

谁不适合创业？



泰德·普林斯
佩斯领导力研究院
创始人兼CEO

最近我在“哈佛博客”（Harvard blog）上读到了一篇有关大多数创业者所欠缺的技能的 研究。根据这篇研究，创业者特别缺乏执着、计划、组织、分析技能。

我既是一名创业者，也是一位多年来致力于深入研究这一问题的专业人士，但我并不认可上述观点。举例来说，如果一位创业者不够执着，怎么能吸引投资者和员工认可他的梦想？如果他缺少计划和组织技能，他又怎么能使事业运转起来？同时，如果缺乏分析能力，他又将如何完成设计和管理？

不得不说，这个信息是完全无效的，因为这些研究都是由学院派的专家总结得出的。正如在下文中即将展示的，学院派专家往往是非常糟糕的创业者，他们并不合适去做客观评判。如果让我总结一些有关创业的理论，我将我的发现分为三类，也就是个性、经验和教育。那么，就用我的经验来尝试分辨哪些人能够成为成功的创业者。

你有正确的个性吗？

许多不愿承担风险的人试图成为创业者，他们往往认为创业比一份常规工作更简单，也能赚更多的钱。但这种创业者往往无法成功。一个程序的遵循者，在这里我们指的是那些喜欢规则、惯例、标准、秩序和正规框架的人，也不适合成为一名创业者。拥有你自己的公司意味着变动性，每件事都在不断地发生变化，没有规则可寻，而作为一名创业者，在创业道路上很难找到可以帮助自己的同伴。

在英文中，有一个词叫做“Analysis-Paralysis”，字面意思是分析麻痹。这种人过度专注于分析事物，以至于被这种问题所困扰。这通常是那些受过高等教育或是在政府或大型企业中工作过的人常常会出现的问题。而对于一名创业者而言，这往往是致命的问题。有时你只需要做出快速判断，然后去执行。

听从意见的人同样不适合创业。你不应该听取别人的意见吗？为什么这会成为一个问题？事实上，绝大多数创业者所做的事情风险性很大，听

取普通人的意见必然不是明智之选。一个创业者应该听从他自己的直觉，如果听取这些普通人的意见，你将永远无法成为一名成功的创业者。

创业者也不能太现实。对于大多数创业者，特别是那些专注于新产品或服务的创业者，必须非常乐观，甚至是有些不切实际。如果一名创业者过于现实，他可能永远都不会成立一家公司，即使成为创业者，失败的几率也非常大。一个非常现实的人是永远不可能开创一些新事物的，尤其是那些有风险的事。如果一个人习惯以团队为导向，他就很难成为一名创业者。这是另外一个奇怪的特征。难道你不想以一个团队成员的身份成为一名创业者吗？不。团队成员喜欢成为一个团队的一部分，但在这种情况下你必须听从团队，至少有时需要与之保持一致。团队总是很安全的，行事作风也非常谨慎，而一名创业者需要的是独立，不仅仅是独立于上司，也要与他身边的人保持独立。当然，创业者也要适时听取他人的意见，但不能过多地听从。那些好的聆听者以及耐心为团队做贡献的人，往往无法成为一名优秀的创业者。

有自知之明和有一个商业伙伴之间有什么关联？很简单，每个人在商业、管理和创业方面都有一个主要的个性弱点。往往你对此并没有认识，或者即使你意识到自己的问题你也不知道如何去纠正和改善。如果创业者有自知之明，那么他会很清楚自己的弱点，而弥补自身弱点的最佳方式，就是找一个在这方面非常擅长的商业伙伴。以一个产品导向型的人为例，他需要的可能是一个善于销售的外向型伙伴。但是，做出这样的选择需要高度的自我意识和成熟。拥有一个商业伙伴就像是结婚，那些拥有商业伙伴的创业者比那些单打独斗的创业者更加成功，比如谷歌、微软、甲骨文等。如果你没有商业合伙人并不意味着你肯定会失败，只是你成功的几率要相对低很多。

