

EFE - Entrepreneurship for everyone

Report expert interviews

New ways of coaching (2019-1-SE01-KA204-060454) is a KA2 Strategic Partnership for adult education co-funded by the Erasmus+ Program of the European Union.

Summary

After the survey with the entrepreneurs and interviews with experts we have identified the listed enemies below.

- Creativity
- Connect to others
- Change management
- Dealing with risks
- Communication
- Negotiation skills
- Handle attitudes from customers and/or team members
- Prioritizing
- Focusing on what is important
- Dealing with stress
- Dealing with feedback
- Self-motivation/perseverance
- Self-confidence
- Cognitive and behavioral flexibility
- Delegation

As part of the conclusion we have divided the enemies into three categories partly based on David Golemans (<http://www.danielgoleman.info/biography/>) work on emotional intelligence.

- **Intrapersonal aspects** can be trained with **Emotional Intelligence** tools and techniques.
- **Transversal aspects** (involving and affecting both areas, intra and interpersonal) can be trained with **coaching** tools, dynamics or techniques.
- **Interpersonal aspects** can be improved through **Leadership** (resonant leadership, as defined by Daniel Goleman) **and soft skills**.

INTRAPERSONAL

Change management
Dealing with risks
Self-confidence

Dealing with stress

Self-motivation/
perseverance

TRANSVERSAL

Creativity
Negotiation skills
Prioritizing

Cognitive and behavioral
flexibility

Focus on what is
important

INTERPERSONAL

Connect to others (relationships)

Communication

Handle attitudes from customers and/or
team members

Delegation

Dealing with feedback

Background

The EFE project was approved and funded in 2019 under the coordination of CSES – _Center för Socialt Entreprenörskap Sverige (Sweden), with INDEPCIE SCA (Spain), CPIP – _Centrul Pentru Promovarea Inventarii Permanente Timisoara Asociatia (Romania), Stowarzyszenie ARID (Poland), APSU – _Associacao Portuguesa de Startups (Portugal), I & F Education and Development (Ireland) and GDR – _Asociación para el Desarrollo Rural del Litoral de la Janda (Spain), as partners.

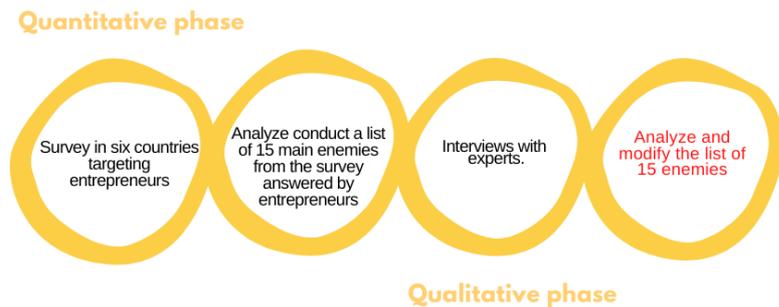
The project aims to help entrepreneurs during the first five years of a new company to overcome the most important difficulties. The project will develop new tools and methodologies to support entrepreneurs and SMEs in enhancing their productivity, competitiveness and efficiency focusing on the soft skills. With this report we have now identified fifteen enemies/challenges that the entrepreneur faces and that interviewed experts have confirmed being important for the first five years of a company.



The process

In total 70 experts were interviewed over phone, email or skype/hangout. Below we have conducted national and international conclusions from those interviews. Each partner interview ten experts in the field of training, coaching, entrepreneurship, job counselling, managers, career guiding, legal consultants, business advisors, small entrepreneurs and team leaders in SMEs.

THE PROCESS OF THE PROJECT



Due to the Coronavirus this was done as an online activity, with several experts at a time, or as one-to-one interviews. The interviews are semi-structured, and the expected time is 30-60 minutes for an individual interview, with six open-ended questions. The interviews are a natural continuation from the previous task, where the 15 enemies will be further identified, complemented, evaluated, verified, altered for final common conclusions.

The 15 enemies identified from the survey done with entrepreneurs.

