



Entrepreneur Scan

Professional services

Test Sample

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Foreword

Become an entrepreneur! At the moment much is said and written on becoming an entrepreneur, and over the last few years government has also been heavily involved in stimulating entrepreneurship. But it's not as simple as that. Being an entrepreneur means running a business and performing activities at your own risk, for you are the only one responsible for part or all of your own - and possibly other's - income.

I can easily imagine that an entrepreneur needs to receive personal feedback, to stand in front of an objective mirror, as it were, and gain insight into the competencies vital to being a successful businessperson. In my opinion, entrepreneurs look for affirmation in those areas where they are very strong or weak and an explanation of what the consequences are for their own company.

In addition, I can certainly imagine that someone who is seriously considering starting their own business wants to prepare him or herself properly. It seems to me that this is a very wise move. In my opinion that type of preparation should consist of at least two components: creating a business plan and compiling an entrepreneurial profile. Despite the surplus of literature about creating a business plan and courses on becoming entrepreneur, there are a few methods that provide insight into the competencies of the entrepreneur. What's more, surveys of financiers point out that venture capital and loans are provided on the basis of both an entrepreneurial plan and the individual applicant's personal abilities and experience.

Now that you have taken the test, you have taken an important step in your own development.

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What can you expect from the E-Scan?

The E-Scan provides insight into your strengths and weaknesses as an entrepreneur. The success of a venture is determined by many factors, but as an entrepreneur you yourself are the most important factor. It is you who is the driving force behind your company. Needless to say, your product plays an important role, but ultimately it's your personality and behaviour that will turn your company into a success.

It is therefore vital that you know yourself. This means taking a critical look at yourself and plotting - or learning to plot - a strategy that will reinforce your own performance. Because as an entrepreneur you will be repeatedly confronted with situations that will demand a certain "character" of you, i.e. situations for which you are not always ideally suited.

Scientific research - the basis for the E-Scan

The E-Scan is based on scientific research into the personal characteristics of successful entrepreneurs in small businesses - characteristics that largely separate successful entrepreneurs from unsuccessful ones. The industry's standard profile, against which your entrepreneurial profile is compared, has been based on research under consultants who on daily basis assess entrepreneurs with a proven track record and those who are just starting out.

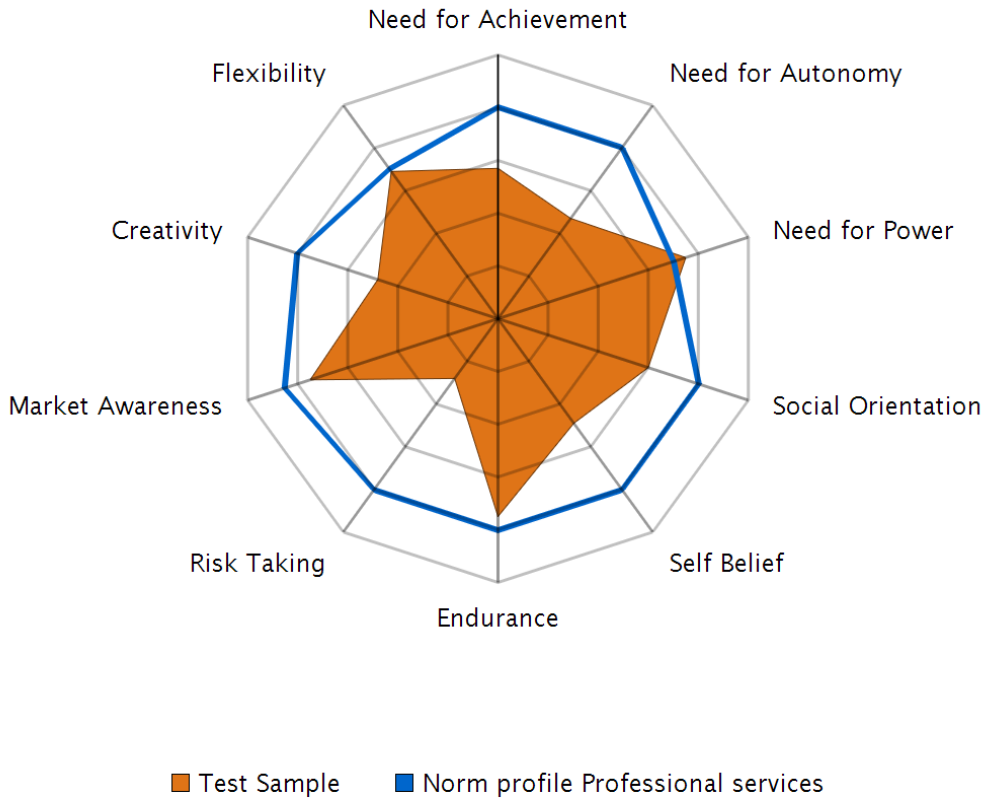
The test distinguishes between three factors - characteristics, qualities and thinking styles - and there is an important difference to be made between them. Characteristics and thinking styles are rather fixed and more difficult to change over time, whereas qualities are easier to learn or unlearn. The test also indicates which competencies are vital in which phase of the business cycle.

The structure of the personal report

The personal report starts with a graphic overview of your entrepreneurial profile. Next, the scores of your specific characteristics, qualities and thinking styles are discussed, and tips and recommendations are provided. The personal characteristics vital in the various phases each venture passes through are then reviewed. Finally, the report concludes with the type of entrepreneur you are and the strategy best suited to you.

Your entrepreneurial profile

The orange field in the spider's web shaped diagram represents your scores and reflects your entrepreneurial profile. The thin connecting line shows the required industry profile and serves as a guideline. The gap between your profile and the industry profile provides insight into your strengths and weaknesses as an entrepreneur. Your entrepreneurial profile is reflected in the diagram below.

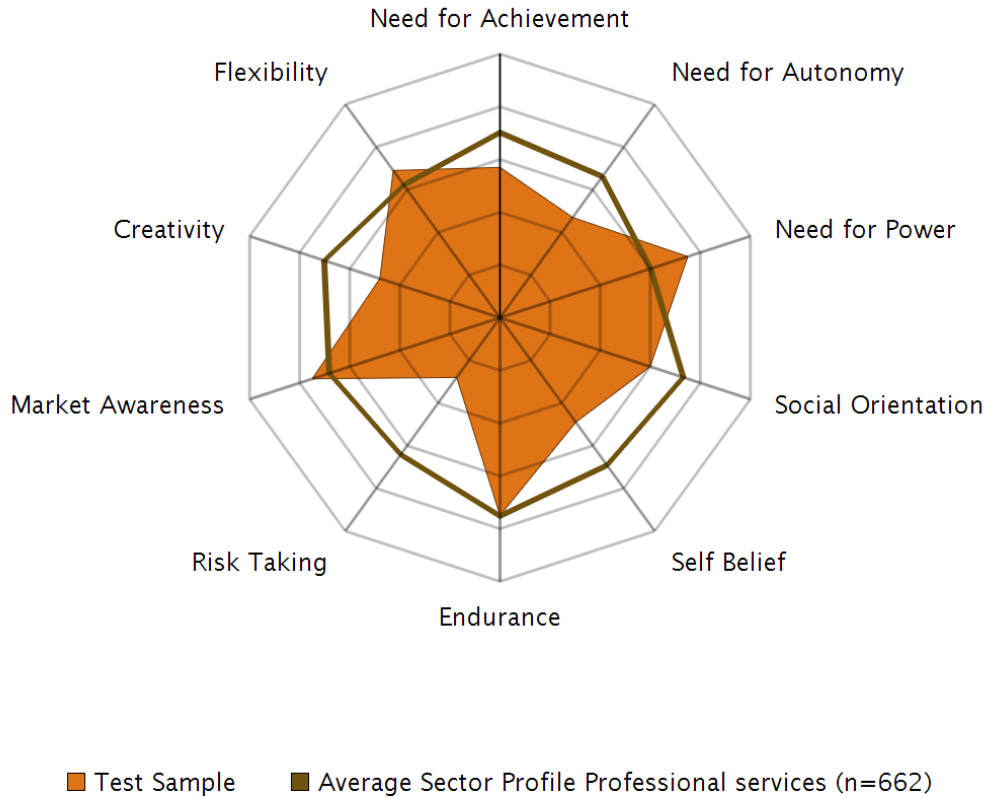


In comparison with the industry standard, your profile reveals the following

Very Strong area	Strong area	Reasonably strong area	Weak area
	Need for Power Endurance Flexibility	Social Orientation Market Awareness	Need for Achievement Need for Autonomy Self Belief Risk Taking Creativity

Your entrepreneurial profile against the average industry profile

In the spider's web your scores are represented by the (orange) field. This reflects your entrepreneurial profile. The thin connecting line shows the average profile of all the people who have done the scan in your sector. This gives you an extra insight how others have scored on the scan. The number of people which the average is based upon is behind the sector. But, this average profile doesn't say anything about successful entrepreneurship in that sector.