有些人喜欢事情清晰明了，例如数学家、逻辑学者和规划者。但作为一名创业者，他所面临的一切都是不确定的，你不知道你的产品或服务是否



能够满足消费者的需求，消费者是否能够及时付款（或者他是否会付款），你也不知道自己是否能够支付工资。因此，你必须对不确定性应对自如，甚至要非常享受它。否则，作为一个创业者你会非常不开心，你将无法面对创业初期所要面对的各种基本的不确定性，无法面对没有资金、没有客户这类情况的发生。一个创业者如果对金钱非常渴望，那么就不适合成为一个创业者。难道一个成功的创业者不应该希望赚很多钱吗？是的，大多情况下他们并不应该这么想。一个优秀的创业者之所以选择创业，是因为创业可以使他们独立出来，不用再为别人打工，或者远离令人沮丧的官僚作风。

你是否有错误的经验？

创业者的成败与其个性有关，而经验也是一个重要因素。哪些经验会对成为一名优秀的创业者造成阻碍？

在政府工作的经验可能是妨碍你成为创业者最大的阻碍因素。在政府部门工作的人，往往非常善于制定和遵守规则。当没有规则和现成的条条框框时，他们就不知道自己应该做什么和如何做了。同时，政府工作人员从来没有创立过小公司或是在小公司工作过，他们从未销售过任何东西，也从不需要赚钱来支付自己的工资，因此，他们完全缺少成为创业者的经验。此外，政府部门的所有事情都是由团队或集体来完成的，由于从未独立完成过工作，你可能会认为自己很优秀。但在一个创业环境里，销售、研发、财务等几乎都需要你自己独立完成。所以，只有极少数拥有政府工作经验的人能够成功创业。

只有极少数拥有政府工作经验的人才能够成功创业，数量非常少。如果你在政府部门工作，同时又想创业，那么在你即将可能犯下严重错误之前，你应该慎重地思考和权衡。如果你的职业生涯几乎都是在一个大公司里度过的话，这和政府部门工作一样糟糕。最大的优势在于你可能参与过销售，但其他主要的劣势与在政府部门工作所引发的问题相同。如果你在小一些的企业工作过，你可能有机会成为一名创业者。这并不意味着你一定能够成功，但你是在一个非常接近于初创企业的环境中工作过。

大学教授和学者往往会成为非常糟糕的创业者。首先，大学往往是政府机构，拥有许多的规章制

度和行政条款。第二，学者们往往没有在真正的企业中工作过，也没有真正创建过公司。第三，他们往往是理论家，几乎从未将他们的所学运用于实践当中。第四，他们的工作是如何学习其他人创造出来的理论或内容，很少自己去创新。当然也有例外，特别是在工程学科领域。在这里，有些教授来自于工程师岗位，他们做出过产品。

太过年轻也很难成为成功的创业者。根据我的公司和其他新晋调研机构的研究表明，创业的成功几率与年龄成正比。你拥有的经验越多，你的人圈子越大，你所在行业的知识就越丰富，也更加有智慧。创业者在他们五六十岁时的成功机会更大。

那些有很多资金的创业者往往会失败，因为他们不需要自己去赚钱来开展事业。他们常常会在错误的事情上花费许多资金，例如促销、招待和包装自己。在产品研发上过度投资往往意味着缺乏纪律和管理。因此，如果你有很多钱，那么你可能很难创业成功，除非找一个可以约束你的合伙人。但没有存款也很难成功，因为如果没有外部投资人支持你，你就必须要有自己的积蓄。事实上，绝大多数创业者最初都无法从职业投资人那里获得资金的支持，有存款的创业者才能够支撑到企业获得投资者青睐的那一天。这可能需要几年的时间。

你是否接受了过多的教育？

如果创业者拥有金融学或MBA学位是否有益？研究显示，你拥有的商业资格越多，你成为成功创业者的可能性就越小。在一个大型企业中，拥有高级商业资格对你可能非常有利。然而，如果你是一名创业者，在创业的过程中没有规则可循，你的商业资格会成为一种劣势，因为它们诱使你用在大公司里的那一套行事作风来做创业环境中的工作，而这往往是完全行不通的。那么，所有高级的资格对创业者来说都是问题吗？大多数情况下是这样的，至少根据我们的研究得出的结论是这样的。

但是，工程学科的学位，包括高级学位是一个例外。我们不知道为什么会这样，但是，拥有工程学学位的人看起来对于生活有着独特的视角，因为他们所学知识和技能就是制造真实的事物或者真实的产品。因此，如果你拥有工程（学）资格，包括硕士学位，我们认为你更有机会成为一名成功的创业者。☑



“Who Is Not Suitable For Entrepreneurship?”

