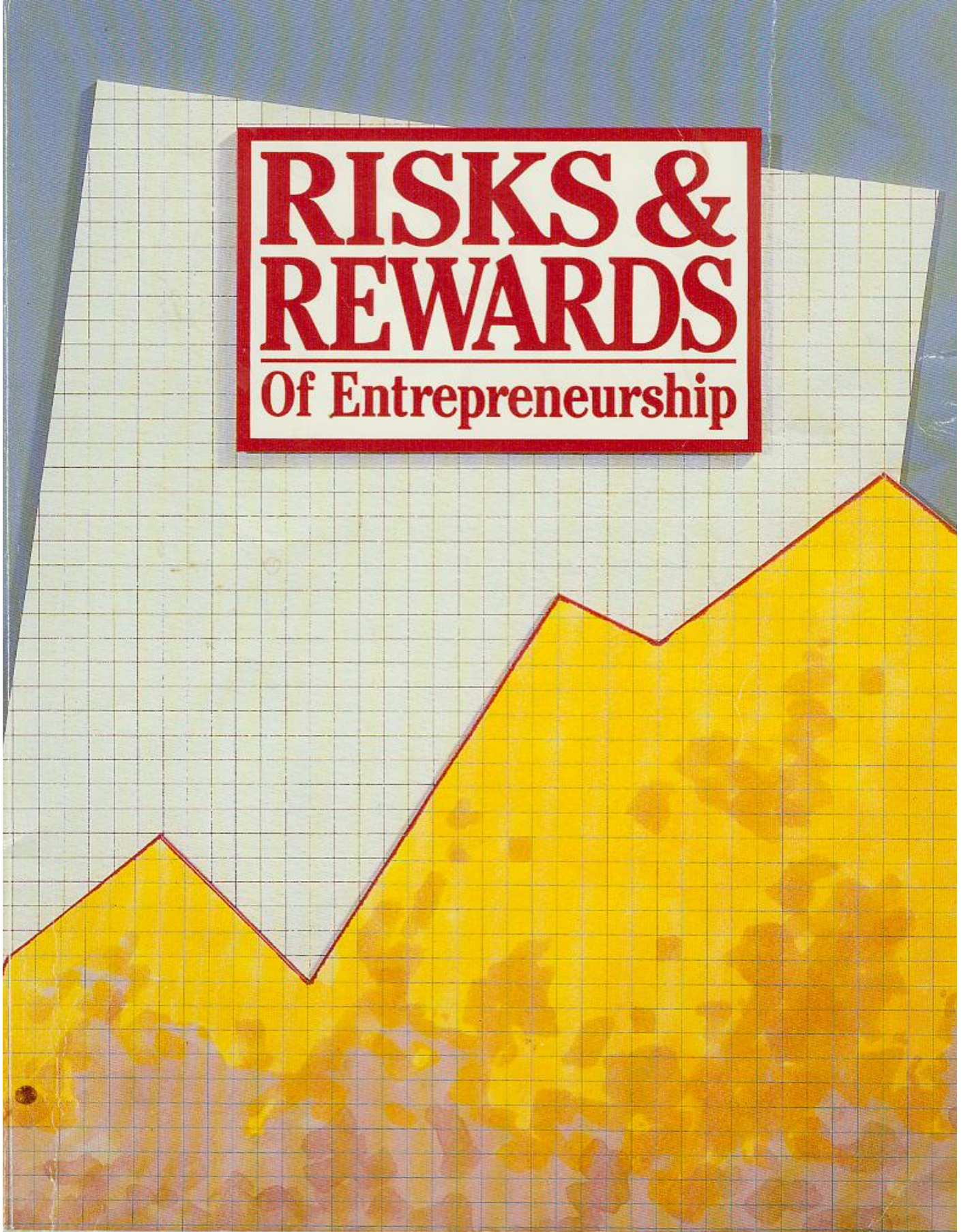


**Section 2**

**What Experiences Have I Had?**



**RISKS &  
REWARDS**  
Of Entrepreneurship

## Section 2

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*Section 2*

# ***What Experiences Have I Had?***

Completing this section will help  
you—

- \* examine past and present experiences
- \* evaluate aptitudes, interests, knowledge, and skills
- \* determine current business expertise

"Entrepreneurs are not born; they become through learning and life experiences."

—*Al Shapero*

## What Is This Section About?

Before choosing a career goal, it is important to identify your current skills and interests. Evaluation of current skills will enable you to choose career goals that use those skills. Also, it will help to determine where you need to seek additional assistance or experiences.

In this section you will review your own experiences, aptitudes, knowledge, skills, and interests in relation to a career. More specifically, you will compare that information to the expertise entrepreneurs or small business owners often have. Entrepreneurship and/or small business ownership is not for everyone; however, it is an alternative career you will want to explore.

Remember that new experiences and additional education strengthens and develops knowledge. This knowledge and skills may **someday** help you successfully start and run a business.

## What is Experience?

**Experiences take place when knowledge (learning) or skills are acquired through watching or being involved in an event.** Past experiences help shape future skills and knowledge. Experiences are also related to your background, values, life-style, and personal attributes (section 1). Experiences can include a number of different events. Examples of experiences follow.

