



YOPEVA Entrepreneur

Course 1: Entrepreneurship and soft-skills



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Course#1 General objectives

The general objective of this course is to introduce to participants what entrepreneurship is and what does it mean to become an entrepreneur. Moreover, and more importantly, its aim is also to make participants see entrepreneurship as a feasible career option and feel competent to be an entrepreneur (to be self-employed and run a company) working on key soft-skills.

This course is an essential first step in the process of becoming an Entrepreneur, not only by the added value of training soft-skills, but also by understanding the need and significance of the other courses in the program. Further, those taking this course would appreciate its contents to be related to real life situations and business ideas. For this reason, (1) the identification of a personal business idea for each student and (2) the practical activities directed to that idea (or any other meaningful and practical business situations) are central to this course.

Please, note that the value of the entire training program needs to be perceived by participants in this first course. It is thus suggested that each student chooses a personal business project and applies the main concepts in the course by means of practical activities.

Course#1 Learning objectives

1. To learn what entrepreneurship is
2. To learn that entrepreneurship is a feasible career option: “you could become an entrepreneur”
3. To learn about two key ingredients needed to become an entrepreneur:
 - a. Internal motivation (driving force)
 - b. The entrepreneur’s soft-skills toolbox (Personal Initiative, Self-efficacy, Commitment, Self-discipline, & Communication)

Course#1 Duration (weeks)

The approximate duration of Course 1 is two weeks and a half. We suggest a minimum of two sessions per week scheme (total five sessions). The recommended duration of each session is a minimum of 2 hours, and a maximum of 4-5h. If one learning unit (see Contents display below) is considered too relevant to be assimilated in one session (such as Unit 2, for example), it could be displayed in more than one session.

We want to stress the message that the literature reviewed advocates for a minimum of two sessions per week. If participants’ training time commitment is less than that ideal, we recommend adding extra assignments to be submitted online.

Course#1 Contents

Course 1 contents are displayed throughout 5 learning Units as follows:

- Unit 1: Introduction and entrepreneurship
- Unit 2: The business idea and the team design
- Unit 3: Initiative and self-efficacy
- Unit 4: Commitment and self-discipline
- Unit 5: Effective Communication

Unit 1: Introduction and entrepreneurship

Objectives Unit 1.

The main objective of this Unit 1 is to get to understand what is entrepreneurship and what does it take to become an entrepreneur.

Contents Unit 1.

This first Unit is probably the most important unit in Course 1, and covers the following elements:

1. Introduction to the course
2. Initial evaluation
3. What is entrepreneurship
4. What is necessary to become an entrepreneur: You could be an entrepreneur (*make students feel the value of the contents that are going to be taught*)
5. Group dynamics (*to get to know each other*)
6. Task assignment
7. Evaluation
8. Support material

1. Introduction to the course

It is important that the trainer introduces his/herself to the participants in the course, placing the emphasis in his/her experience/expertise regarding entrepreneurship, and making him/herself available to answer any questions, doubts/concerns throughout the course, at any time.

In this Course 1, the trainer should emphasize the overall objective of the entire training program, not just the particular purpose of Course 1. That overall objective is:

“For participants to learn the necessary skills and knowledge to become an entrepreneur; ending the program with a basic set of soft skills, business hard skills, and a business plan.”

Further, the trainer should briefly explain how the entire entrepreneur training program is organized as well as each course’s objectives, so that the participant senses the usefulness of each individual course and how such courses contribute to the entire program. This facilitates the student gets both an overall picture and the sense of comprehensiveness, continuity and coherence within.

Individual courses’ objectives could be displayed as follows:

Course	Title	Objectives
Course 1.	Entrepreneurship and soft skills	The student will learn what entrepreneurship is and the basic entrepreneurial soft-skills: - Initiative, Self-efficacy, Commitment, Self-discipline and Communication - Basic criteria to evaluate a business idea

Course 2.	Creativity: ideas generation and definition	The student will learn how to generate ideas, define them in business terms, analyse them and validate them
Course 3 and 4.	Elaborating a business plan	The student will learn what is a business plan, its utility, its parts and how to will build/design his/her business plan
Course 5.	Entrepreneurial excellence	Students will complete their training with some final key components such as effective leadership, negotiating, quality assurance and monitoring, strategic prospective analysis, and the legal aspects of setting-up a business.

Having delivered an overall vision of the program, some time should be devoted to describe the contents in Course 1 by referring to three key elements: course **structure**, course **organization**, and the **evaluation** system for the course:

- **Structure** of Course 1. Entrepreneurship and soft skills:
 - Unit 1: Introduction and entrepreneurship (today)
 - Unit 2: The business idea and team design
 - Unit 3: Initiative and self-efficacy
 - Unit 4: Commitment and self-discipline
 - Unit 5: Effective Communication

- **Organization** of Course 1. Entrepreneurship and soft skills:
 - Structure of each Unit:
 - Objectives and Contents
 - Individual and/or group activity
 - Class discussion
 - Duration of each Unit
 - Frequency (two of more sessions per week)
 - Tasks to carry out in between Units: “Think about your project”

- **Evaluation** of Course 1. Entrepreneurship and soft skills:
 - Group activities
 - Individual project/tasks assignments

2. Initial assessment

We support the idea that running a brief **baseline assessment** could contribute to build up motivation and interest for the course. We propose to ask students to complete a Google Forms (any other tool that registers data allowing for a pretest/post-test comparison could be used), or to write down their answers to the questions laid out below. These questions address the contents and soft skills that any student should attain during Course 1.

[PROPOSED ACTIVITY#1.1]

1. Please, respond to the following questions. Your responses would give you an idea of where you stand before you actually take Course 1. This exercise is not part of your

performance evaluation in Course 1, but rather a self-administered questionnaire that makes you think about entrepreneurship from the very beginning, and what it takes to be an entrepreneur before you actually learn about that in the course.

	Question	Answer
1	<i>What is entrepreneurship?</i>	Find the proposed answer in the section “3. What is entrepreneurship?”
2	<i>What is it necessary to become an entrepreneur?</i>	Find the proposed answer in the section “4.2. The two pillars of entrepreneurship: purpose & resources?”
3	<i>Why are you not an entrepreneur already? Try to identify reasons and obstacles that are holding you back from becoming an entrepreneur</i>	Find possible answers students could provide and how could the tutor manage section “4.1. Needs and Obstacles”.
4	<i>What do you feel you would personally need?</i>	

The trainer should allow some time for students to write their responses, and let them know that each of these key questions will be addressed building on their responses.

3. What is entrepreneurship?

[PROPOSED ACTIVITY#1.2]

1. Ask students about their responses to the question “What is entrepreneurship?” and create/generate a definition from their contributions (arrive to the **desired definition** by gathering students’ commentaries/definitions). It is worth noting that there is not one single valid definition of entrepreneurship, and it can be defined from several points of view.
2. The purpose of this activity is to engage students in a joint activity, encouraging them to reflect on what entrepreneurship is, and define it. If students were not asked to complete a Google form, or to write down their answers, the question can be directly asked to the whole class. This last alternative has the downside that not all students would probably reflect on what entrepreneurship is, which is important to help the learner keep good track of the lesson.

[REFERENCE DEFINITION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP]

EXAMPLE:

Entrepreneurship is an attitude, an action:

Entrepreneurship is the **pursuit** of an **opportunity** beyond **resources controlled**

1. **Pursuit:** the actions of an individual entrepreneur - drive, resiliency, focus, discipline, and balance
2. **Opportunity:** the type of venture - a better, cheaper, or more efficient offering for the customer
3. **Beyond resources controlled:** managing the risks of external constraints

Please, note the exercise aims at reaching some consensus on relevant elements of becoming an entrepreneur by involving students from an early start, and relating that to their initial responses.

4. What is necessary to be and entrepreneur? “You could be an entrepreneur”

This section is structured in two parts:

- 4.1. Needs and Obstacles
- 4.2. The two pillars of entrepreneurship: purpose & resources

The “4.1. Needs and Obstacles” section aims at identifying students perceived obstacles and needs, and then validate those obstacles and try to explain how this course may contribute to understanding them.

Please, note it is relevant for the entire training to gain knowledge of what students think regarding being an entrepreneur and, at the same time, let them know how this course will help them. Let the student feel the course is something valuable and useful for him/her.

The “4.2. The two pillars of entrepreneurship: purpose & resources” section aims at helping each student clarify what is his/her entrepreneur profile, that is, his/her purpose (Why do I want to become an entrepreneur?) and his/her resources (What do I have that could be used in my entrepreneurship process?).

4.1. Needs and Obstacles

[PROPOSED ACTIVITY#1.3]

The purpose of the activity is for students to identify key obstacle in becoming an entrepreneur.