Dr. E. Ted Prince
Founder and CEO
Perth Leadership Institute
www.perthleadership.org

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I just read a study on a Harvard blog about the skills that most entrepreneurs lack. According to this study they particularly lack empathy, planning and organizing, and analytical skills.

As an entrepreneur myself and as someone who has conducted research on this issue for many years I find this totally unbelievable. For one, if an entrepreneur is not empathetic, he won't be able to get investors or employees to buy into his vision. If he lacks planning and organizing skills, how could he get his business even started? And if he lacks analytical skills, how can he design and manage things like product development and marketing.

I am sorry, but I find this information totally useless. Maybe it's because the study was conducted by academics who, as we shall show below, usually make terrible entrepreneurs and who aren't really in a good position to be a judge.

However let me give you some of my conclusions about entrepreneurship. They have come out of our own research. They also come from my own experience as an entrepreneur, the CEO of several companies, and a trainer and coach to numerous companies.

I can categorize my findings under three headings, namely, personality, experience and education. So let's go and see what my experience can tell you about people who will not make good entrepreneurs, and people who will.

Do You Have the Right Personality?

Let me give you, in no particular order, some of the personality traits I see in people who will not make good entrepreneurs:

Risk-averse: This one is obvious. But plenty of people who are risk-averse try to become entrepreneurs either because they are tired of having a boss, think they can make a lot of money or because they think it will be easier than having a regular job. Of course, in all these cases it doesn't work.

Process-oriented: What we mean here is people who like rules, regulations, order and formal frameworks. These types of people won't be able to be an entrepreneur because having your own company means fluidity, everything changing constantly, and no rules, at least, usually not ones that will help you.

Too analytical: In English there's a phrase "analysis-paralysis". People who are too analytical suffer from this problem. In an entrepreneur often this is a fatal problem. Sometimes you just have to make a quick judgment and then go with it. This is often a problem with people who are highly educated or who come from government or a large company - we will talk more about that later.

Listens to advice: Shouldn't you listen to advice? Why would that be a problem? The reason is that most entrepreneurs do things which are risky and appear to normal people to be unwise because they are unsafe. If you listen to such people you would never become an entrepreneur. An entrepreneur has to listen to his own instincts and often disregard the advice of people even those who may be wiser and smarter than he is.

Realistic: Isn't this a good thing for entrepreneurs to be? Not really. Most entrepreneurs, at least those with new products and services have to be very optimistic and even somewhat unrealistic. If an entrepreneur is realistic he will probably never start a company because most entrepreneurs fail. So if you are really realistic you would never start anything new. So someone who is very realistic will never start anything, especially if it is a little risky.

Team-oriented: Here's another strange one. Don't you want a team player to be an entrepreneur? Nope. Team players want to be part of a broader group but in that case you have to listen to the group and at least sometimes go along with it but groups are invariably safe and play it cautiously. An entrepreneur needs to want independence, not only from a boss, but also from the people around him. Sure, he should listen to them, but certainly not too much. For anyone who's a great listener, patient and likes to give a lot of power to his team, that person almost certainly won't make a good entrepreneur.

Self-aware - has a business partner: So what's all this about. What has self-awareness got to do with having a business partner? Simple. Everyone has a major personal vulnerability in business, management and entrepreneurship. Usually you won't be aware of it yourself or even if you are, you won't know how to compensate for it.

The best way to overcome your vulnerabilities is to get a business partner who has the strengths that you don't. A product-oriented introvert for example might want to partner up with a sales-oriented extrovert.

But to make this choice requires a high level of self-awareness and maturity. Having a business partner is like being in a marriage. Our research shows clearly that entrepreneurs who have a business partner are more successful than those who don't. Examples? Google, Microsoft, Oracle etc. If you don't have one it doesn't mean you will fail but your chances of success will be much lower.

