

READING TEXT 5

Setting up in business

(A) It takes a considerable commitment to set up and run a small business. Owners must be able to do all the tasks necessary to run the business or have sufficient funds to buy in appropriate external help, and even then they must be able to check the quality of the service they are receiving.

(B) Anyone planning to start a business must be realistic about what can be achieved, and in what time frame. Entrepreneurs often work extremely long hours, not just during 'trading' hours, but also after hours doing all the associated paperwork. If entrepreneurs overwork, they will find it difficult to make good decisions and will lack the energy to analyse and evaluate marketing and finance data. If an entrepreneur becomes over tired and over anxious, they can undermine their businesses by giving the impression that things are bad and the business is just about to close down.

(C) Many organizations provide support networks for entrepreneurs running small businesses. These networks provide training and access to experienced business mentors for little or no charge. The Business Link network, funded by Department of Trade and Industry, is one source of this kind of support. If entrepreneurs are under 30 years of age, the Prince's Trust also provides training and mentoring for business start-ups. There are various other privately run business networking groups which can be both fun and mutually supportive.

(D) Owners need to consider four key issues: training, leadership and team development, delegation and management systems.

(E) Investment in training is necessary to ensure that staff have the skills to do their jobs efficiently and they can meet the requirements of current legislation such as health and safety. Staff may also need training to develop skills to meet internationally recognized quality standards for products and service delivery. Research shows that small and medium-sized firms often find it very difficult to organize effective training.

(F) Ideally, workplace teams should be happy, creative working groups of individuals who support each other, work to each other's strengths and work towards the business's goals. This might require the owners to undertake self-assessment and target-setting reviews to ensure that the business is staying focused on its objectives. Team development can be fostered by organizing events such as team lunches and days out walking together.

(G) Owners should delegate and employ appropriate people to do the tasks that they cannot do or do not have time to do. By freeing themselves from some of the easier day-to-day tasks of the business, owners can spend their time monitoring the overall business and thinking about where the business should be going. Certainly if the owners are passionate

about the business, they need time to step back and focus on the long-term goals and vision of the organization. They also need time to network, to build up sales leads and to explore further investment opportunities for the business.

(H) In time, owners need to be able to let go of control of some aspects of the business and to develop more formal management systems. This is probably the most difficult task for any entrepreneur. Many entrepreneurs find it very difficult to trust paid employees to run their businesses.

(I) At this stage in their development, without outside help and guidance, many businesses simply reach their 'natural' capacity and they do not develop or grow any further. Entrepreneurs need to decide whether they want to keep their business small - so that they retain control of all decisions - or whether they want to go on growing their business and therefore accept that this will necessarily change their role in the business.

Task 1

The passage below has nine paragraphs A-I. Which paragraphs mention the following information? You may use any letter more than once.

1. physical and mental problems that a business owner can face.....
2. leadership and team improvement ideas.....
3. the advantage of not expanding in business.....
4. individuals and larger groups that are available to help people who are new to business
5. the reasons why the more basic jobs in a small company should not be not be carried out by employers.....
6. external reasons why companies should try to keep their employees' knowledge and expertise up-to-date.....

Answer Key:

1.B 2.F 3.I 4.C 5.G 6.E