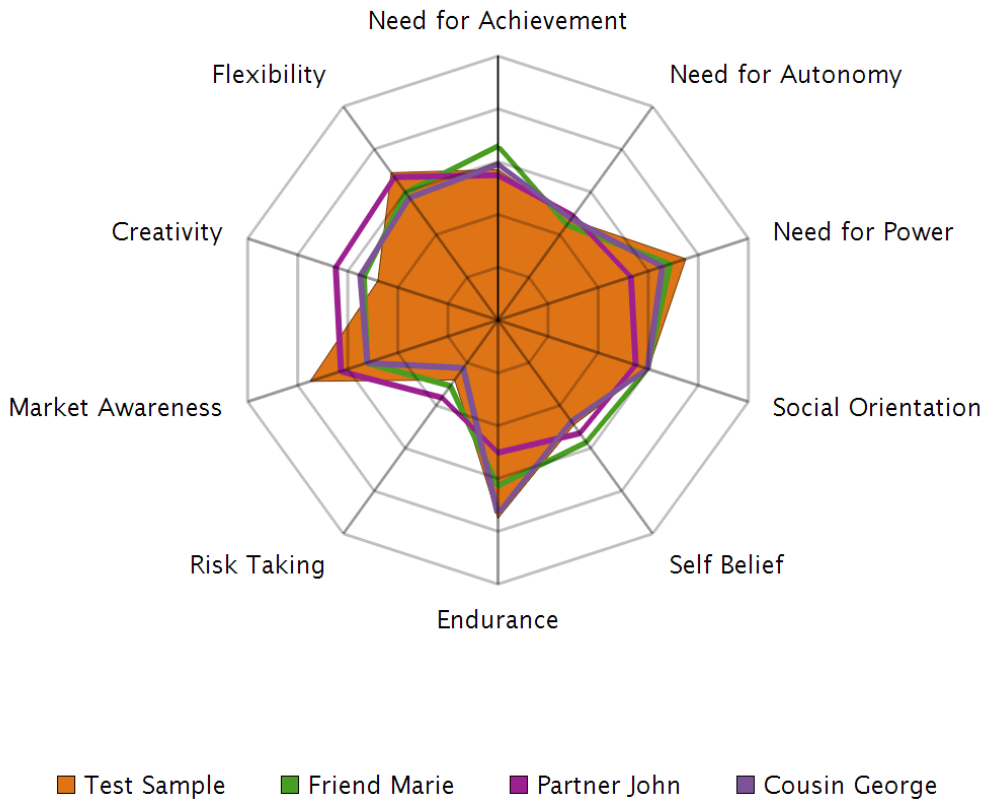


Your entrepreneurial profile with 360° feedback

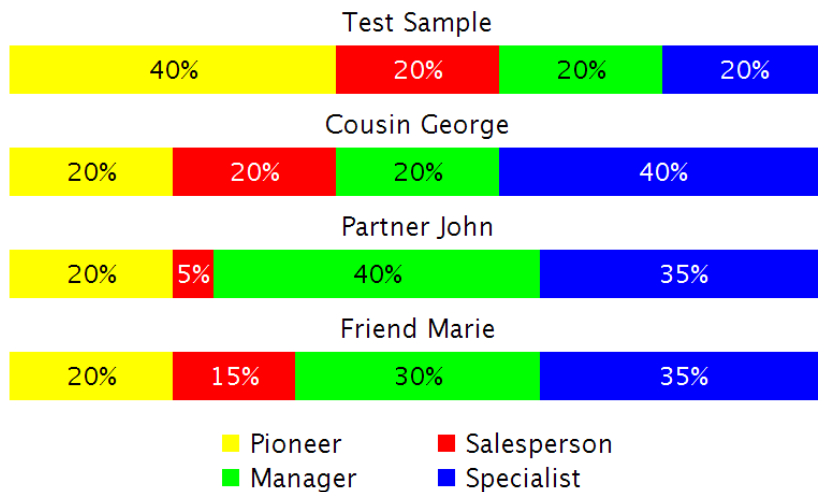
In the spider's web your scores are represented by the (orange) field. This reflects your entrepreneurial profile. The thin connecting line shows the profiles based upon the answers of the persons you have asked to feedback on their views on you. Their names are in the graphic below.

If you have not asked anyone to give their feedback on how they see your entrepreneurial profile, then log in to your personal page and send them an e-mail.

This will make it very clear where others see your profile and where they differ from your own views. It will give you a new and better understanding of how others see your strengths and weaknesses as an entrepreneur.



In comparison with the feedback, your profile reveals the following:

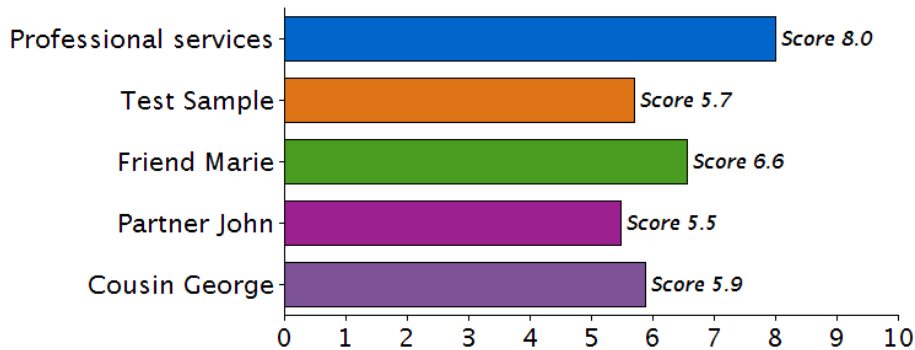


Need for Achievement

What do we mean?

Successful entrepreneurs are achievers. In other words, their ultimate goal is to perform well. Keeping their business objectives in mind, they devote all their strength and energy in their company. They want to perform to the best of their abilities in everything they do, and always strive to do better than the last time. They want to distinguish themselves, and their motivation comes from within. Less successful entrepreneurs don't have as much need to perform well or a weaker will to succeed. They are easily satisfied with less.

How you compare?



In comparison with the Norm profile **Need for Achievement** is a **Weak area**.

You are the type of person who doesn't need to have a clear goal in mind in order to get started. You set your priorities, and it is only the highest one that is your immediate goal. In your opinion, you can also perform without having a clear goal to work towards.

What's more, you're not ambitious and generally speaking you don't set very high goals for yourself. You quickly adjust your goal downwards if it becomes apparent that you have set it too high.

Finally, you have little need to measure your performance against others to determine who is better or more successful. Consequently, you would rather not compete against others, preferring to concentrate on your own activities.

Steps forward

You are the type of person who performs better if you have a clear goal in mind. For that reason, it is vital for you to make your goals SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Resourced and Time-Constrained.

You are the type of person whose need to perform is mediocre. It is important to remember that success is a choice, and you are the only person who determines when you succeed.

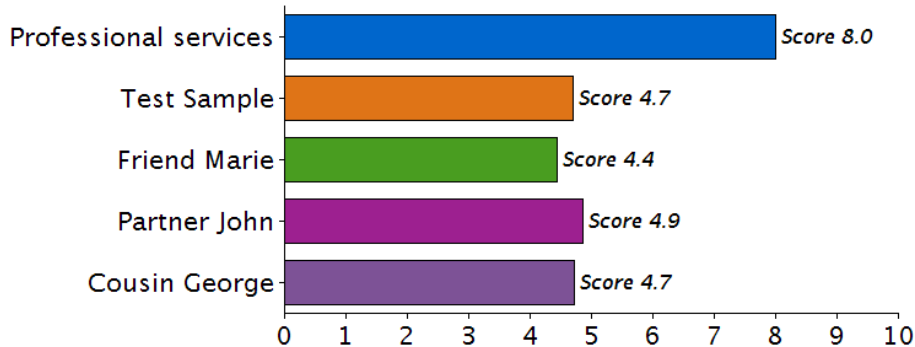
You are the type of person whose need-to-compete score is mediocre. This isn't necessarily a problem, provided you continue to concentrate on your own strengths. However, for your business to be successful, you will also have to take on the competition so do not underestimate the influence they might have on your business and take steps to limit the effect.