Don't like uncertainty: Some people like to be precise and clear about things. Like mathematicians, logical people and planners. But being an entrepreneur is all about uncertainty. You won't know if your products or services will meet customer requirements, if customers will pay you on time (or pay you at all) and whether you will ever be able to get paid yourself. So you have to be very comfortable with uncertainty, maybe even enjoy it. If not, you will be very unhappy as an entrepreneur and won't be able to cope with the fundamental uncertainties of starting a new company with a new product, with no money and no customers and no idea if any of these will ever happen.

Can't cope with ambiguity: This might sound like the last issue, namely coping with uncertainty. But actually it's different. Uncertainty means you don't know what will happen. Ambiguity means accepting things that are mutually contradictory.

An example of this might be sourcing technology from a company that is also your competitor. Another could be developing a new technology that you might believe is already obsolete. Another might be that you develop technology for a market that you don't believe in because it might at some future stage be a good one, even though you think it won't.

Entrepreneurs need to have the ability to work with many goals that might each be in conflict with the others, and yet be able to believe in the company. What's more, they need to be able to convince others - employees, investors, shareholders and board members - too and keep them happy even though the strategy might look stupid or incompetent.

Money-Focused; shouldn't an entrepreneur want to make a lot of money? Nope. In the vast majority of cases they won't. We all see people like Bill Gates or Jack Ma of Baidu, but these are exceptions, not the rule. The vast majority of entrepreneurs want their own companies not because of the money, but because of the independence it gives them from working for others, or for a big frustrating bureaucracy. If you are money-hungry, you are not suited to becoming an entrepreneur.

Do You Have the Wrong Experience?

Ok so that's takes care of some of the personality issues involved in not being suitable to be an entrepreneur. But experience is also another factor. What sorts of experience are bad for becoming an entrepreneur? Quite a lot as I shall show.

Government: Having had all of your experience in government is probably the single biggest factor in meaning you can't be an entrepreneur. That because government is so bureaucratic, the enemy of innovation and entrepreneurship. People who succeed in government are usually very good at making and obeying rules and when there aren't any, they are usually terrible at figuring out what to do when there is no existing framework to tell them what to do.

But there are other factors too. Government people have never started or worked in a small company, never had to sell anything, and never had to make the money to pay themselves. So they usually totally lack any experience that would suit them to be entrepreneurs.

There's another factor. In government everything is done by teams or groups. So if you have weaknesses - and you will - you don't know what they are because you have never worked on your own. You might think you are great until you are on your own and discover you can't do many things you need to be able to do - e.g. sales, product development, finance. In an entrepreneurial environment you have to do most of these things by yourself.

True, there are a very few people who have government experience who can make it as an entrepreneur (I am one of them) but they are very few in number. If you are in government and want to be an entrepreneur you need to think long and hard before you make what will probably be a fatal mistake.

Big company: If you have worked almost all of your life in a big company, it's almost as bad as working in government. The biggest good factor is that you might have been involved in sales, but all the other bad factors are similar to having government experience. That includes rules, bureaucracy, making decisions about a business and never having to pay your own salary from your own sales.

Small companies are a different matter. The smaller the company you have worked for, the more likely it is that you can be an entrepreneur. That does not mean you will be a successful entrepreneur but you will have worked in an environment that is closer to that of a startup.

University professor: University professors and academics generally make terrible entrepreneurs. First of all, universities are usually government agencies with all the usual rules and bureaucracy. Second academics have almost never worked in a real company or somewhere where they have had to start up a new organization or product. Third, they are usually theorists and book learners who have never learned to do anything practical with what they have learned. Fourth, their training is in how to learn something that someone else has created rather than innovate something themselves.

There are exceptions. The biggest ones are in engineering disciplines where usually a professor has come from a real engineering position where they have actually had to build something themselves. But you can forget any of the professors from the social sciences, business, the arts and the natural sciences although there are of course rare exceptions.

Too much money: This might sound like a strange one. Surely if you come from a wealthy family you will have more money which you need as initial investment. Some of that may well be true.

