



Business Creator

Entrepreneurs are innovative problem-solvers. They know how to collaborate and get critical feedback to make their ideas even better. Entrepreneurs brainstorm, often work with teams, set goals, face failure, and try again. Become a business creator and learn the skills you need for success in life, no matter what future path you choose.

Steps

1. Come up with an idea that solves a problem
2. Design a prototype and get feedback
3. Revise your prototype
4. Create your business plan
5. Make your pitch

Purpose

When I've earned this badge, I will learn to think like an entrepreneur when I come up with a business idea that solves a problem, design a prototype, solicit feedback, improve my idea, then create a business plan and pitch it.



Cookie Entrepreneur™

The Girl Scout Cookie Program® is the largest girl-led entrepreneurial program in the world! "I was a Brownie and by far my favorite experience was cookie selling," says Brit Morin, CEO of Brit + Co. "I was so proud of my sales skills. In hindsight, I should have known sooner that I was destined to become an entrepreneur!"

STEP

1 Come up with an idea that solves a problem

Every step has three choices. Do ONE choice to complete each step. Inspired? Do more!

In this step, you'll come up with a product, service, or technology solution for a local, national, or global problem. Your idea might be a radical change or a simple solution.

Idea Sparks

Here are some examples of businesses that solve problems.

- A portable water filtration device that not only makes camping safer, but also helps millions of people who lack clean and safe water
- A tutoring service to help younger kids with schoolwork
- An app that scans food to identify healthy nutritional content

CHOICES—DO ONE:

- ☐ **Research online.** Look for websites that cover social, economic, educational, and environmental issues. Find issues that interest you and explore more. Is there a product, service, or technological solution you can come up with to help solve the problem?

OR

- ☐ **Look around your community.** What are some things you notice in your community that you would change or improve? Is there a product, service, or technological solution that can help?

OR

- ☐ **Talk to a senior member of an organization that makes a difference.** Go online and find someone who works for an organization that assists people, animals, the environment, or other causes—like a group that supports kids with special needs, helps prevent cyber security threats, or builds houses for homeless people. With help from an adult, set up a phone call, email exchange, or in-person meeting with that person to find out the needs and problems of the cause they support. What can you create to help solve that problem?



Entrepreneurial Mindset

You can think like an entrepreneur every day, especially when you approach a new project, goal, or assignment. Here's how:

- ▶ Be curious. Ask “how,” “why,” and “what if” often.
- ▶ Embrace challenges, even when things are difficult.
- ▶ Try again when things don't work.

Pivoting for Growth

In business, pivoting means to make a change in your product or strategy. It's like hitting the reset button on your computer. When your first model isn't working, you reimagine your talents and assets—and this can lead to growth. Brit Morin, a technology executive (and Girl Scout alum!) who founded her own lifestyle and online learning company, explains pivoting: "I had to make a pretty major change at my company in order to pivot our business model. In the process, I had to let go of some of my favorite colleagues and take some heat from the press and from investors. It was definitely one of the most humbling experiences of my professional life, but I knew it had to happen for us to continue to be successful. I learned that as a founder, you have to be thinking two steps ahead even while others are not."

Brit Morin, CEO of Brit + Co



STEP

2 Design a prototype and get feedback

Create a prototype, blueprint, or written proposal for your idea, and use it to get feedback. Make sure to plan how you'll record the responses you receive. Your job is to stay neutral. Try not to protect your idea when you want opinions—critical feedback can lead to improvements!

Open-Ended Feedback

Avoid questions where the answer could be “yes” or “no.” Instead, ask:

- What do you like about this idea?
- What would you change about this idea?
- What would you do to make this idea better?

CHOICES—DO ONE:

- ☐ **Organize a focus group.** Invite at least five people for a roundtable discussion to test what works and what doesn't about your idea. Use this session to get feedback and come up with different ways to improve your idea. If you can, video your focus group to watch later. If you can't video it, have someone take notes for you, so you can remember all the great feedback.

OR

- ☐ **Conduct a survey.** A survey is a precise way to get feedback from people because everyone is asked the same questions and all responses are recorded. Describe your idea and write questions for a targeted group—friends, family, and anyone else who might be helpful. Aim to survey at least ten people. You can do surveys in person or email them.