- Prioritizing money issues
- Prioritizing time issues
- Dealing with stress
- Following up on goals
- Separate between work problems from home problems
- Dealing with risks
- Being creative
- Attitudes from customers
- Structuring my day
- Having patience
- Dealing with feedback
- Attitudes from team members
- Focusing on what is important
- Setting goals



- Self-motivation and enthusiasm

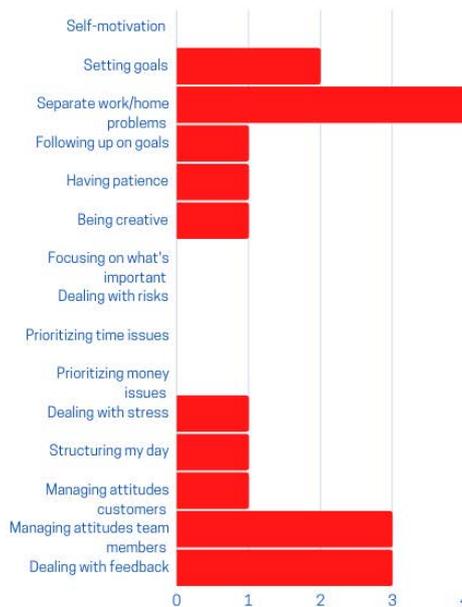
Summary all organizations - Top prioritized enemies and least important enemies.

The result from all countries show four enemies that the experts found more challenging for entrepreneurs, those being *Self-motivation & enthusiasm*, *Setting goals*, *Follow up on goals* and *Being creative*. All of the top enemies were ranked among the top three enemies at six out of seven countries. We also see that the least important enemies are *separate work problems from home problems*, *setting goals*, *managing attitudes from team members* and *dealing with feedback*.

TOP ENEMIES



LEAST IMPORTANT ENEMIES



Self-motivation and enthusiasm ranked as one of the biggest challenges for entrepreneurs, understood as “the incapacity of the entrepreneur to find the reasons to generate an action or attitude”. Without that motivation, the action of undertaking is out of gas, even if you have the right tools and skills required. Considered a core function for an entrepreneur to keep pushing forward and continue even though meeting a lot of obstacles on the way.

Not ranked as a big challenge amongst the entrepreneurs, you could argue that if you once



took the leap of becoming an entrepreneur you learn pretty quickly that you have to believe in yourself otherwise you would give up.

Setting goals and following up on goals, referring to “the absence of a strategic plan involving a company culture, market research and strategies to plan the business model to set goals, objectives and KPIs”. Without goals there is not a strategy to define the business model and, then, a differential value proposition or a clear target group.

Some of the experts also mentioned that entrepreneurs sometimes have a hard time prioritizing setting and follow up on goals and that both enemies go hand in hand and therefore should be considered as one enemy. Follow up on goals were ranked as the top four enemy among entrepreneurs.

Comparing the least important with the top enemies you’ll see that three organizations Indepcie (Spain), I&F(Ireland) and APSU(Portugal) ranked it high while ARID (Poland) ranked the same enemy as one of the least important.

Being creative was ranked as a top challenge in every country except in Sweden where the respond from the experts were the opposite. “It is the creative side of an entrepreneur that creates lack of focus and sometimes **they have too many ideas**”. But the majority of the experts ranked it high referring to that if an entrepreneur lack the skill of being creative it’s hard to come up with new ideas.

Indepcie Sca and GDR from Spain have two totally different answers, indicating that it might be differentiations within the country or that the answers may vary depending on who you ask. Being creative was ranked as the top seven enemy among the entrepreneurs.