Students should have answered the initial assessment proposed questions and the trainer should use their responses in a group discussion. As a reminder, these are the initial assessment questions:

- Have you ever thought about being an entrepreneur?
- What is necessary to be an entrepreneur?
- Why are you not an entrepreneur already? Try to identify all reasons and obstacles that are holding you back from becoming an entrepreneur.
- What do you feel you would personally need?

Once students have answered the question “What is necessary to be an entrepreneur?” and “Why are you not an entrepreneur already? The trainer should aim at identifying all possible reasons and obstacles that are holding students back from being an entrepreneur”. This activity has the purpose to approach each student’s worries and perceived barriers and, building on these, clarify hoe the training program will **address the identified needs and obstacles/reasons for them not to be entrepreneurs**.

Please, note that the trainer should avoid minimizing the influence or relevance of the students’ mentioned obstacles. We suggest the trainer to accept they may be important and how they could be addressed throughout the training.

We hereby provide a list of possible obstacles/needs that could turn up and how to react to them:

	Obstacles/needs	Tutor’s responses
1	Soft-skills	– We are going to learn about them throughout Courses 1 & 2, about their relevance and how to enhance them
2	Knowledge or	– We are going to learn about key hard-skills and, building on to your

	Hard-skills	soft-skills, you will be able to learn about the specific hard-skills you may need
3	Money/Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We will explore strategies to access funding. (could an investor come and explain his/her criteria to decide in what entrepreneur projects/start-ups invest?) - We will learn how to modify an idea to make it more economically attractive
4	Risk, resources and time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We will learn how to simplify complex ideas and transform them into low requiring resources proposals to start with (therefore, less risky). This way the entrepreneurial idea does not need to substitute current jobs the student may have. It could become an extra activity
5	Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This program may assist in providing a basic entrepreneurial network (classmates and referents)
6	Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Even when you find an idea for a product or service, it is frequently difficult for a single person to cover all the necessary functions to make that idea come true. Contacts/network become an important part of putting the idea into practice. Entrepreneurs not necessarily lead all the phases and responsibilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Design the product or service. o Produce the product. o Connect the customer with the product or service -> marketing, contracts, sponsors o Distribute the product or to provide the service o Deal with bureaucracy, procedures, legal aspects, etc. <p>To illustrate this point, the trainer could use the following supply chain scheme (Hussain et al., 2016):</p> <pre> graph LR S((Suppliers)) --> SS[Supplies / Services] SS --> SM[Supplier Management] SM --> SO[Service Organization] SO --> CM[Customer Management] CM --> CP[Services / Products] CP --> C((Customers)) </pre>

Good to read resource for both trainers and participants:

Do you have the mindset to be an entrepreneur?

<https://lauriestach.com/2017/06/28/do-you-have-the-mindset-to-be-an-entrepreneur/>

4.2. The two pillars of entrepreneurship: purpose & resources

The key message to take home here is that the entrepreneur (him/herself) is more important than the business idea. In entrepreneurship, the key element is the entrepreneur and his/her motivation and resources, including his/her soft-skills. That is the first aspect investors really pay attention to. Two dimensions are relevant here:

- a) **Purpose:** the entrepreneur's motivation, drive, core values and vision
- b) **Resources:** those in hand or available to the entrepreneur including physical assets, skills/abilities, organizational processes, information and knowledge

[PROPOSED ACTIVITY#1.4: EXPLORE YOUR PURPOSE]

The aim of this exercise is to make student think of their inner motivation to be an entrepreneur, to explore their purpose in becoming one. That is, to find out about their commitment, their motivation (intrinsic or extrinsic), in brief, the push towards becoming an entrepreneur.

It is important each individual student understands the main driver behind his/her will to become an entrepreneur. This is a pillar in their entrepreneurship adventure. In this respect, **four main archetypes** can be distinguished: get/give/make/live (Toscher et al., 2020). They are all valid purposes.

The trainer should start by asking students to identify the purpose/objective that best describes their motivation, their will to be an entrepreneur.

Objective type	Operational definition: the reason for starting your company is...	Examples:
GET	To GET an external, extrinsic reward in the form of money or recognition above what is a normal salary level. Typically, the participants wanted a “success” or “dividends”, including financial objectives which are a precursor to the said objectives, such as “return on investment” or “revenue growth”	“making \$100mn in 5-7 years time period”, “making a profit”
GIVE	To GIVE something to society. Rooted in idealism or values. This could be anything from leaving a lasting legacy, job-creation, to making the world a better place with the product or service they may provide	“to create employment in the local community” “to lift the social standard of living”
MAKE	To experience the fulfillment of MAKING a product, service or organization. This is based on intrinsic motivation, independent from an external reward, and could revolve around creativity	“to create the best technology platform for education and training”
LIVE	To LIVE a good life. To make a living out of it. This includes a reasonable salary and is most closely aligned with “necessity” entrepreneurship. It may also include a comfortable work situation, freedom to control your own work situation, the benefit of good colleagues, etc	“to make enough money to live comfortably” “want to control my own time”

It would be an excellent complement to set examples to illustrate such definitions/situations. Local examples are very well accepted by students since they can see how their views are shared by local people they may even know. [PROVIDE SOME EXAMPLES]

Please, note that actual entrepreneurs could also be invited to explain their experiences to students. If that is possible, please ask them to explain their purpose/drive and what their initial skills were, too.

[PROPOSED ACTIVITY#1.5: EXPLORE YOUR RESOURCES]

The purpose of this exercise is to explore resources students have at their disposal, those they may have easy access to. This exercise is important to allow students realize their starting situation. Being aware of their initial position will serve them as a reference to frame the contents of the courses, reinforcing their commitment to the training program

The trainer may ask students to identify their resources by completing the following table with the type of resources available to them (individually):

Resource type	Examples
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Financial	Money in the bank account Income (regular, seasonal, punctual) Money that could be borrowed
Material	Locations, premises Vehicles Computers, phone, etc.
Hard skills and knowledge	Activities and tasks (know-how) Jobs Practical experience Knowledge in certain fields: Trainings Personal interests or hobbies (social media, videogames, fashion, sports, books, etc.)
Soft skills	Personal attributes or transversal skills: Initiative, Leadership, Negotiation, Networking, Communication, Creativity, Plan and organization, Self-confidence, Self-control, People address, Commitment, Empathy, Flexibility and change management, Customer orientation, Achievement orientation, Strategic orientation, Analytical thinking, Conceptual thinking, Efficiency and quality, Learning and use of knowledge.
Network	People you know with their own interests and skills: Family, Friends, Classmates, Workmates, other people with access to a variety of different recourses and know-how

The trainer may use case studies to illustrate the above [EXEMPLIFY WITH A CASE]

5. Group dynamics (to get to know each other)

One of the objectives of the course is to start building a network, one way of doing this is by allowing students to meet and work with each other. This could be done at the time during the course the trainer feels more adequate.

[PROPOSED ACTIVITY#1.6]

1. First, ask students to write down their “personal introduction”:
 - Their name and their age
 - What are their main interests/hobbies.
 - What are they good at (soft and hard skills)
 - At least two entrepreneurs they know (they can be famous: Facebook, WhatsApp, KFC etc.)

Please, note a WhatsApp group (or any other social media) or forum could be created, so that students send/share their introduction.
2. Create groups of students (4 to 5 per group) and ask them to present themselves by sharing their “personal introductions”: first all students will let know others about their names, then all of them will share their interests and discuss, then all students will share what are they good at and discuss and, finally, they will share the entrepreneurs they know.
3. Before next session, each student should send his or her “personal introduction” to the social media group.

If students finish sharing their introductions before the time runs out, they can start reflecting about the entrepreneurs they know:

- What do you think about their business idea
- What do they think was the purpose/driver for that entrepreneur (get/give/make/live)

Examples of companies (either big or small) or local entrepreneurs could be given to foster dialogue and serve as an icebreaker.

6. Task assignment

This is a task students should complete after Unit 1 (take home). In Unit 2 some basic concepts about the business idea will be highlighted. For this reason, it is necessary that students work on some business ideas. As stated, these ideas will serve as the basis for activities and analysis in Unit 2.

Each student will have to think about at least 3-4 possible business/company ideas. They do not need to be innovative or revolutionary (e.g. coffee shop), although it would be interesting to try to make it distinctive (e.g. a coffee shop with cats). Some strategies that could inspire student's thinking processes are listed below:

- Problems you may have as a customer
- Your own frustrations
- Other people's complaints
- Things you would like to change
- Other companies' solutions (Is there any other way of doing it? Could it be optimized?) or models (Can it be applied to other settings?)
- Connecting or mixing random concepts (such as in the coffee and cats example)
- Market gaps in your local context.

The trainer could also ask students if they personally know an entrepreneur or someone self-employed that could be willing to come and explain their experience.

