATIVE TEXT

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- 8. Dixon, Amanda (2018, May 21). *Top 10 Components of a Good Business Plan*, retrieved from

https://smartasset.com/small-business/top-components-of-a-business-plan

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- a). Understanding the three levels of entrepreneurship
- Entrepreneur's Glossary
- <u>Inspirational story and entrepreneurship lessons</u>
- Understand the Downside of Starting a Business
- b) The Business Model Canvas vs. The Business Plan
- Business Idea Validation

- wikipedia/What is a Business Model Canvas and its' history
- Alexander Osterwalder's website about the Business Model Canvas
- Classic Business Model Canvas Template
- Strategyzer is the complete resource on the Business Model Canvas
- Lean Canvas a leaner version of the Business Model Canvas
- Step-by-step guide and elements of a business plan
- bplans.com/business-plan-template/free download

CROSSBORDER REMARKS

Though the knowledge comprised in this section is generally valid, entrepreneurship also reflects the development climate in a certain country and it is heavily influenced by the economy and political environment.

TITLE

2. PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

ABSTRACT

What are the specific values, and beliefs typical of successful entrepreneurs and what are the most common character traits of someone who is considered an entrepreneur? These traits and skills come from your genetic makeup and also from life experiences; they can be acquired outside formal education. The research concerning what makes an entrepreneur stand out as a person from his fellows started around the 18th century and is quite extensive. Though there are differences of opinion, a set of personal characteristics can be identified, coupled with specific actions which can stimulate these traits.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SPECIFIC ACTON

There are specific personality traits which make a person more likely to succeed as an entrepreneur. People are born with them or they can be acquired through education and practice. The opinions do not differ greatly between different authors on what are the key traits of a successful entrepreneur, therefore it is easy to extract the most commonly encountered. Also, these traits are common sense. There are, however, surprises amongst the findings research has made in this pursuit. An interesting point is made by some researchers, according to whom an entrepreneur is more of a doer than a thinker, and an element of novelty is represented by listing integrity as a personality trait of entrepreneurs.

a). Top 5 key personal characteristics of a successful entrepreneur

Concentrating on perfecting the following five key personal characteristics is likely to increase your chances of becoming more "entrepreneurial":

1. Risk-taking and acceptance of failure - the more opportunities you embrace, the more chances you have to succeed but also, to fail. In order to achieve the perfect balance, it is crucial to learn how to take calculated risks along with accepting the fact that failure may happen. In fact, most of the learning we do is from failure and not from success.

- **2. Creativity** more often than not, creativity and innovativeness are innate in the case of successful companies and entrepreneurs. This doesn't mean that if you are not born with these traits, you can't achieve them: on the contrary. But why is creativity important in the DNA of enterprise? Since enterprise is all about recognising opportunity where others see problems and finding resources everywhere, creativity is the guiding force behind these actions.
- **3. Passionate, motivated and hard-working -** Often, an entrepreneur has to sell his or her idea to people or they have to create a team. Also, everyday hardships can slow you down and make you less productive. Unless you are passionate, disciplined and motivated enough to surpass these impediments.
- **4. Flexible, curious and open minded** Remember, an entrepreneurial venture is not simply about doing what you believe is good, but also making a successful business out of it. Successful entrepreneurs welcome all suggestions for optimisation or customisation that may enhance their offering and satisfy client and market needs.
- **5. Positivity** At the very core of modern entrepreneurship, we find transforming the world by solving problems, coming up with solutions, constant progress, optimism and positivity are the lens through which the environment becomes a world of possibilities, for those of us with the entrepreneurial spirit.
- b). How to achieve the top 5 personal characteristics of an entrepreneur
- **1.** Learn to take risks and accept failure keeping in mind the words of Mark Zuckerberg, "the biggest risk is not taking any risk", try to analyse your situation and find what the risks of maintaining the status quo would be instead of concentrating on what would happen if you took your chances. Here are <u>five tips on how to overcome fear of risk</u> which might help you.
- **2. Work on your creativity** stimulating creativity is helpful in general, and all the more helpful if you are aiming at a career as an entrepreneur. Constantly changing some habits, surrounding yourself with stimulating objects and things to do, consuming diverse cultural products are just some of the ways people boost creativity. Since the simple method is always welcome, here is a short <u>video with 40 tips to make you more creative</u>
- **3. Feed your passion and find discipline** self-discipline can seem intimidating and hard to achieve, but it comes down to automating your behaviour, concentrating on those actions which are beneficial for you, eliminating the detrimental ones and gaining a few new habits. If you are looking to work on your discipline, here is a **short video** that will come in handy. Passion is the fuel behind your rhythm of work, it is the drive to keep going and the motivation to surpass difficulty. Passion happens when something matters to you, so you need to find what is valuable in your pursuit, in order to keep yourself passionate in your work. Because so many of people don't know what their life passion is, it is important to understand that finding passion is worth it since, once you find it, it stops you wasting energy and helps you achieve goal