TOP THREE ENEMIES

BY EACH ORGANIZATION

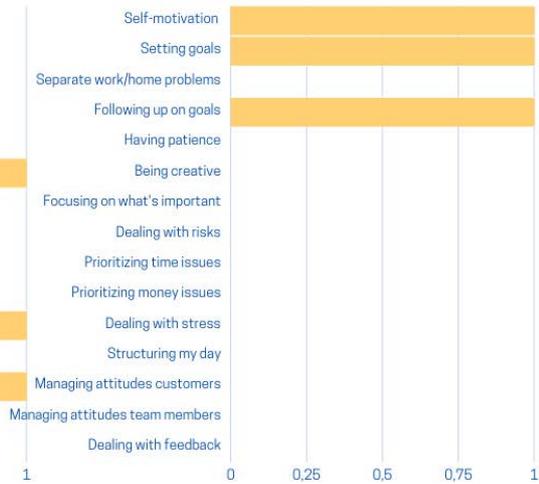
APSU (Portugal)



ARID (Poland)



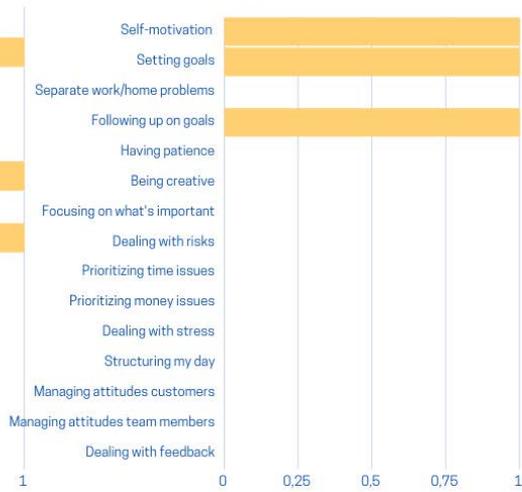
I&F (Ireland)



CPIP (Romania)



INDEPCIE SCA (Spain)



GDR (Spain)



CSES (Sweden)



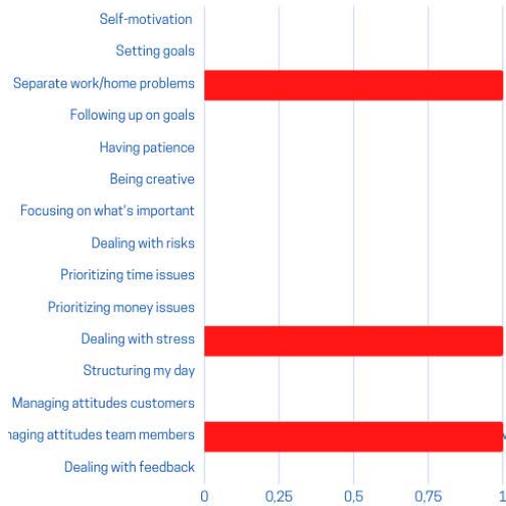
LEAST IMPORTANT ENEMIES

BY EACH ORGANIZATION

APSU (Portugal)



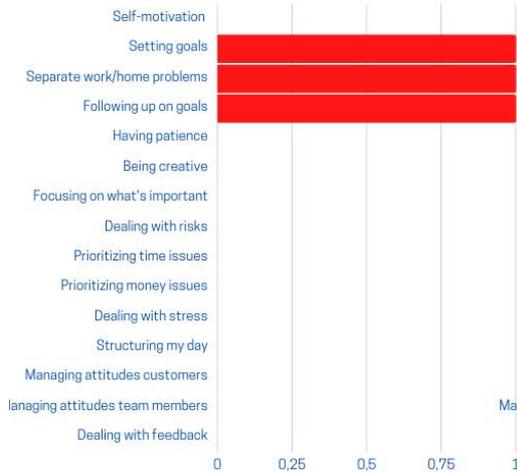
GDR (Spain)



CSES (Sweden)



ARID (Poland)



I&F (Ireland)



CPIP (Romania)



INDEPCIE SCA (Spain)



Experts input on missing enemies

We also asked the experts “Which Enemies are missing from your experience?” We got a lot of different answers, some of them could be categorized under the fifteen we identified but some of them stood out.

To get a better understanding of the enemies missing and how to approach them, we have divided them into three categories, transferable/functional, personal traits/attitudes and knowledge based.

Since the EFE project aim to look at the soft skills, we have chosen to exclude the knowledge-based skills not meaning that it is less important but rather because of the projects purpose and focus on soft skills as transferable/functional and personal traits/attitudes.

