

Lesson Plan 8

Topic: The idea for your own business.

Brief description of activities:

Contemporary reality confronts people entering the world of business with numerous challenges, which necessitate proactive attitude of people responsible for their future. That's why many young people are thinking about running a business and decide to independently create a place of work for themselves. The activities presented here are supposed to encourage students to take entrepreneurial approach to the surrounding reality and build from scratch their own business. At the same time these activities allow them to learn the methods and techniques of generating and presenting business ideas and their evaluation in terms of the reality of the project, the chances of success, competitiveness and innovativeness of the offer. All these elements are essential for success in business.

Objectives: students:

- recognize the importance of the idea of conducting business
- define the purpose of economic activity
- consider the reality of doing business
- can see a chance for work and professional development by running their own business

Methods and techniques:

- working with worksheets
- mind map
- elevator pitch
- group work

Materials and Tools:

- worksheets (Appendix 7.1, Appendix 7.3)
- any object, e.g. a mug, a music CD, a piece of jewellery, T-shirt, toothpaste etc.
- blank sheets of paper
- criteria for assessing the business idea (Appendix 7.2)

Preparation for classes:

- getting the classroom ready
- making copies of Appendices 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4

Class duration: 2 hours

Class activities in brief:

1. After welcoming the students ask what is needed to start a business (set up their own company). Together with the students write down all the suggestions on the board or a large sheet of paper. Sample answers: money, idea, knowledge of the law, management skills, information on registering a company, employees, etc. Try to determine which of these elements should be the starting point for planning business. If the students have any doubts, explain to them that it is not possible to start a business without the idea, and in turn a good idea makes it possible to find a source of financing.
2. Explain that the next part of the workshop will be devoted to the search for ideas for business. Divide the students into small teams and give a "Business Idea" worksheet to each team. (Appendix 7.1). Supervise their work, and afterwards ask the representatives of the various groups to present their solutions to the group. As the summary of the activity, recommend preparing a mind map that will illustrate the opportunities associated with searching for ideas on how to run a business.

3. Explain that the next task is to generate ideas of how to start a business. It may be some service (according to Wikipedia: Service - action to be taken in order to meet specific customer needs and implemented with the customer, often for commercial purposes) or production (according to Wikipedia: production - any human activity whose aim is to produce certain tangible, profitable goods satisfying social needs) and must be connected directly or indirectly to the subject, which will be demonstrated in a moment. The task will be carried out in groups, on the basis of brainstorming, which will allow students to openly express their own ideas. The first stage of brainstorming is to generate as many solutions as possible. All of them should be carefully noted. Allow 10 minutes for this part of the activity. The second step is to analyse the collected suggestions. Students should group, sort and prioritize ideas, and then choose the best one according to the criteria described in Appendix 7.2. They have 15 minutes to find the best business idea. When the explanation part is over, demonstrate a prepared object and set it in a place where it will be visible to all the participants. Give a signal to start brainstorming.
4. After 10 minutes, distribute among students „Criteria for a business idea evaluation“ (Annex 7.2) and ask them to analyse their ideas in accordance with the provided criteria.
5. Instruct students that the next task is to present business ideas using elevator pitch techniques. Explain to the students that elevator pitch is a short, very specific description of the idea, implemented within approx. 30 seconds. Originally the idea was to sell your business idea to chairpersons or major investors during the ride to the top floor in an elevator. Currently, potential investors are busy people who value their time, so a brief statement describing your brainchild, project or idea often allows you to find financing or a business partner. In a short speech the following issues should be addressed:
 - a. the idea of the project: the information should be interesting, presented in a catchy way,
 - b. description of product / service: indicate its most important features and its relationship with what customers are currently looking for,
 - c. target market and its size: prove that the business idea is feasible and determine to what group of customers it is addressed to,
 - d. competition: identify main competitors
 - e. advantage over the competition: Point out the main differences between what the market has to offer and the presented idea. It may be price, patented technology, renowned experts, unique industry or academic contacts, as well as other features making your idea different from what the competition can offer.
6. Ask students to prepare elevator pitch, giving them sheets of paper and a worksheet with a set of problems (Appendix 7.3).
7. When the task is completed, explain that the presentations delivered by representatives of each team will take a form of a competition. The presentations will be judged in the following way: Each team will receive pie slices (Appendix 7.4), and each slice represents the 10% of the capital needed for the implementation of a business idea. When all the speeches have been delivered, after a short deliberation, members of the team decide which idea they liked best by handing the opponents the allotted number of slices. The rule is that they do not evaluate the member of their own team, and that the slices may be distributed in any way, provided that all of them are used.
8. Announce the winners and summarize the workshop by saying that a good business idea has a good chance of getting external financing.

Business Ideas

Read the following excerpts of published articles and determine what was the inspiration for entrepreneurs to operate, e.g.: the use of waste, the media, talking to people, imitating products, new technologies, combining creative ideas, hobbies.