after goal. Allow yourself to take the time to get more passionate in your work and life.

- 4. **Be more flexible, curious and open minded** as an entrepreneur, your work is all about adapting to new situations, growing and focusing on the future and on possibilities which you can use. Hence, these three traits are crucial to survival and continuous progress for any business. In the words of psychologist John Brown, "being open minded is counterintuitive", but the brain can be trained to work that way. To begin with, these four easy tips can help you be more open minded.
- **5. Keep yourself positive** it seems it is possible to be positive when your environment isn't, starting with understanding the benefits of positivity, making lucid choices, surrounding yourself with the right people, visualising and simply being grateful. You will find these tips in this article from verywellmind.com.

ACTION TYPE (*)

Simple actions that can be implemented immediately without requiring an investment.

CONNECTED ACTIONS

Note: The actions of this module can be implemented one by one. However, for optimum results, it is recommended to implement as many as possible.

Action 1. Defining Entrepreneurship

Action 3. Interpersonal Characteristics

Action 4. Critical and Creative Thinking Skills

Action 5. General Practical Skills

Action 6. Field Specific Skills

Action 7. The Power of Branding

TIME REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT A SOLUTION AND WHEN POSSIBLE ASSOCIATED COST

This action requires some hours of study and practice.

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE PART OF THE SOLUTION

<u>Positive:</u> Understanding the potential benefits of working on beneficial, personal characteristics can have a positive impact on a company.

<u>Negative:</u> Finding out that you do not have those characteristics and not being able to achieve them.

ESTIMATED EXPLOITATION

Understanding the benefits can motivate the company members to be successful with their solution implementation.

ICT COMPETENCE

Basic

ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS

Intermediate

WEBSHOP LEVEL

n/a

INFORMATIVE TEXT

1. What are successful entrepreneurship characteristics? retrieved from

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5. Patel, Sujan, (2017, August 21). The 5 Personality Traits All Entrepreneurs Must Have retrieved from

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6. Bram, Thursday (2018, August 28). 5 Key Characteristics of a Successful Entrepreneur retrieved from

https://www.lifehack.org/articles/featured/5-key-characteristics-of-a-successful-entrepreneur.html

7. Pannagio, Tom, Embrace the Risk of Failure retrieved from

https://www.witi.com/articles/406/Embrace-the-Risk-of-Failure/

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- How to find your passion video
- Train your brain to be open minded
- How to be optimistic

CROSSBORDER REMARKS

Universally valid information.

