



ENTREPRENEURSHIP

GUIDELINE



The project is co-funded by EU through the IPA Cross-Border
Programme CCI number 2007CB16IP0007

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

The project 'E-Region: Development Opportunity' works to enhance social cohesion in the cross border region of Macedonia and Bulgaria, through development of online learning tools and promotion of entrepreneurship. The project is based on development of social infrastructures, a joint web portal [www.e-region.eu] for sharing and exchange of information, news and various educational and employment opportunities. With it we establish links among unemployed young people, job opportunities, vocational schools, students, electronic media, citizens, business incubators and youth entrepreneurial ideas. The project fosters regional collaboration in order to increase employability and e-participation through utilization of good practices in e-learning and entrepreneurship. The project was developed as a result of the high rate of unemployment in the Cross Border Region of Macedonia and Bulgaria, with labor force lacking modern professional competencies. The project offers a comprehensive approach to target the lack of entrepreneurial skills, low level of entrepreneurial initiative and digitalization. It offers solutions by fostering the adjustment of labor force to the new labor market demands and using the favorable environment for optimizing educational, professional qualification and re-qualification structures. The project is led by Center for Intercultural Dialogue (Macedonia) in partnership with European Institute-branch Blagoevgrad (Bulgaria), under the IPA Cross Border Cooperation Programme, CCI Number 2007CB16IP0007, in the period of December 2013 by June 2015.

KEY ACTIVITIES:

The project is based on E-learning, E-participation and development of Entrepreneurial spirit among the citizens, targeting mainly young people. It promotes exchange of information and news by development of joint web portal for sharing and exchange of information, news and various educational and employment opportunities. It encourages usage of IT technologies in education, as essential element for increases the competitiveness of labor force in the current market conditions. It boots development of entrepreneurial spirit by direct training and possibility to interact in the field of development of business ideas with structural and educational support.

THE MAIN ACTIVITIES THAT THE PROJECT UNDERTAKES ARE:**1****PROJECT STUDY AND ANALYSIS**

The project study mapped the available e-media, CSOs and vocational institutions in the cross border region of Macedonia and Bulgaria and analyzed the offer of these key stakeholders for the project. The study is a valuable recourse for all the stakeholders working in the area of Vocational Education and Training and Employment opportunities.

2**E-COURSES**

The project started online vocational courses, aiming to improve the employability profile of young people. We offered courses on the following topics: Communication Skills, Project Cycle Management, Employment Representation, ICT Skills, Entrepreneurship Course and Carrier guidance. Each course last in approximate for one month, providing participants with certificates after successful implementation.

3**WEB AGGREGATOR**

The project also created the website www.e-region.eu which is a news aggregator, connecting main news of CSOs, VET and other institutions web portals in the both sides of the region. It is an internet space for sharing and cross border cooperation.

4**TRAINING ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

The project organizes 2 trainings on entrepreneurship, in Macedonia and Bulgaria. The trainings involved around 80 young people providing them with competences in entrepreneurship and develop self-employment possibilities, by supporting them to realize their own business idea.

5**ONLINE ENTREPRENEURIAL INITIATIVES**

The project also opened competition of entrepreneurship projects or business startups, submitted by the young unemployed citizens living in the cross border area of Macedonia and Bulgaria. The best ideas were awarded and promoted on the project website.

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS:

CENTER FOR INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE (CID) is a non-governmental, non-profit youth organization that works on national level in Macedonia. It was formed in May 2006 by youth leaders and youth workers from Kumanovo. CID works to ensure sustainable community development by creating opportunities for quality engagement of civil society, advancing learning opportunities, and active involvement of young people and other citizens. Our main objectives are:

- To facilitate youth support systems as well as participation mechanisms for young people through quality youth work and inclusive policies development
- To develop and provide quality learning opportunities within non-formal education for diverse groups of learners
- To offer capacity development of civil society to directly involve citizens in community decision-making through inclusive work-practices and networking opportunities
- To increase quality of education and learning services through encouragement of cross-sector cooperation, lifelong learning programmes and innovative education tools

