



Ethiopian TVET-System



Clerical Work Support Level-II

Based on August 2012 G.C. Occupational Standard

**Module Title: Identifying suitability for micro
business**

TTLM Code: EIS CWS2 M07 TTLM 0919v1

**This module includes the following Learning
Guides**

LG20:..Explore potential Basic Clerical Support ideas

LG Code: EIS CWS2 M07 LO1-LG-20

**LG21 Compare personal skills and aspirations with micro
Basic Clerical Support opportunities**

LG Code: EIS CWS2 M07 LO2-LG-21

**LG22: Access Basic Clerical Support learning opportunities,
mentoring and advice**

LG Code: EIS CWS2 M07 LO3-LG-22

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Instruction Sheet	LG20: Explore potential Basic Clerical Support ideas
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This learning guide is developed to provide you the necessary information regarding the following content coverage and topics –

- Identifying Products and services that are available from local **micro and small businesses**
- Identifying Products and services that are not available locally
- Determining Opportunities for new micro businesses based on gaps in the provision of goods and services
- Identifying a **range of sources** and utilized to gather information about micro Basic Clerical Support opportunities identified
- Outlining the processes to be undertaken by the micro Basic Clerical Support to provide the products/services

This guide will also assist you to attain the learning outcome stated in the cover page. Specifically, upon completion of this Learning Guide, you will be able to –

- Identify Products and services that are available from local **micro and small businesses**
- Identify Products and services that are not available locally
- Determine Opportunities for new micro businesses based on gaps in the provision of goods and services
- Identify a **range of sources** and utilized to gather information about micro Basic Clerical Support opportunities identified
- Outlining the processes to be undertaken by the micro Basic Clerical Support to provide the products/services

Learning Instructions:

1. Read the specific objectives of this Learning Guide.
2. Follow the instructions described
3. Read the information written in the “Information Sheet---”. Try to understand what are being discussed. Ask you teacher for assistance if you have hard time understanding them.
4. Accomplish the “Self-checks---”.

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5. Ask from your teacher the key to correction (key answers) or you can request your teacher to correct your work. (You are to get the key answer only after you finished answering the Self-check---).
6. Submit your accomplished Self-check----. This will form part of your training portfolio



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Information Sheet-1	LO – 1 Explore potential Basic Clerical Support ideas
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1.1 Products and Services that are Available are identified From Local Micro and Small Businesses

Sometimes the hardest part of starting a business is coming up with an idea, whether a small business is a part-time one person operation run out of someone's home or a multi-million dollar company with dozens of employees. You know, for instance, that you want to work in a particular field but don't know what you might do specifically. Or maybe all you know is that you want to start a business, but you're on the lookout for an idea that inspires you. Follow the links on this page to find small and home-based business ideas that will help you decide what kind of business you want to start.

What does it take for a business idea to make this list?

First, it has to be feasible as a small business. Currently, for instance, there are many exciting business opportunities in biotechnology and resource extraction but these aren't opportunities that most small business people would be in a position to take advantage of.

Second, there have to be few if any barriers to entry, meaning that just about anyone could start one of these businesses; you don't need years of education or millions of dollars.

Third, of course, they have to be legal and ethical.

Why Generate Business Ideas?

- You need a great idea to start a new business
- Business ideas need to respond to market needs
- Business ideas need to respond to changing consumer wants and needs
- Business ideas help entrepreneurs to stay ahead of the competition
- Business ideas use technology to do things better

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- Business ideas are needed because the life cycles of products are limited
- Business ideas help to ensure that businesses operate effectively and efficiently

Why should you Generate Business Ideas?

There are many reasons why entrepreneurs or would-be entrepreneurs need to generate business ideas. Here are just a few:

- **You need an idea– and a good one at that – for business.** a good idea is essential for a successful business venture – both when starting a business and to stay competitive afterwards.
- **To respond to market needs.** Markets are made up essentially of customers who have needs and wants waiting to be satisfied. Those people or firms that are able to satisfy these requirements are rewarded.
- **Changing fashions and requirements provide opportunities** for entrepreneurs to respond to demand with new ideas, products and services.
- **To stay ahead of the competition.** Remember, if you do not come up with new ideas, products and services, a competitor will. The challenge is to be different or better than others.
- **To exploit technology** – do things better? Technology has become a major competitive tool in today’s markets, with the rate of change forcing many firms to innovate. There are several companies in the world, operating in the electronics and home appliances industries, which come up with dozens of new products every month. For these and many others in today’s global markets, generation of business ideas is crucial.
- **Because of product life cycle.** All products have a finite life. As the product life cycle chart shows, even new products eventually become obsolete or outmoded.