3. Interpersonal Skills

ABSTRACT

As a successful entrepreneur, you'll have to work closely with people – this is where it is critical to be able to build great relationships with your team, customers, suppliers, shareholders, investors, and more.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SPECIFIC ACTON

Entrepreneurship is all about networking and sharing and it cannot exist as a one-man show. Therefore, interpersonal skills are just as valuable as personal ones to make a good entrepreneur. However, there are researchers who argue that some entrepreneurs function better by themselves and it is true that the online environment as a business environment allows for indirect relations. Considering these instances, generally, entrepreneurship relies on communication and good people skills.

a). Four essential people skills of an entrepreneur

There are countless lists of people skills to possess as an entrepreneur. However, some four key elements are always taken into account:

- **1. Empathy** you need to be able to understand a client, a team member or a potential investor if you are going to interact with them in a productive way and if you want to convince, sell and gain trust. Therefore, being empathic is essential when building your network. Try to put yourself in the other person's shoes and anticipate their needs, wishes and concerns in order to deliver the best product, solution, service or business proposal. People need to know that you will answer their wishes, resonate with them, and not get the feeling that they are forced into something they didn't agree to.
- **2. Good listener skills** being a good listener also means being an active one, so listen carefully and show people you understand their point of view, even if you don't agree with them. This will take a little more effort than just hearing what the other person says, but it is worthwhile. Keep in mind that the most important part in learning is listening.
- **3.** Leadership skills good leadership is what transforms a group of people in a team oriented towards a common goal. It can make or break the entrepreneurial pursuit. The most successful entrepreneurs out there are also the most inspirational people and true leaders. The difference between a boss and a leader is that a leader inspires his team to be dedicated, he shares the success, creates a family like atmosphere and can communicate accurately a vision so that others can understand and adhere to it.
- **4. Persuasive and inspiring** being persuasive is all about good storytelling, so instead of selling things to people, try to tell the story. In order to act, people need to feel inspired. The secret to persuading people is to tell an effective story with an engaging introduction and a compelling narrative. Closely related to persuasion, inspiration is a step above it. When you persuade someone, all you are doing is convincing them to

share your beliefs and ideals. Inspiration, however, means that you are persuading a group of people not just to align their beliefs with yours, but you're also persuading them to take action based on these beliefs.

b). How to improve your people skills

As with most endeavours, optimising your people skills is a simple task and it will provide you with great feedback in your everyday life, and also in your business relations. The changes you need to make in order to become more sociable are pretty intuitive and you would not guess they have such a significant impact. *Simply acknowledging the others* and focusing on them rather than always thinking about yourself can modify their reaction to you and the way you feel about yourself.

This next action is elementary, but often overlooked: do not be aggressive in your tone, choice of words, body language and actions, because no one wants to converse with an aggressive person.

Learn positive body language: smile, keep your hands in sight, nod when people speak, point your feet and body directly towards them, since this shows interest and openness; don't cross your arms, don't tap your foot or fingers for a conversation to end, don't gaze into the distance; stay away from your wristwatch and phone.

Learn when to speak and when to actively listen, do not gossip or judge, give compliments you really mean and send out only good vibes.

If you need more help, <u>train your people skills using a short video</u> and learn <u>how to speak so that people will listen.</u>

ACTION TYPE (*)

Simple actions that can be implemented immediately without requiring an investment.

CONNECTED ACTIONS

Note: The actions of this module can be implemented one by one. However, for optimum results, it is recommended to implement as many as possible.

Action 1. Defining Entrepreneurship

Action 2. Personal Characteristics

Action 4. Critical and Creative Thinking Skills

Action 5. General Practical Skills

Action 6. Field Specific Skills

Action 7. The Power of Branding

TIME REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT A SOLUTION AND WHEN POSSIBLE ASSOCIATED COST

This action requires some hours of study and practice.

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE PART OF THE SOLUTION

<u>Positive:</u> Understanding the potential benefits of working on beneficial interpersonal characteristics can have a positive impact on a company.

Negative: Finding out that you do not have those characteristics and not being able to achieve them quickly can be frustrating.

ESTIMATED EXPLOITATION

Understanding the benefits can motivate the company members to be successful with

their solution implementation.