We want to highlight that even though we will ignore the knowledge based skills for the purpose of this project we have got a lot of feedback from experts indicating that you need to have basic knowledge about laws and regulations to be followed in a business venture, a basic economic understanding, market knowledge and other skills listed below. But since there are plenty of tools developed for coaching entrepreneurs with those challenges, we will not consider those skills in this project.

Transferable/Functional	Personal Traits/Skills	Knowledge-based
<p>Actions taken to perform a task, transferable to different work functions and industries</p> <p>Based on ability and aptitude</p> <p>Examples: Organize Promote Analyze Write</p>	<p>Traits or personality characteristics that contribute to performing work</p> <p>Developed in childhood and through life experience</p> <p>Examples: Patient Diplomatic Results-oriented Independent</p>	<p>Knowledge of specific subjects, procedures, and information necessary to perform particular tasks</p> <p>Acquired through education, training, and on-the-job experience</p> <p>Examples: Personnel Administration Contract Management Accounting</p>



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Transferable/Functional	Personal Traits/Skills	Knowledge-based
Communicate Original and innovative Bad negotiation skills Build partnerships Motivate others Not being able to delegate Lack of perseverance	Flexible Fear of failure Lack of self-confidence Low resilience Lack of awareness Lack of mental flexibility Too much self-affirmation	Lack of market knowledge, social media. Understanding of digitalization Lack of economic understanding Lack of strategic plan Frustration management Change management Customer service & sales Bureaucracy

What other types of enemies do you see for entrepreneurs that are not experienced or have an education? (all respondents)

We received a lot of input on this question. We want to highlight that this is a generalization meaning that while developing the coaching module we will still have to look at the specific entrepreneur in every case.

Below we have gathered and categorized the input into the three different categorizes.

Transferable/Functional	Personal Traits/Skills	Knowledge-based
Lack of leadership ability, being used to executing an activity and not directing it. Lack of a strong network.	Low resilience - First time entrepreneurs are very enthusiastic at the beginning. But very often happens that they give up when the first	Lack of knowledge about the market/field the entrepreneur is about to enter. Often lack an investment plan and strategy to execute. Strategic thinking was



	<p>obstacle appears.</p> <p>Having too much confidence, can lead to entrepreneurs not accepting advice and feedback coming from experienced people.</p>	<p>indicated by experts as the main issue of lower educated/qualified people</p> <p>The lack of literacy on technical aspects is mention in various forms and is the topic that had more mentions.</p> <p>Lack of knowledge about administrative issues, regulations and laws followed in a business journey.</p> <p>To know how to manage the liquidity of the business.</p>
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One expert said, *sometimes it is also a good thing to not know everything because if you knew how hard it would be from the beginning it would be overwhelming. People with less experience and education tend to just try it while some entrepreneurs with higher education can get stuck with all the detailed plans.*

Another expert said, that *criticisms and self-doubt is common because this type of entrepreneurs might not be always taken seriously.* Other people might tend to believe they are not capable of starting that business or making it grow, which will have an impact on the entrepreneur.

What would you think is the best way to coach (to solve, to handle) these 15 enemies? (all respondents)

We got a lot guidance on how to approach these enemies, coaching as a method was mentioned several times. When developing softs kills it will require ongoing training and it

will not be a quick fix because it requires time for reflection, one expert phrase *it to pace oneself and go little by little.*

Experts also referred to a training platform that accompanies the entrepreneur at various levels making it easier to adapt the content to the specific entrepreneur: company management; company's image; product image; marketing; juridical support, communication. Because different entrepreneurs will have different challenges depending on many factors, as what kind of person you are to in what industry you're in.

Share the picture of the journey as an entrepreneur as a way of learning and acquire new skills in another way than the traditional academic way. Quote from an expert; *To be persistent, not all businesses go well. For example; I have had four businesses and not all went well, but they served as an apprenticeship.*

List of experts' comments on how to approach the fifth teen enemies;

Start by making sure that the coach and the entrepreneur both are align on what to work on.

Keep it simple and meaningful and use an understandable language.

Materials needs to be prepared in an interesting and possible easy way to interest as many people as possible.

Very short activities, which require little effort and time on the part of entrepreneurs.