OR

- ☐ **Use the SWOT analysis to organize feedback.** SWOT stands for: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Collect feedback from at least five people about your idea, then use the SWOT analysis to frame your notes about what they said.

Focus Group Best Practices

- ▶ Invite focus group members who you think will provide honest feedback.
- ▶ Prepare your questions in advance; use them as a guide to open up discussion.
- ▶ Keep your questions informal and simple. Your goal is to encourage conversation.
- ▶ Call on people for feedback. Try not to let one member dominate. Let everyone know their opinions are valuable.

SWOT Analysis

Once you share your idea, you can organize your feedback by using this SWOT model.

S

STRENGTHS:

What did people like or respond positively to?
What makes your idea unique?

W

WEAKNESSES:

What things might not be solved by your idea?
Are the costs to carry out your idea too high to be practical? How can your idea be improved?

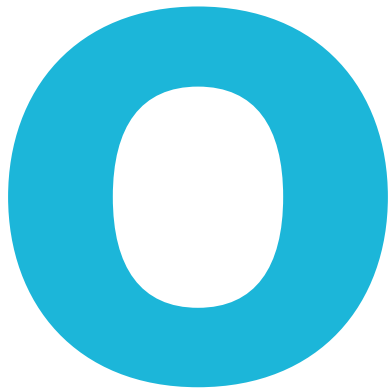
WORDS TO KNOW

Brainstorm: To come up with new ideas and different ways to solve a problem.

Entrepreneur: Someone who creates something or finds a way to help people and solve problems. Entrepreneurs use their ideas to create a business.

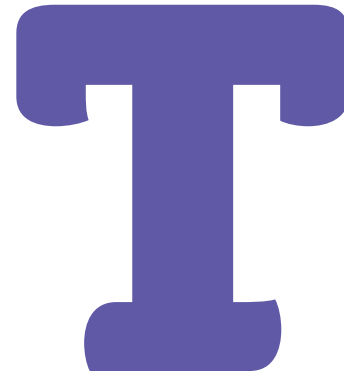
Feedback: An opinion, or what someone thinks about your idea.

Focus group: A group of people invited by entrepreneurs to give feedback on an idea, product, service, or technology to help test an idea.



OPPORTUNITIES:

Is there someone in your network who can help you with your idea? Is there an organization that might have resources or information they can share with you? Is your idea one that can grow and be sustainable?



THREATS:

What current or future developments or trends might be obstacles as you bring your idea to life? Is there anything you need to consider or research more?

Innovator: Someone who creates new products or changes something that already exists. For example, you can innovate a new app and then use your entrepreneurial skills to turn it into a business.

Pitch: When you share your idea with people in a way that

gets them excited and eager to support you as you bring your idea to life.

Product: Something that is made to be sold or used.

Prototype: A tangible way to show your idea to others or to try it out. It can be as simple as a drawing or it could

be a 3-D model made with things like cardboard, paper, string, or rubber bands.

Service: To provide someone with something that is needed or wanted.

Technology: Devices, apps, or tools that make people's lives easier.



Adapted from Become the CEO of You, Inc. by Susan Bulkeley Butler

Be the CEO of You: Keep a Journal

Write your ideas, goals, and feedback in a notebook. Here are some things to include:

- ▶ Your ideas, problems, and solutions
- ▶ Goals you want to meet
- ▶ Feedback about your ideas
- ▶ Brainstorming notes
- ▶ Changes you want to make
- ▶ People you admire (entrepreneurs, inventors, and innovators)
- ▶ Inspiring quotes
- ▶ Names and contact information of people you are working with
- ▶ Names and contact information of people who have helped you (or may help you in the future)

STEP 3 Revise your prototype

Redesign your product, service, or technology based on the feedback you received. You may need to start over because you discovered new ideas while gathering feedback. Once you've revised your product, test it again!

CHOICES—DO ONE:

- ☐ **Research competitors.** Find other ideas that are similar to yours. Use this information and feedback to revise your prototype to make it stand out from the competition.
- OR
- ☐ **Talk to someone who works to support your cause.** Talk to someone who works at an organization related to the problem your product, service, or technology is targeting. Find out how your idea might help or if there is something already being offered that you can improve on.
- OR
- ☐ **Get advice from a business professional.** Share the feedback you received and changes you want to make with someone who has knowledge of how a business works. Make changes based on their recommendations.



