



Developing an Entrepreneurial Mindset: Think and Act Like an Entrepreneur

The percentage of entrepreneurs from the population in a country is an essential factor for development. In Sri Lankan people, we have only 1.5% representing active entrepreneurs. This percentage is a lower value when comparing with developed countries. The main reason is our young individuals are reluctant to select entrepreneurial careers as a better career option. They do not like to bear risk, and our society still has not accepted entrepreneurship as a better rewarding career. Among those who have decided to be entrepreneurs and starting businesses, the failure rate is very high and very few only succeed. According to research findings, more than 20% of businesses are closing down before celebrating their first anniversary. Therefore, parents, educators, and policymakers are responsible for developing an entrepreneurial mindset among our current and future generations to run their businesses.

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The entrepreneurial mindset is not only for entrepreneurs; it is essential for the corporate sector as well. Individuals who have entrepreneurial traits do not like to start and run their ventures and work in government or corporate sectors as employees call intrapreneurs. They are the people who take those organizations to higher levels quickly,

and they also have an entrepreneurial mindset than others. Mr. Harry Jawyawardena is an excellent example of an intrapreneur who converted government own Sri Lankan insurance corporation into a more competitive organization that successfully competed with private sector insurance companies.

Mindset

According to the lord Buddha, Mind is the first. Our mindset is the underlying mechanism that can expose opportunities and ignite our ambition, engaging our faculties in ways that enable us to flourish and thrive. It affects our behaviour, how we make decisions, and how we process (or fail to process) our positive and negative experiences.

Entrepreneurial mindset

Entrepreneurial mindset refers to a specific state of mind which orientates human conduct towards entrepreneurial activities and outcomes. It combines beliefs, focus, and attitude that collectively constitutes thinking, reacting, and feeling entrepreneurial. Individuals with entrepreneurial mindsets are often drawn to opportunities, innovation and new value creation. This state of mind is influenced by their knowledge, experience, competency level, self-belief, personality, values, attitudes, and beliefs. Developing an entrepreneurial mindset is not only for entrepreneurs. It is important for others as well. Especially corporate leaders should think and act like entrepreneurs. You may be working in a small company, a giant multinational corporation, a not-for-profit, a government agency or any organization in between; to capitalize on the new opportunities and meet the challenges of today's market, you need to think and act like we're running a startup.

Why do CEO and other strategic managers need to develop an entrepreneurial mindset?



Characteristics of The Entrepreneurial Mindset

“When everything seems to be going against you, remember that the aeroplane takes off against the wind, not with it”

1

Self Driven

Do you plan for your future and act with inner motivation by yourself, or do you need anyone to push you to do so? Individuals with an entrepreneurial mindset are self-driven; they have the internal drive to turn their plans into reality. There may be failures, but they stick to their goals, never give up. The giant entrepreneur in the automobile industry in the 19th century, Henry Ford, founder of Ford Motor Company, said, “When everything seems to be going against you, remember that the aeroplane takes off against the wind, not with it.”

Having a vision and focus

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Real entrepreneurs are dreamers, and they imagine their desired future state. They continuously keep their eyes on their goals and put all their energy into achieving them. They simultaneously focus on two areas; the fundamental problem they are trying to solve

through their business and their ultimate goals. They spend their focused time each day putting in the work and understanding the purpose behind their work. While some people are setting up a vision board, others prefer to display it on the screen server of the phone. They wake up each day with a plan, purpose and drive, and on the other side, this practice may lead to business growth consistency.

3

Independent

Individuals who have an entrepreneurial mindset will not blindly follow the majority or look to others to be given instructions. Instead, they take independent decisions based on their objective evaluations. As Apple’s founder, Steve Jobs, said, “Don’t let the noise of others’ opinions drown out your inner voice.”

Responsible

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If you have an entrepreneurial mindset, you cannot fear taking full responsibility for what you are doing and not blaming others for their life situations; they empower themselves by improving it.

5

Continuous learning orientation

Entrepreneurs and people with entrepreneurial mindset are life-long learners. While most people spend their spare time seeking entertainment, they are more concerned with learning and development through formal and informal learning methods. The majority of the successful Sri Lankan entrepreneurs have learned from their own experience and observed role models in the past. But current youth have many formal and informal avenues to gain knowledge, such as following online courses, watching selected youtube

channels, following relevant courses at University or technical colleges etc.

6

Forward-thinking

If you want to become a successful entrepreneur or intrapreneur, you need to think long term. The famous investor Warren Buffett said, “Someone is sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago.” If you want to become a successful entrepreneur, you should have the foresight to see the future. Current trends in socio-economic, political, technological, and legal environments will help you forecast for next year and the next five or ten years.

Collaborative mind

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Teamwork and collaborations are critical factors for business success. If you want to think and act like an entrepreneur, you need to think in terms of “we” instead of “I”. Successful ventures such as Amazon and Apple didn’t build Jeff Bezos and Steve Jobs alone. Most Sri Lankan entrepreneurs fear starting and running a business as a partnership with others. That limits their resources access. The UBER is a very successful business model running with making drivers joining as partners with their vehicles instead of drivers.

8

Decisiveness

It is not easy to assess the effectiveness of a decision immediately after making it. As the environment is highly uncertain, it is challenging to take decisions with all necessary information.

Decisiveness means that you make a choice and then own it, even if you’re not sure. Real entrepreneurs take decisions in heart and mind by considering all subjective and objective factors.

Resilience

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There are bad periods such as the covid 19 pandemic period, natural disaster, terrorist attack. There is a saying that every cloud has a silver lining. The ‘Lassana flora’ is a famous florist company converted into daily essentials delivery service in pandemic period is a good example. Entrepreneurs or intrapreneurs with an entrepreneurial mindset will not set back from such bad periods, and bounce back from failure will help the business stay afloat and inspire a team to follow the leader.

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How to develop an entrepreneurial mindset?

Earlier scholars believe that entrepreneurs born with entrepreneurial qualities and education or training have no role in developing entrepreneurial mindset and characteristics. But with many successful stories, now, people understood that individuals could develop an entrepreneurial mindset with their effort. Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook once said: “Ideas don’t come out fully formed. They only become clearer as you work on them. You have to get started.” Therefore, the entrepreneurial mindset is about seeing an opportunity and taking hold of it.

Set goals and daily progress

Great things can’t be achieved accidentally. You have to set thoughtful goals you care about and work towards them. Minor achievements day in and day out accomplish big goals. If you set small goals, try to achieve them quickly and move to the other goals. But if you have decided on a larger goal, it breaks into small, achievable, realistic steps.

Spending time with other entrepreneurs or Intrapreneurs

The people surround us highly impact our life. If we associate negative people who complain there’s nothing they can do to improve their circumstances, we

eventually find ourselves feeling the same way. But if we surround ourselves with energizing, inspiring relationships, their optimism will rub off on us.

Identify and learn from errors or mistakes

Every human is bound to make bad decisions at one point in time. However, learning from errors will help you make a better decision for your next assignment—many successful entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs who made it have experienced failures at some points. Therefore, be aware that you did not create the business because it is perfect; instead, you have completed it because you want it to grow.

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