ICT COMPETENCE

Basic

ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS

Intermediate

WEBSHOP LEVEL

n/a

INFORMATIVE TEXT

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3. Hiscox Blog, (2018, July 25). What are successful entrepreneurship characteristics? retrieved from

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- entrepreneurial-leadership-characteristics
- the-importance-of-interpersonal-skills-to-an-entrepreneur
- Building relationships with communication

CROSSBORDER REMARKS

Universally valid information.

4. Critical and Creative Thinking Skills

ABSTRACT

As an entrepreneur, you also need to come up with fresh ideas, and make good decisions about opportunities and potential projects.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SPECIFIC ACTON

In order to develop a more holistic approach to entrepreneurship, it is essential to foster creative and critical thinking skills. Important innovations and breakthroughs have resulted from combining creative and critical thinking skills. Entrepreneurship is innovative by excellence, therefore requiring a mix of a strong set of critical and creative skills. Approaches differ considerably between the skills used in creative thinking and those used in critical thinking. Essentially, it is the synergy created by the combination of both sets of skills that makes us treat them in conjunction with one another. By applying creative and critical thinking approaches to entrepreneurship, you will enrich and deepen your experience.

a). What are creative and critical thinking skills

In the present context, creative thinking comes down to applying imagination to your entrepreneurial endeavour. Since imagination is limitless, you need critical thinking to tone it down and moderate it.

Creative Thinking Skills: keeping in mind the words of Linus Pauling, double Nobel Laureate, chemist, biochemist and peace campaigner - "The best way to have a good idea is to have lots of ideas," we can assert that creative thinking skills are the ones stimulating the creative process. This set of skills is the very definition of thinking outside the box, changing perspective and lateral thinking. Here are some basic skills in this category:

- **Problem-solving:** finding solutions requires creativity, identification of pathways which have been overlooked.
- **Reframing:** changing our interpretation of an event, situation, behaviour, person or object.
- **Mind mapping**: allows you to write ideas down in an associative, organic pattern, starting with a key concept in the centre of the page, and radiating out in all directions, using lines to connect related ideas. An order or pattern emerges, in the lines connecting related ideas together in clusters.
- Insight: an idea that appears in the mind as if from nowhere

As the Foundation for Critical Thinking puts it, **critical thinking** is that mode of thinking — about any subject, content, or problem — in which the thinker improves the quality of his or her thinking by analysing, assessing, and reconstructing it.

b). How to develop your critical and creative thinking skills

- Focus on the process instead of the result
- ask the main question 20 times, give 20 different answers
- brainstorm or free write: write down all your ideas without judging them
- change tools: using a new instrument is creativity inducing since you need to learn how to use it and the mere novelty is a stimulant for the brain and the creative process.

For in depth practicing of creativity, you can use <u>creativity innovation tools.</u>

On the other hand, five basic critical thinking strategies such as, comparing, contrasting, analysing, categorising and evaluating can help you discern from various possibilities or courses of action and guide you towards making the right decision. Here is one five step process that may help you find a solution through critical thinking.

ACTION TYPE (*)

Simple actions that can be implemented immediately without requiring an investment.

CONNECTED ACTIONS

Note: The actions of this module can be implemented one by one. However, for optimum results, it is recommended to implement as many as possible.

Action 1. Defining Entrepreneurship (Business Model Canvas vs. Business Plan)

Action 2. Personal Characteristics

Action 3. Interpersonal Characteristics

Action 5. General Practical Skills

Action 6. Field Specific Skills

Action 7. The Power of Branding

TIME REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT A SOLUTION AND WHEN POSSIBLE ASSOCIATED COST

This action requires some hours of study and practice.

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE PART OF THE SOLUTION

<u>Positive:</u> Understanding the potential benefits of working on this set of skills can have a positive impact on a company.

Negative: The results are not immediately measurable.

ESTIMATED EXPLOITATION

Understanding the benefits can motivate the company members to be successful with their solution implementation.

ICT COMPETENCE

Basic

ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS

Intermediate

WEBSHOP LEVEL

n/a

INFORMATIVE TEXT

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- 7-creative-thinking-skills-important-for-you-to-have
- <u>creative-thinking-skills</u>
- creative-thinking
- the-seven-most-effective-techniques-for-creativity
- How to think, not what to think

CROSSBORDER REMARKS

Universally valid information.