- Going to youth camp for a week
- Watching a play
- Attending a class
- Learning a craft, or learning how to play an instrument
- Serving as an officer in VICA, DECA, FFA, FCCLA, or BPA
- Doing a community project (community cleanup, visiting a nursing home)
- Receiving an award
- Chairing a committee
- Serving as a member of a committee
- Taking part in family activities
- Receiving your first **paycheck**

Think about some experiences you have had. Jot some of these down on a piece of paper. You may want to use them later in this section.

## **What Types of Aptitudes Might You Have?**

**Aptitudes are natural talents or inclinations for certain activities.** People have a broad range of aptitudes. For instance, Karia may have a very high aptitude for artistic activities. She draws and then paints the sets used in the school plays. These activities just seem to come naturally.

At the same time, Karia has very little aptitude in numerical activities. The study of mathematics is very difficult for this student. Often, people will enjoy doing those things in which they have a strong or high aptitude much more than something that takes greater effort. Some examples of aptitudes include the following:

- **Verbal or nonverbal communications** (written or spoken words or actions that communicate ideas, emotions or events). Giving a speech in class, acting in a school play, and hugging a friend are all methods of communication.
- **Verbal comprehension** (understanding the meanings of ideas or emotions in verbal or nonverbal communication). Listening and reacting to a friend's problem, discussing politics, and trying to sell neighbors on your abilities to mow their lawns are examples of verbal comprehension.
- **Logical** (applying reason or logic to problems). Solving a math problem or measuring the fabric available and deciding if there is enough to make a skirt are examples of logical abilities.
- **Artistic** (creativity, using artistic talents, using musical talents, using dramatic talents). Being able to draw, write poetry, arrange flowers, play a musical instrument, take photographs, sing, or design an outfit are all uses of artistic talents.
- **Mechanical** (understanding relationships between parts of machines, making things work). Fixing the motor of an automobile, putting a radio back together, unjamming a sewing machine, and even driving a car all use mechanical strengths.
- **Numerical** (working with numbers). Solving math problems, determining how many miles a car travels per gallon of gasoline, or doubling a recipe to feed eight instead of four are examples of numerical abilities.
- **Clerical** (arranging and recording number and letter combinations). Alphabetizing or putting items in a special order, filling, and typing are all clerical skills.
- **Spatial** (understanding how parts of things fit together, multidimensional). Being able to put together a jigsaw puzzle, rearranging furniture attractively in a room, and putting together a model airplane all use spatial understanding.
- **Physical** (bodily strength and coordination, manual dexterity). Lifting weights, enjoying aerobic exercise, pushing furniture, and hanging up pictures in a straight line all use physical skills.
- **Organizational** (planning, implementing, evaluating). Planning a party or conducting a meeting makes use of organizational abilities.

*Continued on Next Page*

\* **Intellectual** (original thinking, seeking knowledge, thinking ahead). Reading a mystery novel and deciding "the butler did it," studying for an exam, and analyzing the problem in making a car repair are examples of using intellectual skills.

**Entrepreneurs use their aptitudes to help them develop their business ideas into business realities.** They may use mechanical aptitudes to open a radio repair shop, organizational talents to decide which customer's radio to fix first, and artistic aptitudes to design a sign for their business. However, entrepreneurs usually select a business area in which they have an interest. This you will read about in the next section.

## Personal Profile 4



### Experience and Aptitudes

On the left-hand portion of the following chart, briefly describe two important experiences you have had. On the other side, list the aptitudes you used in the experience, or those you gained from the experience, with the terms that best fit from the unit. As you recall, aptitudes refer to a natural talent or inclination for certain activities. Try to remember as many details from your experiences as possible. You may be surprised at some of the aptitudes you used.

EXPERIENCE	APTITUDES
<b>Example:</b> I found my grandparents old oak kitchen set in the attic. I stripped off the old paint on the table until I reached the natural wood. After refinishing it, I had a beautiful new kitchen set to give to my brother and his new wife for a wedding present.	1. Spatial 2. Artistic 3. Physical
1.	1. 2. 3.
2.	1. 2. 3.

# Personal Profile 5

## Aptitudes Worksheet



Review the list of aptitudes that appear in this unit. Select at least three that you feel you have. List at least two reasons/activities you do that support your claim. Try to be detailed in providing an explanation for why you feel you have a certain aptitude.

APTITUDES	REASONS
<b>Example:</b> Artistic	1. I like to draw pictures of people I know. 2. I enjoy playing the piano whenever I can.
1.	1. 2.
2.	1. 2.
3.	1. 2.

### What Are Your Interests?

**An interest is a subject that you like to read about, hear about, or find exciting.** Often, a person will develop an interest into a hobby. He or she will spend his or her spare time doing an activity that is enjoyable and relaxing. Generally, interests fit a person's personality, knowledge/skills, life-style, and values. You may be very interested in some things or have little or no interest in other things.

Interests can be general but included within broad categories such as cooking, farming, construction, athletics, reading, or cars. Or, interests can be specific, with examples such as the following: dessert making, dairy farming, furniture refinishing, jogging, reading spy thrillers, or collecting old car parts.

Interests or hobbies often develop because of a person's aptitude for such activities. An individual with a strong artistic aptitude may greatly enjoy cake decorating.