Need for Autonomy

What do we mean?

Independence is frequently the conscious or unconscious reason why some people choose the life of an entrepreneur. The need to make their own decisions and do what they want is very strong. Successful entrepreneurs act independently of others, make their own decisions, solve their own problems and successfully complete their activities on their own strength. Less successful entrepreneurs need support or aid and are inclined to leave the decision-making, more often than not, to others.

How you compare?



In comparison with the Norm profile **Need for Autonomy** is a **Weak area**.

You are the type of person whose choice to enter into business isn't based on an immediate need for independence. Your need for freedom to do what you want does not manifest itself very strongly. You can accept it when you are dependent on others and they can determine, in part, what you should do.

Generally speaking, you need the support of others to make progress, as you do not always dare to trust your own judgment. You also accept other people making decisions for you.

Steps forward

You are the type of person whose need for independence scores low. This raises an obvious question: If you are a new entrepreneur why do you want to start your own business? If you are an experienced entrepreneur, why did you want to start your own business?

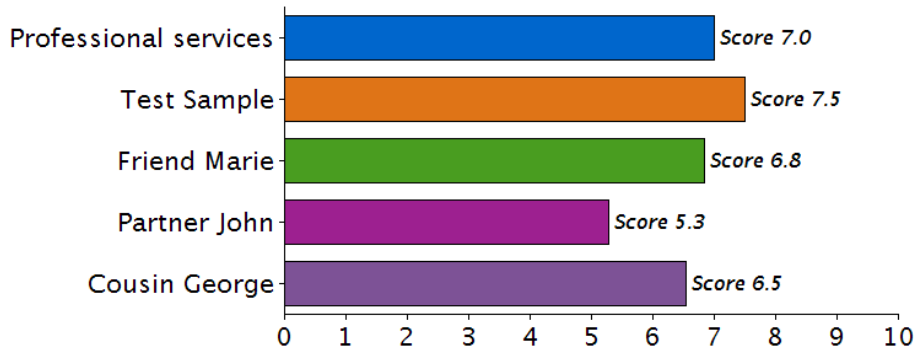
As an entrepreneur, you can move forward by learning to trust your own decisions. Don't be afraid that someone might second-guess you. If this is still beyond your comfort zone, let someone assist you, i.e. someone with business experience or knowledge. Surround yourself with people who have 'made the grade', such as successful entrepreneurs or business experts. Ask them questions about their success; most people love to speak about their own success and there are always pieces of good advice to be found in their answers.

Need for Power

What do we mean?

The need for power is to have control over others, to impose your will on them. The need for power can be a reason to become an entrepreneur, because then you are in charge. Successful entrepreneurs know what they want and how they can influence others in order to attain their goals. In the process, they simply assume that their authority or opinion is generally accepted. Less successful entrepreneurs are more timid; they prefer to stay in the background.

How you compare?



In comparison with the Norm profile **Need for Power** is a **Strong** area.

You enjoy influencing your environment, including your working environment. You wish to run the show yourself even if that means manipulating others a little bit or withholding information that, in your opinion, they don't need to know.

Finally, you try to convince others of your outlook without being domineering or pushy. You also accept it when you don't succeed in convincing others that you're right.

Steps forward

You are the type of person who wants power and control over others. Being the boss and playing the boss are not the same thing. Don't over do it as you will quickly alienate people and end up being less effective.

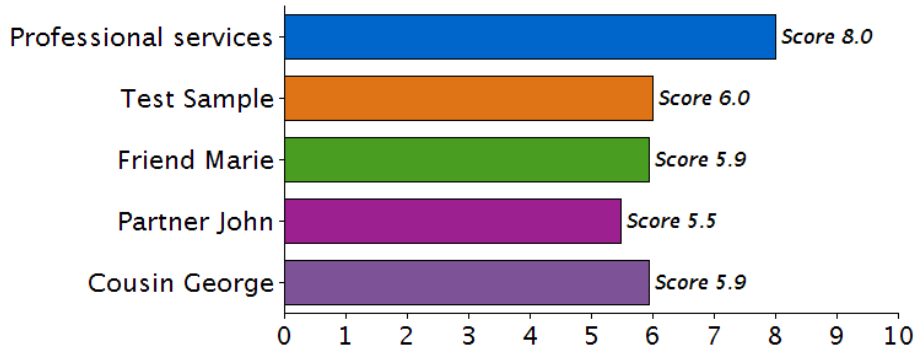
Your power-of-persuasion score is average. Let people know what you want to achieve and don't be afraid that in doing so it might cause offence. You won't offend people when you make it clear what you stand for and what your goals are. If you consider others, they will reciprocate.

Social Orientation

What do we mean?

Social orientation is the degree to which someone is focused on others. Successful entrepreneurs understand that people and networks are necessary to realize their ideas. They easily make contacts and permit business considerations to determine their social behaviour. Consequently, they can put their social needs aside and focus on their venture. Starting entrepreneurs frequently work alone, and it is no secret that self-employment can be a very solitary pursuit. Less successful entrepreneurs are more reserved and cautious when making contacts.

How you compare?



In comparison with the Norm profile **Social Orientation** is a **Reasonably strong area**.

You have difficulty, sometimes, in getting to know others or making small talk. Similarly, you are not led by business considerations or the advantages that you could gain from making contacts. Do you find it difficult to break the ice?

Steps forward

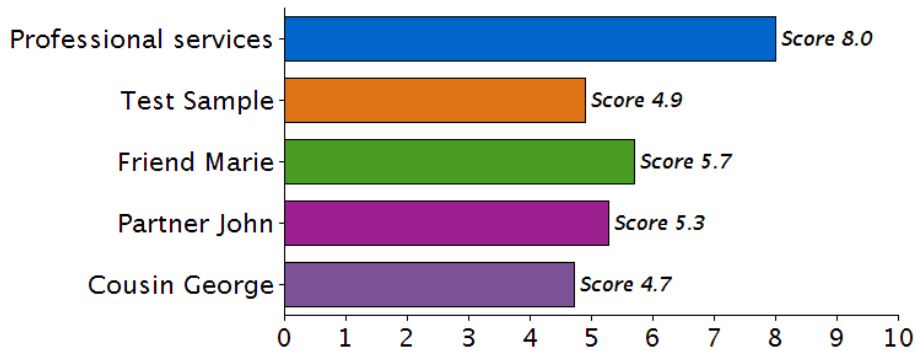
Given that your primary focus is not on others, try to break the ice by thinking of a joke. Humour is frequently disarming. If you can't think of a joke, think of something current that is relevant to the situation you're in or the person you are near to. Show some interest in the person by asking open ended questions. You can always fall back on comments about the latest news, weather or traffic jams, though try to be original.

Self Belief

What do we mean?

Self belief is the belief in your own abilities and in yourself relative to others. Successful entrepreneurs trust that they can reach their goals on their own strengths. They are not only convinced of their ability to complete every task successfully, this type of entrepreneur is convinced that their success depends primarily on themselves. This self-confidence also carries over into relations with others even with those who might be richer, more important or more powerful. Less successful entrepreneurs believe less in their own strengths and live with the idea that their success is dependent upon the prevailing circumstances.

How you compare?



In comparison with the Norm profile **Self Belief** is a **Weak area**.

You are not always sure of yourself. You doubt whether you will be able to achieve your goals. From your viewpoint, a certain amount of luck is involved in doing so.

Additionally, you have doubts about yourself and that could occasionally hinder how you deal with others, as you aren't forcefully argue in favour of your opinion which means you could lose control of the situation. Consequently, you run the risk in business that suppliers or customers won't take you seriously, avoiding doing business with you.