5.General Practical Skills

ABSTRACT

You also require the practical skills and knowledge, to produce goods or services effectively and run a company.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SPECIFIC ACTON

The general practical skills needed in entrepreneurship refer to a set of pragmatic skills which allow one to be in charge of a company. The most important skills in this section are:

a). Project Management: as an entrepreneur, you are likely to be in charge of projects and even teams, so this skill is crucial for your success. According to The Project Management Institute, project management represents the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities to meet the project requirements. In order for that to happen, you need to know exactly what your goals are, how you're going to achieve them, what resources you'll need, and how long it will take you to reach that specific goal. Moreover, the project manager has to make sure that everyone involved in a project knows these and is aware of the purpose of the project. Project Management is a thorough discipline aimed at following the project progress and achieving the final goals in an organised and formal manner.

Project management processes fall into five groups:

- -Initiating
- -Planning
- -Executing
- -Monitoring and Controlling
- -Closing

Project management knowledge draws on ten areas:

- -Integration
- -Scope
- -Time
- -Cost
- -Quality
- -Procurement
- -Human resources
- -Communications
- -Risk management
- -Stakeholder management

For the purpose of project managing your company, you can use specific templates (which you can download from this <u>list of 41 examples</u>) or even dedicated software, free (<u>list with free software</u>) or <u>payed</u>.

For more information, here is an article in which the general discipline of project management is adapted for an entrepreneur: Project-Managers

b). Financial Management - proper records are vital for understanding the financial state and cash flow of your business. This subject is elaborated in depth throughout

the present project, therefore we will focus on mentioning some key points to keep in mind when it comes to managing finances for a small company. Here are five best practices which can help you stay on top of your financial situation: manage expenses, maintain financial stability, monitor & measure performance, use a cloud accounting system, understand & plan tax payment.

c). Sales Skills - According to the National Association for Sales Professionals, one of the key aspects of being an entrepreneur and operating a business is the ability to conduct Business Development. Creating revenue through sales is the ultimate catalyst for any entrepreneurial endeavour. The existence of sales is an important aspect in many ways for an organisation.

Sales equates to revenue and revenue covers expenses. The ability of a business to cover its expenses, creates stable operations and the opportunity for growth. Without sales, the organisation will often struggle and have a difficult time attracting talent and actually growing the business.

Here are some strategies to improve sales for an entrepreneur:

- Understand when a client refuses and stop wasting time and other resources
- Focus on their problem, not your solution, when dealing with clients
- Personalise your communications, don't ever let a customer assume an email is just an automated direct marketing outreach if it isn't.
- Perfect your sales pitch (make it exciting)
- Use storytelling
- Negotiate for a win-win
- Ask for referrals
- Since metrics matter, calculate your CAC Customer Acquisition Cost and ACV Annual Contract Value

Sales is about discipline and detail. For more information, here is a video about <u>How</u> to Improve Your Sales Process and Increase Business

ACTION TYPE (*)

Simple actions that can be implemented immediately without requiring an investment in the first phase. For a more in-depth approach, you might want to purchase software solutions for project managing and/or on line marketing and sales classes

CONNECTED ACTIONS

Note: The actions of this module can be implemented one by one. However, for optimum results, it is recommended to implement as many as possible.

Action 1. Defining Entrepreneurship (Business Model Canvas vs. Business Plan)

Action 2. Personal Characteristics

Action 3. Interpersonal Characteristics

Action 4. Critical and Creative Thinking Skills

Action 6. Field Specific Skills

Action 7. The Power of Branding

TIME REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT A SOLUTION AND WHEN POSSIBLE ASSOCIATED COST

This action requires at least some hours of study and practice. For best results, for each sub-action, at least one day would be necessary.

