

**INSTRUCTION FOR MENTOR****ENTREPRENEURSHIP****3. Theme** Skills and competencies for starting a business**Exercise** “Desirable and acquirable entrepreneurship attitudes and behaviors”**Developed by** Speha Fresia, Italy

**Based on:** Adaptation of the 6 themes of Timmons J.A. - Timmons’ analysis of more than 50 studies found a consensus around six general characteristics of entrepreneurs: (1) commitment and determination; (2) leadership; (3) opportunity obsession; (4) tolerance of risk, ambiguity and uncertainty; (5) creativity, self-reliance and ability to adapt; and (6) motivation to excel. [Timmons, J.A. 1994. *New Venture Creation: Entrepreneurship for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Fourth edition. Irwin Press, Burr Ridge, IL.]

**Learning outcome:**

Reflections and findings about own attitudes and behaviours toward entrepreneurship.

**Aim**

To explore mentees’ personal characteristics in relationship with the following 6 critical factors considered fundamental for an entrepreneur.

To improve self-assessment skill and to find motivations for implementing a personal (training) action plan in order to acquire the desirable attitudes and behaviours.

**Expected duration**

10/15 minutes for the mentee to answer to the Test and around 30 minutes of discussion between mentor and mentee about the results.

**Description**

This exercise can be useful for mentees to self-investigate and explore their own behaviours and attitudes toward the entrepreneurial choice.

The outcome of this exercise will be the visualisation of mentee’s personal attitudes and behaviours self-assessment, distinguished between Strong and Weak Points, and as consequence the areas of improvement.

**Steps for performing the exercise:**

1. Mentor introduces the theme to the mentees.
2. Mentor explains the aim of the exercise and how to perform the exercise.
3. Mentor handles the handouts to the mentees.
4. Mentees perform the exercise individually.
5. Mentor explains the results to the mentees and links them to the e-mentoring process.

**INSTRUCTION FOR MENTOR****ENTREPRENEURSHIP****3. Theme** Skills and competencies for starting a business**Exercise** “Desirable and acquirable entrepreneurship attitudes and behaviors”**HANDOUT FOR MENTEE****Task for mentee:**

The self-assessment of your personal attitudes and behaviours toward the entrepreneurial choice is not easy. Try to answer honestly to the following questions, and you will visualise the strengths and weaknesses about your personal attitudes and behaviours, and you could start to think how to transform weaknesses in strengths, covering the gaps with further exercise and training. Please, read the following statements and mark if you agree or not.

- |  |                              |                             |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>1. Almost always I manage to solve difficult problems, when I try hard enough</b>         | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| <b>2. I have experience in long-term achievements, with regular and continuous effort</b>    | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| <b>3. I have good feelings when I am concentrated in doing something</b>                     | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| <b>4. I like to lead or animate a working group and to share my knowledge and experience</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| <b>5. I am able to provide information, or explanations fluently and appropriately</b>       | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| <b>6. I am comfortable when presenting my project idea</b>                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| <b>7. I like to treat the others as I would like to be treated</b>                           | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| <b>8. I believe that deliberate and systematic research for opportunity is a priority</b>    | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| <b>9. I used to calculate the risks in order to reach my personal/professional goals</b>     | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |

**INSTRUCTION FOR MENTOR****ENTREPRENEURSHIP****3. Theme** Skills and competencies for starting a business**Exercise** “Desirable and acquirable entrepreneurship attitudes and behaviors”

- |  |                              |                             |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>10. I manage to avoid perfection in favour of effectiveness</b>                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| <b>11. I like to break conventions and to find original solutions</b>                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| <b>12. I explore different solutions before changing situation or taking a decision</b>                  | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| <b>13. I am aware of my strengths and weaknesses and I trust in my capacity in overcoming conflicts</b>  | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| <b>14. I believe that the results of the events are primarily generated by my behaviours and actions</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| <b>15. I am curious to know new concepts and to apply them in my practice</b>                            | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| <b>16. I control stress and anxiety and I react with calm, trying to understand causes/effects</b>       | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |

**INSTRUCTION FOR MENTOR****ENTREPRENEURSHIP****3. Theme** Skills and competencies for starting a business**Exercise** “Desirable and acquirable entrepreneurship attitudes and behaviors”**EXPLANATION OF THE RESULTS****Task for mentor**

Below you will find the explanation of the results for mentees and interpretations of their answers. Please explain the results to mentees.