Steps forward

You are the type of person who doesn't always believe in your own strengths. Think positive. Imagine your future situation and remember that it is only a matter of working towards your goal. Create your own luck and remember that it is normal to have doubts (having second thoughts before the project begins), but it's potentially disastrous to be indecisive (having doubts about your decision after it has been taken.).

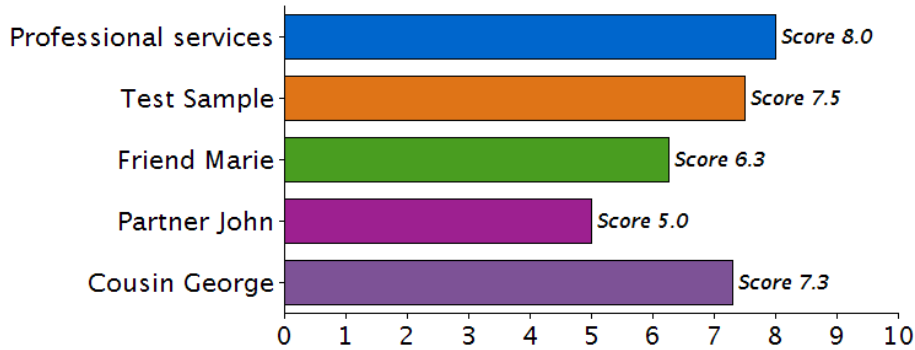
You are the type of person who isn't sure of themselves in relation to others. In fact, by doubting yourself, you get off to a bad start. To help yourself, identify your strengths, write them down and acknowledge them. It is very effective to repeat them out aloud though just as effective to have them printed out and visually available for you at work. Soon you'll see that you will start believing in yourself.

Endurance

What do we mean?

Endurance is continuing strongly in spite of negative developments or objections, even in the longer term. Successful entrepreneurs have great endurance. With a solid and clear goal in mind, they eventually overcome each hurdle to achieve success. Also, if they do not make immediate progress, they persist. They cling to their work and do not stop before their goal has been reached. Less successful entrepreneurs display a lack discipline and are quicker to put the blame for their lack of success on fatigue or trouble.

How you compare?



In comparison with the Norm profile **Endurance** is a **Strong area**.

You are the type of person to persevere. In the long term you keep going until you have reached your goal. If things aren't working out, you focus on other things before returning to where you left off. This is an obligation that you readily take upon yourself and that keeps you motivated. In business it is vital to have this characteristic, because there are many hurdles along the way.

When you do not get ahead in your daily work or you feel that your attention span is waning, you give up more quickly than you would like to. You easily postpone your activities.

Steps forward

You are the type of person who perseveres in the long term. If things aren't working out, take a step back, look back and evaluate what you have achieved so far.

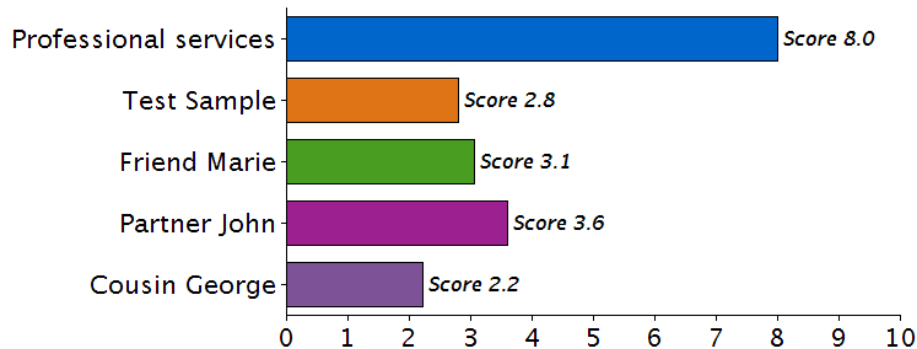
Since you have problems in the short term, take a step back and reflect on progress. Afterwards re-state the activities that have to be completed that day. Reduce the number of activities to fit into a single working day. Then concentrate on one activity at the time, not on the end result.

Risk Taking

What do we mean?

Risk taking is being able to cope with uncertainties and the willingness to take losses. Successful entrepreneurs are active risk takers. They spot chances pro-actively, and do it with energy, initiative and the willingness to realise the chance of a desired outcome, despite the risks inherent to the change. Their goals are more set on improving their lives than on maintaining it. Unsuccessful entrepreneurs are passive risk takers. They approach risk more carefully and more defensive and often only react to what crosses their path, and what they cannot avoid.

How you compare?



In comparison with the Norm profile **Risk Taking** is a **Weak area**.

You are a risk avoiding person. You are very cautious and suspicious about situations in your environment that are new and for which you cannot estimate the risks. If the outcome is uncertain you prefer letting it pass.

Steps forward

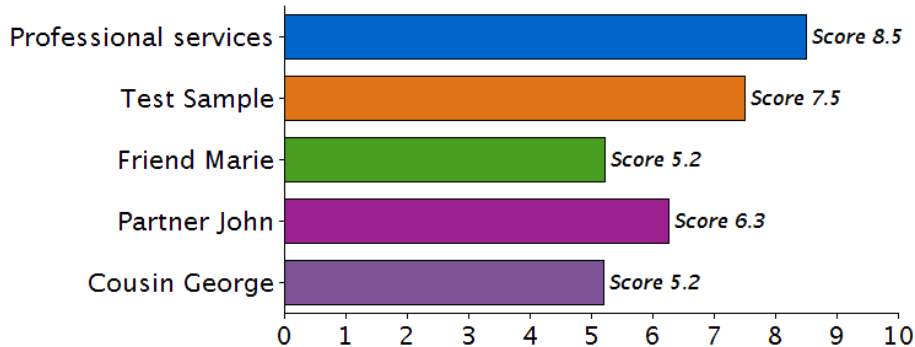
You are really cautious, but where does this come from? What is it that holds you back? To get some certainty, you investigate the risks by viewing them from different angles and assessing the damage they might cause. Are you really worried about the risk of losing money? Try to save the equivalent of a year's living expenses and keep that safe. You will then have something to fall back on. However, you must realise that you cannot gain personal growth, if you don't make mistakes or errors.

Market Awareness

What do we mean?

Market Awareness refers to the ability to visualize the needs of existing or potential customers and linking them to your own company. Successful entrepreneurs anticipate the specific needs of a clearly defined target group. They can also indicate precisely what their competitors do. They follow developments reported in magazines and trade journals and talk with customers to be able to anticipate changes in the market. Less successful entrepreneurs barely have an eye for the needs of their customers. They are frequently more product-orientated and have no clear target group in mind.

How you compare?



In comparison with the Norm profile **Market Awareness** is a **Reasonably strong area**.

You have a vague idea of what your market is and what's happening in it. However, by using limited information to specify your market approach it will need to be developed further or expensive mistakes could be made. You may know some of the types of consumers for your products or services, though not have a fully refined understanding of your real target audience, which will make a significant difference to successful penetration.

Additionally, you are customer-orientated, knowing that you have to think in terms of your current and potential customers' wishes and needs to get them to make a purchase. This is also reflected in you also having well developed ideas as to how you can best approach your customers.

Steps forward

Identify market specific websites where your product may be associated. Use search engines, social media and related online forums to view what others are doing and saying about the challenges and opportunities that your product or service may already be solving. It is worthwhile engaging in conversations, taking care not to disclose sensitive information, to find out key information that you may use to your advantage. Visit representatives of trade associations and look into recent developments and trends. Keep track of successful competitors in your market. Develop a product-market matrix to identify which consumer group produces the greatest turnover and which one the greatest profit. You may need to take professional advice or a short training course in understanding how to build up a marketing and sales plan.

