

Handbook for Coaches of Entrepreneurs and Training Curriculum



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Objectives

The handbook for coaches is the result of the work of the partners in the project entitled “MultiENT-Coach” financed by ERASMUS+ Programme, under the contract number: 2017-1-RO01-KA 202-037219.

The main objectives of the handbook are:

- to give to the facilitators/ coaches a document with theoretical considerations regarding the development of the entrepreneurial competences of the managers/ owners of firms with less than 5 years seniority;
- to provide to the facilitators/ coaches with methodology and practical instruments to help them in the process of facilitating the development of the soft entrepreneurial skills the managers/ owners need in order to scale-up their business or start new businesses;
- to give best practices from partners countries.

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① Introduction

Our world is more and more globalised and people need to adapt to the changes that affect our environment. For that, they have to have a lot of skills to prosper in this environment. EU, through lifelong learning programme, is offering learning opportunities to people at any stage in their life.

The 8 key competences established in Recommendation 2006/962/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning (OJ L 394, 30.12.2006, pp. 10-18) are the following:

1. **Communicating in a mother tongue:** ability to express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions both orally and in writing.
2. **Communicating in a foreign language:** as above, but includes mediation skills (i.e. summarising, paraphrasing, interpreting or translating) and intercultural understanding.
3. **Mathematical, scientific and technological competence:** sound mastery of numeracy, an understanding of the natural world and an ability to apply knowledge and technology to perceived human needs (such as medicine, transport or communication).
4. **Digital competence:** confident and critical usage of information and communications technology for work, leisure and communication.
5. **Learning to learn:** ability to manage effectively one's own learning, either individually or in groups.
6. **Social and civic competences:** ability to participate effectively and constructively in one's social and working life and engage in active and democratic participation, especially in increasingly diverse societies.
7. **Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship:** ability to turn ideas into action through creativity, innovation and risk taking as well as ability to plan and manage projects.
8. **Cultural awareness and expression:** ability to appreciate the creative importance of ideas, experiences and emotions in a range of media such as music, literature and visual and performing arts.

These main competences are a set of knowledge, skills and attitudes that help people to face and solve different problems at work or in life.

For example, The Entrepreneurship Competence Framework (report of research done by JRC in behalf of Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion in 2015-2016) identifies 3 competences areas, each area with 5 soft skills (15 in total), along an 8 level development model.

From this framework it is obvious that developing a competence is a continuing process, a one session training is just the beginning of the process.

The project entitled “Multiplying Entrepreneurship through Coaching- Building a sustainable support structure for start-up companies mainly from production, services, IT and crafts “ with the acronym “MultiENT-Coach” is financed by ERASMUS+ Programme, under the contract number: **2017-1-RO01-KA 202-037219**.

The project was proposed for financing due to the necessities identified by the partners when offering consultancy services to the entrepreneurs. Partners involved in MultiENT Coach feel that fostering entrepreneurship can be a main means to mitigate societal problems and foster economic growth and the capacity to cope with change in their societies. This is in line with political priorities in all of the countries. However, current practices of support for business development have failed by being too oriented to individuals with an academic outlook. Even here current practices don't overcome the theory-practice gap. A more practical and pragmatic approach is needed, including face to face support and coaching. All partners developed critical components for such a concept, but lack the resources and knowledge of other current good practices on an international level, to develop and test an innovative concept.

The partnership of the project is the following:

- Foundation for Promoting the SME's Brasov, Romania,
- Institut für sozialwissenschaftliche Beratung GmbH, Regensburg, Germany
- GrantXperts Consulting Limited Nicosia, Cyprus
- PIA, informacijski sistemi in storitve d.o.o., Velenje, Slovenia
- Storytelleme, Unipessoal Lda, Lisbon, Portugal

The aim of the project is to create a sustainable structure for developing entrepreneurial competences for SME with less than 5 years seniority, from various sectors, including production, crafts, services or ICT and for continuing support through trained coaches. To this end the project will study the current practices of continuing face to face business development support structures and will apply the best practices identified as well as partner's own knowledge and experiences in synthesizing a transferable model of such structures. 20 coaches will be trained for sustainable business founder support, 40 founders will be accessed and coached and a sustainable support platform will be built online.

The project focuses on some aspects of the soft skills necessary in the process of developing the entrepreneurial competence. For the beneficiaries of the project (owners/ managers of the SME's with less 5-year seniority), the outcomes of the project (a handbook for entrepreneurs, training, online assistance, assistance for developing the soft skills) are a starting point of the process. The learning process can be followed through participating in other projects that focus on entrepreneurship, other training or activities developed by Chambers of Commerce or private companies.

② Entrepreneurship as a career option

“Only by letting thousands and millions of entrepreneurs try new ideas, to innovate, to create businesses that put those ideas to work in a competitive and open way, only by doing those things are we going to be able to tackle some of the world’s big problems”.

Angel Cabrera, President Thunderbird School of Global Management, Chair Global Agenda Council on Entrepreneurship

I. The importance of Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship has never been more important than it is today in this time of financial crisis, as the economic conditions in Europe remain hugely challenging. At the same time, society faces massive global challenges that extend well beyond the economy. Innovation and entrepreneurship provide a way forward for solving the global challenges of the 21st century, building sustainable development, creating jobs, generating renewed economic growth and advancing human welfare.

Entrepreneurship is an individual’s ability to turn ideas into action. It includes creativity, innovation, risk taking, ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. “Entrepreneurship is when you act upon opportunities and ideas and transform them into value for others. The value that is created can be financial, cultural, or social” (FFE-YE, 2012).

This definition focuses on value creation, no matter what type of value or context. It covers value creation in any domain and possible value chain. It refers to value creation in the **private, public and third sectors** and in any hybrid combination of the three. It thus embraces different types of entrepreneurship, including intrapreneurship, social entrepreneurship, green entrepreneurship and digital entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship as a competence applies to all spheres of life. It enables citizens to nurture their **personal development**, to actively **contribute to social development**, to enter the **job market** as an employee or as self-employed, and to **start-up** or scale-up ventures which may have a cultural, social or commercial motive.

Entrepreneurship, which has been the engine for growth in the United States, has not been cultivated in an effective or systematic way in Europe. Only 37% of Europeans would like to be self-employed, compared to 51% of people in the US and China. To create more businesses and more startups requires more than a change in policy. It requires a change in mentality. Some of the challenges to be tackled include:

- education should offer the right foundation for an entrepreneurial career;
- difficult access to finance and markets;
- difficulty in transferring businesses;
- the fear of 'punitive' sanctions in case of failure;
- burdensome administrative procedures.

The development of an entrepreneurial mind-set, the support of innovation and creativity, and the promotion of entrepreneurship as a viable career option should be cultivate to the generation of the 21st century from an early stage in order to be able to prepare accordingly the leaders of tomorrow. EUROPE and state governments through various schemes of organizations are aggressively encouraging Entrepreneurship and Skill Development. Furthermore, NGOs, Angel Investor Networks, Venture Funds, Accelerator Programmes, entrepreneurship centers continue to spring up by the month, towards creating a favourable environment and ecosystem to try and propel large numbers from youth into start-ups and small enterprises.

Educational institutions are expected to come forward and connect the above-mentioned ecosystem with the youth of our society. Universities and other public or private companies can play a role in allowing youths to explore the process of starting an educational or social venture. Conferences, discussions, guest lecturers, speakers and projects enable youths to understand the entrepreneurial mind-set, fine tune ideas and give an understanding of real-world issues. Innovative ideas, mad thoughts and free-wheeling spirit reside in all of us and should be exposed.

Indeed, entrepreneurship as a career option is more critical to those who may not fit into standard job profiles for various reasons. The approach and creativity of the education system in innovations in teaching to create training programmes that address this need would make the difference. Start-up incubators can support entrepreneurs in developing skills and provide resources needed at the early-stage. Thus instead of taking the typical route, youths will find new avenues that will not only give economic growth but also open new doors to making a social impact. This new life path impacts youths, the community and the world as a whole...

II. Entrepreneur Vs Employee

According to a 2013 Swiss-German study, the difference in personality between entrepreneurs and employee lies in disposition: While an employee is a specialist, an entrepreneur is a jack-of-all-trades.

"Entrepreneurs differ from employees in that they must be sufficiently well versed in a whole set of entrepreneurial skills," write Uschi Backes-Gellner of the University of Zurich in Switzerland and Petra Moog of the University of Siegen in Germany.

On the other hand, they say that employees are *"specialists who work for others and whose talents are combined with those of other specialists (employees) by the entrepreneurs."*

In their study, Backes-Gellner and Moog showed that people with a broader portfolio of experiences were more likely to have a "disposition toward entrepreneurship." Qualities that predicted against entrepreneurship included a desire for job or income security, as well as, perhaps surprisingly, having an apprenticeship or internship — since those lead to specialization.

Their research suggested that entrepreneurs don't just have a diverse set of skills, but they also have a diverse network of relationships — friends, parents, and business contacts that they can call on when launching a business. Findings in network science show that having such a diverse social network is hugely beneficial at a creative level, too, since the more perspectives you're exposed to, the more refined your ideas become.

So it's a double-diversity that leads to entrepreneurship: lots of experiences, lots of contacts.

The research confirms a lot of folk wisdom about what makes founders function. None other than Steve Jobs used to say that creative people have a more diverse "bag of experiences" than everybody else. In a 1982 speech, the Apple founder told his audience that "if you're gonna make connections which are innovative ... you have to not have the same bag of experiences as everyone else does."

Being an entrepreneur is all about mind-set.

1. *Entrepreneurs improve their skills; employees improve their weaknesses.*

Employees are taught that emphasis should be given to improve their weaknesses. Entrepreneurs are not focusing on weaknesses; instead, they draw on their strengths.

2. *Entrepreneurs may produce lousy work; employees are perfectionists.*

Employees, constantly under the watchful eye of their bosses, strive for perfectionism. Entrepreneurs thrive on lousy work, because putting out lousy work means that at least they're producing, and it's better to create and fail than to not have created at all.

3. **Entrepreneurs say 'no' to opportunities; employees embrace them.** Warren Buffet said, "The difference between successful people and really successful people is that really successful people say no to almost everything." Entrepreneurs maintain their focus on what matters and value their time. Employees, on the other hand, say "yes" to everything because of their fear that if they say 'no' they could lose their jobs.

4. **Entrepreneurs delegate; employees practice 'DIY.'** Entrepreneurs, knowing the monetary value of their time, are always looking for ways to get things off their plate and focus on the things only they can do. Employees try to do everything themselves, and see it as a weakness when they can't juggle it all.

5. **Entrepreneurs mono-task; employees (try to) multitask.** Despite what employers want, studies show that it's impossible for our brains to focus effectively on more than one thing at a time. Entrepreneurs recognize that multitasking means doing nothing well, so they "mono-task" instead. Employees, however, are trained to worship multitasking.

6. **Entrepreneurs thrive on risk; employees avoid it.** If you ask many people in the employee mindset why they won't start a business, they'll say they need the security of their day jobs. Yet entrepreneurs thrive on risk. Without risk, there's no reward, and rather than scaring entrepreneurs away, this knowledge invigorates them. As Peter Drucker said, "Whenever you see a successful business, someone once made a courageous decision."

7. **Entrepreneurs believe in seasons; employees believe in balance.** *Employee's dream is to have a Work/life balance.* But entrepreneurs know that balance isn't achievable. Instead of seeking balance, they believe that to excel in one area of their lives, others will suffer. They accept that the areas of their lives rotate through seasons.

8. **Employees are threatened by smarter people; entrepreneurs hire them.** In the corporate jungle, it's survival of the fittest. Employees, therefore, are threatened by those who are smarter than they as they view them as competition. Entrepreneurs hire those people. They know that without a great team, their business will fail, so they hire up.

You don't have to be a startup CEO or even own your own business to be an entrepreneur, but the entrepreneurial mindset is one that attracts success!

III. Initial Steps for an Entrepreneurship Career

As a facilitator/ coach, if you find that a person is ambitious, self-driven, and determined, starting a business may be for he/she. Instead of job hunting, he/she can start his/her own business.

The initial steps usually taken to start a business:

- **Ask support from friends and relatives.** The new entrepreneurs can discuss their ideas and plans with their family and close friends and get valuable feedback and suggestions. Family and friends are usually objective and honest and they do not afraid to tell the truth.
- **Make a business plan.** The new entrepreneurs should prepare a business plan detailing all objectives and strategies that they are willing to undertake. Budget plans and sales forecast should be also included.
- **Secure a loan for capital.** If it seems impossible to the new entrepreneurs to borrow money from bank, it is better to ask for monetary assistance from their family making at the same time a clear commitment on how the money will be repaid.
- **Work from home, or rent an affordable space.** The new entrepreneurs should avoid incurring unnecessary expenses. At the beginning of their entrepreneurial path they can start working from home or rent a low budget space or rent a small office at an incubation space.
- **Hire staff BUT ONLY WHEN NECESSARY.** The new entrepreneurs should start working alone asking for support or a little help from close friends or parents. The time that their start-up will need more staff, the new entrepreneurs should have to proceed to hire employees. They have to be careful though especially with their cash flow, as this would require shelling-out additional money.
- **Test the market.** Testing if the market is ready for a new product or service is one of the most important steps the new entrepreneurs should take. This could be done through a structured questionnaire that the entrepreneur will develop and share with friends and family aiming to evaluate their reactions and receive their feedback. Also, they can start selling to people from their social environment (e.g. neighbours, family or friends) and study their reactions and feedback on different things relevant with the product or service such as packaging and pricing. That will help the entrepreneurs to make improvements if needed.
- **Register the business.** After the trial and error and if the business appears to be viable, then the entrepreneurs should consider legitimizing their business.

Thus the coach should empower anyone with a great idea and relevant skills to not be afraid to start a business. The entrepreneurial experience and the knowledges that they will gain through this “trip” in case they fail, they will give them an advantage and they will fill the gap in their resume which would look ugly if they have been unemployed for too long. Additionally, the entrepreneur will be able to share with the general public his/her experiences and the knowledge acquired while being self-employed. He/She has to leverage his/her assets and always remember that enthusiasm, creativity and energy are really important qualities and competences for a person who would like to start his/her career.

Growth Mindset Vs Fixed Mindset

There are two types of mindsets we can cultivate. One that embraces problems as opportunities to learn, and one that avoids them, often out of fear to fail. People that avoid conflicts can be described as having a fixed mindset. Those who see problems as interesting challenges have a growth mindset. Sometimes we like to switch from one to the other.

Please watch the video below in which the two mindsets are described:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUWn_TJTrnU&fbclid=IwAR2pKb43BqBrTArJmMAI EaUwF5-yj0RFxeYqA9aDKrWcli0eTITt5XvjlsQ



KEY POINTS

- Entrepreneurship is engine for growth
- Entrepreneurship as a career option is more critical to those who may not fit into standard job profiles for various reasons
- Being an entrepreneur is all about mindset

③ Considerations about adult learning

“Nobody never finalised his apprenticeship”, W.Goethe

“Anyone that stops from learning is old.”, H.Ford

Adulthood and life experiences bring specific characteristics of learning in case of adults comparing to pupils, characteristics that should be taken into consideration when designing training courses for them. Understanding that adult learners are carrying out adult responsibilities and specific experiences in addition of being a student enable trainers to create relevant learning opportunities for them.

Some of adults learning characteristics, revealed by the studies done until now, are:

- adult learners bring knowledge and life experience; each adult accumulates a reservoir of experience growing day by day, which is a rich resource for learning; **real life examples** motivate them and encourage them interacting during the learning process
- there is a change in time perspective as people mature, from possible future application of knowledge to immediacy of application. Considering those facts, adults are more **problem centered** and **results oriented** - they prefer practical and relevant information that could be use for simplifying their work, reaching their goals, improving their skills
- adults prefer to learn by **experiencing** rather than listening presentations; they need to be **actively involved** in the training, most of them need to share their experience or to solve working problems/ take decisions
- adults learners are more **internally motivated** to learn, most of them are taking this decision by themselves and assume the responsibility for learning
- adults learners **need time to reflect** and **practice** new skills because they have a lot of other responsibilities besides learning (family, work, social obligations etc.) and sometimes busy schedules
- adults like to have **alternatives** and to choose from them because real life suppose making decisions
- adults have **different learning styles**, according to their personality; some of them are learning by observing, others by watching learning videos, others by practicing, solving difficult tasks etc.
- adults need **feedback** to their work and **recognition** for their achievements; in this way the usefulness of learning is proven
- adults do their best in an environment where they feel **safe, accepted** and **respected**

When designing adult training programmes there must be also considering the MOTIVATION FOR LEARNING in case of adults:

- knowledge is a power, contributing to the increase of the possibilities for developing professional life and to be more *successful*; professional development is possible only by using the knowledge assimilated
- through learning they expect to get *solutions/ assistance for work/business problems*
- the need for *networking* -interacting with other people in order to exchange information is very useful for professional development

Considering those facts, *ADULTS LEARNING* should take into consideration the following:

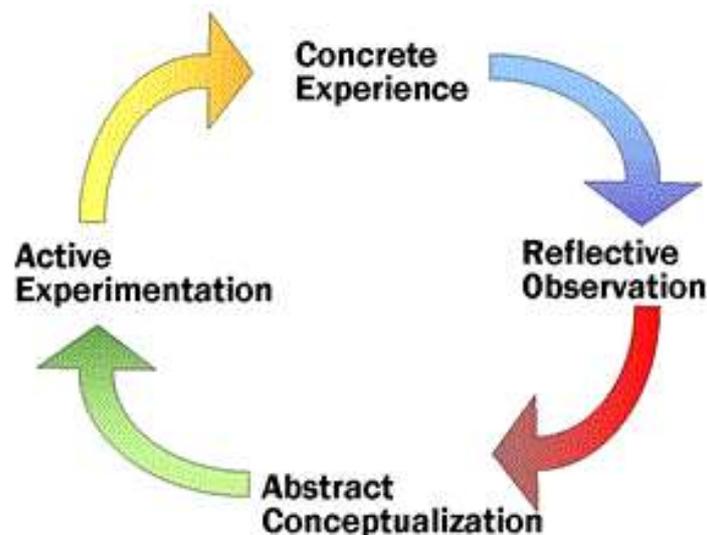
- subjects and learning materials must be **relevant to work needs** and **connect to life experiences**; in this way the results of applying the knowledge learned are tangible.

