

Idea Generation:

From what to start to change the future

5 min

General Introduction

Every business starts from an idea. Every successful business idea focusses on solution of some social issues or satisfaction of customer needs. During this day we will try to become if not entrepreneurs, at least we will try to train our entrepreneurial thinking in the frame of four business-oriented workshops. During the first one we will learn some methods for idea generation. The second one will be focused on defining vision and mission that are very important to any business at the stage of planning. The third workshop will help us understand better the needs of our potential clients and define the value proposition to them. And, finally, we will try to describe the draft of a business model. You have to pass through all these stages before you start with business and financial planning.

20 min

Explanation of the topic

Before we start the brainstorming on ideas for our future businesses, it is important to make some clarification among different kinds of entrepreneurial activities and their goals. Here we would like to point out two kinds of businesses: typical commercial entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship.

Different kinds of entrepreneurial activities

Commercial entrepreneurship is mainly oriented to the profit generation. The goal of such kind of business is producing goods or offering services in order to get higher revenue which usually is reinvested in the business or shared between the shareholders. However, in every entrepreneurial activity, every entrepreneur is expected to offer the products and services of higher quality than the competitors, care about its employees by providing good work conditions and provide remuneration. The main point for us here is that usually the purpose of commercial business is the outcome – financial resources that owner can use on his/her own.

Another kind of business is the **Social entrepreneurship**. This is also a kind of standard business with the final goal of solution of some concrete social issues– employment of marginalised, investment of charitable foundations and so on. In other words, social entrepreneurship is a kind of activity where business is nothing more than an instrument that is used to solve social issues. The most important here is the social aspect, reinvestment of revenue into social causes. The philosophy of social entrepreneurship is that the whole profit is not the final goal of the business activity but just a mean to lead to the final goal – to make our world a better place for living.

You may choose by yourself what kind of entrepreneur you would like to be/become. Despite your choice, the successful business is the one that brings strong value to its customer and somehow helps him/her to find the solution of their problems and leads to satisfaction of their needs and wishes. Therefore, during this workshop we will give you some tools that will help you find the concrete problem you would like to solve with your business and generate ideas for your activity.

Problem tree analysis

MATERIALS:

- Flipchart
- paper

- **Markers**

TIME: 20 minutes

Aim: To map the existing problems and find their particular causes

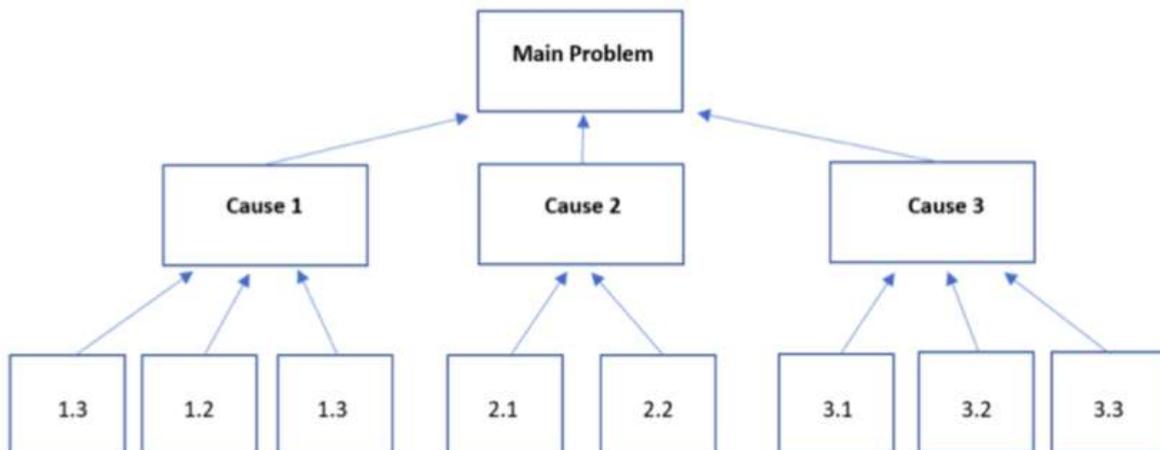
Description:

Depending on the group size, the instructor may divide participants in small groups of four and distribute the flipchart sheets and markers to each group/participant for individual work. We recommend work in groups as brainstorming on a particular idea is more effective and efficacious in bigger groups.