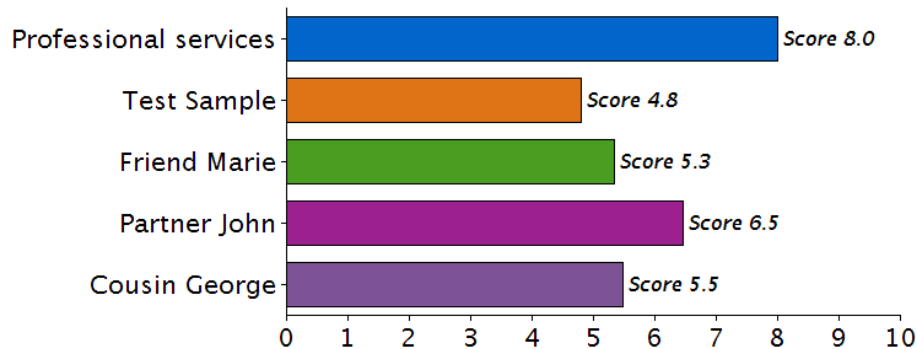
By involving a few current or potential customers in the development of products or the manner in which you could best sell products or services to them could highlight potential changes that could be made to engage what would be more receptive and this will have significant effects on the likelihood of adoption or purchase.

Creativity

What do we mean?

Creativity is the capacity to "play" with thoughts and ideas and to see new possibilities. Successful entrepreneurs are open to what is happening in their surroundings. In doing so, they are not hampered by restrictions of the situation, but rather challenged by the possibilities. They have the capacity to think from different angles and choose the path less travelled. As a result, they can convert problems into new opportunities and dare to take risks. Less successful entrepreneurs are limited in their manner of thinking and are less anxious to experiment.

How you compare?



In comparison with the Norm profile **Creativity** is a **Weak area**.

You are not someone who always comes up with original ideas or new solutions nor do you fantasize a lot. For that to happen, you need to try and visualize new ideas independently of others. However, you normally need others to start the creative process.

You don't see a lot of opportunity in your surroundings and how you could approach different problems. If something new draws your attention, you observe it very cautiously. You would prefer to look at it for a while as opposed to doing something with it.

Steps forward

Remember that there are the possibilities to be found in restrictions. Focus your thoughts or activities on those restrictions and make associations with unrelated subjects. Try to link them to other matters even if it seems illogical at first. For example how would a low cost airline or supermarket approach this subject? Or the opposite, if there was unlimited funds available how could an alternative way be developed. You will begin to see that you will come up with your own new ideas. Write down your own ideas and develop them first before you consult others so that you force yourself to increase your creative capacity.

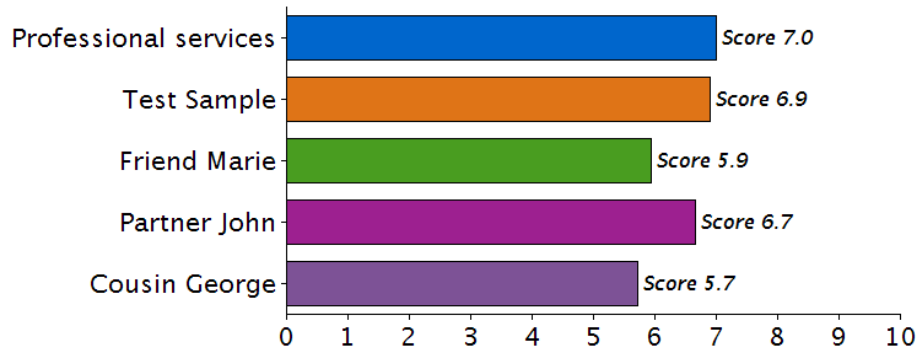
Learning to see possibilities starts by taking a good hard look at things. Take a step back, sit quietly and think about the things that you have done. Then ask yourself which opportunities have arisen or might be offered to you. You may wish to list these and begin to work on how you evaluate which are most suitable right now and begin to identify how you can take them forward. Developing an understanding of the the creative process from ideation to implementation and review will hone your skills and increase your speed in the future.

Flexibility

What do we mean?

Flexibility is based on the ability to adapt. Successful entrepreneurs react to changes they observe in their environment. Such as new wishes of customers or new competitors in the market. They interpret the effects of opportunities or threats and adjust their strategy or business plan accordingly. Unsuccessful entrepreneurs are hardly willing to adapt. They resist change and can be inflexible and stubborn.

How you compare?



In comparison with the Norm profile **Flexibility** is a **Strong area**.

You have the ability to be flexible and know how to adjust yourself and your plans when unexpected things happen around you. You are a dynamic person and know how to react to changes in the market or your surroundings as well as how to deal with the situation and not to give in too quickly when changes are forced upon you.

Steps forward

Wisdom is related to the ability to change. Wisdom is knowing when and how to change. Act out of wisdom rather than out of habit.

Your preference for a certain thinking style - a short explanation

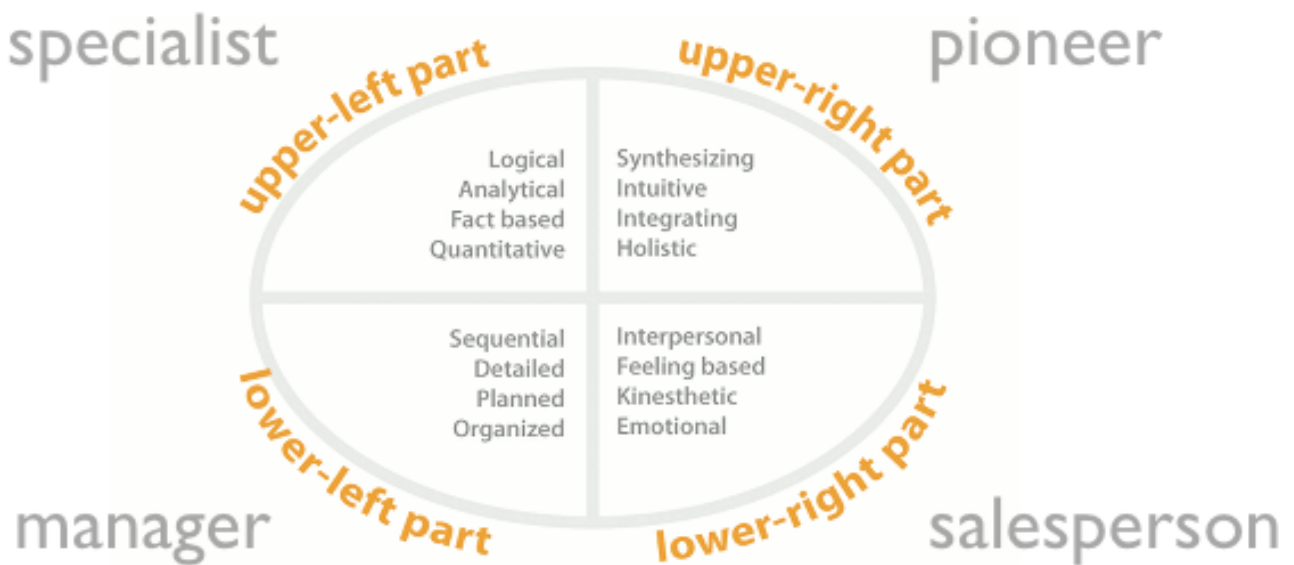
The structure of your brain is directly related to the way you think; in other words, this is your thinking style. It is this thinking style that in turn influences your behavior. Your brain not only has a left and right half, but also a lower and upper part, which jointly form the four quadrants of your brain.

These four quadrants work together as a single unit. Their cooperation depends on the situation, but by nature one or more quadrants are more dominant than the others. In someone who is left-handed, for instance, the left hand is dominant relative to the right hand. Each quadrant has its own thinking style as well as a number of specific characteristics. People who are more left-half oriented have a different thinking style than others who are more right-half oriented. The same also applies to the upper and lower parts of the brain.

Reason (common sense) plays an important role in the left half, while with the right half is dominated by emotion. The lower part of the brain is characterized by dependence and instinct, whereas the upper part features independence and reasoning. The upper-left quadrant has characteristics such as logic, reasoning and analysis. The opposite quadrant, the lower-right part, features by contrast interpersonal and kinesthetic skills. The diagram of the brain below reflects the different characteristics per thinking style.

