How do I find out if owning my own business is for me?

16 KEYS TO SELF-EMPLOYMENT

SUMMARY
Students review CIS Self-Employment, take the CIS Entrepreneurial Career Assessment, and then interview someone who is self-employed. They write a report summarizing specific characteristics necessary for successful self-employment and include a personal statement reflecting whether or not they see self-employment in their future.

OBJECTIVES
Students will:
1. Participate in a guided overview of CIS Self-Employment.
2. Complete the Entrepreneurial Career Assessment Form and analyze their results.
3. Conduct an informational interview with a self-employed individual.
4. Write a report of their interview, summarizing the characteristics for successful self-employment demonstrated by the interviewee.
5. Investigate the possibility of self-employment as a personal goal; include their thoughts and feelings about this in the written report.

PREPARATION
Review the CIS Self-Employment component. Be able to show some of the information students might find there, identify Internet links to highlight in class, etc.

Prepare a computer with a projector in order to demonstrate how to find CIS Self-Employment information or make overheads of Should You Consider Self-Employment? and Using CIS Self-Employment Information.

Photocopy the Entrepreneurial Career Assessment Form Analysis.

MATERIALS
The Entrepreneurial Career Assessment Form — one per student
Optional: Entrepreneurial Career Assessment Form Analysis

COMPUTER USE
CIS: Self-Employment

SUBJECT AREA
Language Arts, Business Technology, Family and Consumer Science

TIME REQUIRED
Four 50-minute class periods or more

GROUP SIZE
Class, small group, individual

STEPS
1. Provide an overview of CIS Self-Employment, allowing 20 to 30 minutes for exploring its Internet and other links. When students have finished exploring the file, tell them to read the introduction to the Entrepreneurial Career Assessment and answer its questions for themselves. Either give them printed copies of the analysis, or have them print it and compare the analysis with their results.

2. Lead a class discussion of the 16 characteristics of entrepreneurs, or “Keys” to self-employment. Encourage students to consider what they know about entrepreneurs who are currently in news stories or who may be family members or acquaintances. Students may wish to discuss personal experiences and strengths, but this discussion would be better held after everyone has completed the interviews and written their reports.

continued
3. Assign the interviews, using standards important to the subject area. Students are to find someone who is self-employed or engaged in some type of entrepreneurial endeavor to interview. (Teacher and staff may decide to help with referrals. Individuals with experience being interviewed often provide greater help in gathering information for the next step.)

4. Students then write a report of the impressions they obtained about self-employment from the interview.
   - They are to consider aspects such as risk-taking, internal “locus of control,” adapting to change, etc., and make specific comments about them.
   - Insights gained in the interview may inspire students to include information about their own hopes, dreams, and goals in their reports.
   - Information obtained in CIS is appropriate for inclusion.
   - Encourage students to record anything they want to remember a year or more from now.
   - Students must include a personal statement reflecting whether or not they see self-employment in their future.

**VARIATIONS**

1. Students create a one-page summary of their demonstrated strengths related to the “16 Keys” in addition to or in place of the written report.

2. Students develop a group or individual entrepreneurial project and document what they do for inclusion in a portfolio. (CIS Job Search can be used to find additional information about organizing a portfolio. Any aspect of a long-term project can be documented, such as examples of numerical or planning skills, when time prevents documentation of a large entrepreneurial project.)

3. Students develop a group project (as in Variation 2 above) and are evaluated based on the quality of the business and marketing plans, and other specified criteria.

4. You may wish to invite community entrepreneurs to review the projects in Variations 2 and 3.

**ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES**

Students will:

1. Take the *Entrepreneurial Career Assessment* and analyze their results.

2. Complete an informational interview with a self-employed individual.

3. Write a report about self-employment that demonstrates an understanding of the “16 Keys” to being successful entrepreneurs.

**STUDENT WORKSHEETS**

*Entrepreneurial Career Assessment Form worksheet*

*Entrepreneurial Career Assessment Form Analysis*

**OVERHEADS**

*Should You Consider Self-Employment?*

*Using CIS Self-Employment Information*
**Portfolio**

If a student’s report includes personal goals or plans, it could be included in a portfolio. Variations 1–3 are suitable for inclusion in a portfolio.