The organization is youth-led thus our work focuses on many aspects which are of interest for young people: from provision of services and information, to research and support for policy-making and networking. CID is a provider of quality Youth Work and as such is well recognized in Macedonia and Europe for its work. As such, CID is offering training and educational consultancy to various public and private institutions and organizations

THE BLAGOEVGRAD BRANCH OF THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTE, along with its branches in Burgas and Pleven, have been involved in territorial cooperation actions with all neighboring countries, both through CBC Programme grants and joint bilateral/regional initiatives. Numerous projects have also been implemented with neighboring countries, throughout the 12-year history of the EI. They all fall within its main areas of activity: policy research and advice; technical assistance, public awareness campaigns, training. The EI has evolved into one of the leading Bulgarian independent policy centers working towards Bulgaria's accelerated and complete integration into the European structures. Significant experience has been gained in key areas like European Regional and Social Policies, JHA and Anti-Discrimination, through studies, networking, information campaigns and seminars. The EI supports and manages a popular web portal, www.europe.bg

QUOTES!!!

"Do. Or do not. There is no try."
Yoda, Jedi Master.

"The critical ingredient is getting off your butt and doing something. It's as simple as that. A lot of people have ideas, but there are few who decide to do something about them now. Not tomorrow. Not next week. But today. The true entrepreneur is a doer, not a dreamer."
Nolan Bushnell, entrepreneur.

"Always deliver more than expected."
Larry Page, co-founder of Google.

"If you're not embarrassed by the first version of your product, you've launched too late."
Reid Hoffman, co-founder of LinkedIn.

"Entrepreneurs can create anything, because they live in possibility."
Jonathan Budd

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

- You can still be involved in the project activities, by
1. Check out news and information on www.e-region.eu
 2. Registering your organization's website to E-region website aggregate (www.e-region.eu/en/submit-your-website/)
 3. Participate in one of the online courses for free (www.e-region.eu/e-courses/)



ARE YOU AN ENTREPRENEUR MATERIAL?

PROBLEM SOLVING MOTIVATES YOU

If you are the kind of person whose enthusiasm rises whenever they face any kind of puzzle, you should think about becoming an entrepreneur. Successful entrepreneurs are creative and innovative problem solvers who enjoy the process of finding a perfect solution to any problem. This is how they develop excellent products and services, enhance work process and overcome difficulties. Eventually, rather than come out of this exhausted, they come out even more inspired to tackle the next big challenge.

YOU WANT TO HAVE YOUR SAY WHEN IT COMES TO DECISION-MAKING.

You are not the kind of person that can simply execute or perform a task. You are also not the kind of person that will accept a decision or assignment offhand. You are always interested about the reasons of different decisions being made, curious about diverse options and solutions and full of ideas on how to contribute to the way work is done. As an entrepreneur you can be involved in key decisions that will affect your own work and the work of others. This is a huge reward, but also a huge responsibility.

YOU ARE ALWAYS FULL OF IDEAS

You like to brainstorm creative ideas on a topic, even if you are not well familiar to it. You are able to analyze even the smallest amount of available data and come up with variety of concepts and solutions, based on analogy and common knowledge. When information is scarce, what you lack in figures, you compensate in creativity and vision.

YOU DON'T FEAR RESPONSIBILITY

You are not afraid to make a decision, take an action and assume responsibility for the final outcome. You decide what to do, give your best, and stand up behind it. Working also means making mistakes, and just like all people you don't like being labeled by them. Still you are able to accept them as part of the process of success, and a key tool to learn how not to do things next time.

YOU DEVELOP STRONG OWNERSHIP

Whether it was a school project during 11th grade, a routine work assignment or the most important project in the world, your task becomes your mission and you are never willing to settle for anything but the best. Regardless how small the consequences of poor quality may be, you refuse to put your name next to a product that you are not completely satisfied with. So whatever the project, you "become" the project itself and are not settling in until completely satisfied. If this is true, then you are definitely entrepreneur material.