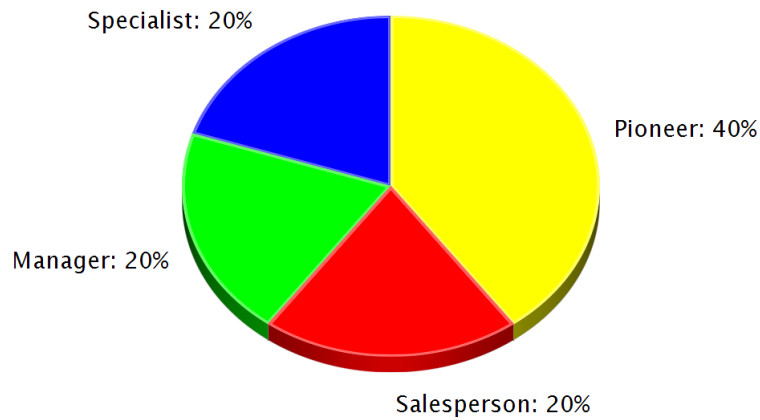
Everyone possesses all of these thinking styles, but there is a natural preference for a certain thinking style. That thinking style is generally the dominant one and determines how you think and act. It is, however, the situation that always determines how the four thinking styles cooperate and thus which behavior you display. For this reason, it is possible that on the basis of your preferred thinking style you react differently than you might expect. And that is what makes people so complex.

Figure: the four thinking styles (Herrmann (1996))

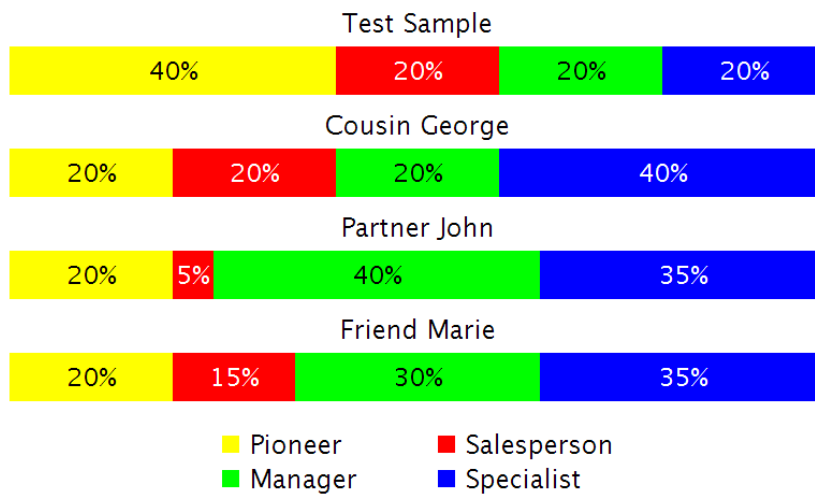


Your thinking styles

In the pie chart you can view your thinking styles. There is no good or false. It is all about your preference. What do you need, and which ones can be developed or complemented?



In comparison with the feedback, your profile reveals the following:

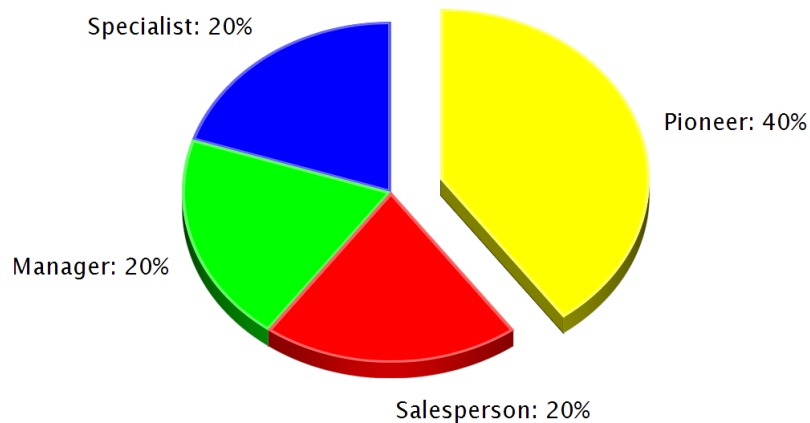


Pioneer

What do we mean?

In business this thinking style is characteristic of pioneers. Their ideas are dominated by possibilities. They live, as it were, in the future and possess a vision for the long-term. Thanks to their strong sense of imagination, they frequently see the complete picture, where others have no idea. Pioneers think in a playful and quick manner, often in a way that is spontaneous. They are noted for their passion, optimism, as well as their occasionally naive style. They have the capacity to change a chaotic situation or save one from becoming chaotic. This is possible due to their ability to put current matters into a new perspective and transform apparently illogical problems into solutions.

Pioneers can reach high altitudes in chaotic situations, but get lost in orderly environments and the daily routine. They are quickly annoyed and pay little attention to details. Their greatest motivation is to receive recognition. They distinguish themselves by acting differently in chaotic situations where they get their chance to do so. Where others accept impossibilities or the routine of a situation, pioneers continuously ask themselves why things happen the way they do and whether it is possible to do it another way. Their ideas or thoughts about how to improve things are only limited by their fantasy.



How you compare?

Your preferred way of thinking is most suited to this type of thinking style. Your score for this category is the highest when compared with the other thinking styles. You have a natural preference for situations where few rules are in place, where situations that have a certain adventurous or unpredictable nature and which grant you the freedom to determine how to run a business. You are the type of person who dreams and acts on instinct. All of these characteristics are necessary in business, especially in the start-up phase. This is the stage where a lot of things start to take shape. However, being an entrepreneur means more than just brainstorming. All thinking styles are necessary to realise ideas successfully. Additionally being an entrepreneur requires every thinking style not just during the start-up phase, but in later phases as well.

Steps forward

First of all, determine the extent to which you recognise yourself in the above description. Unambiguous wording has been purposefully used for this description to emphasise the differences between the various thinking styles. For this reason, you might also recognise part of yourself in the descriptions of other thinking styles. If you recognise yourself in this description, your strength lies in situations that are not fully organised or already implemented and still offer a lot of opportunity to use your own initiative or input. These could include when a company is in the start-up phase or a new idea or concept is being dreamt up or developed. Concentrate on matters where your originality is useful, such as product development. Another example is engagements or projects from customers for whom (unique) solutions constantly need to be dreamt up. In other words, projects that are always challenging or new. Focus on the big picture,

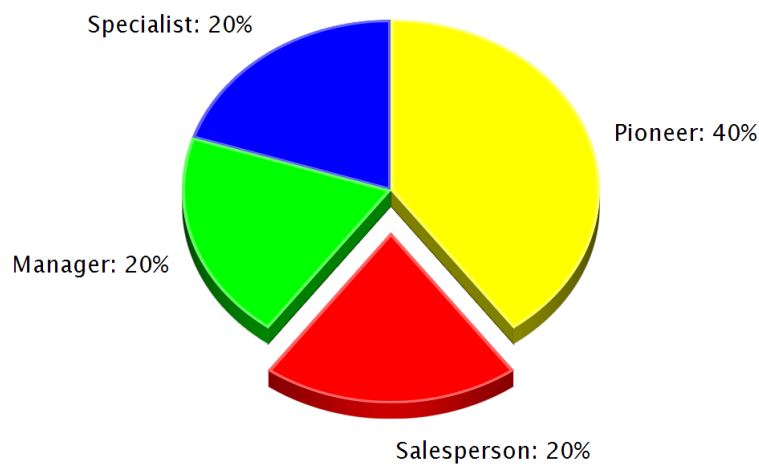
keep things realistic and leave the fine details to others, because you are likely to lose track of them.

Salesperson

What do we mean?

In business this thinking style is characteristic of salespeople. Salespeople love people and focus on establishing relationships with others. They frequently rely on their instincts. They have a tremendous interest in people and place a lot value on making contacts, although they can be led in this aspect by business considerations. They understand the customers needs better than anyone else. Their greatest motivation is to be accepted by others. This is the type of a person who focuses on other people: as long as others are satisfied, salespeople are too.

The sale of products or services means connecting with the needs of the customer. Salespeople work well in harmonious situations, looking ceaselessly for win-win situations. Salespeople will gladly do what others want, because that raises their chance of acceptance. Consequently, this type of person is loyal, flexible and enthusiastic, even if others occasionally take advantage of them. They prefer to avoid conflicts and are not good at enduring criticism, as they take it personally. The fact that they have a thin skin makes them unsuited to making fast, hard or rational decisions. They worry more about who will suffer the consequences, instead of understanding which decision is the best.



How you compare?