Using examples from real life, linked to the subjects discussed, helps remembering the lesson.

- learning have to be **structured** so that the participants can understand the utility of what they learn
- learning must combine **different learning methods**, adapted to different adult learning styles
- learning must **facilitate exploration**- adults like to have the opportunity to assimilate knowledge in a way that is meaningful for them and to choose from different learning resources
- part of the learning must be **self-directed**, due to different learning styles and schedules and the need for choosing from different alternatives
- learning must be **interactive** - participants should contribute with their opinions and be involved actively in the training; through practical activities adults can evaluate themselves
- learning must be **challenging** – using problem solving exercises and case studies will encourage adult learners to find solutions to their work problems
- learning must be **flexible**, regarding the schedule and the trainees level of knowledge

According to David A. Kolb's (experiential) learning cycle, learning is done by transforming the experience and the process of learning in case of adults include the following phases:

- I – experience new information – learning by *experimenting*
- II – observing, reflecting and processing new information –learning by *examination*
- III- conceptualisation/abstractization – concluding, *generalise the experience*
- IV – *apply the experience* to real work/life situations



<https://fieldtools.weebly.com/the-action-learning-innovation-cycle.html>

For example, **in case of learning to coach**, the four phases are:

1. Experience new information - Having a coach guide you in coaching someone else.
2. Reflective observation - Observing how other people coach.
3. Abstract conceptualization - Reading articles to find out the pros and cons of different methods.
4. Active experimentation - Using your skills with what you have learned to achieve your own coaching style.

Starting from those phases, Peter Honey and Alan Mumford had adapted Kolb model and identified four learning styles in case of adults: ACTIVIST, REFLECTOR, THEORIST and PRAGMATIST.

ACTIVIST

The key words for this learning style are: practice, experiments, simulations, brainstorming, presenting, solving short term crisis situations.

Activists **learn best from:**

- new experiences-problems, acting opportunities
- here and now activities e.g. business games, simulations, role play, team tasks
- high visibility activities e.g. chairmanship, presentations
- solving a difficult task

and **learn least from:**

- passive situations- listening, reading, watching
- standing back, not being involved
- individual work
- explanations of concepts/ theory/ working instructions

REFLECTOR

The key words for this learning style are: observation, taking notes, references, analysis, questions and answers.

Reflectors **learn best from:**

- being encouraged to observe/think about activities
- being allowed to prepare before commenting or acting
- being able to analyze/ research/ probe/ pursue
- being allowed to review what has happened

and **learn least from:**

- being involved in quick action without planning/ preparing/analysing
- being forced into the limelight e.g. chairman, role play
- given insufficient data to reach a conclusion
- being obliged to act without thinking

THEORIST

The key words for this learning style are: logic, systems, models, theories, proofs, questionnaires.

Theorists **learn best from:**

- complex situations, well-structured and with objectives to follow
- offered system, model, concept, theory even where application is not clear
- being allowed to explore association, interrelationships, able to question, assumptions, logic
- being intellectually stretched by complex situations

and **learn least from:**

- being asked to do something without apparent purpose
- being involved in unstructured ambiguous activities
- participating in situations emphasizing emotion
- faced with activities without profoundness

PRAGMATIST

The key words for this learning style are: exemplifications, real situations, work-related, problem solving/decision making.

Pragmatists **learn best from:**

- learning materials obviously linked with current job
- given chance to practice technique, give feedback
- high face validity used in processes
- decision making activities

and **learn least from:**

- learning materials not related to immediate benefits
- only theoretical learning materials, no practice or guidelines
- political/ managerial/ personal obstacles to implementation
- trainers distant from reality

KEY POINTS

- Bringing knowledge and life experience, adults learners are more problem centered and results oriented; as consequence, the subjects and learning materials must be relevant to work needs and connected to life experience
- The learning programme for adults must combine different learning methods, adapted to the different adult learning styles and with self- directed parts
- In facilitating training / coaching the trainer have to be aware of adult learning styles: ACTIVIST, REFLECTOR, THEORIST and PRAGMATIST.

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④ The art of facilitating and building support

Founding a company or becoming a solo entrepreneur or freelancer is a major step in life for anyone.

Depending on the individual situation, there are many things to consider.

Although an amount of risk taking is required, it is certainly desirable to minimise risks while making the overall process as effective and efficient as possible. In most cases a good support structure to facilitate the process of founding a company can help a lot.

Being a critical part of such a structure is your offer as a facilitator/coach of company founders.

You can offer this service either as a commercial offer by yourself, as part of voluntary support to founders (e.g., as part of a non-profit association), as an employee of an organisation which is concerned with supporting founders (such as chambers commerce and industry, craft organisations etc.) or other organisation like start-up hubs and the like.

There are many organisations and specialized companies which offer specific support in areas like financing, legal issues, marketing etc.

There is an abundance of information on starting a business and there are thousands of methods and tools to support this process. Many of them are covered in the chapters of this handbook.

In this chapter, however, we look at your role as provider of overall support, as a facilitator and/or coach of the overall founding process.

In this role you will offer various forms of support:

- Support through providing a framework for the whole process of founding through long-term accompaniment, from the first idea well into the phase of consolidating the business
- Support through providing psychological encouragement and an opportunity for reflection and overcoming crises in motivation and confidence
- Support through organising and maintaining a peer support group for reflection, exchange of experience and sharing of resources

- Support through sharing your own experience and knowledge
- Support through sharing your own network of relevant contacts and resources
- Support through curating the vast overflow of available (good or bad) advice and (mis)information

In the process of founding to consolidating and growing a business we can distinguish several steps. The forms of support listed above are necessary in each of them.

The main steps are:

- Orientation
- Planning
- Acting – building your business
- Consolidating and growing your business

We will briefly discuss the overarching process and your corresponding forms of support.

The Appendices to this main handbook will discuss some specific essential points, which should be covered in each of the steps.

Overarching process:

- **Support through providing a framework for the whole process of founding through long-term accompaniment, from the first idea well into the phase of consolidating the business**

There probably are a few determined and talented individuals who are willing and able to go through the whole journey of building a company alone.

Most people however will find it very useful to have some form of guidance and structure on the way.

Various formats have therefore been developed to provide such support, from books to online portals.

One form is the support of a facilitator or coach. Face-to-face facilitation has the advantage of being much more flexible and individual than any other format, as real communication can take place.

The facilitation can be 1:1 or in the framework of a group of potential founders.

While the first format has the advantage of being highly intensive and customized to the individual's specific needs, a group format

- broadens the amount of experience and interesting questions in the room
- encourages sharing and mutual support

- forms a support group
- encourages communication
- multiplies the network available to the members of the group
- is more resource friendly: for each participant it is cheaper to share the cost of you as the facilitator!

Your offer should be transparent to your (potential) clients.

It should be modular. While offering the potential of accompanying the clients as long as they need you, nobody should have to subscribe to long-term services potentially not needed.

Usually programmes start with some kind of initial informative sessions explaining the whole programme, go through the whole process of foundation and offer the most essential information for each step.

Such a session can be offered e.g., as a free 3-hour workshop for potential clients, who then can register for the modular programme.

The programme itself should cover the whole process. This does not mean that you as the facilitator must know everything about every step and that all points in the programme must be covered by yourself. What this means is that you take care that all necessary points are covered in each step.

The more your clients grow as entrepreneurs, the more they will be empowered to use forms of self-development and self-learning, such as retrieving information, inviting relevant speakers, distributing learning assignments, sharing experiences and cases, etc.

More and more, you will be in the role of supervising the process and taking care that all essential points are covered, giving feedback and providing the infrastructure (such as venue, documentation, arranging the dates, etc.)

The specific arrangements naturally depend on the group you are serving. This can be either an existing audience, such as students in their final semesters who are interested in founding a business, a group of bank clients asking for a loan, a group of unemployed persons who are applying for public support for starting up a business or other venture.

The second case is that you offer your service on the market. This means you must publish your services through the usual channels, such as your website, social media, printed materials. If you ran your first group with success, there would be a high probability of having referrals, which of course is the ideal situation.

Here, establishing your services as a commercial offer and everything you would discuss with your clients, applies to yourself first.

- **Support through providing psychological encouragement and opportunity for reflection and overcoming crises in motivation and confidence**

The most important service a facilitator/coach can provide is being someone to talk to. This is someone who is impartial, has no stakes in the outcome, is not a spouse, is not a business partner and no one wanting to sell something. This is someone whose job is to ask the right questions, to provide a safe space to “try” things and to practice and to explore.

This will be particularly important when doubts come up if the way taken was the right one and if the client feels he/she got stuck, feels overwhelmed and overcharged and/or is struggling with tough decisions.

Depending on the situation a 1:1 session can be the best alternative, but often the group (if it has built a level of trust) can also be a good peer coach.

Of course this is not the place to go into detail on strategies to ask the right questions. As a rule of thumb, however, there are two main things you as a facilitator should try to achieve: expand the options conceivable to the client and end complaining so that the client will act.

MORE OPTIONS:

Encourage patiently to elaborate on options

- What else could you do?
- What else?
- What would happen?
- What would be the advantages? Disadvantages?

COMPLAINING:

Patiently ask:

- OK; that is bad, but what can you DO?
- What can you DO?
- What else?
- What would be your first step?

In a group setting the group foremost provides the psychological comfort of a peer group, i.e., a group in the same situation, probably like-minded to a degree, on the same journey/mission, which might not be the case with the “natural” group of friends/family of the client. On the other hand the group is a format in which the client can “test” him/herself and get feedback and encouragement. A group increases the chance of finding someone the client can relate to.

Next to the informal communication taking place, there are a number of exercises for groups to reassure/coach the client, such as the peer case discussion.

- **Support through organising and maintaining a peer support group for reflection, exchange of experience and sharing of resources**

Further down the road, as the group grows into fully engaged and experienced entrepreneurs, the group will need you less as a provider of input and resources but still need your service as facilitator and provider of a space for exchange, which includes facilitation, rooms, arrangement of dates of meeting, organisational support with inviting speakers and the like.

While in the beginning such meetings will take place more frequent, later on a meeting every other month or so will suffice.

Often groups find it useful to meet in a retreat for a weekend once a year.

It is a great service to organise a nice setting for such meetings!

- **Support through sharing your own experience and knowledge**

Usually you will not come up with the idea to be a facilitator for new entrepreneurs out of the blue. You will have some kind of initial relevant experience in one of the fields covered in this handbook, have built your own company or have assisted in consulting young entrepreneurs.

You have read a good deal, know relevant cases and regularly meet relevant people (business owners, funders, people with expertise in different fields)? Great. This is a good starting point.

Reflect upon your own fields of competence and work on those you need to develop more.

All of this can be very useful to your clients. Having someone to talk to who knows the scene and has been through many of the aspects of the journey him/herself can save a lot of time and money. However:

Make sure that you do not take your experience and knowledge as the "last word," but certainly some background will help you to better understand your clients, ask the right questions and have an overview of the whole process.

As always: your knowledge and experience should be your background, not necessarily your program. It is the clients who ultimately must find their way. They will not do what you have done but what you think what they should do, anyway.

Even if the clients often directly ask you to tell them what to do, telling them is rarely the best service, helping them to find out is.

In any case you should make sure to give your opinion and experience as one option/resource among others. Be resourceful, but leave the client in the driver's seat!

- **Support through sharing your own network of relevant contacts and resources**

As a facilitator who works in the field of supporting young entrepreneurs you will have many more relevant contacts and experience than your clients. Also if you can use the resources and network of an organisation or institution this will be of tremendous value for your clients.

You will have experience with these individuals and/or organisations, know people there and therefore be able to help your clients to better understand which ones are the relevant ones for them and which are not.

In many cases you will be able to “open doors” for your clients, as you transfer your “social capital” to them.

Individuals/organisations will be more likely to see would-be entrepreneurs if they know that they are your clients/part of your coachee group, as they know the individual is part of a trustworthy program and therefore their time and effort meeting them is not wasted.

As your coachees grow into successful entrepreneurs and the institutions/relevant individuals make good experiences with your coachees, your network will grow in size and strength.

In order to provide such support you will have to constantly build and maintain your network.

Try to get to know relevant individuals and institutions/organisations. Try to build synergies. Often you can also facilitate access to your clients, which is also in the interest of these institutions.

- **Support through curating the vast overflow of available (good or bad) advice and (mis-)information**

There is an overflow of information available to would-be and young entrepreneurs. This can be very confusing and potentially misleading.

By providing a framework of meetings, reading lists, assignments, selected bits of information and inviting relevant speakers, you can spare your clients a lot of money and time.

By providing a proven and tested programme, your clients can be sure that they will have the opportunity to discuss all aspects really relevant without the fear of missing out on vital information.

On the other hand you and your network are always available to guide to additional information and contacts, if needed.

By using sets of guiding questions, assignments, by sharing talks about various aspects, each prepared by one participant, an endless ocean of information will be formed into one concise guideline/handbook/portfolio for the client.

You should prepare this by reviewing the available information and by maintaining your own selected pool of resources. The handbook at hand is a good starting point, but there will be more resources you will find useful, in particular resources which are specific to your own national/regional/sectorial situation.

The forms of support provided by you have been discussed in the previous paragraphs for the overarching process of facilitating a support programme. There are specific forms of what that means in each of the several stages of a business development. A full discussion of all phases can be found in the extended version of this handbook. As an illustration we discuss the “Orientation” phase.

The forms of support in the various phases of founding a business. The Orientation phase as an example

For example, for the orientation step, as facilitator/ coach, you may reflect on the following types of support:

- **Support through sharing your own experience and knowledge**

Your own experience and knowledge in your particular context will help to shape the programme of the initial rounds of the programme. Base it on literature, but use as much local knowledge (of real actors and relevant informants in your areas) as possible.

As you progress the experience what works and what not expands.

This is knowledge specific to you which is very hard to replace by literature or following general concepts.

Any business exists in a specific context and culture. Your knowledge and experience reflects this. This is you USP.

- **Support through sharing your own network of relevant contacts and resources**

Particularly in the orientation phase this is important.

You introduce your clients to relevant contacts of whose relevance they might have been unaware and which would be inaccessible (or intimidating) without your facilitation.

As clients progress they will lose their initial inhibitions and become ever more self organised. Your support will be more sporadic.

- **Support through curating the vast overflow of available (good or bad) advice and (mis-)information**

There are libraries full of self tests “can I be an entrepreneur?”, “Financing” and all other aspects mentioned. Nobody can read all of it (including yourself).

But for sure you know more than your clients and your network validates your selection.

This is a huge service to your clients. Put them through a good selection and get the rest off their backs.

This will affect the other steps as clients get the experience that it is more productive to share and discuss with you, your peers and the referred relevant actors rather than to hunt and collect vast volumes of information.

Example Schedule of Support Programme

The requirements regarding time and format can be very different, depending on kind of business, prerequisites of clients and other factors.

Founding a small city tour company next to a main job of course is less demanding than starting an international tech start-up looking for big external investment.

A good format for many needs, as used by many institutions can be:

Client acquisition:

Information workshop of about 3 hrs for free

Orientation:

2-6 evenings of 2-3 hrs to touch upon the main topics

Planning:

3 2-day intensive workshops

6 hrs of 1 : 1 coaching

Monthly peer group meetings

Acting:

Monthly evening workshop on relevant themes

Monthly 1 : 1 coaching of 1 hr

Monthly peer group meetings

Online platform to share resources

Profile of facilitator/coach for founders

- **What do you need to know?**
 - You should know basics of business administration and relevant law
 - You should know a number of real life businesses from different fields and know what they are doing and how they are doing it
 - You should know the main current concepts of business creation
 - You should know the main methodologies of communication and facilitation
 - You should know the relevant support organisations and networks in your region
 - You should know support programmes on European, National and regional level
 - You should know that you are not supposed to know everything, but that you are supposed to learn how to find out about everything

- **What must you be able to do?**
 - Learn from people who are already doing it (be teachable)
 - Reach out to people and build a good working relationship (pro-active communication)
 - Master your own emotions
 - Ask questions, give feedback
 - Plan and structure sessions and programmes
 - Build a useful network
 - Be trustworthy and dependable

- **What must be your attitude?**
 - Constructive (solution orientated)
 - Emphatic, but with professional distance (do not get soaked up by client's problems)
 - Selectively authentic (be yourself, but control your emotions)
 - Socially responsible and ethical

KEY POINTS

As a facilitator for entrepreneurs you provide support through psychological encouragement and by giving an opportunity for reflection and overcoming crises in motivation and confidence, through organising and maintaining a peer support group, by sharing your own experience and knowledge, by sharing your own network of relevant contacts and resources, by curating the vast overflow of available (good or bad) advice and (mis)information.

The main steps of support for founding and maintaining the business are: Orientation, Planning, Acting – building the business, Consolidating and growing the business

A set of relevant knowledge, competences and attitudes are required to facilitate this process

Literature:

Hofert, S.:: Praxisbuch Existenzgründung. Frankfurt 2007

Tietze, K.-O.: Kollegiale Beratung. Reinbeck 2003

<https://gruenderplattform.de/>

<https://www.gruendungswerkstatt-bodensee-oberschwaben.de>

⑤ Facilitator versus consultant

*“Tell me and it is possible to forget,
show me and I may remember,
involve me and I will understand”
B. Franklin*

I. FACILITATOR

Facilitation means “to ease a process”; in this context the facilitator is the neutral guide enable a group of people to come together and accomplish their objectives or tasks (such as strategic planning, problem solving, data modeling etc.).

Generally, what a facilitator do is to plan, guide and manage a group in order to ensure that the group's objectives are effectively met, with clear thinking and constructive involvement from everyone.

The facilitator will ensure that the group stays focused and efficient and each member of the group will contribute to accomplishment of assigned tasks; he will also manage potential conflicts between members of the group.

The facilitator is not the same as trainer. There is a difference between them and the most suggestive explanation is that “a trainer brings the participants from unknown to known and a facilitator brings the participants from known to unknown.”

