



TOOLKIT 3 – DEVELOPING YOUR PERSONAL QUALITIES

- ❖ **Develop your creative and innovative skills.**
- ❖ **Reduce stress and achieve inner calm.**
- ❖ **Improve your health and increase your energy levels.**

The 'Developing your business skills' toolkit focused upon developing traditional business skills. This toolkit helps you to nurture and develop your personal qualities. Several studies highlight the difference between business skills and personal qualities:

Business Skills-Example (Left brain)

Planning
Profit planning
Problem solving
Decision making
Developing strategy

Personal Qualities-Example (Right brain)

Coping with stress and risk
Being persistent
Obsessive commitment
Taking responsibility
Being innovative and creative

Traditional (left brain) business skills can be taught and learnt. Left brain is the systematic, rational detail, planning side. Personal qualities (right brain) are the creative, intuitive side of the brain. These cannot be taught using traditional teaching methods. So how do you develop personal qualities?

We now know that entrepreneurs develop their personal qualities in four distinctive ways. These can be contrasted with the traditional ways of teaching business skills:

Traditional Business Skills (Left brain)

Books
Courses
Teachers/Experts

Personal Qualities (Right brain)

Just doing it
Successful peers
From their team
Family and friends

You will see that the ways people develop personal qualities are largely informal, unplanned and therefore there is a chance that these skills are never properly developed.

Here are some ways to develop some of them

Clearly these are not **all** the qualities you need but they do appear regularly in papers and articles on personal business qualities.

STEP 1 **ASSESS YOUR PERSONAL STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

Rate yourself on these personal qualities, **1 = very poor, 10 = outstanding**.
Be honest with your rating, there is no point in fooling yourself.

Being creative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Being determined and persistent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Willingness to be flexible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Highly opportunistic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
'Can do' attitude	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Very risk conscious	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Being very focused	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Thinking strategically	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Obsessive commitment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Accepting responsibility	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Being willing to cope with uncertainty and stress	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Believing in one's own capability	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Networking with people	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Making sense of your scores:

1–3 would be regarded as a low score, which you might need to develop.

Q. Can anyone else in your team cover you on this factor?

4–7 are average scores, may be a strength or a weakness, it depends upon your circumstances.

8–10 would be strengths.

However, too high a score can also cause problems e.g., a 10 on obsessive commitment may lead to problems in your personal life i.e., a workaholic.

STEP 2 HERE ARE SOME WAYS TO DEVELOP YOUR PERSONAL QUALITIES

Transcendental Meditation

There is a growing body of scientific evidence which shows that Transcendental Meditation (TM) can really help to develop some personal qualities. The benefit is that the development of these critical personal qualities becomes less of a lottery.

Here are two examples:

South India Research Institute Ltd

South India Research Institute Ltd (SIRIS) comprises 16 industries manufacturing basic chemicals, pharmaceuticals, pesticides and edible oils. A large majority of employees practises Transcendental Meditation. After implementing the TM programme, G.S. Raju, Chairman of the corporation, noted: Transcendental Meditation is practised during working hours twenty minutes twice a day. Apart from improving performance, this has helped the progress of the company. Workers now work only 7 hours but produce 10 hours' worth of output. Before learning Transcendental Meditation, in 8 hours of work the productivity was equivalent to only 6 hours - an increase of productivity by 57%. In addition, there was a marked reduction in stress, reduced absenteeism, and the workers reported less fatigue, worries and anxiety.

Sumitomo Heavy Industries

More than 10,000 business people in Japan have learned the Transcendental Meditation technique. Over 2,000 of them are top executives of leading Japanese companies including Sumitomo Heavy Industries, Toyota Motor Company and One World Supermarkets. Over 100 Japanese companies have introduced the TM programme to their managers and employees.

Participants showed substantial improvements in physical and mental health, including significant reductions in anxiety, insomnia, depression, emotional instability, physical complaints, smoking and digestive problems.

Here are some personal statements:

**Burton A. Dole Jr, Former Chairman and CEO, Puritan Bennett Corp.
Leading manufacturer of respiratory products:**

'The key to success in today's world is innovation, creativity – beyond anything else. If you create products and services that are clearly better than what your competitors produce, you're going to succeed. Having the ability to enhance one's own creativity as well as that of one's employees seems to me to be the ultimate responsibility of a manager within a company. And the Transcendental Meditation programme allows that creativity enhancement to take place beyond anything I've ever seen.'

**Steve Rubin, Chairman and CEO, United Fuels International, Inc.
International energy brokerage firm:**

'After meditating I have the mental clarity and alertness for laser focus on the details and, at the same time, for broad comprehension so I don't get lost in the details. I find myself continuously growing in insight and intuition, as well as in the ability to focus and analyse. Over my years in business, the TM technique has been a real competitive advantage.'