On all three thinking styles Salesperson, Manager and Specialist you score equally high. This might be an advantage because you can better coordinate between all the styles required for entrepreneurship. Meanwhile it can cause problems as well, in that it takes you more time to determine how to handle a problem. Doubt can play a role because you've multiple angles to view a situation. It also depends on how you normally solve a problem and in the way you absorb information. You mainly are a pioneer, since that's your highest score, who probably keeps an eye for the personal aspect of doing business.

Steps forward

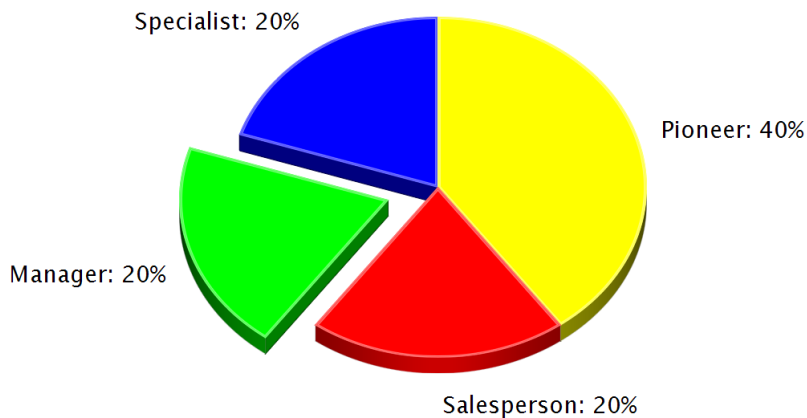
First determine if you recognize yourself in the above description. The descriptions have been written down robustly, to emphasise the differences. If you recognise yourself in this description then your strength also lies in situations where all options are open. Like the start of a new company or developing or building on a new idea or concept. This style typically does things spontaneously without a proper plan of approach, and will jump from one activity to the other. This disadvantages for this style when you are confronted with complex situations. It might help you to make a list with activities you need to do, and work them down from the top to the bottom (in order of importance). This will prevent that you from inefficiently running around from one activity to the other.

Manager

What do we mean?

In business this thinking style is characteristic of managers. Managers are able to look after their companies better than anyone else. As a result of the constant search for certainty, they place a great deal of importance on rules and procedures. Focused on the short-term, they keep an overview in an otherwise chaotic situation. They gladly take charge of things and strive for order. They structure their companies to operate efficiently and prepare plans right down to the smallest detail. Little is left to chance. They structure work to operate flawlessly in a system where everyone knows their role.

However, when changes appear, managers become disoriented because the old rules are suddenly no longer valid. They gladly employ rules with a proven track record and don't give them up easily. They don't like change and demand that everyone sticks to the rules. If subordinates choose not to, then a strong remark will unavoidably follow. Managers have a strong sense of responsibility. They also accept that things must be done the way they have always been done, even if that is not in line with their own way of thinking. Business affairs are arranged in great detail, which make managers steadfast and honest.



How you compare?

On all three styles Pioneer, Salesperson and Manager you score equally high. But which style has the upper hand?

Steps forward

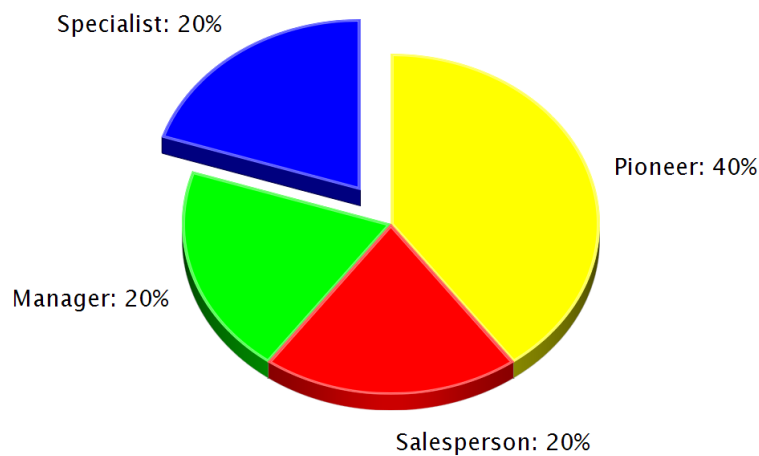
First determine if you recognize yourself in the above description. The description has been written down robustly, to emphasise the differences. If you recognize yourself in here, then your strength lies in organising and bringing structure in work, and by making clear agreements. Focus on matters where you can combine your thinking style of Pioneer with the organisational strength of the Manager

Specialist

What do we mean?

In business this thinking style is characteristic of specialists. Specialists stay abreast of all developments in their field. They know all the ins and outs of their profession. They visualize events based on their experience and professional knowledge, on the basis of which they can arrive at the proper decision in a rational and independent manner. They always know the best alternatives. Specialists are individualistic and realistic. They distinguish themselves by wanting to be the best, at least in their field of expertise. They are frequently critical and initially must be persuaded that something works before they trust it.

They know better or at least claim to know better. They accept reality and within this reality they try to perform to the best of their abilities. The Achilles heel of this type of person is that they can be perfectionists and occasionally adopt an authoritarian attitude. If something concerns their profession, they do not avoid the discussion. Delivering a quality product is the highest priority for specialists. Since they aren't strong in communicating and dealing with people, sales are definitely not their preference. They are convinced that a good product will sell itself.



How you compare?

On all three styles Salesperson, Manager and Specialist you score equally high. But which style has the upper hand?

Steps forward

First determine if you recognise yourself in the above description. The description has been written down robustly, to emphasise the differences. If you recognise yourself in this description, then your strength lies in situations that demand quality and craftsmanship. Analyse what differences and similarities of your Entrepreneur profile meet that of the Norm. Which can you develop and which not?

How to get a grip on growth - what every starting or experienced entrepreneur should know!

Organizations grow or shrink. As an entrepreneur, you must adjust to increasing or decreasing trends. This means that over time your role can change drastically and that other demands will be made on you. The start-up phase of a company requires a role different than the one needed in a phase of a decline. However, even though the development of an entrepreneur doesn't precisely follow the development of a company, an entrepreneur's weaker and stronger points will influence the venture.

Potential pitfalls in the development of the company lie in the person of the entrepreneur. Consequently, insight into your own personality is of vital importance for the development of your own company. This doesn't simply mean that your company will get bigger? It could also become better. But it is only when you recognize and accept your weak points or potential pitfalls that a decreasing trend in your company can be prevented. Only then can a successful strategy be chosen, one that will compensate for your weaker points.

The link between the businesses life cycle and thinking styles of an entrepreneur

The businesses life cycle of a company has four phases of development: no growth, light growth, strong growth and decreasing growth. Each phase can be passed through more than once. After a phase of decreasing growth a phase of light growth can follow. The whole process looks like the curve shown in the graph below. Increases or decreases are possible in this life cycle.

The first phase is called the start-up phase. An entrepreneur generally starts small. Most of their attention is spent on growing and organizing the company. Much practical detail has to be sorted out and in most cases the entrepreneur has to start by recruiting customers.

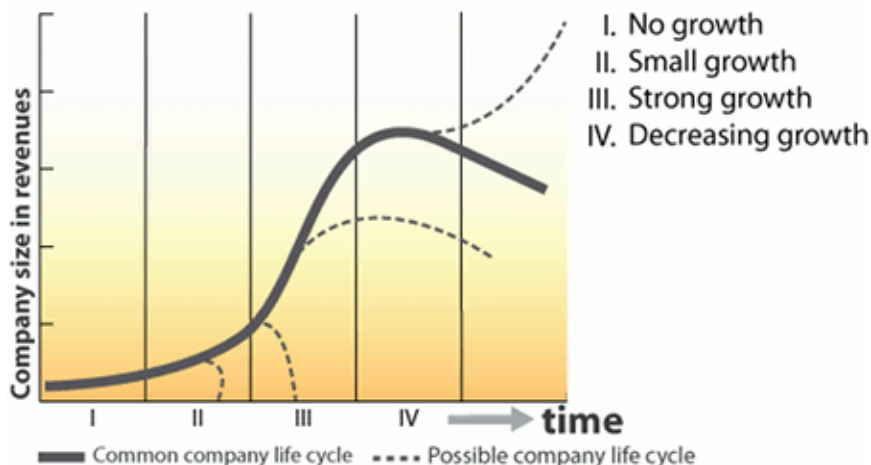
The growth phase is signaled by the first sign of an increase in sales or rising demand for the provision of services. That increase doesn't need to be a logical consequence of the commitment of the entrepreneur. Growth frequently arises by itself, and sometimes the entrepreneur is even taken by surprise by a large order. This could mean that the first employee or employees must be hired. The company relies heavily on the entrepreneur.