Facilitators will focus on both the subject matter and the process and how it should be taught from a learner-centered perspective.

In case of businesses, facilitators are in charge to help the managers to understand their experience and to convert it in knowledge, competences or abilities necessary for solving working problems.

In this way, the role of the facilitator is:

- to inspire managers to generate ideas for business issues, to keep being innovative
- to help managers shaping their ideas, assist them with the methodology of discovery, reflection and planning
- to encourage active participation and keep them focused on the relevant activities

In order to facilitate the learning process, the skills and aptitudes of the facilitators include:

- **LISTENING SKILLS** – you will understand better your trainees needs if you listen them actively
- **GOOD COMMUNICATION SKILLS** – the ability to give expected and clear answers to all questions in every training situation, use body language for a better understanding of your message
- **SIGNIFICANT DIDACTICAL SKILLS** – the ability to apply different teaching techniques, to use audiovisual aids, to select appropriate instructional objectives and to explicitly formulate them, to give constructive feedback to trainees, to evaluate objectively trainees performances
- **PRO-ACTIVE ATTITUDE** - notice new opportunities and search new alternatives for solving problems and have the ability to practice those specialties in practical situations
- **POSITIVE THINKING** - tell the trainee which aspects of their line of thought are admirable
- **PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS** - modeling the problem and combining various skills in dealing with a certain situation; after analyzing the situation and defining the problem the facilitator must be able to work out suitable solutions for it
- **ABILITY TO OBSERVATION AND MAKING CONCLUSIONS** - watching carefully the working process, trainees attitudes and drawing conclusions on it
- **ABILITY TO SOLVE OBJECTIONS** - help the trainees reflect objectively on raised issues, make them 'transparent' and then possibly discuss them
- **ABILITY TO MOTIVATE TRAINEES** – identify what really motivates the trainees and focus on that
- **FLEXIBILITY/ ADAPTABILITY** – the ability to change and adapt to unexpected situations

Considering the way adults are learning, here are some suggestions for facilitating adults learning:

- clarify how the learning will help the trainees in their work/business
- lessons /activities should challenge their thinking and encourage them to envision new ways of seeing things
- lessons /activities must be connected to their experience
- allow participants to be active and to learn one from another
- ask open questions and listen carefully > ask for ideas, new perspectives
- encourage constructive differences of opinions
- understand that people learn in different ways

- summarize and let time for reflection and self-assessment
- get examples from workplace
- use humour; adults like to have fun as much as children do
- ask for feedback and valorize it
- be respectful to the trainees; learning needs an environment of comfort and respect

What to AVOID when facilitating learning:

- Excessive speech from facilitators instead of active listening; offer too many details
- Teaching content without meaningful rationale
- Not following the practical application of issues discussed
- Relying heavily on lecture as the primary teaching method
- Emphasizing abstract information
- Taking away opportunities for self-learning
- Repletion with irrelevant information
- Forcing people to participate to discussions
- Contradictory discussions related to interpretation of different situations
- Inappropriate comments related to sensitive issues
- Use of psychological games
- Repeating activity until it goes well
- Over analysis of discussed issues

II. CONSULTANT

Consultants are professionals with specific area of expertise who are advising managers regarding the ways of action for improving the competitiveness of the company and organisational effectiveness. Managers are hiring consultants in order to benefit from their knowledge and experience, provided in the form of recommendations and suggested actions.

The recommendations may also refer to solutions for solving the problems of the company, problems that could include: unsatisfied clients, lack of resources (eg.financial, human), lack of specific information, wrong management decisions, inadequate promotion, bad time management etc. Consultants could also assist managers in implementation of recommended solutions.

With the assistance of a consultant the problems could be transformed into *business opportunities*.

The question that consultant should be respond is *how to make his client more successful*.

According to Peter Block (*Flawless Consulting: A Guide to Getting Your Expertise Used*) the goal of consulting process is to determine a change in organization, change that may refer to the internal procedures, management tool used etc.

Most important for consultancy is the confidentiality and to maintain the trust of the client.

Consultant mission is a complex process, including the main following phases:

- *entry and contracting* –meeting with the client and discussing the purpose of the consultancy mission after listening client expectations (preliminary exploring of the needs), negotiating and concluding the consultancy contract, assignment planning
- *data collection and diagnosis* - diagnosis of the company situation and identifying the problems and specific causes and also the opportunities that could be capitalized
- *action planning* – developing solutions, evaluating alternatives, formulating the recommendation for action, planning for implementation
- *assisting* the manager in implementing the solution recommended, providing feedback and adjusting if case, training
- *termination* – evaluation and drawing the conclusions into a final report, setting commitments, planning follow up, closing the mission

Considering the differences between the facilitator (neutral guide that manage the processes) and the consultant (professional that provides advice for business content), when discussing with clients we have to identify their needs, using questions like:

- **What problem do you want to solve?**
- **What do you expect from me?**
- **How we will work together?**

If the answer is related to business content (such as “We need to know more about market trends” or “We want to develop and we need an analysis regarding the feasibility of our idea” or “We need to change our human resources policy”), than business knowledge is needed and it must be hired a CONSULTANT.

If the answer is like “We want you to define the process for us” or “We want you to help us to stay on track to accomplish our tasks”, then the client need a FACILITATOR.

A comparative table regarding the role of a consultant versus facilitator is presented below:

*Consulting Vs. Facilitation **

CONSULTING	FACILITATION
<p>Analysis by an expert</p> <p>Not neutral</p> <p>The consultant offers content in the form of expert advice and recommendations for action</p> <p>The consultant may be involved in the implementation</p>	<p>Analysis by client</p> <p>Neutral</p> <p>The facilitator invites an exchange of experience in the form of process, engaging the group to stay focused and on the point. Facilitator will not engage as resource expert.</p> <p>Recommendations for action are done by client.</p> <p>The client is responsible for implementation</p>

**(source: I. Bens, p. 18-Advanced Facilitation)*

KEY POINTS

- Generally, what a facilitator do is to plan, guide and manage a group in order to ensure that the group's objectives are effectively met, with clear thinking and constructive involvement from everyone.
- In case of businesses, facilitators are in charge to help the managers to understand their experience and to convert it in knowledge, competences or abilities necessary for solving working problems.
- Consultants are professionals with specific area of expertise who are advising managers regarding the ways of action for improving the competitiveness of the company.

Bibliographycal resources

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 Magdalena Luzniak, *Coaching, Mentoring, Counselling*, Academy of Humanities and
 Economics in Lods

Building Key Competences for Lifelong Learning in TouriSME – Handbook for Consultants
<http://centerforprofitmanagement.blogspot.com/2010/04/consulting-vs-facilitating-clarifying.html>

⑥ How to elaborate an innovative program for practical training of entrepreneurial competences

First of all, we should answer the following question: What is an innovative training program? When a training is innovative? Innovative means something new. So, do we have to create something new from nothing or do we have just to improve something that is already running? For a facilitator could be something scary to think that he/she have to create and market a completely new program training.

Well, innovation in designing training programme could means several things:

- I. **Products innovation** - We can create an innovative training by improving its functional characteristics.

Functional characteristics may referring at two things:

1. First, we intend **to approach new themes and subjects in our training**. For instance, we decided to talk about “Strategic management on emergent market” – a subject that wasn’t included until now in our subject list.

If you intend to do that, you should pick a theme in subject that you are experience in, obviously. Of course, is a good thing to go through a documentation process and to gain some ideas, but if you really want to be innovative you should use your field experience and share to your audience. People feel when you have something to say and they appreciate authentic experience.

Ways to integrate your experience in the training:

- **Presentation:** you can create new presentations in order to introduce the new subjects that you want to approach.

When you want to approach a new subject, you should take into consideration the following issue:

- You should keep in mind that your presentation should achieve a specific goal: either to help someone to acquire a new ability, either to improve he/her knowledge or to change their attitude. So, everything you want to transmit to your audience should considering those three things.
- Audience is expecting you to know what you are talking about, to have some experience to share in the field and to be passionate by the subject.
- When you create a presentation you need to be aware of the benefits you can bring to the participants, and very important, if your training will make them capable to transfer their new knowledge to working place: will they be able to do new things or do things that they already knew in an improved manner?

In order to achieve this, you should organize your presentation around one big issue/idea and then put your materials in to a coherent order. The objective of presentation should establish what audience will be able to accomplish after presentation: they will be able to elaborate a project proposal for Erasmus programme or to elaborate a dissemination plan etc.

To be successful in your presentation, you should organize your materials in three levels of in depth: *“1. What your audience must know”, “2. What they need to know” and “3. What it would be nice to know.”*

So, when you want to address a new topic, take into account the above things; in addition, you should present as much as you learned from your personal experience: describes situations in which you were at one point, shows what decisions you made and what results you obtained; which are the lessons you learn and apply later and do not be afraid to present also the failures you've been through. Sharing your personal experience and your feelings is an exciting lesson for peers and they find interesting "stories" behind things; the audience remembers significant things making this association between stories and things. Also, accompany your oral presentation with multimedia presentations because occidental culture is a visual culture: after 3 days, the information that was presented by a combination of video and audio (show and tell) is retained in a proportion of 65% compare to 10% for those that were only reported by audio means (tell only).

- **Examples:** uses examples as far as possible related to your personal experience or try to create a connection between the given examples and the professional life of the audience. Show them how you or another manager (it is better to be a well know manager in the local community)

or a company you know it act in a certain situation; give significant details about how you or they go over some obstacles and how you /they handle some problems. The examples are even more interesting for the audience if they are targeting people and companies from the geographic proximity of the class. Of course, pay attentions to the confidential details and jump over.

- Group discussion: provoke your audience to participate at discussion, starting from a specific problem or situation that you have to handle at some point in the past. Tell them how you have choose to act at that time and ask their opinion, try to make them to imagine how they would act. Make them put in to your shoes. Continue to make them to share with the other their similar experiences. It is seems that this kind of discussion are a very effectively learn method for adults.

- Study cases: design study cases based on real experience, imagine situations similar to those in which you were at one point. Those kind of exercises are interesting if the study cases are related to the participant interests and if the debate is finalized with some conclusions. The trainer should invite the class to reflect at the situation presented in the study cases and to put also additional questions in order to have different points of view.

- Roll play: simulate real situations, starting from a problem that you have to handle at some point, one that will drive your audience to act like in real life. Roll playing are really effectively if the participants receive some guidelines before they acting and if the spectators have the opportunity to express their thoughts. The trainer should push the audience to extract some pretty certain conclusion, kind off: “not in this way”.

- Exercises: having in mind some specific skills that you want to develop to your class, imagine situations and practical request in order to force the participants to use their abilities. In order to be effective, exercises should give to the participant a concrete situation frame (such as “you are a manager of a European company with 200 employees, in charge of products development department ...”) and to ask some specific request (such as “a client is telling you that your company innovation policy for electronics products does not meet the requirements of sustainable development. Give him an assertive answer”).

Classroom exercises should always be tailored to the specifics of the training participants: the imagined situations must be related to the work they carry out and the information / abilities learned in the class must be transferred to the workplace. That's why it's important to have an idea of the specifics of their workplaces because the exercises have to put them in concrete situations they face in their daily work. When our organization develops a course content, the trainers always adapt the exercises to the specifics of the participants: for instance, the communication exercises applied to some newspaper advertisers will always be different from the communication exercises applied to the sales office staff of a distributing company of building materials.

From our experience, when they have to resolve an exercise in the class, people prefer to work on pairs and they need enough time to formulate an answer (at least 10 minutes); they always are expecting a feedback from the trainer to see if their work was correct or not.

If you really want to develop innovative exercises, you might want to use some varied techniques:

- Alter the way the participants solve the exercises - some exercises must be done individually, others should be performed in pairs and others should be performed by small groups (maximum 5 people). Be careful to continuously change pairs and group memberships because people tend to stay in comfortable situations, meaning staying in the same pairs / groups, with colleagues with whom they have developed a certain routine and with whom they have already shared roles; some participant always tend to avoid effective participation in the exercise
- Make exercises to stimulate creativity and play - participants can receive objects and materials (beads, thread, paper, etc.) from which they can make small objects to use in their exercise. You will be surprised at how creative people are, even those who are declare themselves less creative, how excited they are ultimately to work together and how much they engage in exercises. From our experience, these are some of the most beloved exercises and the participants remember them for a long time.
- Involve all participants, one after another, in the presentation of the results of the exercises - give each participant the opportunity to present the way he, the pair or the team worked.

Also, check the chapters below to find some really effective exercises that you can apply on to your class.

2. Secondly, that we intend **to use new teaching and learning methods**. For instance, we intend to propose a new kind of exercises for entrepreneurial skills development called “mind-map”.

If you want to use some new teaching and learning methods, you have plenty to choose from: case study, games-based training, instruction by tutor, learning by doing, 4 steps methods, analytic instruction, web-based training, learning projects, quality circles, job rotation, internship, apprenticeship and so. If you want to learn more about this methods, please check the following document http://www.fpimm.ro/static/fisiere/TouriSME_IO3_English.pdf (page 64).

When you choose one of this methods, you should consider this:

- What are your training goals for this session? People have to learn new skills or new techniques for an old skill or a better workplace behavior?
- Who is being trained? New employees, seasoned employees, upper management? How much time has been allocated for training?
- What training resources and materials do you have at your disposal?

No matter what method you choose, you have to consider that adults learning process is subject of some rules, that have been discussed in the chapter bellow.

II.Process innovation – we can create an innovative training by improving instruments and techniques for designing and delivery training to the public.

Process innovation through new design techniques and instruments could means that we want to use new IT software for making presentation. There are plenty of applications and software for making presentation but the most common and most effective is PowerPoint. The programme offer a lot of options and you can integrate photos, animation and video clips. Another useful programme is Windows Movie Maker but you can also looking for other applications on the internet.

The idea is to make an effective and nice presentation and for that you should pay attention to the following tips:

- Keep an uniform style for all slides
- Do not use too many photos, cliché images or animation
- Don't use more than 5 colors to create the slide's image
- Use common fonts like Helvetica, Verdana, Tahoma or Arial
- Create a strong contrast between the letters and background
- Limit the amount of text

Process innovation through new delivery techniques and instruments can be accomplished through internet facilitations:

- **Webinar** - is an online seminar, a training program presented via the internet, which can be tracked on your own computer by the trainees. This seminar is made by live broadcast, audio-video and also includes slide presentations, a chat room and a section of questions and answers that give it an interactive character; on-line courses are the perfect way of distance learning. You can use some programs like: GoToMeeting, Yugma si DimDim
- **Internet conference / meeting** – is an online meeting with the class in order to discuss some specific issues; the participants can talk and share document if they use screen share options. The most popular application is Skype.
- **Share documents** – people can work at a project in the same time, they can fill documents together; the most common application is Google docs.
- **Social media** – you can create a training page on social media and your class will create a professional community: they will have a place to share their idea, change information, post news etc. The most popular social media applications are Facebook and Linked. You can use those internet applications in order to market the training and to gain followers.
- **Blog** – this can allow you class to post articles and documents (scenarios, discussions, case studies) and to add comments; you can also have a moderator who is an instructor who is ensure that content remains focused on the subject. The most popular blog platform are Blogger and Wordpres.com
- **Vlog** - is a form of blog where the articles, documents are made up of video clips; it is a form of web television. A trainer can record an entire session and post it; he can record a video in order to present a particular subject or he can proposes an exercise that the audience must do it at home. In order to be successful, the trainer have to behave normally in recordings, to address the public directly and to try to interact with the audience. Interaction involves asking personal opinion and comments and making reference to them in subsequent videos or asking participants to send videos to post on his vlog. The records can be done with the smartphone.
- **E-learning platforms** - you can post your training on on-line platform and create there a resources center; all the participants can log in and download handbooks, exercises and fill in on-line test etc.

The participants can receive and send documents through many modern ways and this is very helpful when your participants are spread out over a large geographic zone or they have incompatible schedule.

You have to be ensure that course participants are really using the materials that you provide through these modern channels, because studies show that the learning level is lower for distance course participants than for those in the class. That's why it's a good idea to contact the students and ask them for feedback directly or, it is best to combine course delivery methods in class with distance delivery.

Some people are familiar with those modern technologies some other are not. So, for some people this kind of training can be innovative and for other this training is not innovative. Also, what is new and innovative for an organization can be something usually for another, depending on experience and past training offer.

KEY POINTS

- Innovation in designing training programme could means product innovation or process innovation
- When choosing new methods for training, take into consideration the goals of the training, the group that is trained, the time they have for learning, the learning styles of the adults, the digital skills they have
- Be sure that the trainees will really use the knowledge, materials, techniques learned at the workplace, or they can adapt them to the specific of the work

Books:

Delivering effective training sessions, Geri E.H. McArdle, Crisp Publications, INC, 1993
Facilitation skills for team leaders, Donald Hackett and Charles L. Martin, Crisp Publications, INC, 1993

Other resources:

<http://trainingtoday.blr.com/article/most-effective-training-techniques/>
<http://www.yourtrainingedge.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/7-Innovative-Training-Concepts-White-Paper-August-2010.pdf>

⑦ Facilitating entrepreneurial competences using ICT

The actual challenges for economics and societal growth are focused in the importance of develop a greater entrepreneurial attitude.

According to the European Commission (2008), the objective of entrepreneurship education and training should be to "**develop entrepreneurial skills and mentalities**" that benefit economies by promoting creativity, innovation and self-employment.

In fact, the role of SMEs in terms of growth, competitiveness, innovation and employment is now substantially integrated into the European Commission's activity, with the publication in June 2008 of the "Small Business Act for Europe" and on January 2013 the "Action Plan Entrepreneurship 2020".

These publications seeks to identify the entrepreneurship skills needed to develop a growth-oriented business and how these competences can be trained and developed.

