

# Defining the profile of today's entrepreneur



CONCEPTION



MODELLING



PLANNING



IMPLEMENTATION

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# 01

## Introduction

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Defining the profile of the modern entrepreneur is a task that is keeping HR and venture capital firms busy. As in all debates, there are various stances. Some put forward characteristics that are entirely different from those that would have been valued in the industrial society of the past. Meanwhile, others believe that the characteristics that define an entrepreneur have remained the same, unaffected by the historical context in which the entrepreneurial activity takes place. In between, there is a variety of perspectives that help to add nuance to these radical standpoints.

At Barcelona Activa Entrepreneurship, we have drawn up a profile of today's entrepreneurs based on four main areas:

- Socio-demographic characteristics.
- Personality traits inherent in the entrepreneur's nature.
- Personal skills that can be learnt.
- Motivations behind self-employment.

# 02

## Socio-demographic characteristics

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Normally, a section like this would cite the relevant statistics and a set of figures on the origin, age, socio-economic status and gender of entrepreneurs. However, since the sources used do not refer to a single geographical area and the intention is to show a general non-exclusive trend, we have chosen to offer you the information on which these sources overlap.

With this in mind, most entrepreneurs today:

- **Are younger than 40.** This does not mean that people over this age are not becoming entrepreneurs. Previously, it was much harder for a young person to become an entrepreneur due to difficulties in finding funding, having enough savings, and even garnering confidence and enough support for their ideas. In recent decades, more and more young people have been considering entrepreneurship as a lifestyle at an early age and therefore start developing their ideas. Thanks to this trend, an increasing number of young services and products are being introduced to the market.
- **Are from cities.** Similarly to the previous point, this does not mean that entrepreneurship does not occur in smaller communities. On the contrary, this could be the perfect market to introduce products or services that might fail if sold in a city. However, it is true that many entrepreneurs look for bigger, more integrated markets, like those offered by urban agglomerations, due to the number of inhabitants, infrastructure, or even the availability of funding.
- **Are men.** However, though, a growing number of women are deciding to set up their own business. As well as boosting income in millions of households, this trend has brought competition and innovation to traditional markets.
- **There is no specific socio-economic status** signalled in the sources consulted. However, the fact that most businesses are created by people with a university degree suggests that the most prevalent social origin is somewhere between middle and upper middle class.

# 03

## Personality traits

Below, we have put together a list of the personality traits deemed necessary by experts for an entrepreneur to have. Here, personality traits are defined as the characteristics inherent in a person that have emerged in how they act and that are hard to learn or develop in adulthood, or that depend on the person's mood. Although anyone could develop these abilities, many are deeply rooted from an early age in people who decide to become entrepreneurs. These traits are as follows:

- Adaptability or ability to assimilate changes.
- Ambition.
- Risk-taking.
- Self-esteem.
- Willingness to sacrifice.
- Competitiveness.
- Self-awareness.
- Self-confidence.
- Curiosity.
- Decision-making.
- Flexibility.
- Leadership (as a trait, not as knowledge of leadership techniques or an intrinsic management position within an organisation).
- Honesty.
- Initiative.
- Perseverance.
- Proactivity.
- Respect for others.
- Responsibility.
- Realistic, optimistic, creative vision of the future.

# 04

## Personal skills

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In contrast to the *personality traits* described in the previous section, personal skills are understood to be the aptitudes anyone can learn or develop, even in adulthood. These skills, which are usually acquired through training or experience, can be grouped into four main categories: communication skills, management skills, organisational skills and skills for understanding and making the most of the business environment.

### COMMUNICATION SKILLS

At the very least, entrepreneurs have always needed to be able to talk about their project. Furthermore, they must be able to negotiate with suppliers of all kinds. **Negotiation skills** and **persuasive communication techniques** are two attributes that have always been necessary. But market globalisation has meant that businesses need to go much further than before. In this context, entrepreneurs must be capable of **generating support networks** to increase their reach, while **knowledge of foreign languages** is also a useful skill.

### MANAGEMENT SKILLS

This category includes a series of skills and techniques that can be acquired either through direct or first-hand business **experience**, or through specific management or business development **training**. This group also contains more technical or executive knowledge, or expertise related to the sector to which the start-up belongs.