7. Evaluation

This Unit 1 has no specific evaluation requirements. The trainer should however bear in mind that key to the success of Unit 1 is students' active participation. Such participation should be encouraged by compelling those students that do not naturally interact to do so, not only for their own benefit but for the group's.

8. Support material

Entrepreneurship:

MOOC type course: Becoming an Entrepreneur. MIT & Launch (2017): Learn the business skills and startup mindset needed to embark on your entrepreneurial path from the premier program for aspiring entrepreneurs. <https://www.edx.org/course/becoming-an-entrepreneur>

Youtube link to the MOOC course:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3M9X88adJ8&list=PLCUM6hFkkgEFAHSFuazEmfB3p6M0jDRYB>

Supply chain:

Hussain, M., Khan, M., & Al-Aomar, R. (2016). A framework for supply chain sustainability in service industry with Confirmatory Factor Analysis. *Renewable and sustainable energy reviews*, 55, 1301-1312. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Matloub-Hussain/publication/309725790_A_framework_for_supply_chain_sustainability_in_service_industry_with_Confirmatory_Factor_Analysis/links/591d808da6fdcc233fce9f81/A-framework-for-supply-chain-sustainability-in-service-industry-with-Confirmatory-Factor-Analysis.pdf

Purpose:

Toscher, B., Dahle, Y., & Steinert, M. (2020). Get give make live: An empirical comparative study of motivations for technology, youth and arts entrepreneurship. *Social Enterprise Journal*. <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/SEJ-03-2019-0016/full/html>

Unit 2: The business idea and the team design

Objective Unit 2.

In this Unit, **students identify a business idea (they could use)**. In the process, they will learn about the nuclear aspects of a business idea, and what characteristics need to be considered when creating a team.

IMPORTANT: As stated, the objective of this Course 1 it **is not to develop a business idea** itself, but to train the students' soft-skills. Business ideas will be the concern of future courses and students will then have plenty of time and resources at their disposal. However, we understand it is a good plan to allow students practice their soft skills with a business idea they may have an interest on. It is important that students learn about the fundamentals to produce simple and viable ideas that motivate them. As sated the ideas used in this Unit 2 do not necessarily represent the student's commitment to develop a full business plan later in the training program. Our focus is thus placed on developing soft-skills, and we make use of a sample business idea as a motivation and as a reference place for students to practice their skills.

Contents Unit 2.

This Unit 2 covers the following elements:

1. Having a great idea is not that relevant
2. Identify a gap in the market
3. What does your idea require?
4. Choosing the right team
5. Class discussion and tasks assignment
6. Support material

1. Having a great idea is not that relevant

We suggest the trainer to convey the following messages:

1. Almost any idea could make a successful idea; it largely depends on how well you implement it. Investors obviously pay attention to the business idea itself and to its viability, but when the idea has the potential, they focus very much on the entrepreneur him/herself and his/her capacities and skills. It is for this reason that this course places the emphasis on some key entrepreneur's capacities (i.e. soft skills) rather that on the idea per se.
2. A good idea does not necessarily have to be revolutionary; it could be similar to something that already exists but with a twist, if you wish. Initially, we may be reluctant to check our ideas with someone else because we may be afraid that others may steal it from us. Carrying out a business idea requires time, effort, and resources, so most people are interested and motivated to develop their own ideas, not as much other people's ideas. However, mere ideas need to be worked out.

2. Identify a gap in the market

As mentioned, ideas do not have to be revolutionary; one needs however to identify a gap in the market that responds to a need or desire of a specific type of customer. Waiting for a flash of inspiration to get a good idea it is not usually the best approach. Contrarily, it is frequently recommended brainstorming lots of ideas and then combine them and filter them. This may be a rather more productive way to come up with a valid idea.

Our advice is for students to think of ideas that are related to their knowledge, to their interests or abilities (companies they like, tasks they know how to perform, etc.). This will surely keep up their motivation.

In this respect, some strategies could mean paying attention to:

- Problems they may have as a customer
- Their own frustrations
- Other people's complaints
- Things they would like to change
- Other companies' solution (are there others ways of doing it? Could it be optimized?) or model (can it be applied to other fields?)
- Connecting or mixing concepts (such as linking "coffeeshop" and "cats")

[EXAMPLES, IF POSSIBLE, FROM THE LOCAL CONTEXT]

Ideas that initially require few resources are often the best ones. So try to simplify the student's idea, for example, maybe by thinking about an online model/version of the business that may help reducing the costs (e.g. instead of selling something in a store, you may sell it online).

The trainer could use (in class) the table below to encourage students to start thinking on two key dimensions of their ideas: **Personal fit & Feasibility**. We believe that the most relevant point here is not for the student grade items in a 0-10 scale but to be able to justify that score, the reasoning behind it.

	Dimension	Concept	Scale (0-10)	Justification
A	Personal fit	The idea/problem to solve produces you motivation and excitement : is it something you could commit to and work hard on it?		
		The idea/problem to solve involves abilities, skills and strengths you have: is it something you have knowledge or skills to work on?		
B	Feasibility	The idea addresses a gap in the market or solves a real problem . Does it solve an issue that customers have or covers a want/need?		
		The idea is not too expensive or high resources requiring. Can it be started with a moderate investment?		

[EXEMPLIFY WITH A CASE/IDEA, IF POSSIBLE, FROM THE LOCAL CONTEXT]

[PROPOSED ACTIVITY#2.1 – BUSINESS IDEA]

This activity aims at allowing students to analyze the adequacy of an idea considering the “Personal fit” and “Feasibility”.

1. Get the class to work in groups composed of 2-4 participants
2. Each student shares his/her ideas (those ideas thought at home as part of Unit 1 task assignment).
3. Next, participants can give their opinion on the other participants’ ideas, propose changes, merge/mix/fuse ideas, etc.
4. Ask them to analyze the ideas according to their personal fit (drive and skills) and their feasibility (real solutions and affordability) Table included above.

3. What does your idea require?

The trainer should ask students about what would their individual ideas require in terms of key resources: human resources (functions that need to be covered), material, locations, finance, etc. For example, if you want to create an App that translates dogs’ barking into comprehensible human words such as “anger”, “intimidation”, etc., you would probably need someone who knows how to develop an App, someone who knows how to interpret dogs’ barks, someone who has the necessary knowledge regarding audio, etc.

Please, note that many of these aspects will be covered thoroughly in later courses (particularly courses 3&4). In this Course 1 we intend to introduce to students the importance of such elements, and make them think how they relate to their idea.

The trainer could use the following table as a template:

Supply chain elements	Requirements
Design of the product or service	What is the concrete offering? What is needed to design it? Can you design it? Would you need help from others? Who? What knowledge is necessary?
Production of the product	What is necessary to produce the product? Can you do it at home (e.g. cheesecake)? Would you need a manufacturer (e.g. plastic product)? What about suppliers (e.g. Clothes)?
Connect the customer with the product or service	How is the target population going to know about your offering? What does the marketing strategy require? Online advertising? Contacting influencers?
Distribution of the product	How is the product going to reach the target population? In a store? Online? What is needed?
Providing the service	How is the service going to be provided? Does it require a physical location (e.g. a massage)? Can it be delivered online (e.g. a lesson)? Who is going to provide it? A professional? Could you provide it by yourself (e.g. consulting)? Etc.
Bureaucracy, procedures, legal aspects, etc.	What legal aspects need to be checked (e.g. confidentiality/privacy policies)? Is the idea legally possible? Does the idea already exist? Does this affect you?

[PROPOSED ACTIVITY#2.2 – IDEA REQUIREMENTS]

This activity aims at reinforcing students' abilities to identify the resources any idea may demand.

1. This activity could be done in groups or individually and can be integrated within the previous one
2. Make participants choose an idea and identify what would it require in terms of resources using the previous presented template
3. Try to simplify the idea as much as possible
4. Share with the whole group class your chosen idea and its requirements.

4. Choosing the right team

Many ideas, if not all, may require the participation of other people and their different expertise. It proves to be a fundamental point choosing the right combination of team members that would take in the different tasks needed. It is being argued that problems among the founding team members are among the main reasons for startups failure, for example, the lack of founders' complementary skillsets or personality type of founders (Kalyanasundaram, 2018). So, before actually bothering about funding, clients, and product/service development, building the right team is key. Clearly, one can decide to start a company by his/herself, but having a balanced team can be really an asset. Co-founders can complement each other skills, support each other throughout the entrepreneurial process and provide different points of views, ideas and solutions.

The trainer should be able to convey to students that when building a team it is important:

1. **Members share the same values and drive (e.g. get/give/make/live).** Imagine the case of a team in which the first co-founder wants to sell the company when it grows, the second co-founder wants a small firm just to make a living, and the third one wants to create and maintain a big company that contributes to society. Such discrepancies will most likely end-up the adventure in a failure. Having a common interest regarding a field or an industry, is always a positive point, but not decisive. It is important not to confuse values/drives with interests.
2. **Members have complementary skills.** There are three main types of profiles in which you do not want to overlap too much with your co-founders or other members of the team:
 - a. **Product/service profiles:** technical knowledge regarding the design of the product/service and its production/development.
 - b. **Marketing profiles:** responsible of the brand design, advertising and marketing (gets the product and the brand known).
 - c. **Business profiles:** focusing on administration, finance, sales, business relationships and partners/clients.