*Continued on Next Page*

Because of a natural talent, this person may become interested in knowing as much as possible about the activity. He or she may make a lot of cakes for many occasions while developing the interest into a hobby.

Often, a hobby can become a full-fledged business. Paul Newman is a famous actor known for his blue eyes, but he also enjoys cooking. Now, he is well-known for his salad dressing, which can be found on many grocery store shelves. In addition, actress Jane Fonda, well known for many of her movie roles, is an avid exerciser. Many recognize her face on workout clothing, records, videos, and books. She turned her exercise and aerobics hobby into a well-paying business. Certainly, the number of ideas future entrepreneurs can develop is limited only by the limits of their imagination.

## Personal Profile 6



### Experience-Interests

Carefully review each experience listed and described in Profile 4. What interests are captured in each? List these below. An interest is a feeling that goes along with special attention to a subject important to you. You may discover after completing this worksheet that you have many more interests than you thought. If any of your interests have developed into hobbies, be sure to include these on your list.

1.

2.

3.



## Personal Profile 7



### **Interests Grouped According to Similarities**

Look at the interests you listed in Profile 6 and place them into groups according to similarities. List the groupings below.

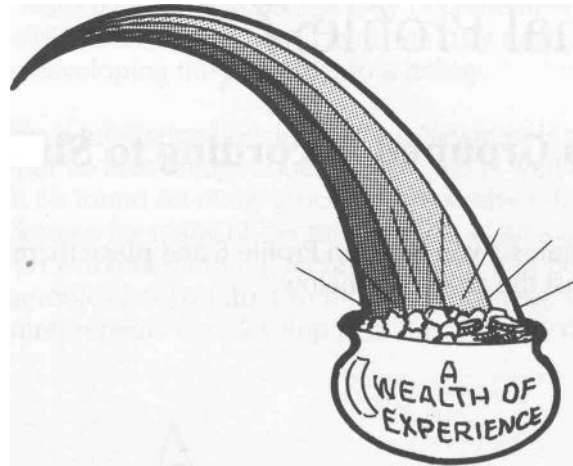
### **What Knowledge Is Important to an Entrepreneur?**

An individual who considers entrepreneurship needs to develop several areas of business knowledge. Knowledge is a familiarity or understanding of a subject gained through experience or through learning and study. You might gain knowledge in the following ways:

- \* Learn about the **community**. What kinds of people live in it, what age groups, whether there are married or single people, what is the number of families, and what are the income levels.
- \* Know **what is happening**. What are the latest styles in fashion, what foods do people eat, what new services are in demand, what types of exercise are now popular. Basically, an entrepreneur will want to know whatever is new and different.
- \* Gain knowledge through **education**. Each subject you study in school will be important as an entrepreneur, including mathematics, history, languages bookkeeping, auto mechanics, home economics, marketing, agriculture production, and English literature.
- \* Learn **on the job**. That job in your vocational area is providing you with practical experience and knowledge every day.

Definitely, all of the knowledge that an individual acquires throughout her or his lifetime is important to becoming an entrepreneur. **Entrepreneurship combines all an individual's knowledge and experience.**

## INTERESTS



Someone with retail work experience, a love of history, and interest in old things may find that an antique store would be popular in a community. Such a business combines experience, interests, and hobbies.

A person who loves cross-country skiing could find that he or she might become an entrepreneur by teaching this skill to others, by organizing and planning trips for those who want to learn this hobby, or by purchasing and renting equipment. Certainly, if you have an interest, you may find that much of the knowledge you have developed enhances that interest.

## What Skills Will I Need as an Entrepreneur?

**Entrepreneurs need many skills to successfully run a business.** Being able to apply successfully the knowledge acquired and demonstrate it in running a business shows the *skill* level acquired by the entrepreneur. These skills differ somewhat from business to business, because each business is different. Certainly, each business will have some special knowledge and skills needed for it alone. However, there are also general skills and knowledge common to most businesses. Some general areas follow:

- ***Developing a business plan.*** This is a proposal that describes your business and serves as a guide to manage your business. Most often, the business plan is important if you need to borrow money or want people to invest in your business.
- ***Obtaining technical assistance.*** Getting help from experienced people and specialized agencies can give entrepreneurs added knowledge and skill to make decisions.
- ***Choosing the type of ownership.*** How a business is organized legally depends on how it is owned. If one person owns it, it is a *so/e proprietorship*. If more than one share in owning-managing the business, it is a *partnership*. A *corporation* is chartered by the state and operates as a legal entity separate from its owners.
- ***Planning the market strategy.*** This is a business tool to help plan and coordinate all of the activities involved in the exchange of goods and services between producers and consumers.

