

10 Timeless Traits of Top Entrepreneurs

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Startup entrepreneurs need a wide range of skills and traits to succeed. Some are industry-specific or tech-related and thus subject to frequent changes and updates. Others are more timeless – the kinds of skills that foster success no matter *what* type of business or industry you are in, or your stage of development.

Here are 10 timeless traits that should be in any entrepreneur’s arsenal:

1) **A knack for knowing your industry**

The most successful startup entrepreneurs take the time to study and become experts in their industry or profession. They attend industry events, read blogs and trade magazines, and their expertise gives them credibility and a huge leg up. This knowledge helps them “connect the dots” and know what’s really important, and what’s not, says Vickie Milazzo, owner of an education company on *Inc.* magazine’s list of the 5000 fastest growing small companies in America.

2) **Ability to adapt ideas from others**

As Milazzo notes, being creative is essential, but it’s not about reinventing the wheel. Successful business owners know how to adapt proven concepts and approaches from other industries and companies and make them their own.

3) **Problem solver**

Entrepreneurs can’t afford to wait around for others to solve their problems. They have to figure out the solutions on their own. And that makes them better business owners for when the next problem arises.

4) **Willingness to think big**

We all like to check the easy things off our “to-do” list and tend to put off the tough ones. But a willingness to dive into the big issues and go for the larger accomplishments is often a success separator. “More importantly,” says Milazzo, when you start thinking big “your creativity and productivity catch fire and the momentum keeps you pumped.”

5) **Real networking prowess**

Connecting to a few people on Facebook or LinkedIn is not networking. The most successful startup entrepreneurs know that *real* networking only happens face-to-face, and most often with people who are *not* their peers. To network successfully you have to connect with people who have more experience than you do.

6) **Penchant for partnering**

Successful entrepreneurs also have a knack for sniffing out others who have skills and insights that can be leveraged in new or unexpected ways. Many people are treasure troves of untapped potential just waiting for the right person to recognize what they have to offer.

7) **Confident negotiator**

Negotiating skills are difficult to develop, and successful entrepreneurs tend to approach negotiating with confidence. Having confidence gives them an edge in bargaining power as the expectation from both sides is that they will deliver at a high level.

8) **Knowing when to get help**

Even though startup entrepreneurs are creative thinkers and problem solvers, the best ones also know how to ask questions and seek help when they need it. Remember that there’s always someone out there who has faced the same challenge successfully.

9) **Aggressive goal setting**

Great entrepreneurs continuously set goals and work toward them. When one goal is reached, they set another and repeat the process. Having clear goals – and also a specific strategy to reach them – helps everyone in a business stay focused and motivated.

10) **Adept at building personal credibility**

Top entrepreneurs also recognize the importance of continuously building personal credibility. They under-promise but over-deliver, meet deadlines no matter what and always do what they say they’ll do. They know their business will only be as good as they are, and if they have a reputation as someone who can be counted on, their business reputation will mirror that. When customers know they can count on your product or service to deliver what it promises, they won’t hesitate to recommend you to others.



About the Author: Daniel Kehrer, Founder and Chief Content Officer of BizBest Media, is a senior-level leader in digital media, content development and online marketing with special expertise in startups, SMB, social media and generating traffic, engagement and leads. He holds an MBA from UCLA/Anderson and is a passionate entrepreneur (started 4 businesses), syndicated columnist, blogger, thought leader and author of 7 business and financial books.