Once the team is designed, it is central to explore, and share with each other, any expectations and information that could potentially lead to interpersonal problems in the future, such as company values, motivations, vision, working style, roles and responsibilities.

Many entrepreneurs start by thinking on other people who have similar interests, such as their friends. It is highly advised that entrepreneurs start by looking for people who share the same values and reasons for starting a business. Skills can be learned and interests can change, but shared values and motivations create a solid foundation.

[EXEMPLIFY WITH A CASE/IDEA]

The following two activities are thought to be delivered either as a block (all together) or as alternating activities with conceptual explanations. The **alternating model is recommended** for a better contents comprehension and coherence. The trainer could decide which option suits the course best.

[PROPOSED ACTIVITY#2.3 – ENTREPRENEUR PROFILE]

1. The objective of this activity is that the students identify and become aware of their current entrepreneur profile.
2. Individually define and share your entrepreneur profile. This is to be done in groups by comparing and contrasting your values and skills.
 - Summarize your values and drive/purpose
 - Identify your skills in each of the three mentioned profiles:
 - **Product/service profiles:** has technical knowledge regarding the design of the product/service and its production/development.
 - **Marketing profiles:** responsible of the brand design, advertising and marketing (gets the product and the brand known).
 - **Business profiles:** focused on administration, finance, sales, business relationships and partners/clients.

[PROPOSED ACTIVITY#2.4 – TEAMING UP]

This activity has two objectives. The first is that the student (individually and in groups) practices the “personal fit” and “feasibility” analysis of an idea, as this is going to be a task assignment. The second is that the student tries to design a team that complements its skills; although in some cases the best outcome is not to build a team (as values and skills do not fit).

1. Individually, choose an idea and justify it using these two elements: “personal fit” and “feasibility”:
 - Personal fit:
 - The idea/problem to solve produces you **motivation and excitement**: is it something you could commit to and work hard on it?
 - The idea/problem to solve involves abilities, **skills and strengths** you have: is it something you have knowledge or skills to work on?
 - Feasibility:
 - The idea addresses a gap in the market or **solves a real problem**. Does it solve an issue that customers have or covers a want/need?
 - The idea is not too **expensive** or high **resources** requiring. Can it be started with a moderate investment?
2. In groups, share the ideas chosen individually and justify their selection.
3. Imagine that you are a group of co-founders. Choose an idea justify its election with its “group fit” and “feasibility”.
4. Think about how could you best distribute/organize the key responsibilities from these three profiles: product/service, marketing, and business.
5. Reflect about point 4: Was the resulting team appropriate? Were the members’ skills complementary? What was missing?

5. Class discussion and tasks assignment

Ask participants to share with the rest of group members their idea as well as the distribution of responsibilities in the “PROPOSED ACTIVITY – TEAMING UP”. End up concluding the main aspects of the business idea and the team building.

Before/For the next session:

[ASSESSMENT TASK#1 – BUSSINESS IDEA]

Ask students to choose and submit (hand in) before the next class a definitive company/business idea for their own project.

Ask them to justify the business idea by answering the following questions:

- What problem/need does it solve, does it fulfill/address a market gap? (2 points)
- Why does the idea personally fit you? (4 points, 2 point each aspect)
 - *The idea/problem to solve produces you **motivation and excitement**: is it something you could commit to and work hard on it? (2 points)*
 - *The idea/problem to solve involves abilities, **skills and strengths** you have: is it something you have knowledge or skills to work on? (2 points)*
- Why is it feasible? (2 points)
 - *The idea addresses a gap in the market or **solves a real problem**. Does it solve an issue that customers have or covers a want/need?*
 - *The idea is not too **expensive** or high **resources** requiring. Can it be started with a moderate investment? (2 points). If possible, explain: How could it be simplified? Or how has it been simplified?*
- What does it require? (4 points)
 - In terms of team/human resources (2 points)
 - In terms of physical/digital assets (2 points)

Total score points: 10.

Please, bear in mind the following:

- a. Explain **how it is going to be evaluated**, what aspects will be considered when grading the task. Remember that the most important point is that they learn how to evaluate an idea, it is not an exam. This means that questions regarding the task can be asked to the trainer (e.g. by mail). Students can help each other, too.
- b. **Stress how crucial and essential this task is**. Emphasize that, even at the beginning participants may have some difficulties, they end up submitting really interesting or solid ideas.
- c. If some students want to do their project together, they need to **justify their teaming up** with their values and complementary skills/profiles.

6. Support material

Business idea and team design:

MOOC type course: Becoming an Entrepreneur. MIT & Launch (2017): Learn the business skills and startup mindset needed to embark on your entrepreneurial path from the premier program for aspiring entrepreneurs.

<https://www.edx.org/course/becoming-an-entrepreneur>

Youtube link of the course:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3M9X88adJ8&list=PLCUM6hFkkgEFAHSFuazEmfB3p6M0jDRYB>

Unit 3: Initiative and self-efficacy

Objectives Unit 3.

In this Unit 3 we will address the concepts of Personal Initiative and Self-efficacy, and how both are key soft skills in the entrepreneur toolbox. The objective of this unit is therefore to reinforce/improve students’:

- a. **Personal Initiative:** A proper definition of goals and plans foster initiative. This is because having clear and challenging goals, and defining the necessary steps to achieve them, makes taking action much more plausible.
- b. **Self-efficacy:** Self-efficacy is thought as a prerequisite for initiative, for which addressing self-efficacy becomes essential. In this unit we will see how to address low self-efficacy by setting learning goals (and plans).

Please, note that the overall propose of this unit is to enhance student’s initiative and self-efficacy by training “goal setting” and “planning”, NOT to develop their business ideas. However, to this aim we need them to works practically with their (tentative) business ideas, setting goals and elaborating initial plans. Although it is preferable that the student could identify an idea that he/she can commit to, the idea itself does not really matter much. Students may change their business idea in future courses, or even work with personal goals/projects instead of working directly with a business idea.

Contents Unit 3.

The contents of this Unit 3 are displayed in three sections:

1. Personal initiative
2. Self-efficacy
3. Class discussion and tasks assignment
4. Support material

1. Personal initiative

First of all, it is important to convey that Initiative and Proactivity are two soft-skills that are used naturally when comparing the present day situation with an envisioned future. Initiative could thus be interpreted as the willingness to:

- a. actively reduce the observable discrepancies between the current situation and the desired present/future (goal), and
- b. think of the best way forward (plans and actions).

Personal Initiative has three components, namely Self-starting, Proactivity, and Persistence. Find below some extended definitions on each of these:

1. **Self-starting: starting an action without being told or without any explicit role model.** Entrepreneurs pursue self-set goals that keep them ahead of their competitors, in terms of products, services, strategies to approach customers, getting information from customers, etc.

2. **Proactivity: foreseeing future opportunities (or problems) and assemble current resources to anticipate them.** Recognizing and exploiting opportunities are at the core of entrepreneurship. The same applies for a proactive stance with regard to problems. Entrepreneurs should prepare to deal with future problems now and should not wait to the point in which they are forced to deal with them.
3. **Persistence: keep trying/doing despite difficulty.** Whenever new ideas are pursued and barriers need to be overcome, adjustments to your original goals need to be done, and sometimes entrepreneurs have to backtrack. Technical, bureaucratic, organizational, and customer related barriers may appear. In spite of these barriers, entrepreneurs should stay on track by persisting to pursue their main goals, being resilient.

Please, note that Personal Initiative is empirically related to economic success in numerous studies on entrepreneurship in Africa, USA, and Europe. Similarly, Proactivity has been consistently linked to business performance. Thus, it makes a lot of sense to place Personal Initiative at the center of a psychological training for those who want to become entrepreneurs.