*What Experiences Have I Had?*

- ***Locating the business.*** This is a very important decision that can “make” or “break a new business. The small business owner must select the “right” site for the business.
- ***Financing the business.*** It may be necessary to know where to go to borrow the money needed to start your business and keep it going.
- ***Dealing with legal issues.*** The entrepreneur deals with a variety of legal questions. He or she needs to know when to seek advice and where to get this advice.
- ***Complying with government regulations.*** Government laws exist to protect everyone involved in business—the citizens who work for the business, consumers, business owners, and even the environment. Regulations concerning small business operation are made on the federal, state, county, and local levels.
- ***Managing the business.*** Good management is the key to success. Managers must plan the work of the business, organize people and resources for work, staff the business, direct employees, and control and evaluate work.
- ***Managing human resources.*** This involves working with people so they will be good employees. Human resource management involves planning, organizing, directing, and evaluating all the activities that directly involve employees and promote their productivity.
- ***Promoting the business.*** Informing consumers about the products and services of a business to help them make a good purchase decision is the purpose of promotion.
- ***Managing sales efforts.*** It is very important to use good selling principles to attract new customers as well as to continue to serve old customers. If a firm cannot sell its products or services, it will not make a profit and the business will fail.
- ***Keeping the business records.*** Keeping business records is a form of score keeping. Small business owners/managers can know the current score of their business with accurate and up-to-date records.
- ***Managing the finances.*** This is needed for a business to grow and earn profits. Financial management tasks include reading and analyzing financial statements and then using this information to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the firm. Financial statements give information needed to plan and take necessary corrective action.
- ***Managing customer credit and collection.*** Owners of small businesses often must extend credit to customers so that sales will not be lost. At the same time, they must avoid ending up with long overdue accounts that can tie up capital and increase collection costs. Customer credit is given to those people whose financial backgrounds have been checked for payment of obligations. Collections refers to the method or schedule used for payment.
- ***Protecting the business.*** It is necessary to identify the risks faced by entrepreneurs by business crime or property loss. In addition, precautions such as insurance should be taken so that a small firm can lessen its losses due to risks.



# Personal Profile 8

## Your Experiences Develop Skills

**Instructions:** Categories are provided on this form to develop a partial inventory of the many skills you already have. Focus on skills that would be helpful in operating your own business. You may have gained these skills at home, on the job, or in school. Beside each skill list where you learned it. You may be surprised to see how important all of your experiences are in acquiring valuable skills.

1. 

<b>Handling Money</b>
-----------------------

Specific Tasks:

How learned:

2. 

<b>Getting Along with Others</b>
----------------------------------

Specific Tasks:

How learned:

3. 

<b>Selling</b>
----------------

Specific Tasks:

How learned:

4. 

<b>Organizing</b>
-------------------

Specific Tasks:

How learned:

5. 

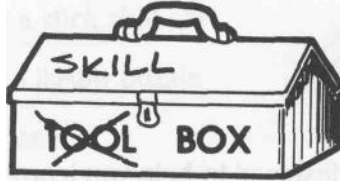
<b>Directing Activities</b>
-----------------------------

Specific Tasks:

How learned:

## How Does an Entrepreneur Gain Expertise?

As you can see, entrepreneurs combine their aptitudes, interests, and the experiences and knowledge they have acquired. They develop skill in a chosen area and demonstrate this skill in running a business. **A high level of skill in an area leads to expertise.**



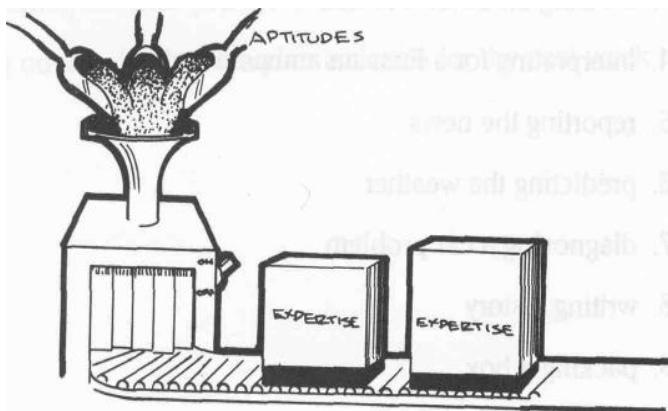
As an example, when you first learned to ride a bicycle you probably could not balance yourself on two wheels. Pretty soon, with practice and the experiences of falling off, you learned to travel without as much difficulty. However, you still had to learn to watch where you were going, how to steer, how to brake, and how to stop. As you developed knowledge about what you were doing, you began to notice that your skills were improving. Finally, watching what was ahead, steering, and all the other skills you had acquired became nearly automatic. You developed an expertise in managing a bicycle.

Evaluating your experiences, assessing your aptitudes and interests, and developing your knowledge and skills teach you some things about yourself. When you consider the combination of all these things, you may begin to see some entrepreneurial possibilities. It is not necessary to make a career decision yet. You still need to learn more about entrepreneurship.

## Are You Building Career Expertise?

Evaluating your experiences provides you with a better sense of the skills and knowledge you possess. In this section, you also learned to assess your aptitudes and identify interests important to you. In addition, you read about different types of skills and knowledge that are important to being a successful entrepreneur.

INTERESTS      EXPERIENCES



Have you begun to think about entrepreneurial possibilities for yourself? Do you have a career goal that uses your current skills and interests? Or, is it necessary for you to develop greater expertise in a certain area? Certainly you need not make a career decision right away. You still need to learn more about entrepreneurship.



## Activities

The following activities are designed to help you learn more about yourself. When you have analyzed your experiences, you may discover how you developed some of your interests. In addition, you will be able to evaluate your aptitudes and see how you apply them every day. Perhaps, you will discover an aptitude that you never before considered! Certainly, you will obtain more information about your entrepreneurial option.