But usually entrepreneurs with too much money fail because they didn't have to make the money themselves to begin with. Usually they spend way too much on the wrong things, particularly promotion, entertainment and perks for themselves. Overspending on product development often means that there is little or no discipline and the company does inessential things, often very badly. So if you have a lot of money it's likely that you won't succeed unless you take a partner who can keep you restrained.

Too young: Aren't successful entrepreneurs usually young? In their 20s? Absolutely not. There is a wealth of research on this, some from my own company and some from other newer research. What this research points to is that the probability of success increases with age. The reason for this is

that you have more experience, a bigger network, more knowledge of the industry you are in, more of your own savings, and just some more wisdom. Entrepreneurs are most likely to be successful in their 50s and 60s.

There is one exception to this. That is, if you have a business partner. If you are in your 20s and you have the right business partner with the right complementary personality, your chances of success increase to the chances of someone in their 40s.

No relevant experience: it's pretty clear from the research into entrepreneurship that if you have experience in the same industry that you are an entrepreneur in, your chances of success increase significantly. If you have been in the auto industry all your working life and you decide to go into food supplies, you will almost certainly fail. The entrepreneurs who tend to succeed have spent 20+ years in a particular industry, have seen a major problem and figured out how to solve it in a way which the industry will accept. That is the best way to be an entrepreneur.

No savings; finally if you don't have an outside investor you need to have your own savings. Actually the vast majority of entrepreneurs never get any money from anyone with the exception of family and some friends. But usually this is not enough. It's highly unlikely you will get money from a venture capitalist or a professional investor. That means you have to have your own savings so you can get your company developed to the point where it might be attractive to outside investors. That might take you several years. So you need enough savings to last you at least 3-4 years.

Do You Have Too Much Education?

So what about education? Are you better off if you have an MBA or a degree in finance? Well, let's see.

Formal business qualifications: our research shows that the more business qualifications you have, the less likely you are to be successful as an entrepreneur. The worst qualification to have is a PhD. That's because PhDs approach everything as a research issue, and that won't work in business where things move very quickly.

It might seem like advanced business qualifications are a benefit if you are in a large company where everything is done by rules. However if you are an entrepreneur and there are no rules, your business qualifications actually become a disadvantage because they tempt you to use the rules of big business in entrepreneurial situations where normally they won't work. And formal business qualifications assume you have resources that an entrepreneur normally doesn't have such as a big team, lots of money for investment, distribution channels, an IT system and framework and so on. In other words, formal business qualifications assume you have the resources of a big company. They never assume you have no resources or that you are starting off with nothing.

Too educated: I just talked about business qualifications. Are all advanced qualifications a problem for an entrepreneur? Well, mostly yes, at least according to our research. Having a PhD is a particular problem if you want to be a successful entrepreneur, as we point out above.

However we have found one exception. That is degrees in engineering, including advanced degrees. Why is this? We really don't know but it's likely that people with engineering degrees have a more practical view of life because they have been taught the skills in making real things and real products and have to deal with real-life production issues. That's different to people who have degrees in social sciences, finance or the liberal arts. So if you have engineering qualifications, including a master's, our research suggests you have a much higher chance of being successful as an entrepreneur.

Becoming a Better Entrepreneur

So what do you do if you have many of the above characteristics which predict that you not are a good entrepreneur, but you will want to be an entrepreneur? Let's say you are from government or a big company, have an MBA, have never worked in a small company, and love analytical work and rules? Here are some suggestions:

- Get yourself assessed behaviorally to figure out your personality traits which will be most likely to lead to failure
- Find a business partner who has the characteristics to compensate for your vulnerabilities
- Find a mentor who has been a successful entrepreneur to give you advice
- Be very humble

Dr. E. Ted Prince, the Founder and CEO of the Perth Leadership Institute, located in Florida in the US has also been CEO of several other companies, both public and private. He is the author of two books: "The Three Financial Styles of Very Successful Leaders" (McGraw-Hill, 2005) and "Business Personality and Leadership Success", Amazon Kindle 2011 as well as numerous other publications in this area. He is a frequent speaker at industry conferences. He works with large corporations globally on leadership development programs and coaches senior executives and teams in the area of financial leadership. He has held the position of Visiting Professor at the University of Florida in the US in its Graduate Business School and also at the Shanghai University of Finance and Economics in China.