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Thus, there is a need to plan for new products and the growth of these. The firm's prosperity and growth depends on its ability to introduce new products and to manage their growth.

What is micro business?

What is a micro-business? Well, there is no exact definition to what a micro-business is because everyone uses their own terms and criteria since it is such a new trend. The definition of a micro-business is subjective to every entrepreneur. In this post I define micro-businesses and the criteria I follow. Also, micro-enterprise is another term for micro-business.

Most micro-businesses have less than six people or had low startup costs, and most likely didn't take out any business loans. Small businesses usually have around five employees and can also have as many as five hundred employees. A side hustle is a micro-business that you run on the side because you have a full-time job or are a student.

What it mean small businesses?

A business is small if the owner has direct lines of communication with the operating managers and has personal contact with a large proportion of the work force, including key personnel

- “Individually owned and operated business”
- “A business employing not more than fifty people” (this number may differ from one country to another)

Reasons for Interest in Small Business

Small business operators constitute a large political pressure group whose voice and concerns cannot be ignored.

- There are large numbers of people involved in small enterprise.
- Employees and sometimes owners of small enterprises tend to underprivileged.
- Small enterprises offer many job opportunities, especially for women.
- Small enterprises alleviate poverty and contribute to development.

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Key Success Factors in Setting up a Small Business

Idea and Market

The important issue to be determined here is the viability of the idea, project, product or service to be offered. In other words, does the idea, product or service meet a need or want for which there are customers who can afford it and are willing to use/purchase it in sufficient quantities to make the whole project worthwhile (i.e. return a profit, in a business context)? How the proposition to be offered is more desirable or better than what is currently available and how will competitors react?

Motivation and Determination

It is widely acknowledged that, to be successful, the individual or group needs to be highly motivated and determined to set up the business to make it succeed. This will be reflected, for example, in how persistent they are in overcoming obstacles that might get in the way, how they go about seeking information and how they act on opportunities. Additional indicators might be their commitment and attitude to work (quality, efficiency, and long hours), previous attempts to set up a business and the support of family or partners.

Ability

Another important question is whether the individual or others involved have particular abilities these may be knowledge, technical or managerial skills of Know about Business Module 4: How Do I Become an Entrepreneur? Relevance to the business or project. One way of making up for any lack in this area could be to team up with people who have the necessary expertise, or buy it in.

Resources

Finally, the extent to which the person(s) involved can acquire or organize resources in adequate measure will not only influence performance but also, in some cases, whether they start at all. Examples here include capital, cash, premises, materials, equipment and labor. The availability of infrastructure (e.g. utilities like electricity, telephone, roads) and support services might also be important.

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Micro Business vs. Small Business

Although there is no universal or even national definition that limits a micro business from also being labeled a small business, small businesses are identified as for-profit enterprises that are independently owned and operated but do not dominate their industry or local market. Generally, they employ fewer employees

Unlike their micro business counterparts, small businesses tend to have less difficulty securing capital loans or lines of credit, and recruitment as an independent enterprise is met with less resistance as their companies are seen as more financially solvent. That solvency comes at a price, however, as many small businesses when registered as an corporation will find their taxes are assessed at a corporate tax rate instead of the personal tax rate commonly used by micro-businesses run by "solopreneurs".

Tax structure and recruitment process can also affect small businesses when it comes to their payroll system. As companies grow, an in-house small business team may require something more robust than a standard bookkeeping system to ensure adherence to payroll taxes, corporate taxes, and government fiscal policies. An internal payroll system, or outsourcing to an independent company that specializes in payroll accounting, can help alleviate the problems that come with increases in size and logistics.

Although all micro businesses are technically small businesses, the operating costs and revenue collected are often significantly higher for a small business as it scales up, even with the addition of only one new employee.



How to start your own



Small Scale
Farm Business
Ideas



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Business plan

You need to know where your business is heading and what goals you want to achieve. A crucial element to any business is the creation of a business plan. Although time consuming, it is a must for any business, regardless of size. A plan would be required. In business, this is normally referred to as a Business Plan. On the whole a business plan should show main things, namely:

- Where you currently are with your idea, project or business;
- What you wish to do;
- How you propose to go about it; and that the project is worthwhile.