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE PART OF THE SOLUTION

<u>Positive:</u> Acquiring these crucial skills is vital for an entrepreneur and it can help strengthen and develop any enterprise.

ESTIMATED EXPLOITATION

Understanding the benefits can motivate the company members to be successful with their solution implementation.

ICT COMPETENCE

Intermediate to advanced, if software solutions are chosen.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS

Intermediate to advanced.

WEBSHOP LEVEL

n/a

INFORMATIVE TEXT

1. Project Management Institute

https://www.pmi.org/about/learn-about-pmi/what-is-project-management

- 2. Paymo Academy, (2018 March 13). What is Project Management? retrieved from https://www.paymoapp.com/academy/what-is-project-management/
- 3. Steenberg, Riaan (2018, February 13). *Project Managing the Start-Up: What Entrepreneurs Can Learn from Project Managers* retrieved from https://www.projectmanagement.com/articles/438230/Project-Managing-the-Start-

https://www.projectmanagement.com/articles/438230/Project-Managing-the-Start-Up--What-Entrepreneurs-Can-Learn-From-Project-Managers

4. Wellington, Gary (2017 June 26). 5 Best Practices That Can Manage Your Start up Finance retrieved from

https://magazine.startus.cc/5-best-practices-that-can-manage-your-startup-finance/

5. Melfi, Michael S. *The Importance of Sales for an Entrepreneurial Organization* retrieved from

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6. Jakobsson, Hampus (2015, April 23). 5 Strategies for Entrepreneurs to Improve Sales retrieved from

https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/245405

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- skills-every-entrepreneur-needs-to-master
- sales-strategies
- <u>5-sales-strategies-for-introverted-entrepreneurs</u>

CROSSBORDER REMARKS

The knowledge has general value, but language versions should be considered when choosing specific software solutions.

6. Field Specific Skills

ABSTRACT

You need knowledge in several areas when starting or running a business, such as the legal environment concerning businesses in your area, and all other technicalities related to setting-up a company. It is also important to keep in mind information related to patents, trademarks and copyright.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SPECIFIC ACTON

A specific set of rules, some very technical, are absolute requirements for your company's continued existence. For instance, you must decide what legal form your business will take, design an accounting system, and comply with regulations covering labour practices, occupational health and safety, and training. Some general lines are respected all over the world, but mostly these technicalities are country specific and need to be followed as such. Also, if in some countries, such as the UK, it is possible to set up a company in one day, in others it may take months.

In business, you can start a company in your own name. A group can form a registered partnership or an incorporated company with a different set of rules, privileges and responsibilities. If you have several partners, you should draw up a shareholder's agreement to define a mutual code of conduct. Or you could decide to form a cooperative or not-for-profit organization - NGO.

Be sure to patent your ideas, or at least ensure that they are protected by a *copyright, registered trademark*, *or trade secret*. There is the possibility you might be infringing on the rights of another company in this regard.

a). Steps to setting up a company in your country of residence

Here are some basic steps necessary to set up a company. These are general things one goes through when setting up a firm, but steps do differ according to national requirements.

- Contact the responsible national authority and fill in the necessary paperwork
- Sort out insurance cover
- Choose a business name (here is where you need to check copyright laws)
- Set up a business bank account
- Get compliant: make sure that you satisfy all regulatory issues such as, health & safety, licensing, data protection, etc.
- Start accounting for everything: set up your own simple book-keeping system
- Sort out your work space

b). Setting up a business in another EU country

As an EU citizen, you are entitled to:

- set up your own business (even as a sole trader) in any EU country, Iceland, Norway or Liechtenstein
- set up a subsidiary branch of an existing EU-based business that is already registered in one EU country

Here are the <u>European Union requirements for setting up a business in another EU country</u> from your own.

Please also refer to Action 1. Defining Entrepreneurship (Business Model Canvas vs.

Business Plan) for information on the Business Plan and Business Model Canvas.

ACTION TYPE (*)

Simple actions that can be implemented immediately without requiring an investment in the first phase. For a more in-depth approach, you might want to invest in a business consultant, but it is not mandatory.