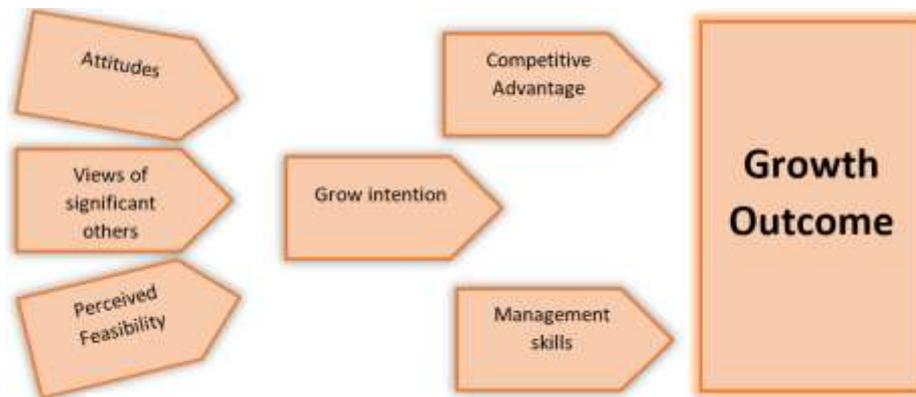
And the first important step is to reflect on the main barriers to a company's growth and answer the question... **What can lock the company growth?**

We can find two kinds of barriers:

Internal Barriers	External Barriers
Psychological / Motivational Factors	Labour Market Conditions
Management Capability	Market Structure / Competition
Funding	Government Policy
Shortage of Orders	Economic Climate
Sales / Marketing Capacity	Legislation B
Poor Product / Service	Access to Markets

In exploring the main barriers to business growth and entrepreneurship, we realize that the key issues involved in growth are:

- (1) Motivation;
- (2) Resources;
- (3) Market opportunities.



The underlying reasons for the failure of business growth and entrepreneurship include: **(1)** the inability or unwillingness of the founder to change and follow innovative paths, **(2)** lack of skills, experience and know-how, **(3)** not maintaining complete and accurate records, **(4)** have little focus on activities, trying to answer in all entrepreneurial dimensions, **(5)** low prices, **(6)** underestimating competition, **(7)** 'Mousetrap Myopia' (the fact that there are so many things happening inside the business that all happening outside is forgotten), **(8)** poor marketing activities, **(9)** no financial control, **(10)** lack of strategic planning, and **(11)** inadequate financial liquidity.

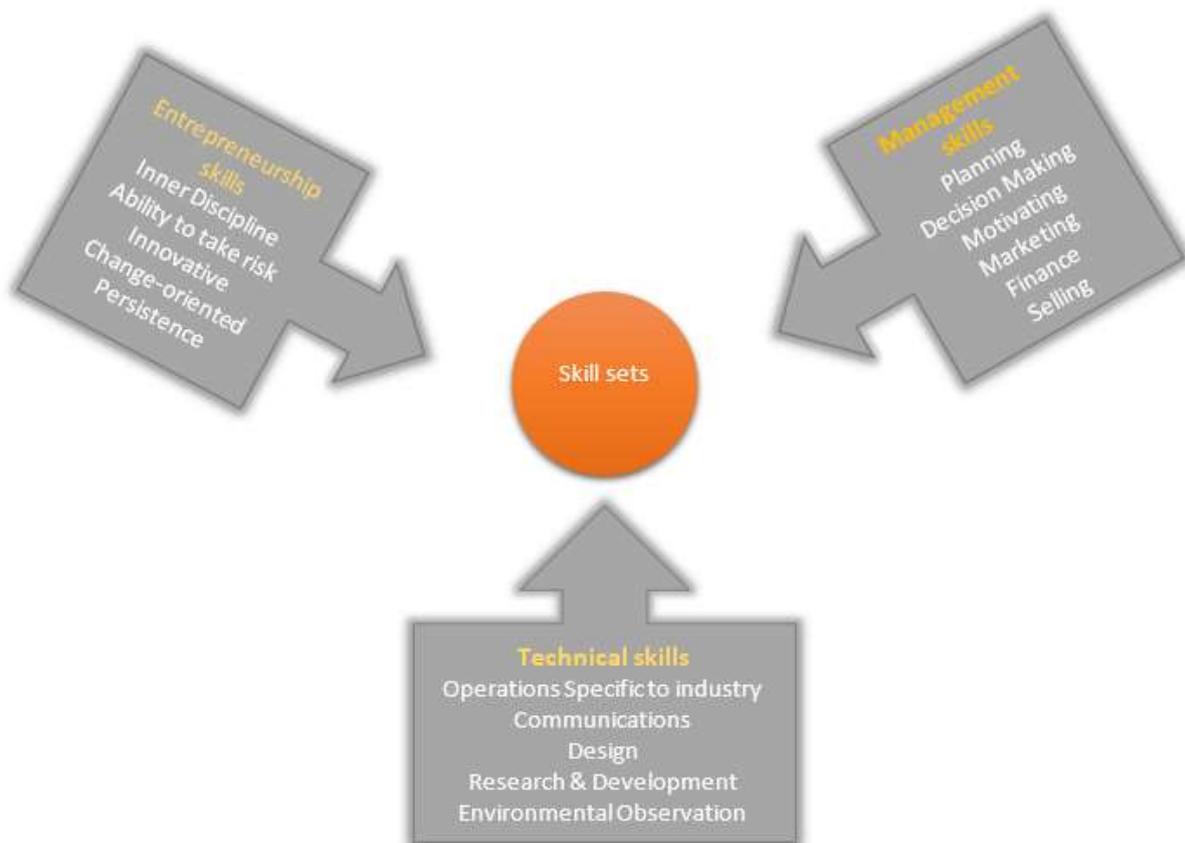
As facilitators/ coaches, in order to help owners/ managers to develop their business, we have to reflect on the following aspects:

How can we stimulate and develop entrepreneurial competences and skills to overcome Growth Barriers?

How can we adapt training programs to meet the real needs of entrepreneurs?

How can we use IT technologies to facilitate the development of the entrepreneurial competence?

The figure below captures much of the essence of what many researchers have presented as key requirements:



- **Technical Competences:** competences to produce the company's product or service;
- **Management skills:** capabilities for the day-to-day management and administration;
- **Entrepreneurial Skills:** which involves the identification of opportunities and continuous action on them and **personal maturity skills** (related with self-awareness, responsibility, emotional competences and creative competences).

ICT tools are also today a fundamental basis on developing entrepreneurial skills.

The most frequently used ICT tool, in this scope, is **e-book**, according to the *ICT TOOLS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETENCES - International School for Social and Business Studies, Slovenia*.

E-books might provide help on how to use other ICT tools and as a support to a learning process. E-book usually consists of electronic version of the text, which was previously prepared as printed version, but it can also include multimedia features to enhance interaction between the content and the learner.

Other ICT tools that are perceived as useful and practical to boost entrepreneurial skills are: **e-learning platforms; business plan software; and market research database.**

In fact, usefulness of the ICT tools is an important aspect of influencing the perceptions of the user and the frequency of the tool's usage:

- 1 - In idea creation stage, the most useful ICT tools are market research database and business plan software. According to the data, these tools seem to be perceived as equally useful.
- 2 - In the stage of business planning business plan software becomes more important with the role of proving the concepts.
- 3 - In the final stage of funding and marketing the most important tools are also business plan softwares.

The analysis previously referred shows that there is no single ICT tool used to promote entrepreneurial competences among young people.

In the context of training and education tools like e-books might be used. On the other hand, skills development in the sense of self-directed-learning promotes tools such as e-learning courses, as the most widely used tool, business plan software and market research database, where competences are developed more in terms of entrepreneurial and management abilities, rather than in terms of knowledge.

The tool which is considered as the most useful tool is the **business plan software**, but there are some more useful tools to help entrepreneurs in various moments in the life of the business:

Productivity tools	Email management tools	Project management tools	Save you time	Tools for information collectors and note takers	Invoicing, accounting, and payroll tools	Marketing tools	Monitor and build your brand
Office Tools (online)	Boomerang for Gmail boomeranggmail.com <i>write and schedule your emails</i>	Trello trello.com	LastPass Password Manager lastpass.com	Google Keep keep.google.com	Invoice Xpress	Google Analytics	Google Alerts google.com/alerts
Diagrams creation	Streak streak.com <i>Affordable CRM tool to manage your contacts, deals, projects, and messages</i>	Asana asana.com <i>Project and team management</i>	Google Dictionary extension	List.ly List.ly <i>This is Pinterest for "word people." Collect content from all over the web and organize it into lists</i>	SAP	MailChimp mailchimp.com	HARO helpareporter.com
Virtual drives (Dropbox, ...)			AdBlock extension	Goodreads extension <i>It allows to unload your brain and toss the Post-it notes reminding you to buy this or that book</i>	...	LinkedIn linkedin.com	

Other tools such as crowdfunding, scientific platforms or educational business simulators are less useful because of its complexity or inaccessibility.

RELEVANT POINTS

- Each entrepreneur requires a different plan, adapted to a personal reality
- There are 4 dimensions of competences and skills to match: (1) Technical, (2) Management, (3) Entrepreneur and (4) Personal Maturity
- Econometric models show a weak relationship between existing management training and improved company performance
- New teaching and entrepreneurship training models focus on the development of entrepreneurial attributes and in the individuals characteristics
- ICT tools, mainly e-learning platforms, business plan software, market research database and e-books are important to develop entrepreneurial competences

The question of how to design and deliver entrepreneurship training specifically tailored to a particular type of public has been discussed for a long time.

Some authors criticized entrepreneurship training programs for being too focused on the functional aspects of business management, rather than helping to develop general entrepreneurs' capabilities to be innovative, manage their business environment, and be creative developing and carrying out their business.

Programs of training for entrepreneurs will help entrepreneurs avoid fundamental mistakes in running their business, as instructors will not "tell" people what to do but will equip them with the skills they need to make better decisions.

KEY POINTS

- Training programs should be part of a larger entrepreneurial ecosystem
- Current training programs are focused on the functional aspects of business management
- It is difficult to find a balance between individual mentoring and group support in programs tailored to meet individual needs
- Participants prefer real-life examples or presentations from existing entrepreneurs
- Entrepreneurial effectiveness and personal transformation are now critical elements of entrepreneurship training programs

Future Challenges

Over the last two decades, numerous attempts have been made to determine the characteristics that define high growth companies and how these characteristics can be replicated among a broader group of entrepreneurs. Some conclusions point that real job growth was created by a small number of high-growth firms has concentrated the minds of researchers and policy makers to identify the key entrepreneurial skills that need to be developed by entrepreneurs oriented toward growth.

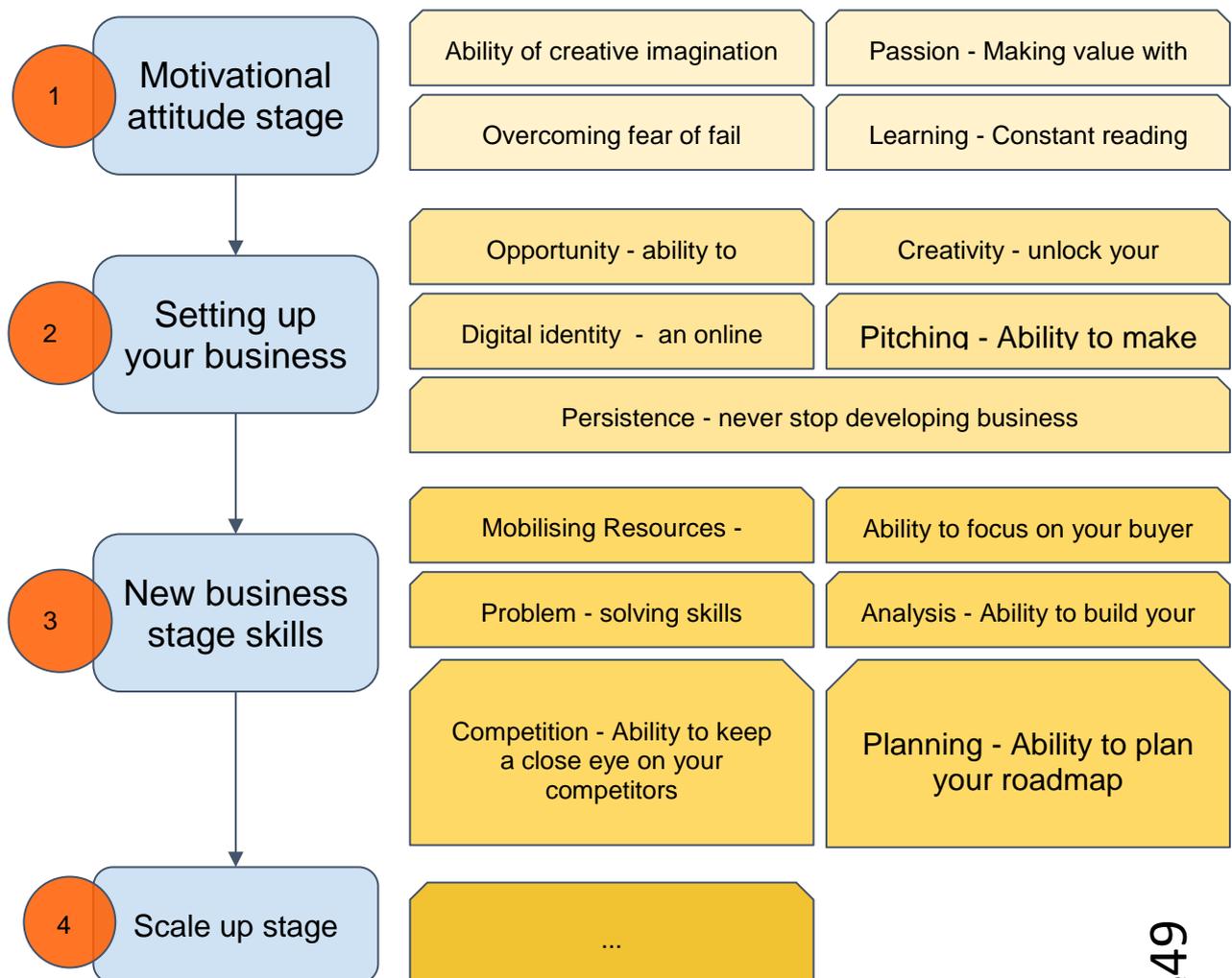
After the extensive review of the literature for this review, the main entrepreneurial skills that need to be developed among growth oriented entrepreneurs are: Customer Oriented; Strategic Development; Financial Management; Human Resource Management.

But the development of these competences is not enough in itself, because the following conditions must exist for any progress to be made:

1. The entrepreneur must be motivated to grow the business;
2. The peer-to-peer orientation of successful entrepreneurs is a critical element of any training program (mentors must also be motivated to work in this role);
3. Entrepreneurs should have expanded access to international networks, finance and markets.

⑧ Necessary soft skills for becoming a successful entrepreneur

Soft skills and different stages of the business development



The facilitator/ coach need to learn different soft skills at the different levels of the development of the business. As entrepreneur, when you start to think about the new business, your mental attitude should change from the someone else company employed aspect to the “self-employed”, “self-motivated” and “responsible for all” person. This takes a lot of effort, learning and trying with different outcomes.

To help you to be able to support the entrepreneur to manage this transition, soft skills are grouped into the following four stages: 1) Preparation stage - a motivational attitude, 2) Setting up the business stage, 3) New business stage skills and 4) Scale-up stage.

Preparation stage - a motivational attitude

Ability of creative imagination

Creative imagination and goal visualisation is where it all begins if you like to increase probability of reaching the goals. All top performers, regardless of profession, know the importance of picturing themselves succeeding in their minds before they actually do in reality. Boxing legend Muhammad Ali was always stressing the importance of seeing himself victorious long before the actual fight. As a struggling young actor, Jim Carrey used to picture himself being the greatest actor in the world. These top performers, among many others, have mastered the technique of positive visualisation and openly credit it as a success tactic.

We used to say about this method as careful planning - but planning starts where you have all needed information for mathematical precision of the plan. Here, the entrepreneur is allowing the creativity mind to express what he/she want to become, how will feel when the goal will be achieved, how this endeavour will change life of the target customers.

Overcoming fear of fail

To be able to overcome fear, the entrepreneur need a mindset preparation. It is important to be as enthusiastic about failure as he/she is about success. He/she need to be aware about risks and failure on one side and success and welfare on the other side. It is the entrepreneur’s decision on where he/she want to give focus. The entrepreneur should replace fear with persistence on achieving the goals and optimism. The entrepreneur can analyse all potential outcomes even though he/she could not be aware about the overcome; learn to think more positively; identify the worst case scenario; have a contingency plan; focus on what the entrepreneur can control; and reduce risk by taking incremental steps. It’s going to be uncomfortable at times but he/she can overcome this with loving what he/she is doing and reading the goals again again.

It is good that the entrepreneur don’t know everything in advance. The business will grow gradually and the steps will be depending on it. The entrepreneur should not wait that all “traffic lights” will be “green” before starting the journey. It also means that he/she will take some risks.

The entrepreneur should think of the company as a ship that it is in a terrified storm. And there are all sorts of waves attacking the company and as long as you are just hitting them above water, you are fine. The entrepreneur can always withstand the attacks that are above water with the support of the team. The entrepreneur just need to focus on understanding what would be an under-the-water shot that could take the whole thing down, and to only step in or protect against those kinds of problems.

Passion - Making value with the business

This is something which creates conflict for all business newcomers - “why be an entrepreneur if the money isn't the reason? Does focusing on more than the bottom line of your balance sheet add to your company's value?” Richard Branson, a man behind 400 companies of Virgin Group certainly thinks so. Virgin's commitment to environmental and societal causes has contributed to employee happiness and the success of his business.

Creating money requires a big dream (something you're passionate about) and a set of beliefs that makes you think you can achieve it. If you pursue something just for the potential big pay day, every entrepreneur can guarantee you one thing - you will fail miserably! The entrepreneur must be aware that when you start something strictly for money, your heart is not into it, which makes it impossible to persevere through the difficulties and challenges you will face. With your business you need to foresee the difference you are making - and you need to believe it. Saying that, money needs to be consequence of your action, not the predominant goal.

