

## Two-minute read # 5 - Qualities of Successful Entrepreneurs

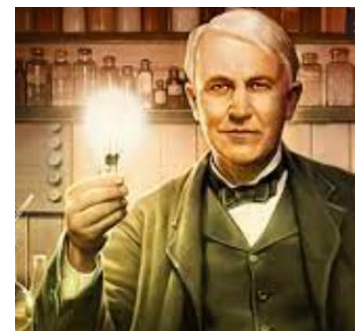
Word of the day: Accelerator - accelerators organize programs aiming to accelerate the progress of early-stage companies or ideas by providing some seed capital (usually in the range of \$5,000 to 10,000), small space with cohorts (cohorts means people or enterprises engaged in building products in similar technology domain or facing similar challenges and opportunities), focused and intense mentoring, connecting with suppliers and buyers, and helping to network with investors. Usually, each program runs for 2 to 3 months and ends with a demo day when startups under the program pitch before investors.

### Entrepreneurial Qualities

Most of us wonder, do I have the elements to start a new venture and manage it? The correct answer to that is – **unless you start, you will never know** because empirical evidence has **refuted** all **conventional wisdom** about entrepreneurial qualities. Some people think successful entrepreneurs are **extroverts** and enjoy a **wealthy** family background. Data show otherwise. Almost 90% of successful entrepreneurs have no business background and are **introverts**—[One should not misconstrue from this data that **extroverts** do not become successful entrepreneurs]. One must have the **nerve** to start, the readiness to **resolve sudden unexpected challenges**, the **tenacity** to **persevere**, **adjust to change**, and **manage change** as it may **unfold**. For the record, common traits among successful entrepreneurs are **leadership qualities** and **entrepreneurial knowledge & experience**. What are the **leadership qualities**?



- People skill: the capability to manage people
- Empathy towards all stakeholders, particularly for customers and employees
- Financial savvy & the ability to manage money
- Prior entrepreneurial exposure
- Knowledge seeker (remember Dhirubhai Ambani!)
- Strong peer network (with people that matter. They play a catalytic role in removing obstacles from your way)
- Remain surrounded by great people (You Become the Company You Keep - Choose Wisely! You're the average of the 5 people you spend the most time with. Show me your friends, and I'll show you your future.)
- Tenacious
- Tolerant to ambiguity (Don't expect things to pan out the way you have planned. Remain prepared for disruptions!)
- A positive view of constructive criticism
- Readiness and capability to delegate to others
- Confident (They know what they are up to. They don't try to be someone else.)
- Disciplined and self-starters
- They are persons of substance (must not only 'talk the talk, but also walk the walk')



- They are open to new ideas
- Readiness to accept failure as an option and learn from every failure, acknowledge mistakes and learn from them
- They are good listeners
- Ability to sell (the best event in the life of a new venture is when a customer makes payment in exchange for the product or service it sells. If you can sell at a profitable price, you can write your success story)
- Frugal in their approach
- They are reasonably passionate and know when to pivot, and are not driven by emotion
- Self-motivated (they do not wait for others to show the way)
- They are systems thinkers (They understand the implications of all their actions over a broad spectrum of subsystems and mega systems.)
- An eye for opportunities in adversities
- Their honesty and integrity are unquestionable (They do not try to achieve things the wrong way even if that provides a shortcut).
- They are rational and free of emotional baggage.
- They communicate effectively and can motivate all towards a common goal.
- They inspire others while taking responsibility and giving credit for good performance.
- They set their mission, work passionately, and are committed to achieving the goals.
- They take the challenge head-on and do not give excuses.
- Persuasion skill - A leader frequently needs to resolve conflicts and, therefore, must have the ability to pursue others to see the rational arguments, inspire confidence, encourage, motivate, or diplomatically persuade people to come around to their point of view.



The list looks intimidatingly large (in fact, it is anything but exhaustive). But if you look deeper, they would appear natural traits of most of us. The best part is that one can inculcate many of these qualities, and one does not have to possess all or most of them to be successful—**You are not expected to memorize the above list**.

## Entrepreneurial Story

### Udaan



Udaan values itself at \$7.5 bn to become the 4th highest-valued Indian startup

**Founders:** i. Amod Malviya alumnus IIT (EE) Kharagpur.  
ii. Vaibhav Gupta & iii. Sujeet Kumar both IIT Delhi, all three are ex-Flipkart.

Udaan is a platform for a Business to Business (B2B) Model where traders and wholesalers connect to each other and to directly connect to manufacturers and can sell their products and services on the online platform or via mobile application. Its main operation is in 3 verticals: food (staples, fruits, and vegetables), non-food (electronics and fashion), and pharmaceuticals.

Udaan, began as a logistic company for electronics goods, but pivoted to be a B2B company. The startup has been started by three ex-Flipkart employees almost at the same time when Just Buy Live was began. Just Buy Live was shut down in 2018 after raising \$100 M

Udaan through its B2B e-commerce platform helps businesses to discover possible customers, suppliers, and different categories of products aiming to facilitate the best deals possible to buyers and sellers. The company supports in logistics and also facilitates secure payments.

Udaan also offers services such as accounting, order processing, and payment management for the merchants registered on its platform. It provides the working capital funds to the retailers at reasonable rates of interest. Therefore, while offering the platform, Udaan also arrange necessary funds for the wholesalers and retailers.

### **The Causes Attributed to Success of Udaan**

- It offers compelling value proposition to retailers and wholesalers.
- They disrupted the supply chain, eliminated some of the middlemen to transfer value to retailers, connected the retailers with manufacturers.
- Strong founding team. Their stint at Flipkart helped in hiring a team of engineers with right kind of skills.
- They began with logistics business that experience and infrastructure helped in furthering the B2B business.
- They tend to provide a complete package to their registered users.
- Udaan consciously decided not to have the CEO post and has somewhat a flat structure.

References:

- The Harvard Business Review: Entrepreneur's Handbook: Everything You Need to Launch and Grow Your New Business - Harvard Business Review (2018)
- Entrepreneurship – new Venture Creation by David H. Holt, Pearson (2016)
- Entrepreneurship Simplified by Ashok Soota, Penguin Portfolio (2016)