## Aptitudes: Matching

**Instructions:** This worksheet will help you understand that many examples of each aptitude exist. Also, you will see that each aptitude is used in many common everyday situations.

**a. numerical**

**g. mechanical**

**b. logical**

**h. artistic**

**c. spatial**

**i. verbal comprehension**

**d. physical**

**j. intellectual**

**e. clerical**

**k. verbal or nonverbal communications**

**f. organizational**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. weight lifting
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. making change for a customer
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. creating an advertisement
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. interpreting for a Russian ambassador
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. reporting the news
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. predicting the weather
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. diagnosing a car problem
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. writing a story
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. packing a box
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. planning a class party

*What Experiences Have I Had?*

- \_\_\_\_.11. typing a letter
- \_\_\_\_.12. moving living room furniture
- \_\_\_\_.13. alphabetizing note cards by the subject's first letter
- \_\_\_\_. 14. obtaining directions to Youngstown, Ohio
- \_\_\_\_. 15. playing the piano
- \_\_\_\_.16. learning to drive a stick shift car
- \_\_\_\_. 17. putting together a jigsaw puzzle
- \_\_\_\_.18. making a funny face
- \_\_\_\_. 19. making a class schedule for second semester
- \_\_\_\_. 20. fixing a lawn mower
- \_\_\_\_. 21. studying for an exam
- \_\_\_\_. 22. putting together a cake shaped like a clown
- \_\_\_\_. 23. sorting buttons by shape and color
- \_\_\_\_. 24. figuring out the end of a story before reading the last chapter
- \_\_\_\_. 25. yelling at a football game
- \_\_\_\_.26. rolling your eyes
- \_\_\_\_. 27. performing a song/dance routine
- \_\_\_\_. 28. thinking about what you should answer to an exam question
- \_\_\_\_. 29. working for an auto repair shop
- \_\_\_\_. 30. coming to a conclusion after being given certain facts
- \_\_\_\_. 31. solving a math problem
- \_\_\_\_. 32. planning a schoolwide event
- \_\_\_\_. 33. reacting to a telephone request
- \_\_\_\_. 34. complaining because you are cold
- \_\_\_\_. 35. making out a calendar with your activities for the next week



# Aptitude Exploration

**Instructions:** After reviewing the following aptitudes and examples, choose four aptitudes that best describe your strengths and write two personal examples of experiences upon which you based your answer

## **Aptitudes**

## **Personal Examples**

### **Verbal or nonverbal communication**

- Talking on the phone for long periods.
- Nodding your head or shrugging your shoulders, talking without words.

### **Verbal comprehension**

- Following instructions on an exam.
- Dressing for rain after hearing the weather report.

### **Logical**

- Figuring out how to get into the house when you do not have the key.
- Solving a mystery before finishing the book, because of the clues the author left.

### **Artistic**

- Acting in a skit.
- Drawing a sketch.

### **Mechanical**

- Fixing a broken toaster.
- Knowing how to jump-start a car when the battery dies.



## **Aptitudes**

## **Personal Examples**

### **Numerical**

- Measuring ingredients for a cake.
- Calculating how much paint you need to paint a house.

### **Clerical**

- Answering a telephone switchboard and taking messages.
- Using a word processor to write letters.

### **Spatial**

- Designing a birdhouse to fit between two branches of a tree.
- Packing a picnic basket.

### **Physical**

- Participating in sports.
- Kneading bread.

### **Organizational**

- Deciding how you will get all your homework done and go out on Saturday night.
- Directing a meeting.

### **Intellectual**

- Learning your Spanish vocabulary words for a quiz.
- Reading a book of your choice.