Reasons Why You Need a business Plan?

1. To attract investors.
2. To see if your business ideas will work.
3. To outline each area of the business.
4. To set up milestones.
5. To learn about the market.
6. To secure additional funding or loans.
7. To determine your financial needs.
8. To attract top-level people.
9. To monitor your business.
10. To devise contingency plans.

Micro and small businesses may include:

- community owned and/or run businesses
 - family owned and/or run businesses

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- franchise
- government owned business
- sole trader owned and/or run business

Steps of business plan preparation

- Step 1. Executive summary
- Step 2. mission statement
- Step 3. company background
- Step 4. product description
- Step 5. marketing plan
- Step 6 .competitors analysis
- Step 7. SWOT analysis
- Step 8.Operations
- Step 9. Financial planning
- Step 10. Timeline

Self check	Group work
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1. By referring sample business plans for every conceivable type of business

- A. prepare a business plan
- B. write a business plan for a small business
- C. give a business plan title

1.2. Identify Products And Services That Are Not Available Locally

Selecting a Suitable Market

What is a market?

The market for a business is all the people within a specific geographical area who need a specific product or service and are willing and able to buy it. Every business sells some type of product or service to people. Potential customers can be described as:

- 1. People who need or want the product or service.
- 2. People who are able to buy the product or service.
- 3. People who are willing to buy the product or service.



Competition must be considered. If competitors are serving the same market, it must be decided if the market is large enough to support another business.

It should also be determined how the product or service is unique and different from that of the competitors.

What should entrepreneurs know about potential customers?

- a. **Know the customers:** The market can be segmented either by dividing it into meaningful buyer groups or dividing it according to characteristics such as age, sex, marital and family status, employment, income and trends regarding any of these characteristics.
- b. **Know what different customer groups wants:** By segmenting the marketing into groups, it is easier for entrepreneurs to determine what products or services each group wants or needs.
- c. **Know where the customer buys:** Entrepreneurs need to find out where the customers in their market are presently buying, and determine what factors will cause them to switch and buy from their new businesses.
- d. **Know when the customer buys:** By knowing when customers buy (daily, weekly, monthly, yearly, and seasonally), entrepreneurs will be able to determine such things as possible hours of operation, when to advertise and quantity of merchandise to have on hand at specific times of the year.
- e. **Know how the customer buys:** Knowing how the customer pays for products and services can help the entrepreneur to determine a credit policy as well as a pricing policy for the business.

Selecting a Business Location

Selecting the business location is one of several factors which is vitally important to the success or failure of a small business. In many instances, the small business owner looks no further than the nearest vacancy sign for locating the business.

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To increase the chances of success, it is important that considerable thought and research be given to selecting a location. It should be emphasized that although a good location may allow a mediocre business to survive, a bad location may spell failure for even the best planned business. Analysis of the location should be a continuous process throughout the life of the business. Such factors as changing population, changes in customer buying habits, new methods of transportation and the direction of community growth can adversely affect the suitability of the business location. Two basic aspects of selecting a location for a business are:

- (1) Deciding on a particular community, and
- (2) Selecting a particular site within that community.

Importance of Business Location

Location is more important for some types of businesses than for others. The right location is very important for retail stores and service businesses. Clothing stores, dry cleaning establishments and service stations all depend on a great deal of customer traffic to survive. These types of businesses must locate near their customers to succeed.

For other types of retail and service businesses and most wholesale businesses, location is not as important in attracting customers. Retail stores that sell high-cost items such as furniture and appliances draw customers to them. Services such as accounting and tax firms and wholesale businesses can be located “off the beaten path” and still have high sales. Customers will spend time searching for the product or service offered by these businesses. Manufacturing, construction and some of the other services are not interested in attracting customers on the basis of the firm’s location. These types of firms find Customers through either personal selling or advertising. The location of these businesses may be selected on the basis of costs, environmental impact, or supply of raw materials. Economics, population and competition are

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important factors to consider when selecting a business location. These factors will also help in selecting a promising city or town in which to locate the business.