## 1. Commitment and determination

**Self-efficacy:****1. Almost always I manage to solve difficult problems, when I try hard enough****Feedback for the answer YES:**

Psychologist Albert Bandura has defined self-efficacy as one's belief in one's ability to succeed in specific situations. One's sense of self-efficacy can play a major role in how one approaches, goals, tasks, and challenges.

**Feedback for the answer NO:**

It is very important to believe in your ability to succeed in specific situations, because most of problems are caused because we do not invest the necessary efforts, or because we are stressed by unexpected events or because anxiety or anger can hide the causes of the events and the possible solutions.

**Perseverance:****2. I have experience in long-term achievements, with regular and continuous effort****Feedback for the answer YES:**

Perseverance refers to the ability to accomplish a certain task or to adopt a particular pattern of behaviour, even if one would rather be doing something else. It is a process where the willpower becomes a substitute for motivation, when one uses reason to determine a best course of action that opposes one's desires.

**Feedback for the answer NO:**

You should reflect why you find difficulties to accomplish certain tasks. The willpower is a fundamental substitute for motivation, and sometimes work becomes harder if you don't determine a best course of action.

**INSTRUCTION FOR MENTOR****ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

3. Theme Skills and competencies for starting a business

Exercise “Desirable and acquirable entrepreneurship attitudes and behaviors”

**Immersion, absorption:**

3. I have good feelings when I am concentrated in doing something

**Feedback for the answer YES:**

Deliberate total immersion and concentration can sometimes lead to a state called flow: a feeling of energized focus, full involvement, and success in the process of the activity. This state produces intense feelings of enjoyment. It is also a positive force because it allows for optimal performance and skill development.

**Feedback for the answer NO:**

If you will try to test your concentration and to keep it, you could learn by yourself your strategies to be concentrated and also your time limits. Experience the sense of full immersion and concentration can generate very positive effects. Try it!

## 2. Leadership

**Leadership:**

4. I like to lead or animate a working group and to share my knowledge and experience

**Feedback for the answer YES:**

Leadership is the ability to successfully integrate and maximize available human resources (by influencing their thinking and their behaviour) within the internal and external environment for the attainment of organizational goals.

**Feedback for the answer NO:**

To lead or animate a working group it is not a simply problem of power! To be recognised as leader you need to be generous and to explain as much as possible your point of view in order to convince the other and gain their support.

**INSTRUCTION FOR MENTOR****ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

3. Theme Skills and competencies for starting a business

Exercise “Desirable and acquirable entrepreneurship attitudes and behaviors”

**Communication skills:**

5. I am able to provide information, or explanations fluently and appropriately

**Feedback for the answer YES:**

You have the ability to develop, transmit and receive clear and consistent messages. But, this is not enough! To be a good communicator you need also to be a good listener and to make people comfortable. Moreover, if you have to foster dialogue, negotiations or investigations you need to be able to reformulate the content of a message several times!

**Feedback for the answer NO:**

The ability to communicate is fundamental to achieving success, and a proper communication is when both the issuer and the receiver interpret the same information as a result of the communication. When this does not happen, thoughts and ideas you send do not necessarily reflect what you think, causing a breakdown in communication and building blocks that hinder the achievement of goals both personally and professionally.

**Extroversion:**

6. I am comfortable when presenting my project idea

**Feedback for the answer YES:**

Extroversion is a dimension of personality, characterized by sociability, the tendency to engage in conversation with others as opposed to inward and individual activity. It could be very useful, e.g. when presenting your project idea to a group of investors, or when you need to investigate on specific topics starting the conversation also with strangers.