Learning - Constant reading habit

World's highest achievers have one thing in common: it isn't a high IQ, nor is it an incredible lucky streak, but their appreciation for constant learning through reading and practicing. The world is bursting with learning. There are several million business books, 3 000 TED talks, 10 000 MOOCs, hundreds of thousands of e-learning courses, and millions of self-published articles on platforms such as LinkedIn and Medium. The modern learner has very little time for learning –less than 1% of their time, according to Bersin, a division of Deloitte. Plus, it is more important than ever to learn continuously as the shelf life of skills shortens and career paths meander and lengthen.

Learning is the single best investment of our time that we can make. As Benjamin Franklin said, “*An investment in knowledge pays the best interest.*” This insight is fundamental to succeeding in our knowledge economy, yet few people realise it. Luckily, once you do understand the value of knowledge, it's simple to get more of it. The entrepreneur must dedicate to constant learning.

Setting up your business stage

Opportunity - ability to recognise it

Opportunity recognition means proactively brainstorming a new business venture or expansion idea. In essence, it is a discovery of an idea to create new businesses and the search of information regarding market and technological possibilities. Opportunity is a deviation between current expectations and a potentially better situation; a favourable or advantageous circumstance or combination of circumstances.

Good or investment-worthy an idea is, the “ah-ha” moment of inspiration is the on-ramp to entrepreneurship. At the real heart of entrepreneurship are three things:

- the ability to identify or recognise opportunity,
- the ability to review or assess opportunity, and last but not least,
- the ability to successfully execute and realise opportunity.

While these tasks seem straightforward on paper, the skills needed for each one are very different, and it is difficult to be good at all of them. To be a successful entrepreneur, you need to excel at all three, all at the same time. The starting point of any business organisation is a powerful idea. An idea worth thinking about, an idea worth enhancing and developing, an idea worth converting into a business.

Creativity - unlock your passion and potential

Creativity is part of every business. Some vocations, like software engineers, use the creativity on daily basis to reinvent their code while others, like tailors, sometimes hiding these skills. But all of them shows their creativity in their product or service - and customers supports it with the purchase. So, how to improve our ability to be creative?

It is important to know that we cannot be creative all the time. Creativity is synonym of free thinking, non judging, open mindedness, limitless, without rules. If a model of a business is a stick, creativity is on the opposite side to the systematisation, standards, strict times and rules. You cannot be creative and obey strict time rule - you cannot say that you will develop some new, never seen product, tomorrow from 1pm to 5pm. That's why the developers never have tidy desk and are stereotyped as bushy hair people with glasses while business managers should be in the suit with the tie.

Digital identity - build your online presence

In order to create a professional digital identity, the entrepreneur first need to understand “what makes you, YOU”. They need to know who they are, what their story is, and most importantly stick with that story. Company brands that have been successful were those that had a personal story that touched on emotion. By understanding the strengths and weaknesses, they will be able to highlight those aspects that set them apart from other people. This regards all aspects of their personal brand: in person and online. The entrepreneurs have to reflect their true self in everything they do, or they risk not looking credible. This means managing the various social platforms they are already on. They have to do a social media audit to ensure their digital platforms conform to the personal brand and how they would like others to perceive them. Even better, as coach, you can be a peer to evaluate their various digital platforms for an outside opinion!

Pitching - Ability to make a 20 seconds presentation of what you are doing

Having a good idea and great business model may not always take the entrepreneur far if they don't know how to present that idea. It's very key to be able to explain the idea in a well-structured format and convey the message in a way that captures the audience. Pitching brings all the knowledge the entrepreneur have gained together regarding business modeling.

Pitching skills will help you overcome the inherent fear of public speaking and aims at teaching you the structure of a successful pitch and effective communication. Always remember that a good idea is not good in its own right. You have to be able to present it effectively and “sell it”.

Persistence - never stop developing your business

There are a million ways to do the business. One system is better than others and over time, things are changing. Technology changes. Attitude of customers changes. So, business owners should change their business too. This is just as true for developing the businesses as it is for personal development. The entrepreneurs can always do better after they went through the process of first development.

Secrets of growth behind companies like Amazon and Uber is in a new model, called “growth hacking”. The phrase is only five years old and already gain significant momentum. You can Grow Hack offline or online - it is important that you do not need to use standard or high cost channels for getting feedback from the customers and then act according to the results. The entrepreneur need to change the business model according to the rules of the customers even if they have only startup.

New business stage skills

Mobilising Resources - Outsourcing and sharing economy

There was a time in business when the entrepreneurs need to have all the knowledge. Carpenters made the whole house - from flooring, cabinetry to door installation. Now, business is changed. Opportunities, due to the vast communication network, are now extensive. Some services, like coaching, once too expensive for the young entrepreneur, are now easy reachable.

Model is calling outsourcing - giving something to be developed to somebody outside your company. There are many websites which connects clients with the freelancer (somebody who is in general self-employed and has knowledge the entrepreneurs need). Examples of such websites are www.freelancer.com and www.PeoplePerHour.com. These platforms allow millions to connect and share assets with minimal expense, sometimes even for free.

Problem-solving skills

Problem solving is the act of defining a problem; determining the cause of the problem; identifying, prioritising and selecting alternatives for a solution; and implementing a solution. Having good, strong problem solving skills can make a huge difference to your career.

A fundamental part of every manager's role is finding ways to solve any problem that will arise. So, as entrepreneur, being a confident problem solver is really important to your success. Much of that confidence comes from having a good process to use when approaching a problem. With one, you can solve problems quickly and effectively. Without one, your solutions may be ineffective, or you'll get stuck and do nothing, with sometimes painful consequences. As entrepreneur, you need to stick to four step model: 1. Definition of the problem, 2. Generating alternatives, 3. Evaluation and selection of best alternative, 4. Implement the solution.

Analysis - Ability to build your analytical skills

In the Digital Age that we live in, in order to be able to run a business – either a startup or large company - it is really important to build strong analytical skills. Collecting, organizing, analyzing and interpreting data plays a key role in running successfully a business. It is clear to all entrepreneurs of all ages that data is a powerful weapon and, if used wisely, it can help you achieve your goals faster and more effectively and outrun the competition.

Analytical skill is the ability to visualize, articulate, and solve both complex and uncomplicated problems and concepts and make decisions that are sensible and based on available information. Such skills include demonstration of the ability to apply logical thinking to gathering and analyzing information, designing and testing solutions to problems, and formulating plans.

Your buyer - Ability to focus on your buyer when developing product or service

The entrepreneur has to answer and reflect on the following questions:

What does your startup / company do? Who does it serve, and how is it different or unique?

The customer value proposition is the keystone for effective product marketing activities. It brings together customer intelligence, competitive insight, and product valuation. It delivers a concise, supportable statement of the product's value. It quantifies how that value is realized based on all of the target user's likely product experiences. The customer value proposition provides a focused approach to understand the target user in the context of your product.

To develop an effective product, it is necessary to measure the degree of fit (coherence) between the values and expectations of the customer and the value proposition of the company. It is strategic to make changes in order to adjust the product on the basis of the client's suggestions, or point to different kind of customers.

Competition - Ability to keep a close eye on your competitors

In the modern world, overstuffed with all kinds of content and information noise, you have to dramatically stand out from the competition to be seen. While there are many ways to try, one of the easiest way to perform better is to learn from your competitors. And doing it much better. If you're doing the same thing as everyone else, how do you expect to stand out? Or worse, why should anyone buy from you if they're already buying the same at other places.

This is why competitive analysis is so important.

Planning - Ability to plan your roadmap

The answers done to the following questions asked by the facilitator/ coach will guide the entrepreneur to understand the importance of the planning ability:

“What will your business be like in three years? Do you have a road map to get from today to your envisioned tomorrow? Will you be a few steps closer to realising your vision by next year?”

No one can predict the future. But if you don't change anything, the future won't be any different from the past.

Strategy means consciously choosing to be clear about your company's direction. With this knowledge, you're in a much better position to respond proactively to the changing environment.

In short - you need steps and deadlines for your business to know if you are doing well or not. It is recurring process which needs to be followed regularly, normally every quarter of the year.

Going Digital - and online

If 85% of all companies are thinking about the digital transformation - isn't the right time to think about it at the startup of the company? The reason for that is dead simple - your customers!

Internet is part of your daily activity. It is not something used occasionally and it is not just about social media. Internet is base for all business communications and customer convenience is probably the most important factor that 71% of the customers thinks they will get better price online. Internet also means access to world-wide market and exploitation of global competition.

Usage of digital resources have two different areas - internal and external. Internal digitalisation means how we can organise our internal processes and external digitalisation means how our customers can access us, buy from us and be supported from us. While external digitalisation is almost always online, significant companies are doing internal digitalisation still on their computers and servers on their premises. In recent years, cloud based solutions are coming forward and leading new transformation - off the premises digitalisation - going cloud.

KEY POINTS

- Soft skills are very important for the success of the entrepreneur
- As facilitator/ coach, help the entrepreneur to reflect and understand which are the needed soft skills and help him/ her to develop it

⑨ Process of coaching for development of entrepreneurial soft skills

An idea not coupled with action will never get any bigger than the brain cell it occupied.

Arnold H. Glasow- American businessman and author (1905-1998)

For assisting the entrepreneur, the coach will have to know:

- a) how to assist the entrepreneur in developing the soft skills for having success (see chapter 4 and 10 IO1)
- b) how to use different methods in order to create an innovative training plan (see chapter 6 from IO1)
- c) how to apply the methods for generating ideas by choosing the appropriate learning method
- d) how the ideas are generated and tested (see chapter 4 from IO2)

The steps that the coach is going through for assisting the entrepreneur

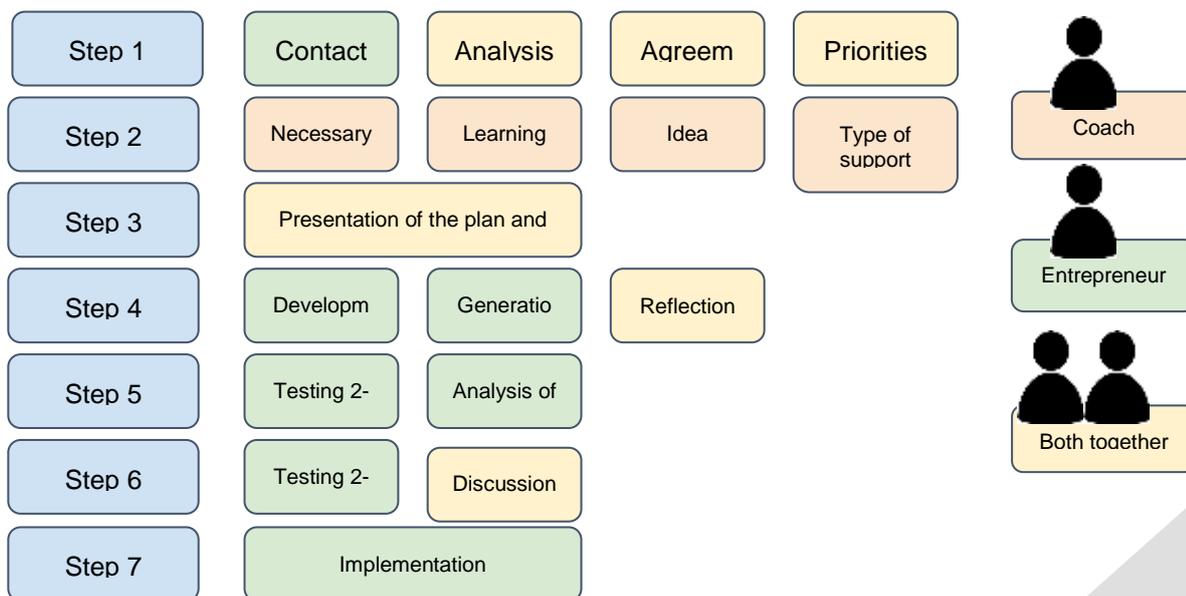
In estimating the steps that you, as facilitator/ coach is going through for sustaining the entrepreneur in solving the problems and developing the business, the following aspects are taken into consideration:

- the entrepreneur managing a less than 5 years seniority business are dealing with a lack of time, being involved in managing the day by day problems
- the entrepreneurs want to find easily practical solutions for the problems they encounter
- the entrepreneurs are creative people but have short time to develop their creativity
- the entrepreneurs want to develop the business by solving the problems appeared in their business through developing new products, new services, different processes or by starting a new branch of their business
- the role of the coach is to assist the entrepreneur to learn how to apply different methods, in order to discover by him/herself the best solution, to motivate them to reflect on the situation/ problem, not to give her/him quick answers or solutions
- ideas are the results of the creativity and ingenuousness of the human being, but are not necessarily the result of a concentrated or organised thinking process and can appear spontaneously and random¹

- ideas are a resource for diversification of the business, that is necessary for all the SME's and a way to keep up with the constant economic and social challenges¹

¹<http://idei-de-afaceri.eu/wp/metode-de-generare-de-idei-de-afaceri/>

The proposed coaching process has 7 steps. These steps are detailed in the following pages and they are linked with the information from all chapters of the handbook.



Step 1

1.1 The coach contacts the entrepreneur.

The coach is acting in the first meeting as a consultant. Due to the trusting relationship with the entrepreneur, the coach (he/she) can organise a meeting to discuss about the problems and/or projects of the entrepreneur. Other situation for contacting the entrepreneur is when an entrepreneur is seeking for consultancy, the consultant can introduce the benefits of developing the business by using the coaching process developed through the MULTiENT Coach project.

A good opportunity to contact the entrepreneurs are the events with networking organised by the associations of entrepreneurs, when the consultant can find a topic related to generating ideas and to introduce the benefits of the process.

1.2 The coach and the entrepreneur analyses the current situation

Using reflective questions and the SWOT analyse, the coach and the entrepreneur analyse the current situation of the company. The coach elaborate the SWOT analyse during the discussions (see the coaching fiche template).

1.3 The coach and the entrepreneur sets the agreement on process

In order to continue, the coach discusses about the benefits of the process and agree with the entrepreneur regarding the following steps. It is very important that the entrepreneur agrees that only by developing his/ her soft skills, changes in the organisation can be introduced.

1.4 The coach and the entrepreneur sets the priorities for the identified problems

After receiving the agreement, the coach, using also reflective questions, helps the entrepreneur to decide on the priorities regarding the identified problems/ development opportunities.

At the end of the meeting they agree on the next meeting.

Step 2

During this step the coach have to decide (using the knowledge from the chapters in IO1, his/her experience and the experience gained during the training) on the strategy to be applied for the individual situation of the entrepreneur. The coach will decide on:

- the *necessary soft skills* for becoming a successful entrepreneur in accordance with the stage/ current situation (chapter 10)
- the *learning method* that is suitable for the entrepreneur in order to help him/her to develop the necessary soft skills and to introduce in the organisation the generating ideas methods
- the appropriate *methods for generating ideas* taking into account the needs of the entrepreneur and of the organisation, the organisational culture
- the *type of support* (see chapter 4 IO1) for each stage of the development of the skills of the entrepreneur.

The coach establishes a plan for coaching with objectives, actions and expected results and organise the next meeting with the entrepreneur.

This is a very important step for the coach because on it depends the future development of the relationship with the entrepreneur and the results of the process.

Also, in this step, by combining the needed skills to be developed and the different methods of learning, the strategy for developing the soft skills will be tailored to the needs and personality of each entrepreneur.

Step 3

In this step the coach works with the entrepreneur discussing about the soft skills that must be developed, the methods for generating ideas and the plan for organising and implementing the learning activity (see also chapters 6, 7 and 8 from IO1). Depending on the necessary skills to be developed and the stage, the coach will expand or narrow down the meeting and the exercises with the entrepreneur.

Step 4

The entrepreneur, using the coaching plan, works on developing the soft skills and applies the first method for generating ideas; discuss with the coach the results. If the results are not satisfying, the entrepreneur applies the second method. The process can continue until the results are satisfactory.

During the discussions with the coach, the entrepreneur will be asked to reflect on the actions done. The coach can use questions like these:

- a) What worked?
- b) What progress you have made?
- c) What didn't worked?
- d) What improvements can you bring to make more progress?
- e) What is the next action you can do to register progress?

Also, these questions can be used by the entrepreneur to assess the progress by himself.

Step 5

The entrepreneur choose 2-3 ideas from the ones generated in step 4 and test them (by making a short study regarding the estimated costs generated during the implementation process versus estimated benefits, or by creating a prototype - if possible and asking the opinion of the potential clients, or using other methods, see also IO2).

If the conclusions are satisfying, the entrepreneur can go to the next step.

Step 6

The entrepreneur fill in the Business Plan and discuss it with the coach

Step 7

The entrepreneur implements the Business Plan and discuss it with the coach.

The entrepreneurs have usually a lot of tasks to manage in a short period of time. In order to see the results immediately and to continue to work with the coach, the coach will adapt the coaching plan and if some methods do not give the expected results in time, they must be changed. It is important to keep the entrepreneur motivation at an optimum level. Also, it is important for the entrepreneur to obtain good results in short time, due to the fact that usually, the entrepreneurs are busy and they look for fast solutions.

KEY POINTS

- As facilitator/ coach take into consideration the learning style of the entrepreneur, the time that he has, the priorities that he sets to the problems
- It is very important not to train the entrepreneur, but to make him/ her to reflect more on the needed soft skills
- The steps proposed for facilitating/ coaching are not a “must do it like this”; it is an opened process, so adapt it to the needs and progress of the entrepreneur

⑩ Conclusions

This handbook has presented comprehensive material on facilitating training and support for young businesses.

The topics have covered the full range of necessary skills and competences, hard and soft skills as well as the overall entrepreneurial attitude which is critical for businesses to thrive.

Transmitting this attitude and walking the talk is the key competence for any facilitator of entrepreneurial training as well as actors in continuing support systems.

In an ever faster changing world “intelligence is the ability to adapt to change” (Stephen Hawking). Therefore active learning, practising and reflecting experience is key for facilitators.

Ideally young entrepreneurs and their supporters are not in a teacher - student relationship, but form a community of learning and practice, in which each individual contributes its own specific knowledge and experience. The entrepreneurial experience is on the same level as the specific conceptual background, facilitation and consultancy background of the facilitator.

Therefore the material presented in this handbook is meant to be a starting point for professional self development.