When the company meets the needs of the market, a period of strong growth ensues. Management becomes more complex, and entrepreneurs lose their overview. The need for the organization to create a clear structure, develop formal processes and delegate activities increases over time. The company becomes less dependent on the entrepreneur.

Inflexibility of the company may cause it to lose touch with the market, resulting in decreasing profits. The decreasing growth or decline phase can occur at any moment. Lack of re action could easily result in the closure of the company.

So there is a need for innovation to kick start a new life cycle. Although it is difficult to identify passages from one phase to another, they are initiated because existing structures can no longer cope. Though not always visible, these passages are real for entrepreneurs. Sometimes a conflict is necessary before an entrepreneur is able and willing to take the next step.

Figure: businesses life cycle



The entrepreneurial thinking style in the business process

The model of the thinking styles and the businesses life cycle complement each other very well. Together they provide clear insight into the different roles that are vital to an entrepreneur in the different phases of a business. In other words: the entrepreneur must play a different role at each stage of the venture. The four stages appear both before and after the start of a company.

Before start-up: from concept to limited company

Phase 1: the concept

The process starts with an idea or concept. The concept lives strongly in the imagination of the entrepreneur, and the challenge is to translate it into a product. This concept can be a prototype or an initial version of a product or service. This phase is characterized by thinking and envisioning. Entrepreneurs are dazzled by their concept and the possibilities it offers. This stage is perfectly suited to the skill set of the entrepreneurial role played by a pioneer.

Phase 2: the product

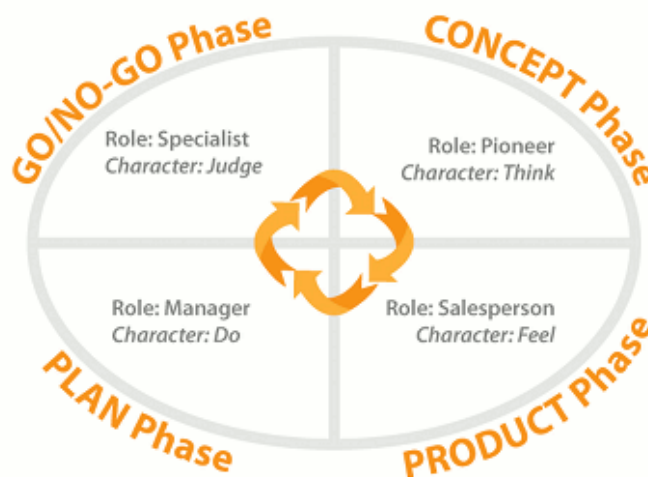
The first responses to the product or service are very important for product development and improvement. Friends or potential customers act as a test panel. The ability to feel and experience the needs of potential customers is characteristic of this phase. The entrepreneurial role played a salesperson is easily recognizable here.

Phase 3: the plan

Whereas instinct played such an important role in the initial phases, entrepreneurs now rely more heavily on a rational approach to the product and the market they target. Choices must be made and a plan drawn up, including a feasibility study of the company's concept. Working systematically and planning in detail are the most important characteristics of this phase, which just so happen to be in the skill set of the role played by a manager.

Phase 4: go/no-go decision

The question of whether or not to commence activities demands an objective assessment of a plan's feasibility. This requires an independent and critical approach. Reasoning must be dominant in this stage. Specific questions must be posed to trace the pitfalls in a plan before it becomes clear what needs to be improved. You may need a business consultant, a specialist to expose financial and other weaknesses objectively and critically.



After start-up: from start to finish

Early phase

During the early phase there is still no growth. This phase is especially characterized by chaos. The young venture is the new kid on the block, and entrepreneurs must be pioneering, especially to get their own business going. Pioneers are independent and take risks. They are convinced of their own ideas and have endurance.

Expansion phase

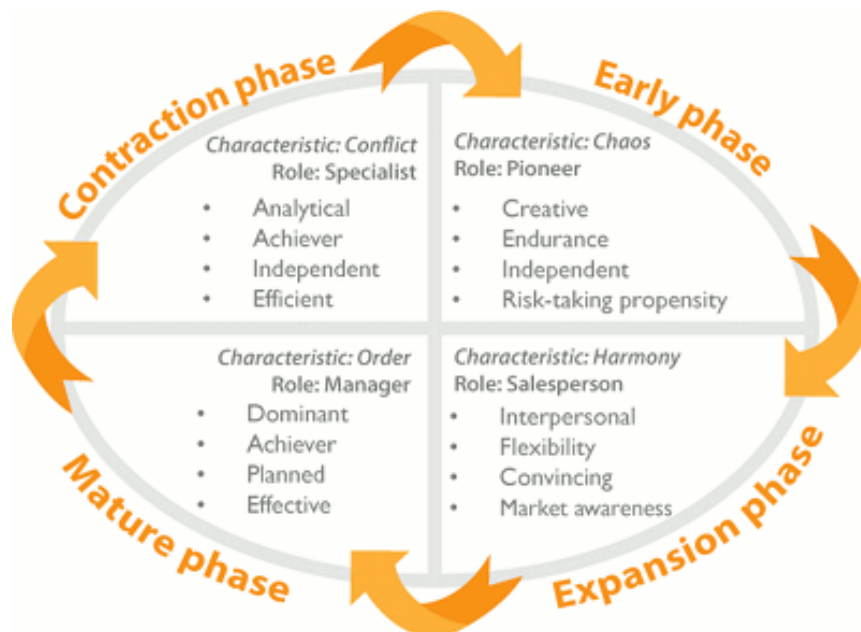
The company's activities connect with the market, as the first customers buy their products or services. The focus then shifts to intensifying sales efforts. Salespeople are open and focused on others. They adapt easily, are market-oriented and have the capacity to persuade others.

Mature phase

The stronger the organization grows, the stronger the wish to control the organization and its growth. Managers focus on running the organization in an orderly fashion and maximizing profits rather than increasing revenues. They may steer all business activities into a single, well-oiled operation. Managers plan, organize and control.

Contraction phase

But a strictly organized company adapts less easily to market changes. Growth may decline, for example, with the arrival of a competitor. A conflict rapidly arises, and the entrepreneur must find an answer. An objective picture of the deteriorating situation must be formed. Now may be the time for the analytical skills and expertise of business consultant. One that understands the ins and outs of good management. Just like any specialist, they strive for quality and want to achieve the best by finding a solution for the problems facing the company.



Final conclusion

Your answers to the Entrepreneur Scan form the basis for your personal report. This report, however, cannot be viewed as being independent of your personal and professional situation. For this reason, we recommend that you discuss your entrepreneurial profile with people who know you well, or even better, with an independent specialist or business adviser in this area. It is not important how well you scored on the scan, but how you respond to it. Which points are important for your development as an entrepreneur and which are irrelevant. Use this input as a basis to increase your self-knowledge and to develop a strategy which reinforces your behaviour as an entrepreneur. One of these strategies could involve a mentor, coach or trainer, for instance. Being an entrepreneur means knowing your own strengths and weaknesses ? as well as how to complement or compensate for them. The better you know where your personal pitfalls lie, the better you know how to assemble that dream team to improve your venture.

You do not score well on important characteristics and qualities for becoming an entrepreneur, especially when they are combined. You score better on your ability to see market opportunities and possibilities. This result is also supported by the fact that the entrepreneurial role of pioneer best applies to you. You are the type of entrepreneur who is able to come up with ideas for products and sees market opportunities.

You have indicated that you don't own a company yet. You might be considering starting up your own company or taking over an existing venture. Based on your answers in the E-Scan, your suitability for starting a successful company is moderate. For this reason, we strongly recommended that you discuss your personal report with others so that your personal situation will also be reviewed. If you want to start up your own company, consider starting with a new idea or product. Many issues have yet to be developed and take shape, and it is precisely this environment that motivates you. If you are thinking of taking over a company, consider looking for companies that are experiencing no or decreasing growth. This is the environment in which you feel most comfortable.