1.1. How to improve Personal initiative

1.1.1. Proactive goal setting

Learning how to set adequate goals will foster Initiative. However, not any goal may be helpful. Goal setting could be learnt by focusing on 5 basic principles:

1. **Clarity:** A clear and measurable goal is preferred to vague or ambiguous goals. Specific and quantifiable goals, together with deadlines, allow for a better appraisal of progress. Example: “read more” vs “finish this book containing 267 pages in the next two months”.
 - Specific
 - Measurable (if possible)
 - Time-bound
2. **Challenge:** Goals have to be challenging, they must entail some degree/level of difficulty but yet be realistic (attainable), too. Some grade of difficulty serves also the purpose of motivation. If a given goal is too easy to achieve or too tedious to complete, it could cause discouragement or frustration and may result in lower accomplishment. For example, if I am not used to reading, the goal of reading a book in two months could be a personal challenge. That same goal may not be a challenge for other people that may be more active readers.
3. **Commitment:** When someone sets a personal goal, or when a supervisor sets a goal for an employee, it is important the individual understands and supports such assignment from the beginning. Commitment means accepting the challenge and remaining accountable to the plan.. When individuals fail to commit to a goal, they are less likely to enjoy the process, feel challenged, or even achieve it. In brief, if I understand why that goal is being set and what am I going to get out of it, it would be more possible that I complete it. Using the example above, if I think and understand that reading that book will provide me with useful knowledge, it is more possible that I finish the book.
4. **Feedback:** Ongoing feedback can help individuals make progress on their goals and make adjustments if needed throughout the process. Feedback can come in various forms, such as collected by analyzing milestones and progress, or during conventional feedback sessions to review progress (e.g. provided by colleagues). For example, If I track the

number of pages that I have already read and the number of pages that are left considering the deadline, I might conclude that I need to increase the number of pages I read per day.

5. **Task complexity:** When the goal is complex, you may want to split it into smaller components that can help you remain focused and motivated. If our book is too lengthy for us (to be read in two months), a good strategy may be to set intermediate goals, for example by chapters.

Using these principles of goal setting would also increase the participants' commitment to goals within the training.

[EXAMPLES]

1.1.2. Proactive planning

Plans aim at relating thoughts with actions and thereafter specifying the necessary steps to achieve a goal. Planning is labeled as proactive when it refers to future problems and opportunities and we anticipate and prepare for them now. Planning should not be overly detailed but comprehensive enough to include central issues that need to be taken into account as well as plan Bs to overcome potential problems. In brief, flexibility and back-up plans in case something goes wrong are important elements of proactive planning.

Please, note it is important at this point to stress the relevance of flexibility and adaptation allowing therefore for updates and changes in you planning exercise. Taking that into consideration, try to be as specific as possible and thus avoid oversimplification and ambiguity.

[EXAMPLES]

[PROPOSED ACTIVITY#3.1 – GOALS AND PLANNING]

This activity aims at reinforcing students' goal setting.

1. Each participant should think about their personal project, its current situation and the desired future.
2. Ask students to establish goals for their projects (both short and long-term goals) following the goal-setting principles (try to think about goals that are needed to get your business idea running.):
 - Clarity: it needs to be specific, measurable (if possible) and time-bound.
 - Challenge: justify why is it not too easy or too difficult.
 - Commitment: justify why is this goal important and logic.
 - Feedback: predict how could feedback inform goal adjustment.
 - Task complexity: exemplify how the goal could be divided in smaller goals.
3. Next, ask students to think of the initial steps needed to start with their business idea. This might include contacting suppliers or trying to find partners or team members.
4. Finally, in groups, share your goals and plans, inspire each other, and modify your goals/plans in case it is felt necessary.

Please, note that the role of the trainer is to walk around the class checking students' progress, listening to their reasoning and providing instant feedback. Students play a central role helping each other's learning process. It is important to remind students to share their points of view regarding each others' tasks and to be open-minded to accept feedback from peers.

2. Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is a fundamental skill when pursuing challenging goals and therefore it is vital to entrepreneurs' success. Self-efficacy is defined as "a person's belief in his/her ability to fulfill a task or to achieve a goal". If someone has high self-efficacy, he/she will tend to set higher personal goals under the belief that they could be attained. The first key to successful goal setting is to build and **reinforce self-efficacy**.

Self-efficacy is strongly related to personal initiative. Self-efficacy helps to increase the probability of performing complex/not easy actions. Conversely, low self-efficacy may block personal initiative since such individuals tend to avoid challenging situations and give up easily in the face of difficulties.

2.1. How to improve self-efficacy?

Self-efficacy is very much related with self-knowledge and introspection, that is, the person's ability to evaluate his/her actual knowledge and capacities. To increase low self-efficacy the person needs to identify the reason for not believing in his/her ability. Very frequently the answer is the lack of knowledge or skills. Once this reason has been identified, learning goals and plans need to be set to compensate the identified limitations.

[PROPOSED ACTIVITY#3.2 – ASSESS YOUR SELF-EFFICACY] OPTIONAL

The aim of this activity is for each student to assess his/her level of self-efficacy.

For each of the following 10 statements, please respond on a 4-point scale from "not true at all" (1) to "very true" (4):

I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough			
1 (Strongly disagree)	2	3	4 (Strongly agree)
If someone opposes me, I can find means and ways to get what I want			
1 (Strongly disagree)	2	3	4 (Strongly agree)
It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals			
1 (Strongly disagree)	2	3	4 (Strongly agree)
I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events			
1 (Strongly disagree)	2	3	4 (Strongly agree)
Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations			
1 (Strongly disagree)	2	3	4 (Strongly agree)
I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort			
1 (Strongly disagree)	2	3	4 (Strongly agree)
I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities			
1 (Strongly disagree)	2	3	4 (Strongly agree)
When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions			
1 (Strongly disagree)	2	3	4 (Strongly agree)
If I am in a bind, I can usually think of something to do			
1 (Strongly disagree)	2	3	4 (Strongly agree)
No matter what comes my way, I'm usually able to handle it			
1 (Strongly disagree)	2	3	4 (Strongly agree)

Once you have finished, add up the numbers of all statements (your score should be in the range of 10-40). If the result is higher than "30", you have a self-reported personal initiative higher than the average (Schwarzer & Jerusalem 1995).

[PROPOSED ACTIVITY#3.3 – LEARNING GOALS]

The objective of this activity is that the student identifies tasks in which he/she feels a low self-efficacy and establishes a learning goal and a plan to address it.

1. Regarding your personal project, identify tasks in which you feel you have a low self-efficacy, in other words, tasks in which you can anticipate a rather lower performance (e.g. presenting your idea to investors). Try to be specific on what type of knowledge are you missing.
2. Next, list as many different ways/resources to solve that lack of knowledge as you can. (e.g. asking to your classmates, to your trainer, looking on the internet, looking for experts in LinkedIn, etc.).
3. Finally, in groups, share your identified tasks and possible solutions.

Please, note again that the role of the trainer is to walk around the class checking students' progress, listening to their reasoning and providing instant feedback. Students play a central role helping each other's learning process. It is important to remind students to share their points of view regarding each others' tasks and to be open-minded to accept feedback from peers.

3. Class discussion and tasks assignment

As a general recommendation, at the end of each activity in the classroom ask students to highlight the main difficulties and conclusions from their tasks.

[ASSESSMENT TASK#2 – STARTING GOAL AND PLAN]

Before the next session, ask students to submit (hand in) **one starting goal for their own project**. The goal needs to address the first actions towards starting their business idea. Therefore, the goal needs to be accompanied with a brief plan with the necessary steps to accomplish it and a reflection on possible obstacles, problems and alternative plans (plan B). Evidently, the plan does not have to be carried out but for them try to picture themselves in the situation.

Each goal submitted may be evaluated in terms of how well do they follow the goal-setting principles. The following could assist in the grading of task assignments (Total 8 points):

- Clarity (1 point)
- Challenge (1 point)
- Commitment (1 point)
- Feedback: predict how could feedback inform goal adjustment. (0,5 point)
- Task complexity: exemplify how the goal could be divided in smaller goals. (0,5 point)
- Plan: dated steps that will be followed (2)
- Possible obstacles and problems (1 point)
- Plans B (what would I do in case the problems happen). (1 point)

Please, note that the trainer will need to explain in class how this Task 2 will be evaluated, what aspects will be considered when grading the task. Remember that the most important

feature in Task 2 is that they learn how to set proper goals and plans to develop their initiative. Written feedback should be given to students.

As a reminder, please note that the chosen idea does not really matter; the focus is here placed on the “goal setting” and “planning” capacities, not on the business idea itself.

We here assist the trainer by providing an Example:

Exercise submitted:

Business idea: A company that guarantees honesty in the *Curriculum Vitae (CV)* and provides candidates to companies ensuring transparency.

Goal: Check the legal viability of the project within the next month.

Plan with steps:

- Search on the internet for laws regarding privacy in selection process:
 1. Can a company (legally) verify the information of a CV by contacting companies or institutions the person has worked for?
 2. Can a company (legally) provide information on a former employee?
 3. Can educational institutions (legally) provide information of a former student?

Obstacles and alternatives: it is possible that I fail to find out the necessary information on the internet, or that I do not know how to interpret laws since I am not an expert on that. In such case, I could look for someone more suited for the task or simply contact a law consultancy company.

