



## Entrepreneurs and Entrepreneurship

An entrepreneur identifies needs within the community, sees them as an opportunity, thinks out a way to acquire the needed resources and acts to turn the opportunity into a reward.

The term entrepreneurship often brings to mind a fast growing business started by one or two people with a good idea and a willingness to work hard. However, entrepreneurship can also help individuals, families, organizations and communities turn opportunities into actions to maintain or increase wellbeing.

The wealth that comes from increased well being can be cultural, social, environmental or financial – or a combination of these.

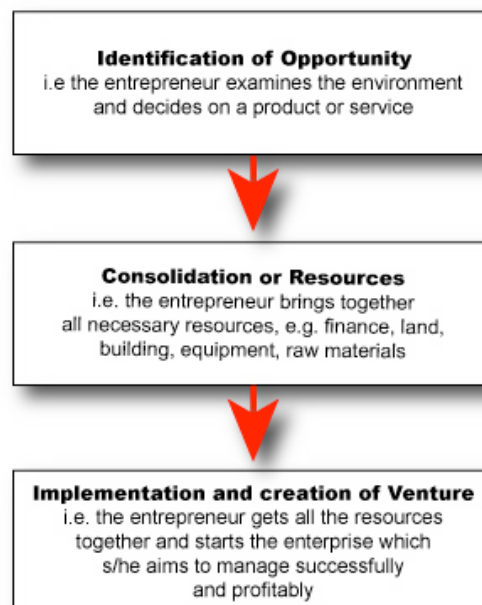
An opportunity must pass two tests before an entrepreneur will move forward:

- 1) Will acting on the opportunity improve my own or my community's well being in the future?
- 2) Am I able to make change happen?

Someone who runs a small business establishment all by him/herself is a self-employed entrepreneur. The business could be of any kind – dressmaking, catering, electrical repairs – and to run it the individual goes through all the business activity on their own. On the other hand when someone runs a small business in which other people are employed, s/he is called an entrepreneur. Entrepreneurship has two clear aspects – the entrepreneur and the enterprise:



An entrepreneur has to go through the following stages in order to establish the business:



## Qualities of entrepreneurs

There are certain personal qualities that are at least as important as and possibly more important than, management or technical skills. When talking to and observing people who run successful businesses, one will find that they display most, if not all, of the following types of behaviour:

- They are persistent
- They grasp opportunities
- They make problems into opportunities
- They take moderate and informed risks
- They try to do things more efficiently
- They strive to improve quality
- They are persuasive
- They network
- They try their best to keep promises
- They set goals for themselves
- They plan ahead, and monitor the results
- They rebound from failure
- They invest in tomorrow rather than spending today
- They are unconcerned about what others think of them
- They are enthusiastic
- They are self-confident

## Characteristics of Entrepreneurs

Most experts agree that not everyone is suited for the entrepreneurial task, but nearly all successful entrepreneurs:

- Cope well or even thrive on uncertainty;
- Are creative problem solvers;
- Have strong human and organizational skills; and
- Understand the relationships between organization, strategies and environment.
- Entrepreneurs must also expect to put in long hours more like five to nine, rather than nine to five and be patient with the complex, diverse task at hand.
- Determination and discipline to see the job through separate entrepreneurial successes from failures.
- Entrepreneurs are risk takers: A management "guru" once said: that "People who do not take risks generally make about two big mistakes a year. People who do take risks generally make about two big mistakes a year". *Sometimes not taking a risk is a risk.*

So what prevents people from taking risks? In short the answer is FEAR: fear of failure, fear of rejection, fear of conflict, fear of uncertainty, fear of losing control, power or status.

### 3) Entrepreneurs deal well with change and uncertainty

There is an old Chinese curse that says, "*May you live in interesting times*". Interesting times are the curse and the blessing of an enterprise and the true entrepreneur is that they can handle the sources of uncertainty that come with the territory without falling apart. Business opportunity is surrounded with uncertainty questions to be answered about market opportunity, pricing, viability of the original idea, customer response and product/service in a reasonable length of time. He or she must be able to lead, manage, identify, prioritise, execute and most importantly, make decisions.

An entrepreneur must be more like a bamboo plant able to sway in any wind without breaking versus a rigid tree that can easily be toppled by a sudden storm. There are no magic formulas or tried and true approaches that are guaranteed to work.

#### 4) **Entrepreneurs are decision makers**

Making decisions is a criterion for success. A person, who cannot reach a decision promptly once he has all the necessary information, cannot be depended upon to carry through on decisions made. The point here is that people who can judge when a decision needs to be made and make it are far more likely to succeed in entrepreneurial ventures.

#### 5) **Entrepreneurs are leaders**

The most basic characteristics noted in the lives of successful entrepreneurs are:

- They can orchestrate people, strategies and technologies to fit changing environments;
- They are usually creative risk-takers;
- They thrive on change and cope well with uncertainty;
- They are determined and disciplined in implementing their visions and ideas; and
- They enjoy deciding and make forward looking decisions.

In encouraging entrepreneurship in rural areas, seeking leadership with these characteristics is essential. While training can help people improve in some of these areas, we should not be naive about what adult training can or cannot accomplish.

## **Becoming entrepreneurial**

Entrepreneurial behaviour can be encouraged because most people have some character traits associated with this behaviour. Some people think they are capable of taking advantage of good opportunities. They expect surprises and can easily adjust. They may also be creative and growth orientated. These traits are entrepreneurial.

Education and training can encourage entrepreneurship. Topics that help develop entrepreneurial traits include:

- **Achievement** – solving problems, setting goals, evaluating decisions, keeping focused, managing money and time.
- **Business** – preparing a business plan, understanding business management and economics
- **Individuals** – understanding diversity, communicating, motivating, negotiating, mentoring, selling
- **Groups** – team building, facilitating, leading, resolving conflicts, governing
- **Creativity** – visualisation, positive thinking, building self-esteem, relaxing
- **Experience** – rotating jobs, playing different roles, mentoring by experienced entrepreneurs