

Misconceptions and Myths about Entrepreneurship

Every would-be entrepreneur can benefit from learning what the role really entails.

A good place to start is with the many myths and misconceptions that surround entrepreneurship — debunking these can help startup leaders figure out what's truly necessary to achieve success with their fledgling company. The following list provides some of the most common assumptions about entrepreneurs and explains why they're wrong.

1. Entrepreneurs are born that way.

Many people assume that entrepreneurs are born that way — and that only people who have certain natural talents can be entrepreneurs. However, the truth is that almost anyone can become an entrepreneur if they can learn the necessary skills. True, some people may adjust to the demands of the role more quickly, but there's no rule that says only certain types of people can found companies. Entrepreneurs may be gregarious extroverts or quiet introverts; they may be “big picture” thinkers or more focused on the details of executing an idea. Entrepreneurism is a learned skill, not a natural-born ability.

2. The only requirement is a good idea.

Many people also believe that all it takes to live the American dream is to have that one fantastic idea for a company. While the notion isn't entirely false, it is misleading. Even the very best ideas — ones with the potential to disrupt an entire industry — need proper execution to become reality. Ideas are important, but so are planning, talent, leadership, communication, and a host of other factors.

3. Starting a new business guarantees freedom.

The appeal of breaking out of the traditional, 40-hour work week draws many to the prospect of starting their own business. What lots of people find is that while they leave behind their old schedule and creative limitations, they exchange them for new demands. Sure, there will be more freedom in some respects, but entrepreneurship often requires great sacrifices. It can consume every part of your waking life; the work doesn't end when the clock strikes 5 p.m.

4. Launching a company quickly leads to wealth.

Some entrepreneurs mistakenly believe that starting a business will put them on the fast track to earning substantial amounts of money — fast. Although some companies are immediately successful, others take a little more time to get there. Properly timing the expansion of the company and sustaining growth are two of the entrepreneur's biggest tasks.

5. Only money motivates employees.

A myth related to the “get rich quick” idea is the assumption that money is the best way to motivate employees. Recent statistics have shown that [Millennials](#), who are quickly becoming the majority in the workplace, would rather earn less at a job they enjoy than secure a higher wage doing something they hate. Overcoming this misconception puts a heavy obligation on the entrepreneur to develop not only a business model that generates revenue, but also a company culture that engages employees.

6. Businesses either flourish or fail.

Because the select few startups that skyrocket out of the gate receive the bulk of the press, it’s easy to adopt an all-or-nothing outlook on entrepreneurship. The overall high failure rate for new businesses may seem to confirm this idea. However, entrepreneurs need to understand that there’s a lot of patience and strategy involved in getting a company off the ground and keeping it afloat. Some companies that initially falter, or that have lackluster growth rates at the start, go on to achieve healthy growth.

7. All responsibility falls on the entrepreneur.

Another misconception about running a new business is that everything depends solely on the entrepreneur. This might be true at the earliest stages, but taking this idea too seriously is also the best way to guarantee burnout. Collaboration and the art of delegation figure strongly in the health of a company. No one can do it all alone.

8. There’s a secret, “silver bullet” key to success.

In business, many successful entrepreneurs promote the impression that they've found some kind of secret key to success. However, this doesn't take into account the entrepreneur's previous ideas that failed; the old-fashioned hard work and patience they put in; or any of the many other factors that are necessary to build a strong company. The reality is that a single key to success does not exist. If anything, entrepreneurial success requires a keychain of different ideas, people, and resources that must come together at the right time and place.

9. Businesses need someone with an MBA at the helm.

Confusing value and necessity is a mistake when it comes to entrepreneurs and business degrees. On the one hand, a formal education provides immeasurable benefits. On the other, the market does not require entrepreneurs to have an MBA or other business degree. Some startup owners have degrees in subjects like engineering, for instance; they use their deep technical knowledge to identify gaps in technology and devise solutions. Other successful startup founders have no degree at all.

10. Quitting is for losers.

One final misconception is the idea that entrepreneurs have to stick everything out — no matter what. But the fact is that not every idea will blossom into a sustainable company. Successful entrepreneurs often cycle through and try out many ideas before they find one that has legs. Quitting might look like failure, but really, it's a common part of the entrepreneur's journey and can provide incredibly

important lessons. Knowing when to walk away and move on to the next idea is therefore critical.