**Instructional Notes**

*Preparation for “16 Keys” Activity*

**Sorting**

**Subject/Program Area:** Career Focus, Career-Related Learning, English, Guidance, Professional/Technical, Technology

**Grade Level:** 10, 11, 12

**CIS Component:** Self-Employment

**Standards**

**Career-Related Learning Standards:** Career Development

**SCANS Standards:** Information, Interpersonal, Thinking Skills, Personal Qualities

**NCDG Standards:** Positive self-concept, Career information skills, Decision-making skills, Career planning skills

**ASCA Standards:** Career Development, Personal and Social Development

**Sorting**

**Bloom’s Taxonomy:** Evaluation
ENTREPRENEURIAL CAREER ASSESSMENT FORM

Read each statement and rate your agreement with it using the following scale:

- Strongly Agree = 5
- Between Strongly Agree and Somewhat Agree = 4
- Somewhat Agree = 3
- Between Somewhat Agree and Strongly Disagree = 2
- Strongly Disagree = 1

______  1. I am willing to work 50 hours or more per week regularly.
______  2. My family will support my going into business.
______  3. I am willing to accept both financial and career risks when necessary.
______  4. I don’t need all the fringe benefits provided conventional employment.
______  5. I would like to take full responsibility for the successes and failures of my business.
______  6. I would experience more financial success operating my own business.
______  7. I feel a great deal of pride when I complete a project successfully.
______  8. I have a high energy level that can be maintained over a long time.
______  9. I enjoy controlling my own work assignments and making all decisions that affect my work.
______ 10. I believe that I am primarily responsible for my own successes and failures.
______ 11. I have a strong desire to achieve positive results even when it requires a great deal of additional effort.
______ 12. I have a good understanding of how to manage a business.
______ 13. I can function in ambiguous situations.
______ 14. One or both of my parents were entrepreneurs.
______ 15. I believe that my abilities and skills are greater than those of most of my coworkers.
______ 16. People trust me and consider me honest and reliable.
______ 17. I always try to complete every project I start, regardless of obstacles and difficulties.
______ 18. I am willing to do something even when other people laugh or belittle me for doing it.
______ 19. I can make decisions quickly.
______ 20. I have a good network of friends, professional and business acquaintances.

Total: __________

Total the numbers you placed in front of the statements and enter the total. Then refer to the following chart to determine a general assessment of your suitability for self-employment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>80 - 100</td>
<td>You have outstanding ability to be an entrepreneur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 - 79</td>
<td>You have satisfactory ability to be an entrepreneur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 - 59</td>
<td>Self-employment may not be an appropriate career for you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 - 39</td>
<td>Probably you should avoid an entrepreneur career.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Entrepreneurial Career Assessment Form is reprinted from “Mind Your Own Business” by LaVerne Ludden, Ed.D., and Bonnie Maitlen, Ed.D., with permission of the authors. Copyright 1994 by JIST, Indianapolis, Indiana.
The following list describes some common characteristics of an entrepreneur. The number(s) after each characteristic indicates the related statement(s) in the assessment form. This list interprets the form qualitatively. Note that arriving at a conclusive portrait of a typical entrepreneur is very difficult. Therefore, you may score low on the assessment and still succeed as an entrepreneur.

“The 16 Keys”

1. **Works Hard (Statements 1 and 8)**
   Self-employment requires a great deal of time and effort. The entrepreneur must perform a wide variety of time-consuming tasks. Seventy-seven percent of all entrepreneurs report working 50 or more hours per week, and 54% say that they work more than 60 hours per week. Such a time commitment requires that you have a high energy level.

2. **Has Family Support (Statement 2)**
   A successful entrepreneur needs family support. If you are married, your spouse must believe in your business because it will require that both of you sacrifice time and money. The stress may create disruptions in family relationships. If you have children, they will need encouragement in understanding your need to spend so much time away from the family. The more positive support you receive from your family, the more you can concentrate on making the business a success.