General Factors in Selecting a Business Location

ECONOMICS: How much people in an area earn determines the demand for goods and services. Entrepreneurs should therefore gather information about income in the area they have selected. Specific questions include: What is the average family income? What are the income levels (low, medium, high) in the area? What are the employment/unemployment trends? Other important economic factors might include good highways and access to railroads

POPULATION: Entrepreneurs should identify the groups of people who will be their customers. For example, if you are interested in opening a music store, it would be important to know where the greatest population of teenagers and young adults is located because they buy the most music CDs. Other population factors include: How stable is the area? Do people move in and out regularly? Is the population growing or declining? If the area is rapidly growing, there will probably be a large number of young families. All these factors need to be considered when locating a business.

COMPETITION you must study your competitors by gathering information on their strengths and Weaknesses. You should know how many competitors you have and where they are located. You should also find out how many businesses similar to yours have opened or closed in the past two years. Indirect competition that provides similar kinds of goods and services should also be studied.

Procedures for Selecting a Specific Location

The following procedures are recommended when selecting a business location:

1. Make a list of factors you feel are “necessary” for considering a business location.

Also include a list of factors that would be “desirable” but are not necessary.

2. Find all the possible locations in a community that meet your list of factors.

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3. Visit the locations to get an idea of their general appearance and eliminate those locations that are not suitable for your needs. Reduce the number to 2 or 3 locations that appear suitable.
4. Visit the locations again and use a checklist to compare locations against the factors you have identified. Consider the factors that are critical to the success of your business.
5. Return to the locations at various times of the day and evening to get a better understanding of the suitability of each location.
6. Conduct a traffic count at each location. Count the number of cars and pedestrians that pass each location at various times to calculate the number of potential customers.
7. Ask the opinion of experienced consultants and business people in the area to help you decide on one location.
8. Analyze all the facts and opinions you have gathered before making a final decision regarding the location of your business.

Selecting a Specific Location

List “necessary” and “desirable” location factors

- Identify potential sites that match location factors Visit sites and select 2 or 3 best sites
- Compare locations to “necessary” and “desirable” location factors
- Visit sites at various times of day and evening and conduct traffic count
- Ask experienced business people and consultants to help
- Analyze all facts and opinions
- Make final decision on business location

Self check	Discuss test
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1. Discuss Importance of Business Location
2. Why Business plan is important?
3. List individually owned and operated business of your local area



1.3 Determine Opportunities For New Micro Businesses Based On Gaps In The Provision Of Goods And Services

Good business opportunity is that which is a techno-economically and commercially viable and feasible and environmentally sustainable proposition. Every entrepreneur needs to identify a sound opportunity. To identify an opportunity, one needs to:

- ✓ Collect information on Opportunity Identification (OI) Discuss the potential business opportunities with existing entrepreneurs
- ✓ Collect information on new major investment going to materializing the area
- ✓ Collect negative list of banned items for financing
- ✓ .List out poor performing industries
- ✓ Collect information on skill base—especially on handicrafts, etc.
- ✓ Collect information on availability of infrastructure like power, water and transport, etc.
- ✓ Collect basic information on local resource base, e.g. agriculture, forest and mines.

Therefore, one needs to consider the following facts before deciding upon an opportunity:

- ✓ Experience
- ✓ Economic Background
- ✓ Investment Capacity
- ✓ Family Background
- ✓ Managerial Capabilities
- ✓ Market Competition with other Producers/Size of Market
- ✓ Location of the Unit
- ✓ Availability of Technology and Process Know-how
- ✓ One's Education
- ✓ availability of Raw Material
- ✓ Availability of Skilled Workforce
- ✓ Availability of Required Infrastructure
- ✓ Project Cost
- ✓ Export Potential
- ✓ Profitability of the Product
- ✓ Degree of Risk
- ✓ Government Policy

Who Benefits from MSEs development program?

- Unemployed youth & women
- TVET school graduates
- School drop outs

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- Existing SMEs such as weavers street vendors
- People who live on the Street
- traditional handicraft operators,

Difference between micro and small business

The role of Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) in employment and income generation is increasingly recognized as a solution for Ethiopia and has become a viable option for policymakers with dual objectives of enhancing growth and alleviating poverty. A “microenterprise” is a small business that employs a small number of employees

Microenterprises often operate with fewer than 10 people and start with a small amount of capital. Most microenterprises specialize in providing goods or services for their local area. Microenterprises are business enterprises found in all sectors of the Ethiopian economy with a paid-up capital (fixed assets) that does not exceed Birr 20,000, excluding high-tech consultancy firms and other high-tech establishments. Small Enterprises are business enterprises with a paid-up capital between Birr 20,000 (birr 2,500) and Birr 500,000.