New material should be communicated to the community of facilitators and will be added as needed. The mobile application which will be developed in this project is a promising format for adding such material in a very dynamic way.

The initial trainings and consultations which have contributed to the development of this handbook have involved a broad range of future facilitators, from experienced supporters of SME with more than 20 years of experience to very junior young student entrepreneurs and facilitators, from those experienced in the support of small SME in traditional sectors to facilitators deeply embedded in the most advanced IT entrepreneurial communities.

Therefore the material presented can be trusted to be relevant and validated by experience and up to date expertise.

The authors welcome feedback and suggestions for further development.

In particular we welcome reports from cases of application of this handbook.

We wish all of the users success and a lot of interesting personal encounters while using the handbook.

Appendices with the exercises

Exercises Chapter 3 Consideration about adult learning

QUESTIONNAIRE – ADULTS LEARNING STYLES

This questionnaire will help you pinpoint your learning preferences so that you could select learning experiences that suit your style and having a greater understanding of those that suit the style of others.

There is no time limit to this questionnaire. The accuracy of the results depends on how honest you can be. There are no right or wrong answers.

If you agree more than you disagree with a statement put a tick by it.

If you disagree more than you agree put a cross by it.

Be sure to mark each item with either a tick or cross.

<input type="radio"/>	1.	I have strong beliefs about what is right and wrong, good and bad.	
<input type="radio"/>	2.	I often act without considering the possible consequences	
<input type="radio"/>	3.	I tend to solve problems using a step-by-step approach	
<input type="radio"/>	4.	I believe that formal procedures and policies restrict people	
<input type="radio"/>	5.	I have a reputation for saying what I think, simply and directly	
<input type="radio"/>	6.	I often find that actions based on feelings are as sound as those based on careful thought and analysis	
<input type="radio"/>	7.	I like the sort of work where I have time for thorough preparation and implementation	
<input type="radio"/>	8.	I regularly question people about their basic assumptions	
<input type="radio"/>	9.	What matters most is whether something works in practice	
<input type="radio"/>	10.	I actively seek out new experiences	
<input type="radio"/>	11.	When I hear about a new idea or approach I immediately start working out how to apply it in practice	
<input type="radio"/>	12.	I am keen on self-discipline such as watching my diet, taking regular exercise, sticking to a fixed routine, etc.	
	13.	I take pride in doing a thorough job	
<input type="radio"/>	14.	I get on best with logical, analytical people and less well with spontaneous, "irrational"	
<input type="radio"/>	15.	I take care over the interpretation of data available to me and avoid jumping to conclusions	

<input type="radio"/>	16. I like to reach a decision carefully after weighing up many alternatives	
<input type="radio"/>	17. I'm attracted more to novel, unusual ideas than to practical ones	
<input type="radio"/>	18. I don't like disorganized things and prefer to fit things into a coherent pattern	
<input type="radio"/>	19. I accept and stick to laid down procedures and policies as long as I regard them as an efficient way of getting the job done	
<input type="radio"/>	20. In discussions I like to get straight to the point	
<input type="radio"/>	21. I thrive on the challenge of tackling something new and different	
<input type="radio"/>	22. I believe in coming to the point immediately	
<input type="radio"/>	23. I am careful not to jump to conclusions too quickly	
<input type="radio"/>	24. I pay meticulous attention to details before coming to a conclusion.	

The Questionnaire is scored by awarding one point for each ticked item. There are no points for crossed items. Simply indicate on the lists below which items were ticked by circling the appropriate question number.

2	7	1	5
4	13	3	9
6	15	8	11
10	16	12	19
17	24	14	20
21	23	18	22

TOTAL

Activist

Reflector

Theorist

Pragmatist

Exercises Chapter 5 Facilitators versus consultant

Please identify what role is necessary (consultant or facilitator) in the following situations:

<i>Client need</i>	<i>Consultant / Facilitator</i>
Research on competition	
Guide a group to accomplish strategic planning	
Advise on business subject matters	
Enable a group of people to do team building	
Analysis of investment project	
Recommendation regarding human resources policy	

Chapter 7 - Facilitating entrepreneurial competences using ICT

Type	Example of Good & Innovative Practice	Example Links and Competences acquired
training	Work-based learning for non-traditional students based on full-time employment or entrepreneurs	Types of platforms and Links
Simulation	<p>The group's task is to design and market a product to present to the "Dragons Den" The Dragons (managers, teachers or leaders /coaches) will ask questions about the product, its quality, and money making prospects and after the presentation will decide which groups product they wish to invest in. (Based on the television show, Dragons Den /or Shark Tank).</p> <p>Teams have 3.5 hours to form and create a business product or service and define a market. They need to be clear about their target market, who exactly is going to buy their product or services and how the product or service will be a benefit to consumers. After lunch, they put together a 'pitch' for investment from the Dragons.</p> <p>Equipment Required: Computer, Pens, papers and any other presentation resources Space Required: Small. Indoors or outdoors. Group Size: split into smaller groups (3-5 participants).</p>	<p>Exercise provides the opportunity for participants to engage with the following issues and demonstrate the behaviours and skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creative Problem Solving Strategic Planning Providing Timely & Effective Feedback Respecting Confidentiality Assertive Behaviour Effective Communications Evaluating Opportunities Financial Control It tools Core Competences Demonstrated during the exercises Competing Collaborating Compromising Originality of contributions Value of contributions Persuasion – Ability to persuade others <p>And also, ability to demonstrate the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research – Establish and provide evidence of what

		<p>customers want</p> <p>2. Product – Demonstrate that your product satisfies customers needs</p> <p>3. Price – To justify how have arrived at a price, so customers can afford the product but to make a profit</p> <p>4. Promotion –how will promote the product...which channels will use?</p> <p>5. Places – where will sell the product?</p>
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Exercises Chapter 8 - Necessary soft skills

Preparation stage - a motivational attitude

Vision - Ability of creative imagination

Exercise 1 - Vision Board

Vision boards are one of the best visualisation tools which makes your business idea more tangible, more powerful, releases fears and is constant reminder of what you want to achieve.

“By putting a vision board somewhere you can see it daily, you will prompt yourself to visualise your ideal life on a regular basis. And that’s important because visualisation activates the creative powers of your subconscious mind and programs your brain to notice available resources always there but escaped your notice.” - Jack Canfield, serial entrepreneur

Steps for the exercise:

1. Use Powerpoint, Google Slides or similar
2. Have a clear idea of what is your “moment of success”: It seems obvious. But if you don’t know with clarity where you want to arrive you can’t visualise it.
3. Draw in the centre of the paper your final goal - your workshop or your vision. Search for an appropriate picture on the net and place it on the board. Draw as many details as possible: Colours, emotions, peoples’ expressions, smells, the ambient....a good visualisation, to work, needs significant details. We need to help our mind to elaborate an image as true as possible to the scene.
4. Imagine the impact it will have on the people: See the effect that we bring about around us: an audience that applauds, a satisfied customer on gala receiving in your suit, a happy owner of a renovated shining car you just delivered.
5. Don’t forget to add your favourite picture of yourself in the board or picture of you where you want to be after this goal will be achieved

Some people said that they cannot draw them in the luxury car, with significant money etc. since this is not true. If you cannot imagine it, draw it, show to others without fear, you cannot achieve it. This is the first step to overcome the fear.

Print your vision board and hang it into your office. Whenever you feel stressed and without energy for your project, go to your vision board and read all details, try to feel the victory after getting this vision done. Use it as life enhancer, supporter and reminder of your dreams. You can have multiple vision boards and you can update them frequently to match your new subgoals.

There are hundreds of videos about the steps to prepare your vision board. Here is the one - <https://youtu.be/iamZEW0x3dM>

Risk Assuming - Overcoming fear of fail

Exercise 1

FRAMESTORM EXERCISE

Aim: Framestorm Exercise is an individual exercise aiming to help participants recognise and reframe their negative thoughts. Trainers should ask participants to insist in recognizing their negative thoughts which sometimes are hidden. Then trainers should ask each of them to share their thoughts with the rest of the group. This procedure helps participants realize that some negative thoughts (fears) are common to all people.

Estimated time: 25-30 minutes

Materials: Paper and pencil

Description:

Step 1: Write down your most persistent negative thoughts

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

- What is my current framing?
- Which emotional effects does this thought create in me?

- Does it make me more resourceful?
- Is that helping me get closer to my goal?
- If I continue to give life to this framing, what reality will I create?
- Do I want this scenario to become my reality?

Step 2: Framestorm perspectives

Read the different framestorm perspectives below and answer them. If you run out of energy in relation to a particular question, choose another one. Keep momentum until you have at least 10-15 alternative reframings. A framestorm process is not about criticizing and excluding options but about identifying options.

What does this situation look like from someone else's point of view?

- How would a wise person (a role model for you) view this situation?
- Looking back at the situation 10 or 20 years from now, what may be your constructive learning?
- If your friend or your child were in a similar situation, what advice would you give?
- If you were to reframe the situation in a humorous way, how might that sound?

Exercise 2

ACCOMPLISHMENTS LIST

Aim: Accomplishment list exercise is an individual exercise aiming to help participants to think about their achievements, their strengths and their feelings and then help them understand how those things will benefit them as entrepreneurs. By helping the participants identified what they have achieved and which are their most important strengths, we will help them to overcome the fear of fail and start thinking on a more entrepreneurial way.

Estimated time: 15 MINS

Materials: Accomplishments worksheet & Pens for all the group.

DESCRIPTION:

- Give each person in the group the "Accomplishments" worksheet.
- Ask them to think of three things they have worked towards and achieved in their lives.
- Ask them to identify the factors that contributed to their success.

- Invite each person in the group to share the things they accomplished, and discuss why each achievement made them feel the way they did.
- Discuss how this learning can be generalised to other areas of their lives.

After the exercise participants should devote some time to think how they might apply what they have learned in their daily lives to help them achieve future goals.

The key is to get participants to think about their strengths and then help them understand how those things will benefit them as entrepreneurs.

ACCOMPLISHMENT WORKSHEET

Think of things from any area of your life where you had to work at it to achieve and progress and complete the work sheet below -

List three accomplishments where you had to work hard to achieve

1.
2.
3.

How did these make you feel?

1.
2.
3.

How did you do it? How did you have the strength and courage and motivation to accomplish these things?

Why did you believe you could do this?

Exercise 3

POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY EXERCISE

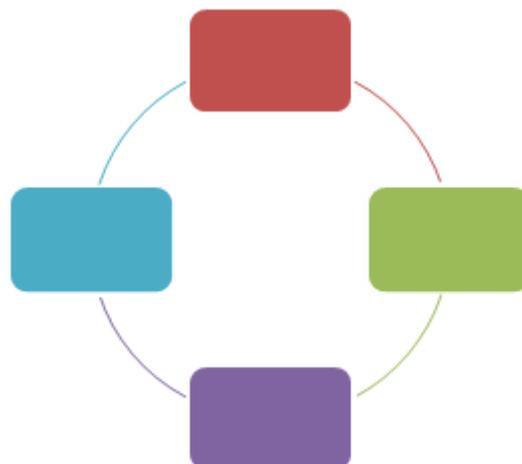
Aim: This is an individual exercise aiming to help participants focus their attention on the positive aspects of life and overcome the feeling of fear of fail.

Estimated time: 15-20 minutes

Materials: Paper and pencil

DESCRIPTION:

1. Write down 4 positive things that happened to you during the day
2. Write down 4 things you are grateful for in your life



Notes for trainers

- This is an individual exercise
- Ask participants to concentrate on it and then to share their answers with the rest of the group

Debriefing questions

- How do you feel hearing these positive aspects of your life?
- How often do you think positive?
- What are the obstacles to positive thinking?

Passion - Making value with your business

Exercise 1 - The \$5 dollars challenge

This exercise is built on the [Tina Seelig business game](#) which makes group of people think not just about the money, but about the difference they will make to accomplish the task.

Steps for the exercise:

1. Divide your audience into the groups of 5-7 people
2. Groups gets a task: they have 20 minutes to think how they will double initial investment of \$5 in the next 2 hours. Business plan needs to be sustainable, means it will work daily with the same group of customers
3. Tasks end with the 2 minutes presentation of business plan of each group

Exercise 2 - Test greater value of your business idea



If you are already in business or just starting - it is worth to see our idea from the perspective different from money. This exercise is prepared from the [John Blakey article](#) and describing following scheme we should incorporate in our business to success.

Steps for the exercise:

1. Give short explanation of the scheme
2. Every participant should draw this scheme in the middle of the paper
3. For every of four parts - they should define for their business or business idea

Questions for help:

- Do we get paid a sustainable value for what we do in the eyes of our owners/sponsors
- Are we great at what we do in the eyes of our customers?
- Does what we do make the world a better place in the eyes of our grandchildren?
- Do our employees love what we do and the way we do it?

Learning - Constant reading habit

Exercise 1

INTERVIEW A LOCAL ENTREPRENEUR

Aim: This exercise will help the participants to learn through the experiences of a successful local entrepreneur. Additionally this exercise will help the participants to develop a number of soft skills such as listening and business awareness skills, presentation skills, analytical skills, etc.

Materials:

- Tape recorder
- “Entrepreneur Interview” worksheet.
- Internet access to conduct research
- PowerPoint, Prezi or other presentation materials (e.g. a creative poster).

Preparation:

The participants will be encouraged to view relevant videos of entrepreneur interviews, e.g. Virgin Timber Lumber video or videos from national/local entrepreneurs, in their language. The facilitator will briefly explain the purpose and value of this activity, giving detailed instructions to students on how to best identify and approach possible entrepreneurs and persuade them to dedicate time for this interview.

Duration:

a) Preparation time before the interview: 3-5 hours (180 - 300 minutes) to conduct research for the interviewee and his/her business activity and company, b) interview time: 30-45', c) preparation of presentation: 2-4 hours (120 - 240 minutes). Total 10 hours maximum.

Description

Theme: Contribution of entrepreneurs in their communities.

Objective:

- a) Conduct a short research project to answer specific questions,
- b) draw on several sources,
- c) enhance their listening and business awareness skills,
- d) develop their presentation using multimedia components (graphics, images, music, sound),
- e) be able to present claims and findings in a logical and structured way,
- f) recognize entrepreneurs within their community and understand how relationships and customer service help make entrepreneurs successful, appreciating at the same time the role of entrepreneurs within their local context.

Main Steps for the activity:

1. Ask participants to come up with questions of their own to ask a local entrepreneur.
2. Ask participants to interview an entrepreneur in their community. This can be a relative, a business they or their parents, support, etc.
3. The teacher should provide a list of their own to the students who don't know or do not have access to any entrepreneurs.
4. Give students a deadline for completing the interview.
5. Let them know they will be responsible for sharing what they have learned with the rest of the class. They can prepare a PowerPoint, Prezi or other type of visual presentation to accompany their oral presentation. Ask them to be creative in their presentation.
6. Do their research about this specific entrepreneur or company in advance, before the interview takes place.

"ENTREPRENEUR INTERVIEW WORKSHEET"

Business name:

Entrepreneurs' name:

Dear Mr/Mrs (name), we are delighted and honour to have the privilege to interview you today and for devoting your time in this. We would be very interested in learning more about your entrepreneurial journey and about your future professional plans. We have prepared a list of questions for this purpose.

1. Can you tell us a few things about you? Your family status, education, professional experience, areas of interest.
2. What kind of business do you run?
3. How long have you been in business?
4. What was your inspiration for starting the business?
5. What is one thing you wish you would have known prior to starting your own business?
6. What kind of obstacles did you find on your way and how did you overcome these?
7. What is the No.1 mistake entrepreneurs do in their first steps?
8. What role has relationship building and networking played in the success of your business?
9. What advice do you have for entrepreneurs who are just starting now?
10. Why do you love what you do?
11. Do you have any plans for new products/services or new business activities?

Thank you for the time you have devoted to us, this is greatly appreciated.

Exercise 2

Growth Mindset

Aim: This exercise aims to help the participants understand the importance of growth mindset through the constant learning.

Materials:

- List with questions
- Blank paper
- Pens or pencils

Preparation:

The facilitator will briefly explain the purpose and value of this activity, giving detailed instructions to participants about the importance of constant learning and of growing mindset. The facilitator should explain to the participants how they can utilize the questions below by giving them practical tips.

Duration: 45 minutes

Description: Shifting from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset takes daily work. Participants should try to answer the questions below by asking themselves the questions. They can also print out the questions and post them on their place asking themselves on a daily base until their able to answer all of them.

Main Steps for the activity:

1. Ask participants to read carefully the 15 questions from the list below:

- What made you think hard on your life as entrepreneur or would-be-entrepreneurs?
- How will you challenge yourself?
- What can you learn from this experience or mistake?
- What would you do differently next time to make things work better?
- What else do you want to learn?
- What strategy can you try?
- Who can you ask for honest feedback?
- Did you work as hard as you could have?
- If it was too easy, how can you make it more challenging?
- Did you hold yourself to high expectations or did you accept “good enough”?
- Did you ask for help if you needed it?
- What can you do to manage distractions?
- Have you reviewed your work or logic for errors or flaws?
- Are you proud of the end result? Why or why not?
- What’s the next challenge to tackle?

2. Discuss with them each question in order to give clarifications

3. Give them printed the list and a blank paper and ask from them to answer them

4. Then facilitator will discuss the answers with the participants, the difficulties they faced, etc.

Exercise 3

Case Studies

Aim: Through the case studies participants will be able to understand the importance of constant learning by trial and error and through the experiment of different approaches.

Materials:

- Printed case studies

Preparation:

The facilitator should read the 2 case studies and prepare questions that will help the participants understand the main aim of the 2 case studies.