YOU CAN AND WANT TO LEAD

You are the kind of person that always has a clear vision of where are they headed and what it takes to get there. You are also the person that can share these ideas in an inspiring manner and stimulate others to follow that vision. This does not necessarily mean that you are an extrovert "talkaholic" and someone who lives for the moment when they will deliver a speech to a crowded hall, it just means that you are able to present your ideas in a way that is understandable to others and makes them want to take part in creating the vision you are sharing.

YOU LIKE BEING YOUR OWN BOSS.

You would like nothing more than the freedom to organize your work, time and resources. You would like to set your own priorities, make your own decisions and have the liberty to make things happen under your own terms. This is one of the key reasons why so many have chosen to become entrepreneurs. Yet be aware that the fact that you can come any-time to work does probably mean that you will get there first and leave last.

HOW TO START A START-UP!

STEP 1: IDENTIFY AN IDEA

Out of the sea of possible business idea you feel may have potential, you will need to decide for one ... well at least in the beginning. When choosing the “best” idea to pursue mind the following: Products and services that are the easiest to sell are those that reflect a real need. It will be harder to sell something to someone if they cannot see a clear value from purchasing your product. Therefore when you think about what business to get into think of real problems that people face and stuff that make their everyday life “complicated”. Then, try to work out simple solutions that can assist them to overcome these problems. If you find a real need and manage to “solve” it through your business, chances are it will be a success. Just think about these successful business ideas: baby strollers instead of carrying your baby around for a walk, cheap airlines instead of a 10-hour train ride and food delivery instead of:

1. Getting in a car
2. Driving to a take away
3. Ordering and waiting for your food
4. Driving home
5. EAT.... – or more probably sleeping while the food is getting cold

And remember, the bigger or more annoying the problem or need that you are solving, the more will people be willing to pay for it. While thinking about your business idea, start from yourself or analyze different groups (man, woman, young – old, students, couples, mothers, grandparents, sportsman and doglovers...). Think about what their day looks like, what are their daily routines, which parts are good and which reluctant – now think how can you help them bypass unpleasant tasks. This is your business idea.

STEP 2: EXPLORE THE MARKET (INDUSTRY)

One brilliant idea you have had recently is a custom made design for floppy disks covers. Now regardless of how much I would enjoy a butterfly-decked floppy, truth is, it is something that has lost its market value, just like the newspaper industry. Your business idea should follow the industries of tomorrow, not yesterday: strong and growing industries that will give you the space not only to start but to expand your business.

A sustainable business idea is one that is optimized for future trends not something that tackles yesterday's concerns. This requires a very sound analysis not only of current trends, but also the ones of tomorrow, and such analysis will need you to implement both information and intuition, as future IS unpredictable. Still, by observing the habits of your potential customers today,

try to assess what their needs will be tomorrow, or which current everyday hardships will continue to be their greatest challenge in the future. Take a look at industry trends and industry growth rates, this should also give you an idea of what areas are expanding and which are shrinking down. The right choice of industry will be determinant to the viability of your business idea.

STEP 3: EXPLORE THE MARKET (CLIENTS)

What are your clients, what are their characteristic, what are their current needs and the needs of their tomorrow? I can't stress this enough, but a sound client analysis is crucial to the success of your products, as regardless of how well you do everything else, eventually your business success comes down to whether someone will accept to pay for it or not. Make sure you make an offer they cannot refuse. Analyze all the time so that you are one step ahead of your clients in knowing what they need.

STEP 4: EXPLORE THE MARKET (COMPETITION)

Who else is in your line of business and how large a share of the market do they already cover. If a stable company has been delivering a quality products for a long time to a group of loyal customers, it is rarely a good idea for a startup. Try to identify an "empty field", a problem no one is solving, a badly solved problem or a problem of tomorrow. This will give you the advantage of being the "first" to offer a service/product, thus create your own market where there will be little or no competitors – only you and your clients.