3. **Takes Risks (Statement 3)**
   Entrepreneurs are risk takers. They risk their careers, time, and money in order to make a success of their businesses. A review of the research on this subject finds that most entrepreneurs perceive risks differently than other people. What others see as a risk, the entrepreneur sees as a controllable situation. Entrepreneurs will try to organize a risky situation by identifying resources, ordering them for a purpose, and scheduling their use appropriately. To be successful in self-employment, you should feel comfortable taking reasonable risks.

4. **Sacrifices Employment Benefits (Statement 4)**
   One of the major realities of self-employment is that you won’t receive a regular paycheck. You pay for your own fringe benefits. A nice office, secretarial assistance, equipment, and other features of employment you have grown to expect are no longer available unless you provide these for yourself.

5. **Is Independent (Statements 5 and 9)**
   Entrepreneurs like being independent and in control of situations. Many people who become self-employed consider the opportunity to be their own boss as one of the major benefits of self-employment. Although being independent may not be a major concern for you, it is certainly an aspect of self-employment that you need to feel comfortable with. If you cannot afford to hire other employees when you begin your business, you may at first be lonely as a self-employed person.

6. **Wants Financial Success (Statement 6)**
   A primary reason that most entrepreneurs have for going into business is to achieve financial success. The desire for financial success provides motivational drive for the self-employed person. If you want to be an entrepreneur, you need to establish a reasonable financial goal that you want to achieve through self-employment. This goal will help you measure how well you are doing in fulfilling your personal needs through an entrepreneurial career.
7. **Is Energetic (Statements 1 and 8)**
Self-employment requires long work hours. You will frequently be unable to control the number of hours required to fulfill all the necessary tasks. The entrepreneur must have a high energy level to respond to the job’s demands. In fact, an entrepreneur will often be energized by the work that is demanded and finds an energy loss when “relaxing.” You will need stamina that allows you to work 12- to 16-hour days, 6- to 7-day weeks, and 52-week years.

8. **Has an Internal “Locus of Control” (Statement 10)**
Successful entrepreneurs have an internal locus of control, or inner sense of responsibility for the outcome of a venture. Research evidence shows that an internal locus of control increases creativity and activity. To be an entrepreneur, you should have a strong sense of being a “victor” who is responsible for your actions. If, however, you frequently consider yourself a “victim” and blame other people, bad luck, or difficult circumstances for your failures, entrepreneurship might not be the right career move for you.

9. **Has a Need to Achieve (Statements 7 and 11)**
Entrepreneurs have a strong need for achievement. They strive to excel and accomplish objectives that are quite high. If you want to become an entrepreneur, you should be willing to set high goals for yourself and enjoy striving to achieve these goals.

10. **Has Business Experience (Statement 12)**
An entrepreneur should have extensive business experience to be successful. General management experience is beneficial because an entrepreneur should know something about all types of management. Formal training and education in management also are helpful.

11. **Has a Self-Employed Parent as a Role Model (Statement 14)**
Research has shown that entrepreneurs are more likely to have a parent—especially a father—who is self-employed. A parent’s inspiration and knowledge about operating a business can contribute to an entrepreneur’s success. If you have a parent who is self-employed, consider this a plus for your own success as an entrepreneur.

12. **Has Self-Confidence (Statements 10, 15, and 18)**
An important characteristic of entrepreneurs is self-confidence. This factor is particularly important when you face major challenges and difficulties with your business. You need to believe in yourself. Your belief will help you overcome the problems that inevitably affect all self-employed persons at some point in their careers.

13. **Has Integrity (Statement 16)**
People often cite honesty and integrity as characteristics of entrepreneurs. Customers do not want to deal with business owners who are dishonest and unethical. You should feel positive about your ethical treatment of people and be committed to conducting your business with the utmost integrity.

14. **Has Determination (Statement 17)**
One of the most important characteristics of entrepreneurs is determination. This trait is closely related to self-confidence. The more you believe in yourself, the more likely you are to continue to struggle for success when faced with tremendous obstacles. You need determination in order to overcome the problems that beset every new venture.