When the groups are organised, share the materials among them and continue with the rules.

Problem tree analysis is usually being used to identify the negative aspects of an existing situation and establish the cause-effect relationship between the identified problems (causes). That is why our task now is to:

1. focus on some key issue that is relevant to the society or to some group of people who would be your potential clients. Put this problem on top of your flipchart sheet;
2. try to find at least three causes of this problem after defining the key problem. Put them below the key one and connect them with arrows (as on the example below);
3. think of more specific problems that lead to those causes you defined in the 2nd stage. Find at least 3 for each, write them below the 2nd line and connect them with arrows.



Conclusion: The problem tree method is very helpful to map the problem with its most influential roots. We have done this because the solving of a bigger problem starts from solving its roots. The work in bigger groups enables the participants to look through different perspectives of the issue and try to evoke the most important causes (roots) and discuss their strength and relationship.

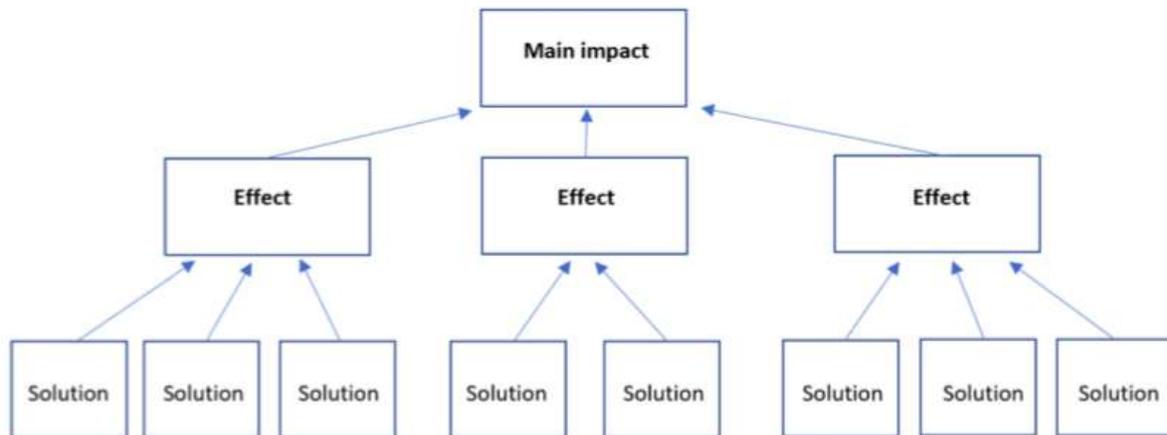
Solution tree

The purpose: Brainstorming on solution ideas for the discovered problems in “Problem tree analysis” activity.

Description:

Let the participants stay in the same groups with their problem trees. Distribute one more sheet of paper for this activity and continue with the rules.

When you have a visible problem map in front of you, your task is to find solution to each cause of problems that has emerged. In this kind of activity we start from finding solution to micro-problems and then demonstrate the impact of those solutions to solve the major problem(s) mentioned in the previous activity. Take a look at the example given below:



Now, find the solution you would like to contribute to with your entrepreneurial idea. The one you choose now can be your mission as an entrepreneur. Now your task is to find a model of how your business idea will contribute to this solution.

Conclusion: This activity helps you now to find the solution you would like to implement in your business.

Presentation and discussion

When both activities are completed, organise a presentation session so each group could exhibit their problem and solution trees. Depending on the number of the participants, set the time per each team for presentation and brief feedback from peers.

Conclusion: During this workshop we made the first steps in finding the main idea for your business. If you use these tools in looking for an idea, your business will be valuable to the customers and to the society, since it is not only profit but also socially oriented.