## Crossword Puzzle

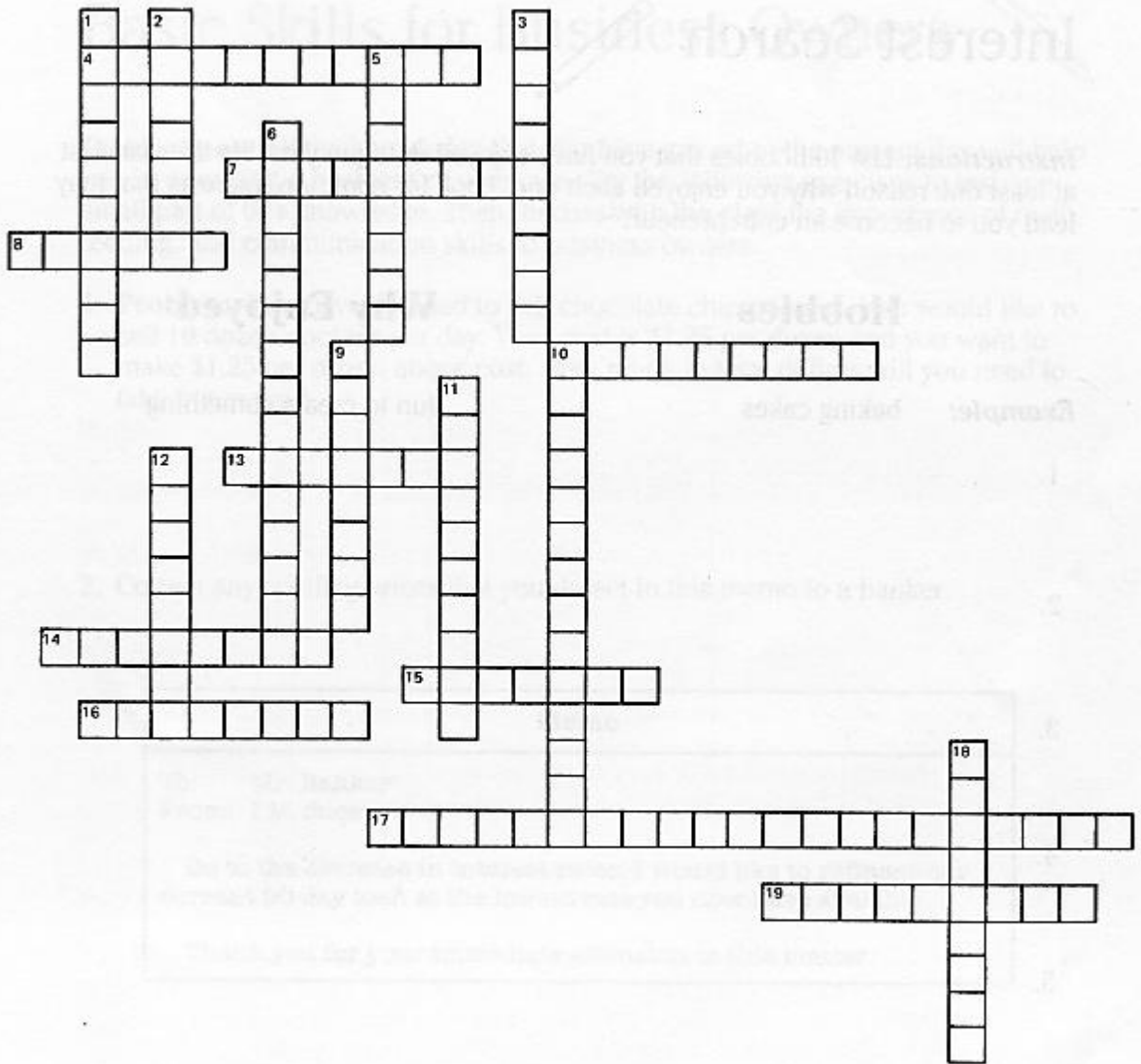
**Instructions:** This activity will help you review some of the terms you learned in this section. Read the clues and fill in the puzzle.

### Across

4. \_\_\_ happen when knowledge, skill, or practice occurs through watching or being involved in an event.
7. Aptitude: working with numbers.
8. Successful application of knowledge acquired and demonstration of this knowledge in running a business.
10. Legal organization of a business depends on the type of \_\_\_.
13. Aptitude: applying reason to problems.
14. A feeling that goes along with special attention to a subject important to you.
15. Activities that you enjoy doing in your spare time.
16. Aptitude: bodily strength or manual dexterity.
17. Aptitude: spoken words or actions that can tell ideas, emotions, or events. 19. High levels of skill in a certain area.

### Down

1. Aptitude: understanding relationships between parts of machines.
2. Aptitude: understanding how parts of things fit together; multidimensional.
3. Understanding or awareness of a subject through learning about it or through an actual experience.
5. Aptitude: arranging and recording number and letter combinations.
6. Employees of a business. (2 words)
9. Aptitude: using creative talents.
10. Aptitude: planning, implementing, evaluating.
11. The method used for paying, or scheduling credit payments.
12. The market \_\_\_ is a business tool to help plan and coordinate the activities used in the exchange of goods and services between producers and consumers. 18. Natural talents or inclinations for certain activities.





# Interest Search

**Instructions:** List 10 hobbies that you have enjoyed doing in your life thus far. List at least one reason why you enjoyed each one. Look for common interests that may lead you to become an entrepreneur.

## Hobbies

## Why Enjoyed

**Example:** baking cakes

fun to create something

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.



# Basic Skills for Business Owners

**Instructions:** All the knowledge that you have gained to the present day will help you in operating a business of your own. Try the following exercises to test one small part of this knowledge. Then discuss with the class the importance of math, reading, and communication skills to business owners.

1. **Problem:** You have decided to sell chocolate chip cookies. You would like to sell 10 dozen cookies per day. Your cost is \$1.25 per dozen and you want to make \$1.25 per dozen above cost. How much in total dollars will you need to take in per day?

2. Correct any spelling errors that you detect in this memo to a banker.

Memo
To: Mr. Banker From: I.M. Success
Do to the decrease In interest rates, I -would like to reflnace our currant 90-day loan at the lowest rate you now have avalable.
Thank you for your immediate attenslon to this matter.

3. Number these accounts payable in alphabetical order to simplify your bookkeeping system.

\_\_\_\_\_ Miller, L.J.

\_\_\_\_\_ Williams, M.B.

\_\_\_\_\_ Cook, D.K.

\_\_\_\_\_ Bayer, E.J.

\_\_\_\_\_ Johnson, S.A.

\_\_\_\_\_ Swingle, A.A.

\_\_\_\_\_ Rollins, D.M.

\_\_\_\_\_ Kelly, L.L.

\_\_\_\_\_ Le Fever, C.S.

\_\_\_\_\_ Baughman, O.L.

\_\_\_\_\_ Yeager, C.S.