**Feedback for the answer NO:**

Extroversion is a dimension of personality, characterized by sociability, the tendency to engage in conversation with others as opposed to inward and individual activity. Of course you cannot make violence on yourself if you are a shy and introverted person! But it is important to be aware about it and to compensate this difficulty with other qualities or to practice extra-professional activities, like theatre, music or to be engaged in the community life.

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Trust building is a continuous and consistent attitude of reliability and readability. It means also the ability in creating a climate of trust in a group and obtains collaborations, interacting with other and sharing relevant information. It is based on values like honesty, responsibility and fairness.

**3.Opportunity obsession/recognition****Opportunity recognition:****8. I believe that deliberate and systematic research for opportunity is a priority****Feedback for the answer YES:**

The opportunity recognition is a process of searching, evaluating and exploiting opportunities. Personality factors that facilitate the process: creativity, foresight, intuition, and alertness. It means also to have a deep and intimate knowledge of the market and the customers' needs; to be linked to social/entrepreneurial networks and to be open to the ideas of others.

**Feedback for the answer NO:**

If you believe in stability entrepreneurship is not for you: the constant search of new opportunities is essential to ensure business continuity. You can be helped by deepen your knowledge of market and clients' needs, to be linked to groups of interest or entrepreneurship networks or just to listen, read and combine the ideas of other people.

**INSTRUCTION FOR MENTOR****ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

3. Theme Skills and competencies for starting a business

Exercise “Desirable and acquirable entrepreneurship attitudes and behaviors”

## 4. Tolerance of risk, Ambiguity, and Uncertainty

### Ambiguity, tolerance, paradox and uncertainty:

9. I used to calculate the risks in order to reach my personal/professional goals

#### Feedback for the answer YES:

The ability to perceive ambiguity in information and behaviour in a neutral and open way is particularly important to evaluate and calculate the risks in the dynamic entrepreneurial system. This characteristic is correlated with creativity, risk aversion, psychological resilience. It means the ability to sustain uncertain and unstable situations through the adoption of specific tools for planning and control, and also, very important, not to be afraid of changes!

#### Feedback for the answer NO:

The ability to perceive ambiguity in information and behaviour in a neutral and open way is particularly important to evaluate and calculate the risks in the dynamic entrepreneurial system. It would be very appropriate to be able to foresee the different scenarios and to calculate the related risks, because a clear vision of the threats can give you the possibility to transform these obstacles in opportunities.

### Pragmatism, sense of reality:

10. I manage to avoid perfection in favour of effectiveness

#### Feedback for the answer YES:

The pursuit of practicality, over aesthetic qualities, addresses to a concentration on facts rather than emotions or ideals. Pragmatic people are guided by practical experience and observation rather than theory. It means to learn from your failures, to select and find practical solutions, to concentrate yourself on facts, controlling the emotions.

#### Feedback for the answer NO:

Sometimes we have to renounce to perfection in favour of effectiveness. For an entrepreneur the right balance of effectiveness and efficiency is one of the hardest tasks. It is particularly important to cultivate the sense of reality, starting from learning from the personal mistakes and failures.

**INSTRUCTION FOR MENTOR****ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

3. Theme Skills and competencies for starting a business

Exercise “Desirable and acquirable entrepreneurship attitudes and behaviors”

## Creativity, Self-reliance, and Ability to Adapt

### Creativity:

#### 11. I like to break conventions and to find original solutions

##### **Feedback for the answer YES:**

Creativity is a mental process involving the discovery of new ideas or concepts, or new associations of the existing ideas or concepts, fuelled by the process of either conscious or unconscious insight.

##### **Feedback for the answer NO:**

Creativity is a mental process involving the discovery of new ideas or concepts, to keep an independent thinking and to experience changing situations, observing your conscious or unconscious reactions. You can exercise this attitude in creating initiatives for your friends or family in social, cultural or free time domains.

### Capacity of abstraction:

#### 12. I explore different solutions before changing situation or taking a decision

##### **Feedback for the answer YES:**

The capacity of abstraction means to be able to combine abstract and specific thoughts, and the ability to switch between the two modes of thought appropriately and skilfully.

