

2.1: What Is an Entrepreneur

Learning Outcomes & Task Summary

Learning Outcomes:

- Define entrepreneurship
- Reflect on entrepreneurial themes
- Review approaches to entrepreneurship

Task Summary:

- [Lesson 1.1.1: Defining Entrepreneurship](#)
- [Lesson 1.1.2: Entrepreneurial Themes](#)
- [Activity 1.1.1: Read/Watch/Listen](#)
- [Activity 1.1.2: Journal Entry](#)

Begin this module by completing the lessons below. Many of the lessons in this course provide options to either watch or read the content in addition to working through brief lesson activities like multiple-choice questions to check your understanding. Work through each module in a linear fashion, beginning with the lessons and ending with the learning activities towards the bottom of the page.

Lesson 1.1.1: Defining Entrepreneurship

Transcript

What exactly is entrepreneurship and who comes to mind when you think of someone who is entrepreneurial? Is it someone who goes on Dragon's Den? Could it be the impassioned student who starts a non-profit to clean up the oceans? What about the uber eats driver who drops off tacos at your front door? There are a few common threads with all of these ideas and roles, some of which are believing in something or someone, having a passion for something awesome, and are committed to progress and making things happen. Would you want to have a life full of belief, passion, and progress? If so, you may be an entrepreneur!

Entrepreneurs are everywhere and they are a key part of our society. To start off, we will wrap our minds around, and define, the spirit of entrepreneurship. With our definition in mind, we will reflect on the role entrepreneurs have in our world, the different types of entrepreneurs, and their relevance.

While there may be some stereotypical views of who an entrepreneur is and what entrepreneurship is all about, the spirit of entrepreneurship is much broader than someone taking out a loan to start a business or going onto Dragon's Den to solicit investor funding. Entrepreneurs are everywhere, in all industries, facilitating changes to enhance the lives of themselves and others.

Let's have a look at and consider some quotes from some really smart people about what they have to say about entrepreneurship:

"Whilst there is no universally accepted definition of entrepreneurship, it is fair to say that it is multidimensional. It involves analyzing people and their actions together with the ways in which they interact with their environments, be these social, economic, or political, and the institutional, policy, and legal frameworks that help define and legitimize human activities". (Blackburn, 2011, p. xiii).

"Entrepreneurship involves such a range of activities and levels of analysis that no single definition is definitive" (Lichtenstein, 2011, p. 472).

"[Entrepreneurship] is complex, chaotic, and lacks any notion of linearity. As educators, we have the responsibility to develop our student's discovery reasoning and implementation skills so that they may excel in highly uncertain environments" (Neck and Greene, 2011, p. 55).

"An entrepreneur can be described as one who creates a new business in the face of risk and uncertainty for the purpose of achieving profit and growth by identifying significant opportunities and assembling the necessary resources to capitalize on them" (Zimmerer & Scarborough, 2008, p. 5).

"An entrepreneur is one who organizes manages and assumes the risk of a business or enterprise" (Entrepreneur, n.d.).

When trying to define entrepreneurship we might think of a person who undertakes the activities needed to start a business however given the diverse perspectives listed above that have nothing to do with starting a for-profit business it would seem that there is no hard and fast rule on the definition of entrepreneurship and it certainly isn't narrow enough to only reflect those activities completed to start a for-profit business.

Lesson 1.1.2: Entrepreneurial Themes

Transcript

After identifying about 90 attributes associated with entrepreneurship, Gartner (1990) went back to the entrepreneurs and other experts for help in clustering the attributes into themes that would help summarize what people concerned with entrepreneurship thought about the concept. He ended up with the following entrepreneurship themes:

The Entrepreneur

The entrepreneur theme is the idea that entrepreneurship involves individuals with unique personality characteristics and abilities (e.g., risk-taking, locus of control, autonomy, perseverance, commitment, vision, creativity). Almost 50% of the respondents rated these characteristics as not important to a definition of entrepreneurship (Gartner, 1990, p. 21, 24). The question that needs to be addressed is: "Does entrepreneurship involve entrepreneurs (individuals with unique characteristics)?" (Gartner, 1990, p. 25).

Innovation

The innovation theme is characterized as doing something new as an idea, product, service, market, or technology in a new or established organization. The innovation theme suggests that innovation is not limited to new ventures, but is recognized as something which older and/or larger organizations may undertake as well (Gartner, 1990, p. 25). Some of the experts Gartner questioned believed that it was important to include innovation in definitions of entrepreneurship and others did not think it was as important. (Gartner, 1990, p. 25).

Organization Creation

The organization creation theme describes the behaviors involved in creating organizations. This theme described acquiring and integrating resource attributes (e.g., Brings resources to bear, integrates opportunities with resources, mobilizes resources, gathers resources) and attributes that described creating organizations (new venture development and the creation of a business that adds value). (Gartner, 1990, p. 25). The question that needs to be addressed is: "Does entrepreneurship involve resource acquisition and integration (new venture creation activities)?" (Gartner, 1990, p. 25).