CONNECTED ACTIONS

Note: The actions of this module can be implemented one by one. However, for optimum results, it is recommended to implement as many as possible.

- Action 1. Defining Entrepreneurship (Business Model Canvas vs. Business Plan)
- Action 2. Personal Characteristics
- Action 3. Interpersonal Characteristics
- Action 4. Critical and Creative Thinking Skills
- Action 5. General Practical Skills
- Action 7. The Power of Branding

TIME REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT A SOLUTION AND WHEN POSSIBLE ASSOCIATED COST

This may take from a minimum of one day in some countries, to weeks in other countries.

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE PART OF THE SOLUTION

n/a

ESTIMATED EXPLOITATION

This is an elementary and mandatory level of action for all companies.

ICT COMPETENCE

Basic

ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS

This action is country specific.

WEBSHOP LEVEL

n/a

INFORMATIVE TEXT

1. Watson, Erika (2018, January 18). How to Set-up a Business Today: 7 Simple Steps retrieved from

https://www.prowess.org.uk/set-up-business-today

2. Ramdev, Vinil (2016, June 23). 8 Things to Know Before Starting a Business, retrieved from

https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/277991

- 3. Business Development Canada. 7 tips for starting a business successfully https://www.bdc.ca/en/articles-tools/start-buy-business/start-business/pages/7-successful-start-up-tips.aspx
- 4. Harroch, Richard (2018, July 15). The Complete 35-Step Guide for Entrepreneurs Starting A Business retrieved from

https://www.forbes.com/sites/allbusiness/2018/07/15/35-step-guide-entrepreneurs-starting-a-business/#6399e613184b

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

• European Union website on how To start a new company or expand your business in

another EU country

CROSSBORDER REMARKS

Cross border differences apply since this action is country specific.

7. The Power of Branding

ABSTRACT

The brand is one of the most powerful intangible assets ever created which is why branding deserves a dedicated chapter within the entrepreneurial skills. Both the technicalities and the philosophy of branding are vital to understand and acquire for business owners.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SPECIFIC ACTON

Whether you go about branding your company by yourself or get help from an advertising professional, there are essential elements to keep in mind. In the words of Steve Jobs, 'The chance to make a memory is the essence of brand marketing'.

Definition: The brand is the perception of your product, services or company by the public-the sum total of all the impressions a customer has. It represents the idea or image people have in mind when thinking about specific products, services and activities of a company, both in a pragmatic (usefulness and applications of a product) and emotional sense (the way a product makes you feel). It is therefore not just the physical features that create a brand but also the feelings that consumers develop towards the company or its products. The totality of physical and emotional cues is provoked when exposed to **elements of a brand**, such as **the name**, **the visual identity** (colours, graphic design style, images) or even **the message** (slogan, texts).

Why should you brand: if you don't actively create the brand you want the public to perceive, it is the very public who will do it for you and it might not always turn into a positive result. So, pay attention to detail and put in the work and resources to define who you are (company, product, service, person). Moreover, branding is the one thing that makes you stand out from your competition. If you manage to build a strong brand, it will increase the value of your products. Most importantly, brands evoke feelings and feelings cause actions, such as the act of buying, choosing one product over another in the same category. Ultimately, remember that a well-built brand can last forever and renew itself beyond the life of your products - the brand is your competitive advantage in the long term.

a). Main components of a brand

- **Mission and vision statements** the mission is the brain of your company, it defines the present state and the purpose of your organisation; the vision can be seen as the heart, it is an inspirational statement of the long-term achievements you have in mind. These two elements are often combined e.g. IKEA's vision is 'To create a better everyday life for people.'
- Brand (communication) strategy a set of guidelines, derived from the mission and vision statement, which form the basis for all levels of communicating the brand: visual (logo, colour, shape, style graphic design); verbal (name, slogan, text); choice of communication instruments and channels (classical advertising, online focus, web and social media, product placement, media buzz)
- The three 'C's of a successful brand cohesiveness, consistency, clarity all of your communication and customer interaction has to point the same direction and derive from a strong, defining message. Congruency is what makes a brand magnetic, all communication has to be aligned and generate power of attraction.