- Clarity: it is specific, although it is not really measurable.
- Challenge: I have never read a law, so it is definitely a challenge.
- Commitment: It is essential to know if it is legal to, for example, call candidate’s previous employers, otherwise the idea is not viable.
- Feedback: as it is not measurable feedback does not really play a role, mainly, if I do not find out the information online, I will look for an expert.
- Task complexity: it is hard to imagine that it could be divided into smaller goals.

Example Evaluation:

- Clarity (1/1 point): yes
- Challenge (1/1 point): yes
- Commitment (1/1 point): yes
- Feedback: predict how could feedback inform goal adjustment. (0,5/0,5 points): yes
- Task complexity: exemplify how the goal could be divided in smaller goals. (0,5/0,5 points): yes
- Plan: dated steps that will be followed (1/2 points): not dated
- Possible obstacles and problems (1/1 point): yes
- Plans B (what would I do in case the problems happen). (1/1 point): yes

Total points: 7/8

Example of Feedback from the trainer:

Remember that plans need to be as specific as possible, in this sense, it could have been specified WHEN these steps are going to be performed.

Moreover, in this case, you have chosen a non-measurable idea. For ideas to be measurable they need to be quantifiable, but this will not be the case for all goals. As a suggestion, to try to make a more precise goal, you could first identify what are the laws/articles that need to be read and then create a reading plan (As in the book reading example provided in class).

4. Support material

Initiative:

Frese, M., Hass, L., & Friedrich, C. (2016). Personal initiative training for small business owners. *Journal of Business Venturing Insights*, 5, 27-36. <http://text2fa.ir/wp-content/uploads/Text2fa.ir-Personal-initiative-training-for-small-business-owners-1.pdf>

Goal-setting:

Indeed Editorial Team (2022) *The 5 Principles of Goal-Setting Theory (With How-to Steps)*. <https://ca.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/goal-setting-theory>

Lunenburg, F. C. (2011). Goal-setting theory of motivation. *International journal of management, business, and administration*, 15(1), 1-6. <https://www.goalhub.com/s/Lunenburg-Fred-C-Goal-Setting-Theoryof-Motivation-IJMBA-V15-N1-2011.pdf>

Self-efficacy:

Speier, C., & Frese, M. (1997). Generalized self-efficacy as a mediator and moderator between control and complexity at work and PI: A longitudinal field study in East Germany. *Human Performance*, 10, 171-192. <http://www.evidence-based-entrepreneurship.com/content/publications/042.pdf>

Garland, H., & Adkinson, J. H. (1987). Standards, persuasion, and performance: A test of cognitive mediation theory. *Group & Organization Studies*, 12(2), 208-220.

Unit 4: Commitment and self-discipline

Objectives of Unit 4.

The main objective of this Unit 4 is to deliver the idea that the entrepreneurship process could sometimes be extremely frustrating and tough. It is for this reason that Commitment (as a soft-skill) is going to be a powerful source of energy and motivation, particularly when investors, not just once but several times, refuse our proposal, or when negotiations are not successful enough, or when our start-up fails. Being committed to our purpose might be crucial to succeed.

Contents Unit 4.

The contents of this Unit 4 are displayed as follows:

1. Commitment
 - a. Commitment, motivation and discipline
 - b. The Company's mission and vision statements
2. Self-discipline
3. Class discussion and tasks assignment
4. Support material

1. Commitment

1.1. Commitment, motivation and discipline

Commitment provides motivation (the desire and energy to do something) as it binds an individual to a particular course of action.

In our lives, we frequently use the term *Commitment* to refer to important actions or decisions that have relatively long-term implications (e.g., commitment to a marriage; commitment to becoming a parent; commitment to improving employee productivity or satisfaction....). The binding nature of Commitment makes it unique. By contrast, we use the concept *Motivation* to refer to an individual's incentive to do something in particular, including situations that have relatively trivial and shorter-term implications (e.g. go to the cinema, do the gardening, do some housework, or the homework).

Further, when thinking about motivation we distinguish between:

- Intrinsic motivation: defined as the desire to perform an activity for its own sake, so as to experience the pleasure and satisfaction inherent in the activity.
- Extrinsic motivation: defined as the desire to perform an activity with the intention to attain positive consequences such as an economic incentive or to avoid negative consequences such as a punishment.

Generally speaking, intrinsic motivation is rather more desirable for different reasons such as being associated with positive business outcomes. Whereas actions that are extrinsically motivated are less likely to be repeated when the economic incentive is not present. In entrepreneurship it is key to internalize the need and desire for our goals, plans and actions (instead of seeing them as obligations), revealing self-determination, an inner force that goes beyond punctual economic incentives.

Throughout the entrepreneurial process, there will be tasks that are not really enjoyable, hard times and tough moments in which the entrepreneur will not be particularly motivated. In these moments, commitment is necessary to remind the entrepreneur his/her purpose and motivate/energize him/her back again. When the goals you pursue are clear and desired, although motivation may not be that present, commitment and self-discipline will help you complete the necessary tasks and keep your plan going.

A simple way to increase your commitment to a plan is to make it public, sharing it in your social media, with your friends/family, etc.

1.2. The Company's mission and vision statements

Commitment is crucial for the entrepreneur. In the business world (start-ups, companies) commitment could take the form of a mission and a vision for your project or company. The mission and vision statements describe what the company aims at as well as a desired future for the company.

Making a mission and a vision statement explicit is a first, albeit important step in strategic planning. Despite we will cover strategic planning for your business idea in future courses we believe this is a right moment to introduce the value of mission and vision statements to reinforce Commitment.

Briefly, a **mission for you company is a clear statement of what the company does, which is the added value of what it does, and who is it going to benefit from your products and services.** When thinking about that you will most probably be reflecting on your values and on the ultimate purpose of starting a business. It is great to find an alignment between your company's mission and your core values (what you stand for).

A starting point to create a mission statement is to provide answers to the questions below:

1. **Purpose:** What does your product or service do, or aim to provide and for whom?
2. **Values:** What does your company stand for? For example, are you environmentally conscious and provide a more sustainable solution to solve a problem? Values are what make your company unique.
3. **Goals:** What does your company accomplish for customers? Why should they purchase from you instead of other competitors?

With these three components, you can create a mission that is unique to your brand. The mission statement takes the form of a single sentence, a paragraph at the most, in which three elements should stand out:

- What the company is doing
- How do you do it (added value)
- Who are your target customers

It is frequent to find vision and mission statements separated. While the mission statement refers to the purpose of the company, its products and services and the target population you are aiming at, **the vision statement describes a desired future for your company, a future in which your company develops to its full potential.** Again, the vision statement is a self-contained phrase, sometimes with a poetical touch.

Taken together, mission and vision statements are important sources for commitment and motivation factors for the entrepreneur.

In our case, we will try to create a complete vision-mission statement that:

- Describes the desired future (of the company or its impact on the world/society)
- Describes what the company does (what and who)
- Includes core values (why do you do it? what is your purpose?) -> sometimes it overlaps with the desired future.
- Makes evident the connection between the desired future, the core values and the offering.

Ecoalf: (invented vision-mission) We want a world with oceans free of plastics, this is why we collect plastic from the ocean and make clothes with them. We put faith in responsible and ecologic market economy, because we only have one planet, and we need to take care of it.

[EXAMPLES] COMBINE LOCAL AND GLOBAL EXAMPLES

Tesla vision-mission: To create the most compelling car company of the 21st century by driving the world's transition to electric vehicles.

Amazon vision: To be Earth's most customer-centric company, where customers can find and discover anything they might want to buy online.

Warby Parker mission-vision: To offer designer eyewear at a revolutionary price, while leading the way for socially conscious businesses.

Cradles to Crayons mission: Provides children from birth through age 12, living in homeless or low-income situations, with the essential items they need to thrive – at home, at school, and at play.

[PROPOSED ACTIVITY – MISSION & VISION STATEMENTS]

The objective of this activity is that the students practice how to write and assess a vision and mission statements.

1. Get students work in small groups. Provide the groups of students with examples of rather well known companies (provide just the names).
2. Ask students to work individually first and write a tentative vision and mission statements for the example company names by following the steps below. Ask them not to copy from each other, this is not graded, try your best.
 - Explain the company's product or service.
 - Identify their target population
 - Identify the company's core values and how are they present in the product/service.
 - Describe the desired future of the company
3. In groups, share each other's vision and mission statements. Assess your peers' answers in reference to what is required as a mission and vision statements.
4. Come up with an agreed vision and mission statement for the example companies.
5. Finally, share the group's outcome with the rest of groups. This could be reading out the mission/vision statements and asking the rest of groups to identify the company.

2. Self-discipline

Self-discipline can be defined as “the ability to make yourself do things you know you should do even when you do not want to in the service of a higher goal”, so there is no need to wait for a good mood.

Having clear and appealing goals and plans you can trust is an excellent ground floor for your self-discipline. That is, be clear with what to want to do and how to do it gives you a strong sense of direction and confidence for your actions. You can fix milestones along the way to serve as reference points for measuring your progress (and get rewards).