\_\_\_\_\_ Hardesty, R.M.

\_\_\_\_\_ Bateman, J.S.

\_\_\_\_\_ Charles, P.E.



## **Telephone Survey**

Call three entrepreneurs who operate businesses related to your career area. Ask each of them to name the 10 most important skills needed to operate a business successfully. Compare the answers of all three and list the skills named by all of them. Discuss the results in class.

## Success Stories



Think about how these entrepreneurs selected their career goals. Answer the questions included with the success stories and then begin section 3.

**Name:** Dan Rhoades

**Business Name:** Auto Body Specialty's

**Business Address:** 8020 N. Dixie Drive

Dayton, Ohio 45414

**Type of Business:** Auto body repair and painting

When Dan Rhoades was 20 years old, he started Auto Body Specialty's. His thorough training at Patterson Co-op High School in Dayton, his rewarding experiences with VICA (Dan won the national VICA auto body contest), and his on-the-job training gave Dan the confidence that he could deal with customers and manage his own shop.

The biggest change Dan sees in his life-style is that he no longer has two or three bosses to answer to or someone breathing down his neck. However, Dan thinks that he's harder on himself than any boss ever was. "Now I have only one boss—myself—and I think this boss is the hardest one to work for." Dan characterizes his life-style by saying it consists of "long hours and hard work."

Dan financed his business through a combination of personal savings plus loans. Because he feels strongly about being his own boss, Auto Body Specialty's is organized as a sole proprietorship. Dan was able to use his experiences as a student at Patterson Co-op High School to determine who his potential customers would be. Locating the business on North Dixie seemed obvious to Danny because of the extra high volume of traffic.

In setting up his business, Dan received assistance from a variety of contacts and resources. Friends who work at parts and paint supply stores, people he met while working at other auto body shops, and the faculty and principal at Patterson Co-op High School were all of help. Still, there were problems: how to get the necessary equipment, building, customers, and employees. Being able to borrow money and advertising solved the first three problems. Finding good employees, according to Dan, "... is always an ongoing problem."

Currently, Dan needs a larger building and needs to increase the number of employees so he can give more time to managing the business. Normally, Dan employs two other people, but right now he has just one employee, a young man who also graduated from Patterson Co-op High School.

Continued on Next Page

*What Experiences Have I Had?*

At this time, all of the profits go back into the business. Sales were lower than projected last year because of a two-month slow period, which all the auto body shops in the area experienced.

Dan feels that the technical as well as academic skills he gained as a student at Patterson Co-op have contributed to his success, even though academics were hard initially. His strong marketing ability, his abilities to get along with people, be flexible, and put in long hours, and his resourcefulness all contribute to his success as an entrepreneur.

To Dan, "it has always been very satisfying to assemble a wrecked car back to its original shape." Dan also derives great satisfaction from doing a quality job and satisfying the body repair market. Dan feels that, through hard work, intense planning, and maximizing his potential, he can reach his goals.

Dan said that, one day, he would like to be able to retire, buy a yacht, and take plenty of vacations. As to when he will consider himself a success, Dan will say only that "... success will catch me off guard one day."

In addition to his education at Patterson Co-op, Dan attended Dupont Refinishing School, which was the prize for winning the national VICA auto body contest. He currently is attending a car unibody workshop.

## Case Study Questions

**Dan Rhoades**  
**Auto Body Specialty's**

1. What experiences gave Dan the confidence to become an entrepreneur?

2. Which aptitudes listed in this section apply to Dan?

3. What type of business ownership did Dan select, and why?



*What Experiences Have I Had?*

4. What does Dan say about finding good employees?

5. Do you think that Dan tries to improve his skills? Why or why not?

**Name:** John R. Miller

**Business Name:** Bryant Hill Jerseys

**Business Address:** 100 Bryant Street  
Chesterfield, MA 01012

**Type of Business:** Dairy farm

John Miller's roots go back 200 years in the town of Chesterfield, Massachusetts. He chose to start his own dairy and Jersey cattle breeding business partly as a way to maintain that heritage.

John's grandfather was a dairy farmer. His mother's family had farmed in Chesterfield for generations, though the family farm was sold before John decided to go into business.

John had operated his own egg business from the age of 10. From age 12, he was involved in 4-H projects breeding registered Jersey cattle. At school he maintained a "respectable" grade level, he says. He was active in 4-H and FFA (Future Farmers of America) activities and held both local and state offices. He is still an assistant 4-H leader.

These activities gave John experience in public speaking and debate that has proven valuable in business. He belongs also to nonagricultural civic groups in Chesterfield. He believes it's good public relations.

John majored in animal science at Smith Vocational High School in Northampton, Massachusetts. He also attended the State University of New York at Delhi, New York, for one semester and took artificial insemination instruction at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts.

This formal training "taught me many techniques in dairy herd management, record keeping, ration balancing, soil management, crop growing, financial projecting, and other aspects of farm management so extremely essential in successfully getting a dairy business off the ground," John says.

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### *What Experiences Have I Had?*

In addition to producing high-quality milk, John's Jersey herd has been a consistent winner in breed competition, and he sells breeding stock in all parts of the country. John likes being his own boss because he can make decisions to improve the breed. He has two local dairy farms as competition. However, the other two do not sell breeding stock. John believes his stock sales give him a shield against the ups and downs of the milk market.