Sir John Harvey-Jones, former Chairman of ICI:

'I thoroughly recommend from personal experience TM to anyone running a business in today's highly stressful world.'

STORY – TM A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

My work with entrepreneurs revealed the need to find a way to help them to develop their personal qualities. Traditional business teaching methods do not develop personal qualities.

I was discussing this problem with a business friend who then told me that he started TM on the advice of his doctor in order to reduce his blood pressure. He found that at the same time, his creativity had increased, and he felt less stressed. He said he was able to work harder without feeling tired and to think more clearly. This sounded like an avenue worth pursuing, so I signed myself up as a guinea pig to test the effects of TM. Had I discovered a solution by accident? I was a bit sceptical but I enrolled on a TM programme in Sheffield, and within 3 months my blood pressure had reduced, I felt less stressed and people told me I was much more relaxed. In fact one person said I'd started looking happy.

This was not the reason I attended the programme but I was delighted with the unexpected bonus of the personal benefits!

I can recommend TM from personal experience and that's why it is included in this book. I now know TM can help develop the personal qualities necessary to survive and prosper in today's world.

How does TM work?

I experienced right from the beginning that TM had a very settling effect on my mind. And I noticed too that physical activity settled down in just the same way. The whole system became very quiet.

This is the secret of TM: rest. It gives very deep rest to mind and body. Some scientists say deeper than the deepest sleep. And when people are rested they're happier, healthier, and more creative. They learn better. They respond to stress more positively. They enjoy coming in in the morning. One of the selling points of TM in the US has been as a cost-effective way of retaining staff. Corporations know that every time they have to replace an executive it costs them \$250,000 plus. To pay for an employee's TM course costs them \$1,000. (£500 in the UK is the standard course fee. If you want the teacher to come to you onsite it will cost more.)

Is TM any different?

Like me you've probably noticed recently there's been a lot in the Sunday papers about meditation and complementary therapies generally. There's usually a line in them that goes like this: 'Recent research shows that meditation can be a valuable tool in coping with stress.' Statements like this have made Dr Jaan Suurkula very cross. So much so that he's just set up his own website, Swedish Physicians for Transcendental Meditation. Dr Suurkula explains:

'Practically all the research proving that meditation is beneficial has been done on TM. Yet people are commonly saying that all kinds of meditation are essentially as beneficial. This has no scientific basis and is due to ignorance about the great differences between mediation techniques.'

You can visit his site at <http://home.swipnet.se/tmdoctors/ptm.htm>

Even though TM is a very ancient technique and has remained unchanged for thousands of years, the instruction course which takes four consecutive days for a couple of hours each day, now is structured in an easy practical way for business people.

TIP: Attend an introductory session, which is free. It lasts about one hour and you can ask questions and find out more about the process.

Here's how to find out about TM:

- Contact the TM UK Centre on 08705 143733 or e-mail: info@t-m.org.uk
- Request an information pack.
- They will send you details of your nearest TM centre. Ask them to send you the video in which professionals and business people introduce TM.
- If you want to read more about TM you can visit the website at www.t-m.org.uk. It summarises over 150 scientific papers into the benefits of TM as researched around the world.

Clearly TM will help you to develop some of these personal qualities. But how do you develop others such as:

- Being focused
- Thinking strategically
- Being willing to cope with uncertainty
- Networking with people

Here are some ideas, which might help:

- Try using the 'Tools for prioritising and focusing' (toolkit 6). These will help you to get focus and direction into your life and work.
- The 'Re-doing your strategy toolkit 9 will help you think strategically. One technique I learnt from Dick Watson of Keepmoat Plc was to write down my three or four strategic priorities on a card and to carry it with me at all times. This kept reminding me to stay focused on the strategic issues.
- Simon Woodroffe of Yo Sushi has developed a simple but very effective way of handling situations where he had little experience or confidence e.g. asking his bank for funding or getting to see key people. He calls it 'Act as if ...' 'I just act as if it's no big deal and appear confident, hopefully not arrogant; in many cases I got what I want.' If you face new situations try acting as if ... and see if it works for you.
- Dinah Bennett of Durham Business School taught me a key lesson in networking. I was happy running workshops and talking to people with my props i.e., overhead and flipchart. Yet when I went into a room of strangers to network I got nervous. Dinah told me that everybody else was probably even more nervous than I was. But if you bite the bullet and introduce yourself to people your confidence grows. It did and I found that networking was a fantastic business development process. Try using 'Build your business by networking' toolkit 20.

SUMMARY

Personal qualities are critical to success in business. They can't be taught but they can be developed. As your confidence and personal qualities develop so does your business and that's the payoff.