



Excerpted from
FastTrac® TechVenture™



TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR BUSINESS®

A program of the Kauffman Foundation

Characteristics of Entrepreneurs

Entrepreneurs are people who interpret problems as opportunities, take action in response to needs, and accept calculated risk in the hope of creating value. Most entrepreneurs believe that solving problems for a business they own is more rewarding than solving problems for a business where they are employees.

Entrepreneurs generally have most of the following characteristics. How many of these characteristics describe you?

Business knowledge – Entrepreneurs don't always have the general understanding of business management that's necessary to succeed. Where they have gaps in expertise or experience, successful entrepreneurs seek advice from mentors and other business professionals to assist them.

Desire – When entrepreneurs passionately seek success, their desire pushes them to do the tasks necessary to achieve their goals.

Determination – Successful entrepreneurs do not quit easily. When things look hopeless they persevere, not allowing their business to fail.

Energy – Most entrepreneurs have high energy levels to tackle the demands of building a new venture.

Ethics – Business owners who have a reputation for being credible and honest attract customers, colleagues, investors, suppliers, and a high-quality team.

Good people judgment – The ability to pick the right people is an essential skill and critical for success.

Low support needs – Entrepreneurs usually have little, if any, support staff during the early stages of their business. They are willing to pitch in where needed and adapt to their small-scale enterprise.

Market awareness – Successful entrepreneurs take direction from the market and see opportunity at every turn. Many entrepreneurs see an opportunity that others miss. It can be an asset to be unconventional.

Persuasiveness – Entrepreneurs must persuade other people to do all sorts of things for them such as lend them money, work hard for them, buy from them, and sell to them on favorable terms.

Problem-solving – Entrepreneurs are quick problem-solvers—they do not need the perfect solution in order to get started. They look at problems from different perspectives and are able to find creative solutions.

Responsibility – Entrepreneurs realize that they are accountable for their own success.

Self-confidence – Entrepreneurs believe in themselves and have confidence that somehow they will solve any problem that arises.

TIP "Genius is one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration."

–Thomas A. Edison



Self-discipline – Entrepreneurs must have the self-discipline to do the things they don't enjoy.

Social responsibility – Entrepreneurs are often passionately motivated to share their successes and wealth by giving back and supporting their communities and society as a whole.

Thrive on uncertainty – An entrepreneur must be able to exist and prosper in an environment that is often or sometimes confusing, chaotic, and uncertain.

Value appropriate control systems – Not all entrepreneurs have an inherent ability to control costs, inventories, cash, and other assets, but such controls are crucial for a business to succeed. Successful entrepreneurs rely on the expertise of their team members to rein in any excesses when necessary.

TIP Build a culture of "giving back" from day one to show your commitment to being a good corporate citizen.