How can self-discipline be trained? One way is to define self-discipline as a habit, the habit of “doing things you do not want to do”, or the habit of “doing things you know you should do even when you do not want to”. We can use the knowledge on **habit formation to train our self-discipline**.

To form a habit, **repetition is crucial until our behaviour is automated**. Automaticity is the result of repetition. The more frequently a behavior is performed the faster it will be adopted (daily repetition could be a good option). A study published by Lally et al. (2010) concluded that automaticity takes between 18 to 254 days (depending on the difficulty of the behavior change you pursue), and most people get to it in 66 days (so do not pretend to hurry up habit formation).

1. **Move from intention to action: start by “doing what you should” ONCE.**
 - Try to anticipate the activities that you will not want to do (but you need to do) and establish a plan.
 - Plan how possible obstacles will be faced (distractions, too)
 - Set reminders (alarm clocks, post-its, etc.).
 - Adapt the environment to facilitate the behavior. (e.g. prepare the setting)
 - Keep track of the behaviours that are carried out (register when you do the intended behavior or when you do another action).
2. **Repeat the habit of “doing what you should”.** Probably one of the most important things in order to maintain a behavior over time (for example, to do it when you are not motivated) is that the behavior itself, or its result, must generate positive emotions like satisfaction or other rewards (feeling that the expected value of the action is obtained and that it contributes to the goal and the plan).
 - Focus on the different benefits/rewards that behavior may have and on the feeling of pride experienced after having performed the desired behavior.
 - Internalize and remember the desire and the need for the habit, prioritizing a genuine interest in carrying out the behavior by itself and not only by external rewards.
3. **Eliminate interfering habits.** Creating new habits often requires removing another unwanted existing habit, for example, checking messages and/or information on social media instead of doing the needed task.
 - Replace old habits and behaviours with another habit that uses the same cue.
 - Modify the context so that the cue that triggers the unwanted habit disappears (e.g. not going to work following a route full of candy and donuts shops).
 - Set reminders (not to perform the habit you want to change).

[PROPOSED ACTIVITY – SELF-DISCIPLINE]

The aim of this activity is to help students reflect on their discipline and share tips with each other to overcome lack of motivation.

1. Ask students to think, individually, about activities or tasks regarding their personal project or personal life that they have to do / should do but they have not done yet or feel unmotivated:
 - What tasks /activities can be done that you have not done yet?
 - What activities do you expect that will be an obstacle due to your lack motivation?
2. Ask them to provide answers to:
 - Why haven't you performed these tasks already? Is it due to motivation?
 - What are the goals behind these tasks? What is the purpose?
3. Ask them to think ways they could improve their self-discipline with these examples:
 - Do I feel more motivated when I focused or imagine the task already finished?
 - Can I somewhat make this task easier? For example, setting reminders.
 - Would it be useful to establish a deadline? What about making public your intentions to do it?
4. Ask students to share their results in groups.

3. Class discussion and tasks assignment

Once the proposed activity has been discussed within small groups, ask groups to highlight the main difficulties and conclusions.

[ASSESSMENT TASK#3 – VISION-MISSION STATEMENT]

Before the next session, ask students to submit (hand in) a tentative vision and mission statements of their personal project. The submission should be assessed in terms of:

- Describes the desired future (of the company or its impact on the world/society). (1 point)
- Describes what the company does (what and who). (1 point)
- Includes core values (why do you do it? what is your purpose?) -> sometimes it overlaps with the desired future. (1 point)
- Makes evident the connection between the desired future, the core values and the offering. (1 point)

Please, note that the trainer should explain how would the student be evaluated, that is what aspects will be considered when grading the task outlined above. Remember that the most important thing is that they learn how to write a vision and mission statements. Questions regarding the task can be asked to the trainer (e.g. by mail) or that students can help each other. **IMPORTANT: DO NOT WRITE THE ANSWERS FOR THEM**, it is essential that each student knows how to define his/her own goals and vision; and feels his/her own purpose; otherwise, it is going to be artificial to pursue a mission that someone else has set for him/her.

4. Support material

Commitment and motivation:

Meyer, J. P., Becker, T. E., & Vandenberghe, C. (2004). Employee commitment and motivation: a conceptual analysis and integrative model. *Journal of applied psychology*, 89(6), 991. https://www.academia.edu/download/49996904/Employee_Commitment_and_Motivation_A_Con.pdf

Kuvaas, B., Buch, R., Weibel, A., Dysvik, A., & Nerstad, C. G. (2017). Do intrinsic and extrinsic motivation relate differently to employee outcomes?. *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 61, 244-258.

Company mission – vision statement:

Kolowich, L. C. (17 of November of 2022) *27 Mission and Vision Statement Examples That Will Inspire Your Buyers*. Hubspot <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/inspiring-company-mission-statements#missionvsvision>

Wright, T. (27 of July of 2022) *How to Write a Vision Statement (With Examples, Tips, and Formulas)*. Cascade. <https://www.cascade.app/blog/write-good-vision-statement>

Self-discipline:

Gorbunovs, A., Kapenieks, A., & Cakula, S. (2016). Self-discipline as a key indicator to improve learning outcomes in e-learning environment. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 231, 256-262. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.09.100>

Habit formation:

Lally, P., & Gardner, B. (2013). Promoting habit formation. *Health psychology review*, 7(sup1), S137-S158. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17437199.2011.603640>

Lally, P., Van Jaarsveld, C. H., Potts, H. W., & Wardle, J. (2010). How are habits formed: Modelling habit formation in the real world. *European journal of social psychology*, 40(6), 998-1009. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/70653523.pdf>

Unit 5: Effective Communication

Objective Unit 5.

The aim of this Unit 5 is to highlight the importance of effective communication as a key ingredient of the entrepreneurial process. Entrepreneurs will have to pitch their business idea to possible investors, clients, partners, etc. and negotiate effectively. However, Course 1 is not the place to display in depth all aspects of communication. Pitching and Negotiation, for example, need to be grounded on a rather more elaborated business idea and business plan for which they will be covered later in the training program.

Despite the above, there are other very relevant elements of communication that the entrepreneur should be aware of and attain as a soft skill. This Unit will review some of these selected aspects, with particular focus on oral communication.

Contents Unit 5.

The contents of this Unit 5 are displayed in the following sections:

1. General presentation skills
 - a. Verbal communication and presentation design
 - b. Non-verbal communication
 - c. Other tips
2. Class discussion and tasks assignment
3. Support material

1. General presentation skills

Effective Communication takes place when there are no barriers to get our message across to those that we believe need to know about it. But... what makes for a communication to be effective?

There is an overall consensus among experts that effective communication need to incorporate elements such as clarity and consistency of the message, adequate language, timing and context, and a proper use of the medium of communication and the use of technology. We will be looking into these now.

Please, note that delivering a presentation to a given audience is an active dissemination activity. It is not a passive diffusion of information; quite on the contrary, you have a selected audience in front of you, ready to listen to what you have to say, willing to stay connected for some time, and able to provide relevant feedback to your message. You should seize that opportunity, enjoy it, and work hard towards delivering a good presentation.

No one is born being an expert in delivering a presentation. One may have certain natural skills, but relying on them exclusively is not a guarantee of success. Effective communication needs to be worked out, and everybody could become a better communicator with a method and practice. We have divided the contents of this section into verbal and non-verbal communication. Both are extremely relevant and need to be addressed at the time of delivering your message.

1.1. Verbal communication and presentation design

The first message to take home here is: you should have a clear idea of what you want to communicate. You should become your first listener and, accordingly, inform/communicate yourself before you actually communicate others. Having a clear and well-defined message is the first step towards an effective communication. For example, a common error is to try to communicate too many messages or too much information at the same time. Keep your speech straight and clear. Tell yourself which are the main take-home messages you want to convey to your audience, and set the pace to do so.

Language is key to clarity. It is not just what you have to say but how you say it. For example, using too many technical words, or words with two or more meanings, could add confusion to your speech. Make sure your language is adequate to your audience. Do not resign using rather sophisticated or technical words when necessary but avoid packing your speech with them.

Keep to your timing. The duration of your presentation is limited to what you have agreed with the audience. Do not extend that. If there are further information needs from the audience, then use the Q&A time for clarification. Respect is paramount here.

Use a proper medium and technology. When using visual aids and technology, be sure that they do not mask the message you want to get across. That is, focus on your message not on the technology. Use the technology to your benefit not as a substitute. Devote more time and effort to your message (clarity, adequacy, consistency) than to technology gadgets and tools. As stated, effective communication means communication free from barriers. Do not make of technology a barrier.