His real name was Loeb Strauss and was the son of a German Jewish vendor. At eighteen, he emigrated to New York and began working in a trading company Strauss Brother & Co., founded by his older brothers. When the gold rush began he moved to San Francisco, planning to make a fortune on trade with those who sought the precious ore. He opened a clothing company under his own name. He imported clothes, blankets and underwear, and sold them to small shops sprouting like mushrooms all over the west coast. It is where the miners and prospectors looking for gold were buying their supplies and complained about their clothing chafing with every move. Strauss then drew his attention to the material, which no one was interested in - namely sail canvas. Of this material he sewed a few pairs of pants and sold them to the miners, who quickly appreciated their strength.

idea: inspiration:

Jakub Bochenek began his adventure with soap bubbles at the Krakow market. The student of Mining and Steel Industry Academy was making some money in the intervals between classes by releasing bubbles to the delight of the locals and tourists. It was a way to improve his household budget, and to have some fun. The growing interest in his past time activity made him turn it into a serious business. The young man decided to manufacture and sell a special liquid soap for making bubbles, but to do so it was necessary to develop a good recipe. It took him three years and many hours spent in the lab until he was able to choose the proper composition of the fluid. Bubbles that arise from it are durable, resistant to wind and can reach enormous sizes. The company's customers are people looking for interesting gifts, intrigued passers-by, and companies looking for an unusual idea for an advertisement or event.

idea: inspiration:

The idea for the business came unexpectedly during a trip abroad with the basketball team that Kazimierz Wierzbicki was cheering. He was lodged in an apartment where the walls were covered with framed puzzles, and the most striking ones were those based on the images of Rubens and van Gogh. Today, Kazimierz Wierzbicki controls about 70 percent of the Polish market and 15-20 percent of board games.

idea: inspiration:

In Poland there is a fashion for cooking, fuelled by TV shows with chefs or amateur cooks. It is hard to resist - now everyone wants to cook. This trend fits well PysznaPaczka.pl (DeliciousParcel.pl) – a subscription service, sends you a monthly pack containing food products, kitchen gadgets, and provisions for the preparation of these dishes related to the particular theme: Christmas, Easter, Italian cuisine, barbecue / picnic, herbs and spices, etc. the cost of every package is constant - PLN49.90 plus delivery costs and the value of each package is a minimum of PLN70.00.

idea: inspiration:

Hip hop has had its followers for a long time, so shops offering clothes and other accessories specific to this subculture are prosperous. However, in order to run the business effectively, you need to track trends: go out to parties, know the right people, know what to wear. Not everyone has such possibilities, so you should take advantage of ready-made solutions in the form of franchising, for example, the city clothes - Cropp Town, developed by LPP. Just prepare suitable premises, in accordance with the terms of the franchise, and the LPP will train employees, select the range of goods and supply the shop.

idea: inspiration:

In the past, she was always interested in the automotive industry, maybe a little out of necessity, because her environment was dominated by boys, constantly talking about cars. Later she used her passion to work as a journalist – she hosted a weekly 15-minute programme in the local television station dedicated to the automotive industry. It turned out that she could not find any information about cars that are directed specifically at women and responsive to their needs. Thus there was born the idea for an online portal on automotive addressed to representatives of the fair sex.

idea: inspiration:

GetResponse is a company that supports emailing newsletters and campaigns with more than 300,000 customers worldwide. It was created out of laziness, because the owner found it tedious to email the offers manually. That gave him the idea to create an automatic e-mail marketing platform.

idea: inspiration:

To make money you do not always have to sell your product - sometimes it is enough to give away something for free, and receive revenue from advertising. Such a business model is employed by the company that uses Free Paper Cups, supplying paper cups for offices. The disposable cups advertise companies who offer various trainings or produce office equipment and various accessories useful at work. Due to the fact that they are free every office is happy to use them, and thus the advertising message has a chance to get to people making strategic decisions – it means that it hits precisely the target group.

idea:

inspiration:

One of the Colombian tailors had the idea that it is possible to produce light bulletproof clothes with Kevlar fibre woven with cotton. In his plant he is able to sew almost any type of bulletproof version clothes to measure. He owes his business idea to the stay at university, when he had the opportunity to observe the bodyguards of one of his colleagues - the daughter of a well-known senator. None of them ever wore a bulletproof vest, because they were made of lead plates and were simply too heavy and too hard

idea:

inspiration:

Appendix 7.2

Criteria for a business idea evaluation

1. Is the product / service compatible with the requirements of the law?
2. Is the product / service safe for a potential user?
3. Is the product / service safe for the environment?
 - a. does it pollute the environment
 - b. is it recyclable
4. Will the product / service bring benefits to society?
5. Are the costs incurred in connection with the manufacturing of the product / service low?
6. Will the product / service find a large number of recipients?
7. Is the product / service attractive to consumers?
8. Does the product / service meet the existing needs?
9. Does the use of the product / service depend on other products?
10. Are there any other competitive products / services on the market?
11. Are there any features distinguishing the product / service from others available on the market?
12. Is the idea innovative or does it contain innovative elements for the traditional business?

Elevator Pitch

Within 15 minutes, prepare a 30-60 second speech presenting your business idea. The statement should contain 150-200 words, be clear and clearly built, emotionally marked and attractive to the audience through the use of unconventional wording and the so-called "hooks" that will attract attention of the recipients.

During the presentation the following issues should be addressed:

1. the idea of the project: the information should be interesting, given in a catchy way
2. description of product / service: Indication of most important characteristics and their relationship with what customers are currently looking for
3. target market and its size: to prove that the business idea is feasible and to determine to what type of customers it is addressed.
4. competition: to identify the main competitors
5. advantage over the competition: to show the main differences between a market offer and presented proposal. This may be price, patented technology, renowned experts, unique industry or academic contacts as well as other features making your idea different from what the competition can offer.

Appendix 7.3