Facilitator has to highlight at the end to the participants the following regarding the importance of learning and developing new skills :

Do:

- Select a skill that is valued by your organization and manager
- Divide the skill up into smaller, manageable tasks
- Reflect on what you've learned and what you still want to accomplish

Don't:

- Try to learn in a vacuum — ask others for guidance and feedback
- Rely solely on your boss for advice — you may want to involve someone who isn't responsible for evaluating you
- Assume it's going to happen overnight — it usually takes at least six months to develop a new skill

Duration: 45 minutes

Description

Case study 1: Learn by trial and error

<https://www.hbrascend.in/topics/how-to-master-a-new-skill/>

Jaime Petkanics was a basic Excel user when she started her first job out of college. As a recruiter for JP Morgan, data analysis wasn't one of the required skills. However, a few months in, she was asked to build an Excel model that would track and report the success rates of campus recruiting efforts. "I was totally out of my element," she admits. "Excel is not a core part of a recruiter's job. I was focused on hiring people — that's what I was being measured on." But she had an interest in analysis (that's why she chose to do recruiting at an investment bank), and wanted to prove herself as a newcomer.

She started by learning as much as possible on her own. She found tutorials on Google, and watched instructional videos on YouTube. But she still struggled. "When I got stuck, I would ask bankers. They build models every day so I was able to leverage my connections and find people who had the right skills," she says. Over the course of two weeks, Jaime developed the model. "I didn't get it perfect the first time. There were mistakes in the formulas and people found errors," she says. But she continued to refine it, and because of her success, others asked her to take on similar projects. "Once people knew that I could pull data together quickly — and make sense of it — I started to get a lot of requests."

She admits this trial- and-error approach wasn't the most effective way to learn Excel but given

the immediacy of the need, it was necessary. By the time she left the job almost three years later, Excel and data analytics were strengths that helped her land her next position.

Case study 2: Experiment with different approaches

<https://www.hbrascend.in/topics/how-to-master-a-new-skill/>

Safia Syed, a regional finance controller at a global outsourcing company, noticed that any time she suggested an improvement to a financial or IT system, colleagues resisted. Her ideas went through numerous rounds of review and were heavily questioned. She decided that her communication style was hindering her, and needed to be changed. “I was given feedback a few times that I was too opinionated,” she says.

Safia started by reading books about how to persuade people effectively and joined Toastmasters, a non-profit educational organization. Through that program, she learned how to connect with stakeholders and present ideas in a more appealing way. Also, coincidentally during the same time, the president of Safia’s company started interviewing key employees to better understand what they did or did not like about their jobs. This provided Safia with a perfect opportunity. She explained her desire to see her ideas have more impact and the boss advised her to focus less on whysomething needed to be changed and more on how it could happen, including what she could do to make sure it did.

Safia realized she had been assuming that her colleagues understood what the problems were and how to fix them. She had been highlighting what needed to be done, and leaving it at that. With her new understanding in hand, she was able to try a different approach: she mapped out a process and pointed to the root causes. This helped her audience understand where they could make changes and how exactly she could help.

Safia has noticed a big difference in how colleagues respond to her suggestions: they are now more open to hearing them, and willing to work with her to implement them.

Setting up your business stage

Ability to recognise opportunity

Exercise 1

Brain Teaser - The 9 Dot Puzzle

Aim: To help the participants start thinking “outside the box” and utilise their analytical skills and problem solving skill to find the solution. This will cultivate their mindset and it will also help them in their entrepreneurial path.

Description: The most common difficulty with this puzzle is that people don’t draw lines outside the box, even though it is not stated that you are not allowed to. People usually think there is a boundary and they are not allowed to draw the lines outside.

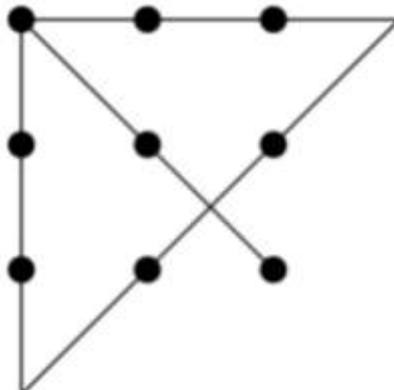
Materials: PowerPoint with 9 dots Puzzle

Estimated time: 5 MINUTES

Question 1: Could you connect the 9 dots with 4 connecting lines?
Don’t lift your writing instrument off the paper.



People often assume that you must stay within the box created by the dots.
Think outside the box...literally!



- What can be learned from this puzzle?
- Analyse the “problem” – find out what is allowed and what is not
- Define the problem from other perceptions / beliefs
- Don’t accept other people’s definitions of problems. They could be wrong or biased.
- If your definition of the problem is inaccurate, then no number of solutions will solve the problem.
- Ask yourselves: are the boundaries our own perceptions or are they reality?
- What are the possibilities if you push your boundaries?
- Remember: repeating the same wrong process with more vigour doesn’t work.

Exercise 2

Game of Alternative Uses

Aim: To help the participants start thinking “outside the box” and be creative. At the same time will be able to develop their analytical and and problem solving skills. This will cultivate their entrepreneurial mindset.

Estimated time: 2 minutes for each object

Materials: Pens and paper

DESCRIPTION:

Think of as many uses as possible for everyday objects E.g. Paper clips:

1. Hold pieces of paper together
2. Cufflinks
3. Earrings
4. Bookmark
5. Keeping headphones from getting tangled up
6. Thing to push router to restart.

Now do the exercise with the objects below:

- Chair
- Mug
- Brick
- Table
- Spoon Etc.

How do you feel about this activity? What parts of it do you particularly like? Dislike? Why? What did/do you enjoy about this activity? What was especially satisfying to you? What did/do you find frustrating about it?

<http://99u.com/articles/7160/test-your-creativity-5-classic-creative-challenges>

Creativity - unlock your passion and potential

Exercise 1 - Find your talents you are unaware of

This exercise is based on the [dr. Susan Biali business story and her advice](#). She found in her investigations that we know about our talents, just we do not use them or we forget about them. Use is for enhance your business life.

Steps for the exercise:

1. Announce this will be 5 minutes exercise with pen and paper
2. Lets participants do a mind map with their name and the word "TALENTS" in the middle (explain what the mind map is if this is necessary!)
3. Ask them to do the inventory of their talents which are written around the centre. Let's ask them to further break down the idea if it is too wide (for example, if the talent is music, let's break it further with "guitar player" and "drummer")

Questions for help:

- Are there things you like to do and other people have complimented you, but you dismissed their opinion?
- Is there something you would like to do but you didn't for some reasons?
- Notice when you lose track of time, or what you hate to stop doing - this is your passion and needs to be done more frequently.
- Think of what you loved to do as a child - before the grown-ups get to us with their ideas, most of us know exactly who we are and what would make us happiest

Digital identity - build your online presence

Exercise 1

GET test

Aim: Through this exercise the participants will be able to identify in which scale they have a number of entrepreneurial characteristics. According to the results that they will receive they will be able to build their online presence.

Estimated time: 30 minutes

Materials: Online GET Test <http://www.get2test.net/>

Tutors should familiarise themselves with the test and its support materials before the programme. It can be found here:

<http://www.get2test.net/>

The GET test identifies 5 characteristics that ought to underpin enterprising behaviour:

- Need for Achievement
- Need for Autonomy
- Creative Tendency
- Calculated Risk
- Locus of Control

It also gives an overall score for the test where a higher score suggests you may be more enterprising. This test is not scientific – and is more of a development tool and it is important to make that clear to participants.

Exercise 2

BRAND U

(From Young Business Leaders Project (2012-2014))

Aim: To help participants identify their strengths and learn to present themselves in an assertive and confident way.

Estimated time: 40 minutes

Materials: A4 sheets for each participant, various magazines, scissors and glues.

DESCRIPTION:

1. Think of the following questions and then create a collage which describes your **abilities** as a person and as a (future) professional. Add a **tag line** to your personal brand. (Imagine this activity as part of the creation of your digital identity for the promotion of your business)

You can use pictures from the magazines, drawings or any object that can best describe your personality.

- Identify the primary "**product**" you have to offer to others (service, resource, special ability, etc.)
- Identify your **core values**. What really matters to you?
- Identify your **passions**. What things or ideas do you love?
- Identify your **talents**. What have you always been recognized for?
- What do you **do better than most other people**? What skills do people seem to notice in you?

(An example of a professional coach's tag line: "A visionary realist to help you discover and manifest your dreams")

3. Finally, give a 1-2 min. presentation of your collage.

Notes for trainers

- Give a pair of scissors and glue to each participant and ask them to share the magazines among them and cut out any pictures they find appealing
- Encourage participants to be innovative and relaxed
- Humor is an essential part of the process

Debriefing questions

- Was the process of advertising yourself difficult or easy for you?
- How do you feel about the final outcome? Is it representative of you?
- What are the obstacles- if any- in presenting yourself confidently?

Pitching - Ability to make a 20 seconds presentation of what you are doing

Exercise 1 - Let's start pitching-Telling a story

Aim: This exercise will help the participants develop their pitching skills and be able to present an idea or product in a very limited time highlighting the most important characteristics.

This exercise is split into two parts. Part A and Part B.

Part A: Slides Karaoke

A number of random slides are shown in a specific sequence and the student presenting has to tell a story while the slides are showing and transitioning. After 2 slides or so, another student has to come up and continue the story from where it was left off.

The goal of the exercise is to teach the students to talk, help them overcome anxiety and inhibitions associated with the fear of public speaking-shake off their stage fright, and gets them used to improvising and thinking on their feet.

Part B: One-minute pitch.

Introduction:

Example video 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i6O98o2FRHw>

Example video 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3xn88qYx00Q>

The students will be given a random product for which they will be asked to speak about for one minute. They will have 3 minutes to prepare what they want to say and then one minute to present it. The goal is to use up the entire minute for presenting.

The point of this exercise is not to talk specifics about the product or the business idea they will be randomly assigned. The point for them is to get up "on stage" and in front of everyone and talk for one minute non-stop, so as to begin overcoming any anxiety or inhibitions they may have about public speaking. Another reason is for them to begin to appreciate "presenting time": how long it takes to say what they have prepared and make best use of the time available.

Example business ideas to give participants (companies they probably know): Google; Apple; Nespresso; Ryan Air; IKEA; AirBnB; Twitter; McDonald's; Dell; Amazon; PayPal; Dropbox; Evernote; Eventbrite; Ebay; Zara

Persistence - never stop developing your business

Exercise 1 - test your idea!

When you are working on a business idea, you need to know how to test it

Have you been working with an untested assumption? What are small tests you can create to get quick, actionable feedback on those assumptions?

Steps for the exercise:

1. Make groups of five people
2. Select common product or service which you want to test (for example - sell unique local souvenirs over the internet)
3. Give 15 minutes to brainstorm on the ideas, **how to get free feedback** on the product or service
4. Every group present the results of the brainstorming
5. Comments on the ideas

Exercise 2 - test your Invitation to purchase

Before every sale, you will need to make conclusion statement - your invitation for the customer to buy your product or service. So, test two versions of your invitation sentences.

1. Every participant prepare on one A4 paper two versions of the invitations to purchase (10 minutes)
2. Let them stick it to the wall
3. Give to participants small stickers - as many as there are invitations on the wall
4. Every participants read every invitation, select which he/she prefers, and put a sticker to the selected invitation. Write on the paper why!
5. Every participant get their invitations and analyse it.

New business stage skills

Mobilising Resources - Outsourcing and sharing economy

Exercise 1 - Breaking tasks into manageable parts

If you want to mobilise resources, outsource specific product or service, you need to know how to break complete project into the manageable parts, which can be given to someone else to develop.

Steps for the exercise:

1. Select participants into groups of 4-5 people in one group
2. Select a unique task which needs to be developed by the outsourced team (for example, website). It needs to be the same task for every group so at the end groups can compare how the exercise was prepared
3. Every group present their work, other groups comment it

Problem-solving skills

Exercise 1

POOCH: PROBLEM, OPTIONS, OUTCOMES AND CHOICES

Aim: This exercise will help the participants learn the “POOCH” method, a 5-step process to problem solving. It assists in solving simple problems presented as case studies and offers an effective method to work through more complex decisions. The POOCH model aids participants to think critically. It is a strategy that allows to clarify issues by using logic in judging information. Estimated time: 45 minutes

Material: POOCH hand-outs for each group of the participants, pens.

DESCRIPTION

Step 1: Introduction (5 minutes)

- Explain to the participants that POOCH stands for Problems, Options, Outcomes and Choices and that it is a tool to foster critical thinking.
- Divide the participants into the groups of 3.
- Provide the participants with the POOCH hand-outs and problem scenarios or statements.

Step 2: Problem hunting (10 minutes)

- Ask the participants to identify the problem and record it in the diagram.

Step 3: Generating scenarios and options (10 minutes)

- Ask the participants to identify and generate reasonable possible scenarios and record in the Options section.

Step 4: Outcomes harvesting (10 minutes)

- Encourage the participants to state positive, negative and interesting points relating to each Option and to record in the Outcomes section.

Step 5: Identifying choices and argumentation (10 minutes)

- Ask groups to choose the most appropriate choice to the problem identified.
- Ask each group to present their choices and provide the arguments.

By the end of the activity, the ‘critical mind’ will likely be ‘warmed up’. A short evaluation from

Handbook for Coaches of Entrepreneurs and Training

the groups should be delivered. First, each individual group should discuss within their group personal reflections on how they felt and if this process was effective, what are other options and critiques of this activity. (5-10 minutes).

After a few minutes, all groups should join with the facilitator to share their individual problem/solution scenarios, and also their evaluation of the experience and processes of the activity.

This activity is very flexible. Depending on the level of the group, scenarios can be adapted to be more or less complex. If your course is discussing particular topics (for example: human rights, community health, environmental sustainability), adapt stories, or create stories that fit the topic.

Additional Material:

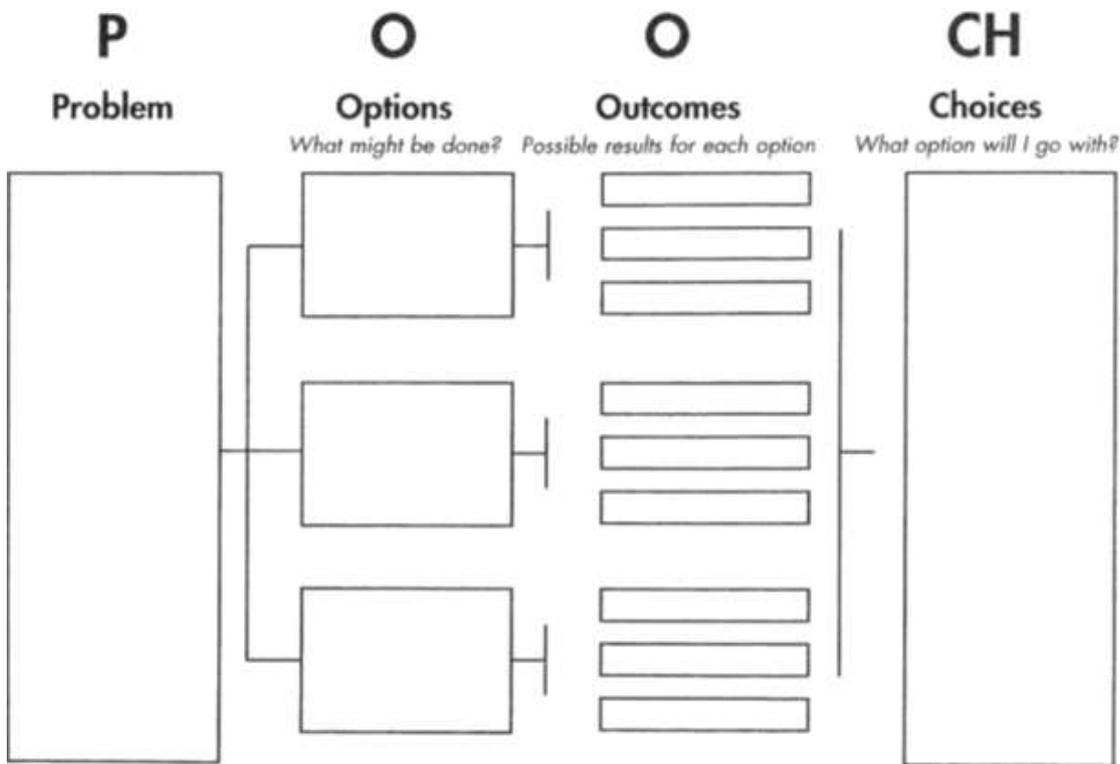
POOCH hand-out:

<https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/736x/83/93/2f/83932f00b4e6b860289e5fe2e43dbb1c.jpg>

Example Topics/ Scenarios:

- Because of state budget cuts, your municipality could only afford to hire one trash collector for your entire neighbourhood. Because of the increased workload and long hours, a single trash collector cannot possibly handle all the work to be done. Your neighbourhood is starting to get a bad reputation because the neighbourhood is looking dirty and old. What would you propose to your city officials to solve this problem?
- A growing problem in your community, and society at large, is that of childhood obesity. A national study was just done and your community happens to have the highest prevalence of childhood obesity in the whole country! Poor food choices and inactive lifestyles contribute to this problem. What would you propose to your city or national officials, school board member, or other community leaders to help find a solution to the problem of obesity in children? If there is not official support, how might you be able to organize and initiative to help solve this issue?
- Your organisation has been given 300 euro to spend on a needy family. The selected family has suffered since the parents were in a car wreck and have not worked in 3 months. The car wreck was likely connected to one or both parent's reported alcohol use. As a result, the parents' license was revoked, they can't make it to their job because the distance from the house and also the injuries. They are required to pay high-fee for alcohol rehabilitation courses in order to stay out of jail. There are 2 children in this family, ages 6 and 9. They are unable to participate in many school and community activities and beginning to feel excluded from their peers. Decide how you will spend the money for the family and explain why you made the choice of purchases that you did.

More examples: <http://www.onlinecollege.org/2011/10/03/20-classic-case-studies-every-business-student-should-know/>



Exercise 2

SPAGHETTI TOWER (MARSHMALLOW CHALLENGE)

Aim: This exercise will help the participants to work as a team in order to find possible ways of finding the solution to the problem. The exercise will help them to develop their problem solving skills and at the same time their team working skills, analytical skills, etc.