As a member of the audience, it is always nicer to hear someone explaining something naturally than listening to someone who has memorised a monologue word by word. Since you will be using a slide presentation (or any other visual support), or a set of notes, you can use the as a reference, as a reminder of what you have to explain. Memorising becomes less relevant. Finally, do not read line by line from your slide. Slides should represent key points in your speech, not your speech.

Practicing the presentation several times, explaining it naturally, will have a much better result than memorizing the speech. As a speaker you will be always be conscious about what to explain and hardly go blank. In the event you go blank, just look back at the slides, or your notes, to remember what needs to be explained. In this case, using slides have two main purposes: (i) expose the most substantial information and visually support the explanation, and (ii) remind the speaker what he/she has to say. Use both to your advantage:

Your voice and pace are two key ingredients for a successful presentation. It is highly advisable that you speak at a pace the audience could follow. Keep an even pace is also desirable, but you can modulate that when felt necessary. For example, slow down your pace if you want extra attention from the audience to a given concept. Further, you could use inflections in your voice so as to highlight a particular aspect of your speech (making a point, summarise a key message...) and to catch the audience attention. The tone of your voice gives the audience many clues about yourself, so it could be used to show competence, confidence and enthusiasm, too.

Always stand beside the screen. If you are using visual presentations be aware that you may be blocking the view. Stand to one side of the screen and try to face the audience when speaking. Do not talk to your screen (unless you wear a mic) since the audience will not be able to hear what you say (you will not be projecting your voice towards them). You can look to the screen to recall your contents or to refer to something that is being shown, but when doing that you should that avoid talking since your voice may not get to the audience.

It is recommended that you find an initial link between your presentation and the audience. There are many ways to do that. Catching the attention and interest of the audience may include starting by formulating a question or two (it is not necessary to expect an answer) so that listeners will be actively engaged. Sentences like “imagine/think about... ..for a moment” can be used to achieve the same objective.

1.2. Non-verbal communication

When it comes to conveying confidence using non-verbal communication (for example, in a public speaking exhibition), there are several aspects to consider. Some of these aspects include:

- **Posture and orientation:** It is recommended you feel comfortable in front of your audience, in a natural position so to speak, for example standing on your legs somewhat separated, both legs and upper trunk (whole body) facing the audience. If you have to be seated, it is pertinent to lean forward, towards your audience, respectfully.
- **Movement** (walking or moving your feet): Walking and moving around is not banned but should not be something people notice. It may distract the audience from the message and you do not want that to happen. Use it therefore when convenient and with moderation. Similarly, restless feet are usually an indicator of nerves; so you want to avoid that.
- **Gestures:** Hands must be free and move according to what is being explained (natural gestures); without much movement but without remaining immobile. When using hands to point to an element in your visual presentation, avoid moving them (or your laser pointer) too much, on the contrary, use it to point out what needs to be highlighted and back to its natural position again.
- **Facial expression:** Your facial expression needs to accompany your message. Be ready to use your charm and your smile when possible and according to the context.
- **Gaze:** Your look/gaze must be directed and distributed to all listeners. There are practical tips in this respect: choose 3 or 4 specific people (dispersed in the room) and alternate the look between them. You do not need to look directly to them, just spread your gaze among them.
- **Proximity:** You must be as close to the audience as possible, obviously leaving a minimum distance, with no relevant physical elements standing between you and the audience.

1.3. Other tips

In the literature (see links provided) many authors claim there are other important aspects to a presentation that need to be observed. We have selected some of them below.

- **Dress code.** You want to choose your outfit taking into account the context and the audience you will be addressing. Be aware if there are any dressing protocols that may apply. In addition, think practically. You do not want whatever your wear to act as a barrier to effective communication. Inappropriate clothing, jewellery, hats or any other piece of your outfit could interfere and distract the audience from what is important: your speech.
- **Arrive early.** Plan ahead and get yourself in time to the place where you have to deliver your presentation. Just in time or late are not valid options. You probably want to meet the moderator (if there is one), get to know your audience a bit before you start, get a good feeling about the place and the technology at your disposal. This time could also be used to load your presentation (if you have one) and avoid the audience having to wait.
- **Decide how to handle audience questions.** This has to be decided in advance and inform your audience accordingly. You may want to handle questions while you are speaking, or at the end of your speech. That choice largely depends on the time you have for your speech,

- but other circumstances may force one or other option. The key message here is to accommodate your preference and let the audience know.
- **Have a plan if the technology fails.** Arriving early could avoid many technology failures, but still, if technology fails (although it should not) have a plan on how to best proceed. The plan does not need to be perfect, but viable. The audience will be understanding.
 - **Before you start.** Before you actually get your presentation going, greet the audience (thank them for being there), the rest of participants and moderators (if that is the case), and briefly introduce yourself. All these will put you at ease before the presentation. Using a smile when standing in front of your audience will make that audience feel more comfortable listening to you. No chewing gum or eating during your presentation, although you may drink water to clear your voice and hydrate.
 - **Conclude properly.** Do not finish your presentation abruptly by saying: "This is it" or "I'm done." A good conclusion will be a brief summary and a thank-you phrase.

2. Class discussion and tasks assignment

Once activities have finished, ask groups to highlight the main difficulties and conclusions from the tasks.

Ask students to complete a google forms (or any other tool that registers the data allowing a pretest-posttest comparison) or to write down the answers to a set of questions. These questions need to address the contents and soft skills that students will learn during the course. For example, with the following questions:

- **What is entrepreneurship?**
- **What are the two pillars of entrepreneurship?**
- **Identify all reasons and obstacles that you feel now that are holding you back from being an entrepreneur.**
- **Do you feel that the course was useful? Why?**
- **Do you feel that the course helped you improve your mindset necessary to be an entrepreneur? Why?**
- **Do you feel that the course helped you improve your soft-skills necessary to be an entrepreneur? Why?**
- Rate your level of agreement with the following statements: (1. Strongly disagree, 2. Disagree, 3. Neither disagree or agree, 4. Agree and 5 "Strongly agree")
- **I could be an entrepreneur**
- **I have the mindset to be an entrepreneur**
- **I have the necessary skills and knowledge to be an entrepreneur.**
- *I have a good level of Personal initiative*
- *I am a very good communicator*
- *I am a really committed person*

[ASSESSMENT TASK 4 – UNIT 1 PRACTICAL TOOL]

Ask students to submit a synthesis of contents in which they summarize the aspects/criteria they would take into account when:

- Analyzing a business idea (1 point)
- Choosing a team (1 point)
- Setting a goal (1 point)
- Stablishing a plan (1 point)
- Facing a necessary task but they are unmotivated (1 point)
- Writing a vision-mission statement (1 point)
- Preparing a presentation

- Verbal aspects and slide (1 point)
- Nonverbal aspects (1 point)
- Preparing a Pitch (1 point)
- Preparing a negotiation (1 point)

The idea of the synthesis is that each student creates a useful tool that summarizes the entire course. The objective is that the student can use this document in the future when facing these situations.

TUTOR/MENTOR: Regarding evaluation, the most important thing is that the aspects and criteria are written in their own words and structured in the way they feel more useful: in a list, in a scheme, in a paragraph, etc. If an important idea is missing in a section, 0,5 points will be deducted.

3. Support material

There are many interesting links at your disposal to enlarge your knowledge about what makes a good presentation, how to prepare for a presentation and how to delivering one effectively.

<https://www.niu.edu/presentations/deliver/index.shtml>

<https://www.trentu.ca/academicskills/how-guides/how-write-university/how-approach-any-assignment/preparing-and-delivering-oral>

<https://hbr.org/2013/06/how-to-give-a-killer-presentation>

<https://subjectguides.york.ac.uk/presentations/delivery>

<https://www.ingeniousdesign.co.uk/how-to-prepare-and-deliver-a-great-presentation/>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1119252/>

Course#1 Assessment and feedback

The evaluation of the course is based on the sum of the assessment tasks done throughout each course's units. Taking Course 1 as an example:

- [ASSESSMENT TASK#1 – BUSSINESS IDEA]
- [ASSESSMENT TASK#2 – STARTING GOAL AND PLAN]
- [ASSESSMENT TASK#3 – VISION-MISSION STATEMENT]
- [ASSESSMENT TASK#4 – UNIT 1 PRACTICAL TOOL]

The evaluation should include a written feedback and a numeric grade. The following sheet summarizes the proposed assessment for Course 1:

TASK	SCORE	MAX	TASK FEEDBACK
[ASSESSMENT TASK#1 – BUSSINESS IDEA]	0	10	
[ASSESSMENT TASK#2 – STARTING GOAL AND PLAN]	0	8	
[ASSESSMENT TASK#3 – VISION-MISSION STATEMENT]	0	8	
[ASSESSMENT TASK#4 – UNIT 1 PRACTICAL TOOL]	0	10	
TOTAL SCORE:	0	36	OVERALL FEEDBACK OR COMENTARY (OPTIONAL):
FINAL GRADE (0 to 10):	0		

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