Creating Value

This theme articulated the idea that entrepreneurship creates value. The attributes in this factor indicated that value creation might be represented by improving an organization (this could be a business, a non-profit, a charity, or a small group changing the world), creating a new organization, growing an organization, creating wealth, or destroying the status quo. (Gartner, 1990, p. 25).

Uniqueness

This theme suggested that entrepreneurship must involve uniqueness. Uniqueness is characterized by attributes such as a special way of thinking, a vision of accomplishment, the ability to see situations in terms of unmet needs, and creates a unique combination. (Gartner, 1990, p. 26).

Entrepreneurship is many things to many people and it involves doing certain things, having certain skills and characteristics, as well as having access to resources that can (and should) be leveraged across all industries and types of organizations.

Entrepreneurial Approaches

One final way to look at entrepreneurship is through the approaches that are taken to improve one's life and the world around them. As a starting point, here are the four main approaches to entrepreneurship adapted from Gartner's attributes:

1. Innovate
 1. Definition: Innovation involves creatively solving problems and seeing solutions where they are not readily apparent.
2. Start a business
 1. Definition: Starting a business can be for something large or small and can involve many people or just one, The two things that makes starting a business unique from other types of organizations are they need to provide some kind of product or

service and the intent is to bring in more money than just covering costs (i.e. to profit).

3. Improve something from within

1. Definition: Things are rarely perfect from the get-go, nor are they perfect as the world grows and changes! Making improvements within existing organizations to enhance efficiency and effectiveness can be not only valuable, but sometimes necessary for the well being of an organization!

4. Create of a non-profit organization

1. Definition: non-profit organizations provide products and services, but the intent is to only charge enough money to cover the costs associated with that provision. Typically organizations like this provide some kind of social service and can be registered (or non-registered) non-profits, social enterprises, and charitable organizations

Keep these in mind as we will go into more detail on what these look like later on in the course and use these for your simulation work in Unit 3.

Activity 1.1.1: Read/Watch/Listen – Reflect

In Unit 2 we will learn about entrepreneurial skills, one of which is resource gathering. To get a head start on practicing your entrepreneurial resource gathering and innovation skills, your task is to search through the resources linked below to identify an entrepreneur who emulates the themes you have learned about and had success living out the definition of entrepreneurship you have started to craft throughout this module.

Reflect on the theme that appeals to you the most, and your draft definition of entrepreneurship, and reflect on how the theme and definition have both enabled the success of this individual, and how you might be able to create your own success using this theme and your definition as an entrepreneur over the next 18 months.

The key steps are:

1. Research the links below
2. Identify an entrepreneur from these resources you admire
3. Reflect on what entrepreneurial theme from Lesson 2 within which they have had success
4. Reflect on how their success relates to your own draft definition of entrepreneurship (does it change it? support it? why?)
5. Reflect on how you can create your own success using the theme and your definition of entrepreneurship over the next 18 months

Resources:

- Read this article on [9 Entrepreneurs Tell Their Stories of Pivoting 180 Degrees to Start New Careers](#)
- Read this article on [30 Entrepreneurs who are Changing the World](#)
- Read this article on [Top 20 Most Famous Entrepreneurs in the World](#)
- Watch this video on [50 Entrepreneurs Share Priceless Advice](#)

Activity 1.1.2: Journal Entry

See homepage note for reflective writing resources

So often when we go through learning, particularly in a formal educational setting, we get through the material as quickly as we can, and oftentimes don't remember half of what was covered! Journaling can be a really powerful way to learn because it gets us to pause and reflect not only on what we have learned but also on what it means to us. Journaling makes meaning of material in a way that is personal and powerful.

It's time to reflect on your Module 1 learning experience. . Part of being an entrepreneur requires a notable degree of self-reflection and self-awareness. This journal entry is all about the learning experience that you have had thus far. Identify your learning strengths, and what has come easily to you as you have gone through the first module of the course. Also, identify the areas which you want to strengthen and improve on from a learning perspective. Keep in mind this journal entry is not about the content you have learned, but rather how you have learned, and the Learning Experience. This is intended to help you better understand yourself as a learner, which is really important as you go through not only this course but also the rest of your education. Your journal entries should be either 300 to 500 written words or a video that is approximately 5 minutes.

Using your own experience and the course material, reflect in your journal (blog, vlog, etc) on all of the following prompts for this module:

- Key Concepts you have learned that help you better understand entrepreneurship
- Concepts that were easy to understand and why
 - If there was not a particular concept that was easy to understand, reflect on why this was the case
- Concepts that were difficult to understand and why
 - If there was not a particular concept that was difficult to understand, reflect on why this was the case

Next, create a rough draft definition of entrepreneurship (aim for one or two sentences).

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References

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