These abilities include **multi-tasking**, **overall knowledge of how a business works** and **strategic business vision** (setting goals and assessing whether or not they have been reached, predicting a project's viability, etc.).

### ORGANISATIONAL SKILLS

At first glance, this category might seem to refer only to entrepreneurs looking to build complex business structures with a lot of staff. But this is not the case. In our knowledge society, organisational skills are not confined to the sphere of the company itself; they are also useful in dealing with clients, suppliers and the business environment in general.

This group also includes the ability to **develop and manage a work team**, and not just by leading it; often, this can be done on an equal footing with the other people involved in the business. Knowledge of **work planning and organisation techniques** is also important. The final skill in this category is the ability to **analyse the business's internal reality** (structure, knowledge management, etc.).

## SKILLS FOR UNDERSTANDING AND MAKING THE MOST OF THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

It has always been important for entrepreneurs to be familiar with the business environment, but the knowledge society and the emergence of new technologies have triggered a significant change in how we receive information on this environment. There is more information to hand than ever, and in this context of excess information, it is more difficult to get to know the business environment sufficiently, because it is constantly changing.

The first skill in this group is the entrepreneur's **ability to select and summarise the information** they receive to turn it into useful knowledge that fulfils their needs as an entrepreneur. To develop this skill, **knowledge of the new technological resources** always arriving on the market is required. In the current ocean of information, it is important for entrepreneurs to know their way around the internet, to remember what they are looking for at all times, to manage the business's databases, and to be able to read the statistics offered by the servers on which their websites are hosted.

To achieve all of this, they need a **solid foundation of multidisciplinary, versatile training**. Some would say this should come from a university education, but these skills are often self-taught and based on curiosity and experience.

The most important thing, according to sector experts, is for entrepreneurs to have the information that enables them to construct a useful **overview of the economic and business environment**. As well as benefiting the company, this makes them aware of how the market is doing, including the alliances being made and competitors' behaviour.

# 05

## Motivations

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Having examined the ideal profile for an entrepreneur, some of us may find that we are a long way from fitting this description at the moment. But anyone who decides to set up a business has motivations that have led them towards self-employment.

If you think you have not fully developed all of the skills and personal traits mentioned above, but you are motivated by some of the elements below, you can probably become a successful entrepreneur with enough effort in certain areas. In no particular order, the motivations that drive entrepreneurs include the following:

- The ability to work with a partner, parents, children, friends or colleagues.
- Independence and acquisition of decision-making powers, social recognition or improved social status.
- Increased income.
- Solving the problem of not finding work in the labour market and deciding to make the most of their own strengths.
- More or better opportunities for their children.
- The chance to create a spin-off project from a parent company that helps in decision-making and participates in its development.
- A desire to bring a business idea to life as a form of self-realisation.
- The ability to remain or set up in a specifically desired geographical place.
- Resolving a personal situation, caused by professional difficulties, personal difficulties, or another issue.
- Family tradition.
- Other.



# 06

## Human beings: natural entrepreneurs

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We are coming to the end of this list of traits, characteristics, skills and motivations based on the ideas of Pedro Flores, who, in one of many free-to-access documents on the Internet, argues that human beings are natural entrepreneurs. The author maintains that people are born with the skills and abilities to undertake action or activities that allow them to maintain their standard of living, to grow, and to achieve a higher quality of life. These abilities constitute humankind's heritage or inheritance, through which human society has been developed, with all its virtues and faults.

Flores develops this topic even further, but we will stop here and ask these questions, which seem to prove him right: Aren't we always looking for the best in life? Aren't we always trying to live the best life possible?

If your answer to both these questions is yes, you too have the makings of an entrepreneur. You too can go out there and create your own business.

Written by the technical team at **Barcelona Activa Entrepreneurship**, using the following sources of information:

- “*El nuevo perfil del emprendedor ideal*”, JAVIER REY on <http://baquia.com>
- “*Conceptos fundamentales: El emprendedor*”, on Ventanilla Única Empresarial Virtual. <http://www.vue.es/>
- “*Así es el joven empresario*”, A. M. GONZÁLEZ on El Comercio Digital.

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