Organize support groups.

Encourage entrepreneurs to share vulnerable experiences.

Suggestion on to include peer to peer feedback between entrepreneurs, and/or support groups.

Less academic training. It is better to have dynamic and participative team sessions.

Make the material available online so that you can access it from anywhere at any time.

Evaluate and mentoring the entrepreneur to monitor progress against achieved knowledge and skills.

Give a new entrepreneur practical information about possible obstacles and ways of avoiding or solve them, create awareness early in the process.

Learn from other entrepreneurs so that they can draw from their experience, mistakes and success stories and use that as inspiration.

When growing make sure to care in selecting employees your future employees.



Other things that could be important for the project's future work?

This project could be an inspiration to other projects, as one expert phrase it *a wonderful opportunity to create positive change and to start to build purpose-driven organizations that priorities people and planet alongside profit.*

Other things to consider;

- The EFE training contents should be adapted to the needs and level of the target. Initial evaluation of entrepreneurship competences should be an integrative part of the training.
- Digital marketing which nowadays is key to making progress and visibility. But particular attention should be given to any online/digital training content, as some might this people lack or have low digital skills.
- Another concern from one of the experts was *we will have to help manage the 'always on' culture caused by technology and the ever-increasing pressure of being up to date.*
- Thanks to mobile technology and readily available internet access, remote workers are already common. Employees won't need to be in the same location. This will make it easier for the next generation workers to choose to live anywhere, rather than find a job and then move to a city with that job.
- Collaboration with private entities than public could help spreading the result.
- Try to make entrepreneurs understand themselves by understanding their drive.
- Create time for reflection around what we're doing, look at the actual needs and what kind of skills we (the coach/mentor) need to have to be able to meet the needs that the entrepreneur requires. Invite the entrepreneur to co-create and use a coaching approach.
- Take into account all people, do not limit it to age, disabilities and make sure to think about equality and diversity while creating the material.

Methods that could be of interest for the project

Nonviolent communication

Authentic relating

Core quadrant

Theory you

Networking with Mentoring



Summary and conclusion from survey

With the input from the experts we have modified the list of enemies, the new list exists of 15 enemies divided into three different categories Intrapersonal, Transferral and Interpersonal making it easier for the next step to develop the learning module. These categories are partly based on David Golemans work on Emotional Intelligence.

- **Intrapersonal aspects** can be trained with **Emotional Intelligence** tools and techniques.
- **Transversal aspects** (involving and affecting both areas, intra and interpersonal) can be trained with **coaching** tools, dynamics or techniques.
- **Interpersonal aspects** can be improved through **Leadership** (resonant leadership, as defined by Daniel Goleman) **and soft skills**.

Modified enemies

We've chosen to combine *handle attitudes from customers* and *attitudes from team members* even though the appeared problem could be very different it would still be the same approach to handle another person's attitude. Making it into one category.

We chose to remove *Separate between work problems from home problems*, since that enemy could be approached with *focusing on what is important*.

After feedback from experts we decided to add the category *Connect to others*. Which is a merge of *build partnerships and motivate others*, suggested categories from several experts.

We also after feedback from experts decided to include *flexibility* which was among the suggestions of the experts. Especially important during these circumstances, being able to adapt and change to survive as a company.



The final list of 15 enemies

- Creativity
- Connect to others
- Change management
- Dealing with risks
- Communication
- Negotiation skills
- Handle attitudes from customers and/or team members
- Prioritizing
- Focusing on what is important
- Dealing with stress
- Dealing with feedback
- Self-motivation/perseverance
- Self-confidence
- Cognitive and behavioral flexibility
- Delegation

INTRAPERSONAL	TRANSVERSAL	INTERPERSONAL
Change management	Creativity	Connect to others (relationships)
Dealing with risks	Negotiation skills	Communication
Self-confidence	Prioritizing	Handle attitudes from customers and/or team members
Dealing with stress	Cognitive and behavioral flexibility	Delegation
Self-motivation/ perseverance	Focusing on what is important	Dealing with feedback



Follow the progress of the project here: <http://www.efeproject.eu/>



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