---

7. **Is Energetic (Statements 1 and 8)**
Self-employment requires long work hours. You will frequently be unable to control the number of hours required to fulfill all the necessary tasks. The entrepreneur must have a high energy level to respond to the job’s demands. In fact, an entrepreneur will often be energized by the work that is demanded and finds an energy loss when “relaxing.” You will need stamina that allows you to work 12- to 16-hour days, 6- to 7-day weeks, and 52-week years.

8. **Has an Internal “Locus of Control” (Statement 10)**
Successful entrepreneurs have an internal locus of control, or inner sense of responsibility for the outcome of a venture. Research evidence shows that an internal locus of control increases creativity and activity. To be an entrepreneur, you should have a strong sense of being a “victor” who is responsible for your actions. If, however, you frequently consider yourself a “victim” and blame other people, bad luck, or difficult circumstances for your failures, entrepreneurship might not be the right career move for you.

9. **Has a Need to Achieve (Statements 7 and 11)**
Entrepreneurs have a strong need for achievement. They strive to excel and accomplish objectives that are quite high. If you want to become an entrepreneur, you should be willing to set high goals for yourself and enjoy striving to achieve these goals.

10. **Has Business Experience (Statement 12)**
An entrepreneur should have extensive business experience to be successful. General management experience is beneficial because an entrepreneur should know something about all types of management. Formal training and education in management also are helpful.

11. **Has a Self-Employed Parent as a Role Model (Statement 14)**
Research has shown that entrepreneurs are more likely to have a parent—especially a father—who is self-employed. A parent’s inspiration and knowledge about operating a business can contribute to an entrepreneur’s success. If you have a parent who is self-employed, consider this a plus for your own success as an entrepreneur.

12. **Has Self-Confidence (Statements 10, 15, and 18)**
An important characteristic of entrepreneurs is self-confidence. This factor is particularly important when you face major challenges and difficulties with your business. You need to believe in yourself. Your belief will help you overcome the problems that inevitably affect all self-employed persons at some point in their careers.

13. **Has Integrity (Statement 16)**
People often cite honesty and integrity as characteristics of entrepreneurs. Customers do not want to deal with business owners who are dishonest and unethical. You should feel positive about your ethical treatment of people and be committed to conducting your business with the utmost integrity.

14. **Has Determination (Statement 17)**
One of the most important characteristics of entrepreneurs is determination. This trait is closely related to self-confidence. The more you believe in yourself, the more likely you are to continue to struggle for success when faced with tremendous obstacles. You need determination in order to overcome the problems that beset every new venture.
15. Adapts to Change (Statements 13 and 19)

A new business changes rapidly, so an entrepreneur must be able to adapt to change. Two primary skills are required for adaptation to change: the capacity to solve problems, and the ability to make quick decisions. Another skill is the ability to learn from your experiences and to seek formal learning that will help solve your problems. To be a successful entrepreneur, you will need all of these capabilities.

16. Has a Good Network of Professionals (Statement 20)

An entrepreneur has a good network of professionals. This network provides access to those who can be consulted for advice, information, and referrals. You should have an extensive network of professionals to whom you can turn for assistance.

The Entrepreneurial Career Assessment Form is reprinted from “Mind Your Own Business” by LaVerne Ludden, Ed.D., and Bonnie Maitlen, Ed.D., with permission of the authors. Copyright 1994 by JIST, Indianapolis, Indiana.
SHOULD YOU CONSIDER SELF-EMPLOYMENT?

- Self-employment can be part of a realistic career goal.

- Over 15 percent of the work force in the U.S. are self-employed or run their own businesses.

- The number of self-employed people increases every year.
USING CIS SELF-EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

- Begin by asking whether self-employment is right for you. Use the Entrepreneurial Career Assessment Form to look at your some personal characteristics.

- There are advantages and disadvantages to consider. Use Is Self-Employment Right for You? for a realistic discussion of the rewards and costs of working for yourself.

- Some occupations have more self-employment. Use Self-Employment Opportunities for unique characteristics of different fields and a list of occupations with a high level of self-employment.

- Self-employment requires some unique skills and personal attributes. Use Deciding to Go into Business for Yourself to review important aspects of business ownership.