STEP 5: DESIGN YOUR PRODUCT

Your product must hit the essence of your customer need. An exhaustive analysis of your client needs will give you essential information you can use for detailing your product. Once you have the core of the product set, you should also think about what else you can do to make your product more desirable and customer-friendly. Also, think about how your customer NEEDs the product to be delivered, where/when and how do they need it available, what other needs are connected to the primary need you are fulfilling and what can you add to your product to also reach these additional needs. Think of some obvious examples: An IKEA store has childcare facilities – as their clients are often young couples with small children that need to be entertained so their parents can buy more furniture – which takes some time and concentration to decide. A library where you can find coffee, copying services, snacks and a comfortable space to read. Making the additional services available eases your customer's access to your product and creates an extra value. This extra value can also be the thing that will separate you from the competition and help you create a strong client base, sometimes even draw your competitor's clients to you. Bottom line, you must make your product easy to use for your customers, based not only on their need for your product, but other connecting needs they may have.

STEP 6: MAKE A BUSINESS PLAN

When you are in the beginning of such an exciting endeavor such as the start of your small businesses, there are a million things you need to do... quite a few of which probably seem much more exciting than spending hours and hours developing your business plan. Yet, one of the biggest mistakes an entrepreneur can make is to skip the planning and go right into execution. The business plan is a framework that will help you answer key questions about your business you otherwise may fail to foresee. By carefully following the planning framework you can be sure that you will not miss out on any major questions that may turn out to be fatal to your business once you start implementation. The business plan will help you analyze your industry, clients and competitors. It will make you think about the value you are delivering, how will you promote and sell your product, costs and pricing, potential partners, collaborations and available support. It will also make you think about potential risks and risk mitigation strategies, as well as an exit plan in case things don't turn out the way you plan. Plans are not cast in stone and they will probably need a lot of adjustment through their implementation. However the process of planning will not only give you a clear idea of what EXACTLY should you be doing, but also, by going through it you will have essential information about all aspects of your business that will help you a lot in daily functioning and decision-making.

STEP 7: CONSIDER COSTS

This is part of your business plan, but an essential thing as well so we need to emphasize it properly.

You need to calculate all expenses related to setting your product on the market. This is not only the price of the product itself, but also expenses related to working premises, equipment, utilities, staff, promotion, transport, distribution, taxes... If you are thinking of financing your business by a loan, then you should also bear in mind the monthly credit payment. Eventually, your own budget may probably be the company's budget in the first year(s). Therefore, do not forget that you yourself will need to eat, sleep and live in general, so calculate these amounts as well.

STEP 8: GET THE MONEY IN ORDER

Once you have a clear idea on how much investment you need to start and run your business for the first year, it is time to get the money in place.

Unfortunately, regardless of many stories about business angels and available finance you hear, chances are no one will give you money to finance your ideal business from scratch. Banks may also be reluctant to credit a start-up idea before you can show that your product is viable and people do want to buy it. The truth is, if you want money for your business, you will need to be creative and find them yourself. It also means:

- Do act like a startup – don't be fancy and cut on costs wherever you can!
- Start small and invest back in business whatever you make!

In case you need huge amounts to launch your business, and you see no options to gather these money, redo the planning once again and downsize the initial idea. Start with smaller orders, fewer locations, less staff. In essence simplify the idea so it is manageable as a start-up businesses. Once you have your first group of returning customers, you can think about expanding to fit the original plan.

STEP 9: KISS YOUR PERSONAL LIFE GOODBYE

Sorry to say this, but as a young entrepreneur you will probably need to work up about 60-80 hours per week. Put in a few hours of sleep and other life essentials, and there is not much time left for your personal life... Yet, as Warren G. Tracey put it so nicely: Entrepreneurs spend a few years of their lives like other people **WON'T**, so they can spend the rest of their lives like other people **CAN'T**.
Hope this helped.

STEP 10: GIVE YOURSELF INTO IT!

Focus. Be there. Think about everything. You have to give it all you've got or your business will not stand a real chance. See the world through the lenses of your business, identify new customer groups and new customer needs, alternative supplies or distribution models, creative marketing and advertising strategies ... basically think outside the box. Learn, innovate, change what is not working and repeat what is. Make shortcuts whenever possible but never compromise on quality or integrity! Eventually, be patient. Businesses need time to be set up, start and grow. And for each business failed in the first 3 years, we will never know whether they truly failed or were only given up too soon.



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