##### **Feedback for the answer NO:**

In order to avoid irreversible mistakes it is always suggested to understand what is going on in the world around us and, when there is a problem, to understand the reasons of all parties involved. To imagine the different scenarios for the different alternative decisions is a good exercise.

**INSTRUCTION FOR MENTOR****ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

3. Theme Skills and competencies for starting a business

Exercise “Desirable and acquirable entrepreneurship attitudes and behaviors”

**Emotional Intelligence:****13. I am aware of my strengths and weaknesses and I trust in my capacity in overcoming conflicts****Feedback for the answer YES:**

It is the ability to identify, to assess, and to control the emotions of oneself, of others, and of groups. It consists of:

- a. *Self-awareness* – The ability to recognize your own emotions and how they affect your thoughts and behaviour, know your strengths and weaknesses, and to be self-confidence.
- b. *Self-management* – The ability to control impulsive feelings and behaviours, manage your emotions in healthy ways, take initiative, follow through on commitments, and adapt to changing circumstances.
- c. *Social awareness* – The ability to understand the emotions, needs, and concerns of other people, pick up on emotional cues, feel comfortable socially, and recognize the power dynamics in a group or organization.
- d. *Relationship management* – The ability to develop and maintain good relationships, communicate clearly, inspire and influence others, work well in a team, and manage conflict.

**Feedback for the answer NO:**

This item concerns your difficulty in identifying, assessing, and controlling the emotions of oneself, of others, and of groups. It would be useful to reflect about the items listed above.

**INSTRUCTION FOR MENTOR****ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

3. Theme Skills and competencies for starting a business

Exercise “Desirable and acquirable entrepreneurship attitudes and behaviors”

## 6 Motivation to excel

### Locus of Control:

**14. I believe that the results of the events are primarily generated by my behaviours and actions**

#### **Feedback for the answer YES:**

It is the extent to which individuals believe that they can control events that affect them, that events result primarily from their own behaviour and actions. This is opposed to the belief that powerful others, fate, or chance primarily determine events (Source: J. Rotter).

#### **Feedback for the answer NO:**

If you believe that the results of the events are primarily generated by chance, fate, powerful others you are on the wrong way. If you think honestly about the responsibility of your failures you will be more aware about your personal bindings, trying to overcome limits and to improve your performance.

### Willingness to learn (openness to experience):

**15. I am curious to know new concepts and to apply them in my practice**

#### **Feedback for the answer YES:**

It is the willingness to explore and consider new and unfamiliar ideas and experiences. Openness involves active imagination, aesthetic sensitivity, attentiveness to inner feelings, preference for variety, and intellectual curiosity. It is one of the major factors of personality. It means don't stop learning and to know your personal learning style.

#### **Feedback for the answer NO:**

To enjoy learning, in every sphere of your life, is a key factor to leave in a fast changing society. What we learn today, maybe tomorrow could be obsolete and no more useful. The only way is to keep learning, and through the direct experience understand your knowledge needs.

## INSTRUCTION FOR MENTOR

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP

3. Theme Skills and competencies for starting a business

Exercise “Desirable and acquirable entrepreneurship attitudes and behaviors”

### Emotional stability:

**16. I control stress and anxiety and I react with calm, trying to understand causes/effects**

#### **Feedback for the answer YES:**

People emotionally stable are less reactive to stress, anxiety, anger, guilt, and depressed mood. They tend to be calm, tempered, and less likely to feel tense or rattled.

#### **Feedback for the answer NO:**

If you are always afraid to fail when you start a new activity, or if you get angry too easily, you should stop and think: “Did I take my time to reflect and organize my tasks?”; “What happens when I get angry?”

### Collect the results of the test:

THEMES	YES	NO
Commitment and determination (3)		
Leadership (4)		
Opportunity obsession/recognition (1)		
Tolerance of risk, Ambiguity, and Uncertainty (2)		
Creativity, Self-reliance, and Ability to adapt (3)		
Motivation to excel (3)		
TOTAL SCORE (by number of answers)		
TOTAL SCORE (by percentage)	%	%

### Describe the next steps:

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