When he first went in business, many dairy farmers favored Holsteins. But John had faith in his Jerseys, and he finds the popularity pendulum is now swinging in his direction. "I've shown my lenders that Jersey cows are efficient dairy cows worthy of investment," he says. "The farm's roughage program has more than doubled through land improvements. I set production and classification goals for the herd, and we've surpassed them."

Though John is now a sole proprietor, that is not the form of business he originally preferred. He tried to go into partnership with a couple of other dairymen "in hopes that I wouldn't have to have such a great cash outlay," he says. The partnership didn't work out. John had to finance his farm with a large mortgage. "It wasn't what I really wanted to do at first, but it's worked out okay," he says.

Last year's sales amounted to about \$135,000, and half John's profits were put back into the business. With milk prices down, this has been a break-even year so far. John hopes for "a year good enough so I can make a solid profit," because he'd like to be more secure financially and there are several land and building improvements he'd like to carry out.

John is finding out firsthand that farming carries more risk than other businesses. He says he tries to learn from his mistakes but recognizes that "lots of times there are things that are just not my fault as far as uncertainties in the marketplace and prices and things of that nature."

One thing entrepreneurship demands is that he "be more flexible with finances and be willing to put more back into the business than into the household."

John's advice to anyone contemplating starting his own business is to know what he's getting into. "If you can get involved working with someone or for someone before you decide to take the big plunge—unless you already have a lot of experience from your background or upbringing—I think that's a very good place for starters."

## Case Study Questions

### **John R. Miller Bryant Hill Jerseys**

1. How did John Miller's family background figure in his decision to become a dairy farmer?

*What Experiences Have I Had?*

2. What were his early entrepreneurship and agricultural experiences?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. How did vocational, college, and technical training help him reach his career goal?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. How does his stock breeding and sales program help reduce the ups and downs of dairy farming?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Why would John have preferred a partnership to start with?

**Name:** Anna T. McLaughlin  
**Business Name:** Professional Plant Care Service  
**Business Address:** 1346 Old River Road Manville, RI 02838  
**Type of Business:** Interior Landscaping

Anna McLaughlin says, "There would be no business without my vocational education. It gave me the knowledge of horticulture and showed me how to work with my hands—to get dirty."

While in high school at Davies Vocational Technical School, Lincoln, Rhode Island, Anna majored in horticulture. Her training included plant identification, plant requirements, ornamental horticulture, plant and soil sciences, pest control, and greenhouse management. She developed self-confidence and assertiveness as her knowledge grew, and through her involvement with Future Farmers of America (FFA) she learned leadership.

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### *'What Experiences Have I Had'*

Anna combined her horticultural skills with an artistic nature in selecting the type of business to open. Says Anna, "I saw many people in offices, banks, and restaurants creating their own indoor gardens, often losing their costly purchases." She noted a need for professional care of indoor plants while working for a wholesale florist, where customers often asked her questions about plant selection and care.

At age 24, Anna started her own business. She states, "I couldn't find the kind of job I wanted. I knew interior landscaping was challenging, and I believed I could do the job." She targeted her potential customers as new businesses, existing businesses with neglected plants, and new public buildings, many of which "are built with the addition of indoor plants in mind." Anna began her business at night while working for someone else. She used money from her job to purchase the van needed for transporting plants.

It wasn't easy for Anna to establish a reputation in the field, but she persevered. She says, "I believe in doing the best I can and having a positive attitude. I have faith in myself."

Professional Plant Care Service is a full-service interior landscaping firm. Anna designs interior landscapes and selects the plants based on light, temperature, water requirements, durability and visual effect. She then services the plants weekly, guaranteeing their health and appearance.

Anna feels that being a small business gives her an edge on competition. "I can oversee all major work and devote more time and care to each job." Professional Plant Care Service is a sole proprietorship employing five people. Anna proudly states that all of her employees are students from her high school. She trains them for a career and hopes they, in turn, will do the same for someone else one day.

In the future, Anna hopes to double her business while maintaining the personal service she provides. She says, "I want to hire enough people to oversee jobs that the business can run itself."

Anna enjoys the independence and sense of accomplishment that come with owning her own company. "I love it when someone says, 'That's beautiful!'" and keeping it that way is my job—a challenge."

## **Case Study Questions**

**Anna T. McLaughlin**  
**Professional Plant Care Service**

1. Where did Anna McLaughlin get the idea for her business? How did she target potential customers?

*'What Experiences Have I Had?'*

2. What are the necessary skills in her business, and how did she acquire them?

3. Owning one's own business involves total responsibility. Anna's responsibility does not end with choosing and planting the plants. What else does it entail and how does she fulfill it?

4. To Anna, what are the advantages of being a small business?

5. What are Anna's business goals?

## **The Think Tank**

### **What Experiences Have I Had?**

**Instructions:** Summarize what you have learned in this section by answering the following questions as a private journal entry to keep for use in your future career planning. Add it to the same activity from section 1.

\* What is experience?

\* What types of aptitudes might you have?

\* What are your interests?

\* What knowledge is important to an entrepreneur?

\* What skills will you need as an entrepreneur?

\* How does an entrepreneur gain expertise?

\* Can you choose a career goal?