STEP

4 Create your business plan

A business plan helps you consider all the things you need to get your product, service, or technology to the people who will use it—and keep it running. Your plan should include details about how your business will operate, from how the money will be spent to your marketing plan.

CHOICES—DO ONE:

- ☐ **Create a business plan with a mentor.** While you were developing your product, service, or technology, you may have come into contact with someone who can act as an advisor—someone you can call on when you need encouragement or input. If you didn't, that's fine! Find someone now and have them help you write your plan.

OR

- ☐ **Write your business plan and get expert feedback.** Find someone in a related business or with a business background who can help refine your plan.

OR

- ☐ **Write your business plan and take it to a possible investor.** Find someone who invests in businesses locally and ask them for feedback on ways to improve your business plan. Find out what they look for in a business plan that convinces them to make an investment.

Planning Guide

Consider your product, service, or technology:

- ▶ What is it called and what does it do?
- ▶ What is special about it?
- ▶ Who will use it?
- ▶ How will you let people know about it?
- ▶ How much will it cost to make?
- ▶ How much will it cost to distribute? (How will you get it into the hands of the people you want to help?)
- ▶ How much will you charge your customers?
- ▶ How will you sustain and grow your business?

Maximizing Mentorship

A mentor is someone who can inform your choices and help you grow as an entrepreneur by sharing their stories and guiding you with ideas and opportunities. Once you find a trusted adult to be your mentor, decide if you want to communicate in person, video chat, or through emails. As your business idea grows, you may identify additional mentors for different aspects of your business.

Who to consider:



Pitch It!

Consider your audience and what is important to them. Include information that will respond to their wants and needs. Not every pitch will have the outcome you want. It's important to learn what went well in the pitch and what can be improved.

1. Introduce yourself and tell your story.
2. Explain the problem your product, service, or technology solves.
3. Show your product and what it does.
4. Share the main points of your business plan.
5. Make a clear call to action—state the results you want from this pitch. (Maybe you're looking for customers to buy your product or investors to help fund the business, for example.)
6. Hold a question-and-answer session at the end.



STEP

5 Make your pitch

Now that you've created a business plan, use it to create a pitch to get feedback. You may even discover a possible investor to move your plan forward! Remember to ask for feedback about how to make your plan even better. It's never too late to keep making changes and improvements.

Tell Your Story

Storytelling is a powerful sales tool. By sharing something memorable, you can capture your audience's attention, motivate them, gain their trust, and inspire them to take action. Come up with an anecdote about why you created your product or service. Practice your pitch until it feels like a conversation, not a speech. Record and watch yourself for extra practice!

CHOICES—DO ONE:

- ☐ **Pitch to your friends and family.** If possible, include someone in the group who has sales experience or experience giving a pitch.

OR

- ☐ **Pitch to a possible investor.** This might be a local banker who finances advocacy programs, a philanthropist who has an interest in your proposal, or a group that provides grants for service ideas.

OR

- ☐ **Pitch to a nonprofit organization or advocacy group.** Find a group that works on a cause related to your product. Pitch your plan to someone who handles fundraising and find out if they have any ideas or leads that could help you.

Make an Impression

Think of meeting a new person as an opportunity to pitch yourself and what you believe in. A first impression is formed within 30 seconds. If you want to make a strong first impression:

- ▶ **Practice business etiquette.** Think about simple things like dressing neatly, starting with a handshake, and ending with a thank you. Have some small talk topics in mind and picture what you'll do with your hands when you're talking.
- ▶ **Make eye contact.** Look people in the eye.
- ▶ **Be energetic.** You believe in your product or service: Use that enthusiasm to sell it!
- ▶ **Speak up—clearly.** Practice your pitch beforehand to make sure you're not speaking too softly, quickly, or slowly. Avoid repeating things like "um" and "like."

Adapted from Become the CEO of You, Inc. by Susan Bulkeley Butler

Now that I've earned this badge, I can give service by:

- Becoming a mentor to a younger girl who wants to reach certain goals
- Sharing what it means to have an entrepreneurial mindset with my family
- Helping a friend come up with a business plan for her idea

I'm inspired to:

Made possible by a generous gift from Susan Bulkeley Butler, author of *Become the CEO of You, Inc.*

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