Estimated time: 45 minutes

Materials:

Each team gets the same set of supplies:

- 1 m of tape
- 1 m of string
- 1 marshmallow
- 20 sticks of dry spaghetti
- Pair of scissors
- Plus, a stop-watch, since it's a timed activity
- Measuring tape to measure the finished towers

Description:

- The entire marshmallow has to be on the top (not to be cut/eaten)
- You may use as much or as little of the materials given to each group
- You can cut or brake materials (except the marshmallow)
- Set a timer for 18 minutes
- When completed, no-one is allowed to hold the structure.
- At the end measure the structures, and the tallest is the winning team

The winning team will be the one to build the tallest possible free-standing tower in 18 minutes that will support the marshmallow.

Analysis - Ability to build your analytical skills

Exercise 1

Group Exercise – The Problematic Garden
(From Young Business Leaders Project (2012-2014))

Aim: To help participants understand how to identify a problem and make a correct decision. Participants will have to work in teams and identify the main problem and the solution to the problem. In order to be able to find the solution to the problem they have to analyse the situation in depth and find possible alternatives.

Estimated time: 45 minutes

Description:

- There are 25 cards that explain a specific situation. The cards will be shared equally between the members of each team (max. 5-6 members in each team).
- Each team will try to write down the definition of the problem (cause, limitations, target goal), based on information described in the cards.
- Teams have 30 minutes available for discussion and 5 minutes for developing the written definition of the problem.
- At the end of the exercise, each team will describe how it worked (communication between the members, ways of understanding the problem, difficulties, etc).

The rules of the exercise:

- You cannot exchange your cards with the other team members.
- You cannot show your cards to other team members.
- Communication will be verbal. You can repeat your thoughts if needed.
- You cannot keep notes.
- Any information deemed unnecessary by the team, will stay capsized on the table and will not be used.

Cards:

1. My garden used to have a wonderful greensward
2. The grass has been dried in some regions and the yellow spots look very bad
3. In dried regions there have appeared mounds of loose soil
4. Moles create mounds in the grass
5. The garden has never had mounds in the past
6. I used to be proud of my greensward
7. Neighbour's garden doesn't have any dried spots
8. My neighbour is making fun of my garden
9. I dislike my neighbour
10. My greensward is well watered
11. The grass doesn't need fertilizer
12. The automatic lawn mower (electric cutting grass machine) is broken
13. I want to get rid of dried regions in my garden
14. Moles have tiny eyes
15. Moles have closed eyes
16. Moles can see in the dark

17. Moles have soft fur and eat worms
18. My major concern is my garden
19. The traditional hand guided lawn mower is working perfect
20. My son learned at school that moles look for worms and thus dig the ground
21. There used to be no worms in my garden
22. Worms -eaten by moles- are larvae that will be turn into butterflies
23. I love butterflies. There are many in my garden
24. Lately, I found many worms in my garden
25. I groom the garden very often, but I avoid using poisonous pesticides

Notes for trainers

Disclosure (to be used at the end of the exercise):

Target goal: To have a nice garden with butterflies (as to avoid neighbour's comments)

Limitation: To keep the worms (larvae)

Definition of the problem: How to get rid of the moles

Pay attention on how each team tries to understand the cause-effect sequence of the problem.

Then use this input to refer to theory.

Mention the usual mistakes in problem identification and decision making process

Explain how we can deal with them.

Debriefing questions:

- Did the discussion lead the members to change their views on this issue?
- How did they deal with bounded rationality?

Exercise 2

PETAL DEBATE

Aim: This exercise will help the participants analyse a situation in depth, find possible solutions and present to the other participants their way of thinking. At the same time this exercise will help the participants to develop their problem solving skills, their creativity, their presentation skills, their teamwork skills, etc.

Estimated time: 35 minutes

Materials: A4 paper, flip-chart, markers, pens, post-it notes

DESCRIPTION

Step 1: Petal group discussions (15 minutes)

- Announce the topic and write it on each table.
- Tell the participants to discuss their point of view, the points they agree or disagree, to give an initial proposition. Tell the participants that they have to determine concrete ideas, solutions and possible changes to make the proposition acceptable by everyone around the table.
- The participants have to take notes and to identify 2 key words from their discussion.

Step 2: Propositions of "ambassadors" (10 minutes)

- Ask the participants to select one "ambassador" (or appoint one by yourself) to come to the flower centre.
- Tell the "ambassadors" that they have 10 minutes to discuss the propositions in the centre of the flower and that other participants have to listen actively to the discussion.

- The “ambassadors” have to find a common proposition to the problem and to write it down on the flip-chart.
- If a common proposition is not reached, the “ambassadors” have to come back to their “petal” and negotiate their propositions

The facilitator has to provide an introduction to the method, to think about the actual discussion topics and facilitate the discussion.

- Military service for 2 years should be required for all people in all countries (ages 18-25).
- Improper recycling will be criminalized. Community members who don’t recycle or lack to recycle properly will be issued citations and fines. After 3 citations, this will become a criminal offense which requires an appearance in court and punishable by community service or up 90 days in jail.
- After BREXIT, more countries are also considering to follow in the footsteps of Britain. Should any other countries leave the EU? Support your argument. Why or why not? And what would be the positive and negative impacts of this decision for the country, the EU, and globally?
- A just government should prioritize civil liberties over national security.
- There is a recent movement of carnivores who also happen to be animal-rights activists. The group is promoting cannibalism as way of equal treatment towards humans and animals. This is currently not a legal practice. Is this really ‘equal treatment’? Why or why should this not be legalized?

You can find ideas for discussion topics: • <http://idebate.org/>

Your buyer - Ability to focus on your buyer when developing product or service

Exercise - UBER CASE STUDY

Aim: This exercise will help the participants to identify the pains and gains of a product and start examining the customer segments profile. Value proposition will help the participants evaluate accordingly their product/idea and take decisions for their following steps.

Estimated time: 30MIN, 45MIN

Material: Copies of customer segments template in A3, Post-it, Pens.

Step 1: Trainers should divide the class into groups (4 or five members for each group), and ask from participants to do their research online regarding UBER.

Step 2: Groups should start fulfilling the canvas with sticky notes, starting with customers activities (the far right side of the map). In this part groups should figure out which kind of task/activity customers are carrying out, and what are the emotional and social implications of their functional needs. They should focus only on customers' needs or job. After fulfilling the job sector, groups should move to customers' pains and gains.

Pains: For a better understanding and for a better result, trainers should ask groups to list frustrations, costs, risks, fears customers experience trying to get their job done. Also here emotional and social sides must be taken into account. The list should be put on sticky notes, trainers should encourage visual solutions.

Gains: Trainers should ask groups what are the relevant positive outcomes their customer expects in getting their job done, no matter if outcomes are functional, social or emotional. What counts for your customer? Why is so important getting this job done?

Step 3:

Each group should choose a member of its team to be present their customer segment in front of the class

Important information for Trainers

Mobility problem and Über solutions

Über is an on-demand transportation service which has brought a revolution all across the world. The Value Proposition of ÜBER has made it possible for people to simply tap their smartphone and have a cab arrive at their location in the minimum possible time. To fully understand what Über VP really is, we have to start the process of value proposition design from the top, thus we will be able to recap and simulate the steps to build a value proposition: to build it not only on the functional jobs, but also on the social and emotional ones. So we have to consider the basic and broadest customer need that lies behind the choice of using Über or other market solution: we have to consider the need (or the job/the task) of getting from point A to point B in a city. It's an extremely broad need, just the kind of need we want to explore.

Weighing Über VP, we can think they have focused and setting their value proposition in comparison and competition with regular or traditional taxis VP. But there are some features in Uber VP that can only be explained by taking into account the need of mobility in the broadest way possible. In other words, UBER has built its VP and its "positioning" by assuming not only

its customers functional jobs (how to get them from A to B in the quickest and cheapest way possible for example), but also what's holding them back, what they fear the most, what they want to achieve, what they want to share with other people when they try to get from A to B, how they want (if they want) to be seen from other people.

Customers' pains and gains

If we take only the functional part of getting from point A to point B in a city, we are only able to sketch out the functional problems (pains) they face/expect when they try to make their job/task done.

Functional pains can include: 1) being trapped in a traffic jam; 2) the price of getting from A to B; 3) uncertainty about the time of departure and the time of arrival; 4) waste of time 5) wasting time to buy ticket; 6) the weather 7) waiting in line 8) getting squeezed in a crowd. They are solid and urgent pains, everyone experiences during lifetime trying to accomplish the task of getting from A to B.

Now we have to list all the solutions/products/services that are currently help customers in getting this job done: bus, metro, taxi and see how they solve/address customers' functional pains

- a) Bus addresses good only point 2) (bus is cheap and the price is set and known), and partially point 3, 6 and 7, but performs poorly on the other points.
- b) Metro, where available, it's really good on point 1, 3, 4, 7, but it falls short on 7, 8.
- b) Taxi: it's good on point 3, 4), 5) 6) and 8 but is unfit to solve/address 1), 2), 7).

Depending on the persona you sketched for your customers and how the problems are ranked, you can find the perfect fit for every type of customers, using only its socioeconomic outlines. At a first glance people can already find the right offer, so, one can think that the market it's mature (past ripe) and there's no need or space for another solution. The point is that you have consider functional jobs and and functional job, you have seen and sketch your customer in two dimensions.

What if we are able to add pains and gains related to the emotional or social fears/expectations? Even in satisfying a basic need as the one above, customers are social and emotional beings, trying to affirm themselves among others and trying to find a specific emotional state. Mapping all this things in the customers' segment of your value proposition canvas can lead to widen the comprehension of customers and find more space to compete, a better value proposition and (maybe) a better business model.

Put social and emotional aspects in the customers' map. Which are the social and emotional pains and gains related to the "getting from A to B" job?
Let's see.

Social gains: share the experience with someone; be of help; organize everything in advance; looking good; socialize; be seen as a cool/rich person

Emotional gains: feeling safe, feeling a better person, create value for other people.

Emotional pains: uncertainty, sense of anxiety, not in control of the situation, feeling bored.

This widens your customers map. Current solutions often falling short in addressing that type of

things.

Examples? Pick emotional pains or gains related to security or the sense of safety related to going around town. Do you know the bus driver? Do you know the taxi driver? Is he kind, is he responsible? What if he drives bad, or behaves worse? What if he's unkind with passengers or cheats on the taximeters. Are you in control with the solution you choose to get your job completed? Is it the taxi or the bus late? Where it is? Can you plan things in advance and avoid wasting time? Maybe you can't. Or at least not in the way you want to.

Now can we introduce the features of Uber and link (bold in brackets) them to the customers map that includes social and emotional pains and gains:

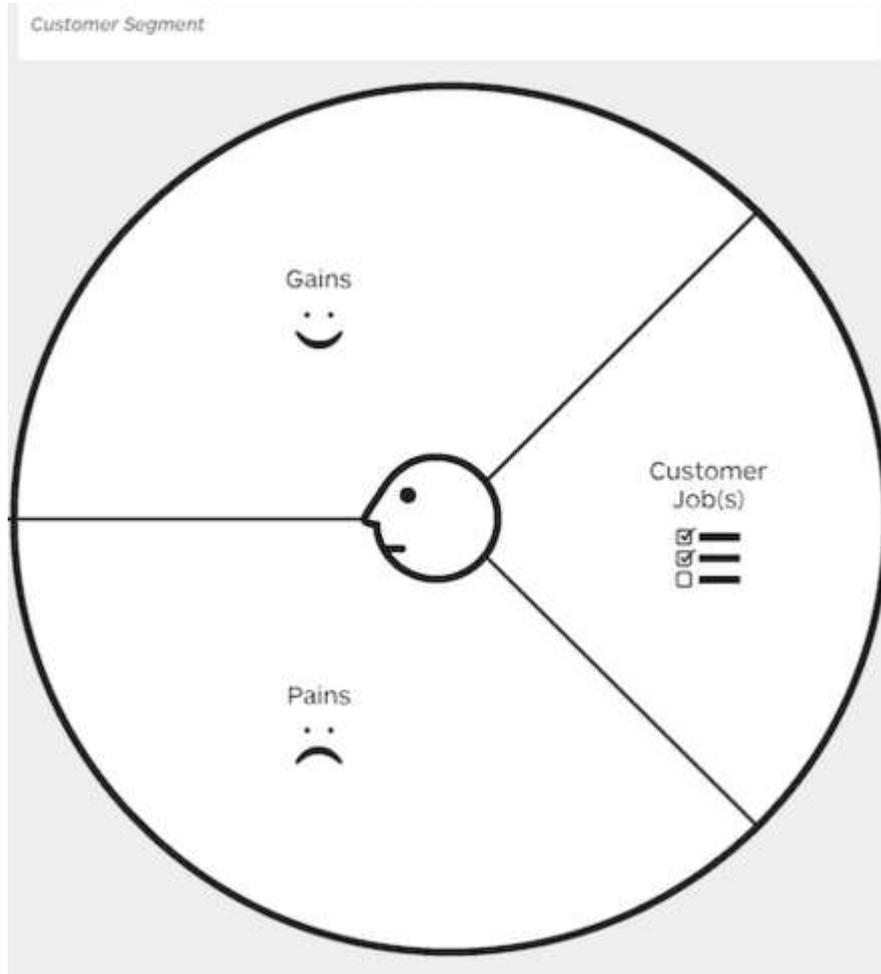
- A user can tap his smartphone and call a cab at his location (complete control)
- If driver accepts the ride, driver details are sent to the customer along with ETA (feeling secure and reducing the sense of uncertainty)
- The customer can track the driver as he arrives to his location (reducing waste of time, complete control of the experience)
- The driver can also track the exact location of the customer and reach his exact location
- The payment procedure is handled by Uber (no cash or change to handle)
- Uber business model had a rating system in place for drivers right from beginning, where a customer can rate the driver after his ride (sense of safety again, sharing with others and be part of the value created).

Another solution which potential for a certain type of customer can be investigate only by taking into account social and emotional aspects is the bicycle.

What drives people using bicycle no matter if it rains, if it's dangerous, if it's tiresome?

Social gains: feeling a better person, feeling more sustainable (green), feeling accepted among peers.

Emotional gains: feeling free, feeling less bored.



Competition - Ability to keep a close eye on your competitors

Exercise 1 - Identify your competitors

The first step for competitive analysis is to define your competitors. The clearest way to identify your competitors is to figure out what would happen if you weren't around. Who would supply your customers' needs, and what would customers buy to solve their problems? Also, who's taking away your customers?

For this exercise, every participant should fill this table:

Direct competitors	When customers are making purchasing decisions, their products or services always end up on the short list.	
Indirect competitors	These companies offer alternative products and services than what you offer.	
Newcomers	You know about new initiatives which can become your direct competitors in some time.	

Planning - Ability to plan your roadmap

Exercise 1 - Mission, Vision and Values

First tasks of the business plan is definition of the vision, mission and values of the company. They are important for strategic direction. Without the individual foundations of strong values illustrated by a vision to be undertaken by a mission, an organisation cannot become an overly successful organisation. Without developing a mission, vision, and values to assist in developing a strategy, an organisation cannot identify, distinguish or explain itself to its employees and customers alike.

Steps for the exercise:

1. Show the table below to the participants and explain difference between vision, mission and values
2. Give to the participants 10 minutes to think about the statements of their organisation
3. Every participant should present their statements and answer possible questions from the peers.

	Vision Statement	Mission statement	Values
Explanation	This is the DREAMING piece. If everything goes right, this is how your organisation will have changed the world.	This is the DOING piece. This states who you serve, what you serve them, and how you do it each day.	What values should guide the operations of our company (code of ethics)? It is the company culture.
Example	Oceana: Seeks to make our oceans as rich, healthy and abundant as they once were. Alzheimer's Association: A world without Alzheimer's	Zappos: provide the best customer service possible. CVS: We will be the easiest pharmacy retailer for customers to use.	Adidas: Sport is the foundation for all we do and execution excellence is a core value of our Group.

Going Digital - and online

Exercise 1 - Define software you will need for your startup

This exercise is great motivational task for everyone to start thinking what can be obtained for free to fill your office demands.

Steps for the exercise:

- Form groups of four people
- Give them the task to solve common problem (for example, to track office hours and make monthly statistics) using free online tools
- Let groups presents their achievements and comment them

Exercises Chapter 9 Process of coaching for development of entrepreneurial soft skills

Case study:

Mary is a textile engineer, employed in a company that offers services related to quality check of the products that are exported by the clothing manufacturers, for about 20 important companies in the country. Before that she had to manage production departments (with 5 to 30 employees) in different companies that produced clothes. She lives in a small city (25.000 inhabitants) in an area where the clothing industry is very well developed and the qualified workforce is very hard to find. During the time she learned how to plan the activity and how to motivate people.

The trend of the request of embroidery on the clothes is rising, more clients asking for personalized garment with this technique due to the high quality of the pattern, the variety of colors, the strong visual impact and the resistance over time as long as the object resists. So, not only the clothing companies are using the embroidery, but advertisers, schools, hotels, boarding houses, restaurants, sports clubs are looking for small companies with high quality products, to personalize using embroidery different objects (uniforms, napkins, aprons, bed clothes, sportswear, caps etc).

Two years ago, due to the observation regarding the low quality of the embroidery on the cloth products, she decided to start a business in this field. She had practical experience in embroidery, because she has a home embroidery machine and she sometimes do embroidery on cloth for family and friends and for small events in her town.

For starting the business, she applied for a financing national programme in order to purchase a computerized industrial embroidery equipment, with 4 embroidery heads and a specialized software with over 3000 predefined embroidery patterns and with the possibility to create new patterns. The financing programme request was to create 2 jobs and to maintain the jobs for at least 2 years. Maria agreed to take this risk of creating 2 jobs, even the qualified persons are hard to find in the area where she started the business; she agreed to employ a high school graduate and an unemployed person.

She succeeded in obtaining the non-reimbursable financing of 42.000 euros. In the first stage, she purchased the equipment and the software. Due to a family situation, she employed her sister in law and 2 other persons (her daughter as a high school graduate and an unemployed person, both without the necessary qualification).

In the first 2 years, she managed to receive some good offers in order to cover the costs. Most of the clients were satisfied with the quality of the work and promised to come with more offers. She is still employed in the quality check company because she is afraid of losing her job.

Request:

Elaborate the SWOT analyses.

Prepare a coach strategy for Mary for developing her necessary soft entrepreneurial skills in order to develop the business.