b). Easy steps to create a brand for a start up

- **1. Define your customers**, create detailed profiles for your clients (age, sex, location, habits, lifestyle, aspirations, clothing style as much detail as possible) the customer 'persona'
- **2. Choose your name**, it has to be representative of the company, it is the shortest expression of your product. You can use tools such as Panabee or Shopify
- **3. Design a logo**, this is also a very concise expression of what your company is about. It has to be simple, original and representative. If you are going to do it yourself, you can use free tools such as Canva's free logo design tool to create some great logos.
- **4. Social media presence,** this is mostly a free or affordable means of reaching your target audience. Keep it simple, be active, aligned with the brand strategy, useful and entertaining.
- **5.** The art of storytelling and engaging with people, around a defining theme for your product, allows you to engage with customers on an emotional level throughout your communication. Also, it is crucial that you stay connected with your community, attend events, get involved, especially as a start-up they are your main customers.

ACTION TYPE (*)

Simple actions that can be implemented immediately without requiring an investment in the first phase. For a more in-depth approach, you might want to invest in quality graphic design of your visual identity. This can also be achieved if you learn graphic design basics yourself.

CONNECTED ACTIONS

Note: The actions of this module can be implemented one by one. However, for optimum results, it is recommended to implement as many as possible.

- Action 1. Defining Entrepreneurship (Business Model Canvas vs. Business Plan)
- Action 2. Personal Characteristics
- Action 3. Interpersonal Characteristics
- Action 4. Critical and Creative Thinking Skills
- Action 5. General Practical Skills
- Action 6. Field Specific Skills

TIME REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT A SOLUTION AND WHEN POSSIBLE ASSOCIATED COST

From a couple of hours to study the subject matter to at least one day to apply the knowledge.

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE PART OF THE SOLUTION

<u>Positive</u>: this section deals with one of the most important aspects of entrepreneurship, so it is beneficial for any company to gain the necessary knowledge.

<u>Negative</u>: it requires learning or perfecting skills such as graphic design, which can be difficult and time consuming.

ESTIMATED EXPLOITATION

Good branding is key for success on the market, it increases product awareness, sales and builds a strong market presence. Therefore, creating a powerful brand must be taken seriously.

ICT COMPETENCE

Basic for getting the elementary information and skills.

Advanced if you opt for learning graphic design.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS

Intermediate

WEBSHOP LEVEL

n/a

INFORMATIVE TEXT

- **1.** Marion from The Branding Journal. *What Is Branding?* retrieved from https://www.thebrandingjournal.com/2015/10/what-is-branding-definition/
- 2. Wells, Robison (2016, August 3). What is branding, and why is branding important? retrieved from

https://www.lucidpress.com/blog/what-is-branding-and-why-is-branding-important

- 3. Indralingam, Ashania (2016). *What is branding?* retrieved from https://99designs.com/blog/logo-branding/what-is-branding/
- **4.** Cook, James (2018 April 2). *Strong, attractive SME branding principles* retrieved from http://www.alignandpull.com/branding-an-sme/
- 5. Kolowich, Lindsay (2018 July 9). 17 Truly Inspiring Company Vision and Mission Statement Examples retrieved from

https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/inspiring-company-mission-statements

6. Kapoor, Prince (2018 February 23). 5 Quick and Simple Branding Tips for Start ups and SMBs retrieved from

https://techspective.net/2018/02/23/5-quick-simple-branding-tips-startups-smbs/

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- How to create great brand names video from the TED archive
- Building a brand online in the content age Video from Project Life Mastery
- What makes a truly great logo <u>Video from Vox</u>
- Where to start when building a brand Video by Peter McKinnon

CROSSBORDER REMARKS

Universally valid information.