The opportunities in micro business encourage poor individuals and families to start their own businesses, earn income, and benefit their communities (Gebreeyesus, 2009) Applying microenterprise to environmentalism provides an opportunity for cooperation between economic development and environmental sustainability. intention. Thus, definitions depend on the government policies. In Ethiopian context Micro enterprise (ME) Small and medium enterprise investment paid up capital not Exceeding Br 20,000 Investment paid up capital Br 20,000-50,000.

Micro and Small Scale Enterprises (MSEs) are lifeblood of most economies.

What is stated or identified as micro and small enterprises in many industrialized countries may differ in other developing countries. Most definitions of MSEs depend up on the policy makers (financiers, labor officers, traders and service personnel). The common criteria that are used by different countries are

1. Number of employees
2. Asset employed

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- 3. Sales turn over or
- 4. Combination of the above three factors.

Self check	Discussion test
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1. Discuss the difference between micro and small business

1.4 Identify and utilize a range of sources to gather information about micro Basic Clerical Support opportunities identified

Kind of Information Required by Potential Entrepreneurs

A. Marketing information

1. Type

- Suppliers of materials, goods and services
- Customers – their buying power
- Competition from other businesses
- Distribution channel for the product(s)
- Pricing of goods and services
- Promotional strategies
- _Market opportunities

2. Sources

- Customers
- Suppliers
- Business journals and catalogues
- Libraries
- Business Associations
- Trade fairs
- Internet

B. Technical information

1. Type

- Designing premises, products, stationery, web sites, etc.
- Nature of product/service you would like to engage in
- Tools and equipment you require
- Materials needed for your production process

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- Technology choice, etc.
- Advice on location and premises

2. Sources

- Friends and colleagues
- Bureau of Standards
- Association of Manufacturers
- Industrial Research Development Institutes
- Industrial Estates
- Internet

C. Information and communication technology (ICT)

1. Type

- Hardware, software and networks
- Packages on accounting and production
- Web sites for the business
- Databases appropriate for the business
- Internet
- Phones, both fixed and cell/mobile

2. Sources

- Local business networks
- Trade magazines
- References
- Trade journals
- Trade fairs

D. Financial Information

1. Type

- Finances required
- Sources of business finance
- Economic conditions and trends within your community
- Management and financial controls
- Accounts and book-keeping systems
- Software packages
- Audit requirements
- Taxation matters
- Business purchase facilities
- Unemployment benefits funds
- Leasing companies
- Savings and loans cooperatives
- Special funds for vulnerable groups
- Franchising companies

2. Sources

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- Venture capital funds
- Banks and other financial institutions
- Microfinance institutions
- Development loans and grants
- Financial institutions targeting women
- Mutual credit funds
- Family members and friends
- Suppliers and credit from other business owners
- Internet

Small and micro businesses operate in all industry sectors, but are most prevalent in the agricultural and service sectors. Within the service sector, a large number of small and micro businesses operate in the retail, trade, construction, finance, property and business services industry sector. Micro and small businesses could include:

- Community owned/or run businesses
- Family owned and/or run businesses
- Franchises
- Government owned businesses
- Sole trader owned and/or run businesses
- Other forms of small businesses which meet the accepted definition of a small business

Market Analysis

One of the first stages of a feasibility study is to conduct a thorough market analysis. This is a process in which you determine what products and services already exist in the marketplace, how they are and how effectively they are being delivered. You need to understand the environment your business will be operating in. To understand the market you could analyze:

1. What products/services are available
2. Who provides them
3. How are they accessed?
4. What is the quality of the goods/services
5. How reliable are the goods/services
6. How reliable are the suppliers of the goods/services
7. What complementary/additional/add-on services are available

Once done, it is important to identify and determine any gaps in the market. This becomes a potential position for a profitable new business. It is important to gather as much information as possible when starting a new business. Obviously time is an issue,

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however, the more time and planning you spend on your new business will lead to less chances of failure. “If you fail to plan, you plan to fail.” For effective research, the following resources could help:

- Business advisers
- Business Enterprise Centres (BEC’s)
- Government agencies
- Internet
- Business people
- Mentors
- Friends, family
- Community
- Surveys

1.5 The Processes to Be Undertaken Are Outlined By the Micro Basic Clerical Support to Provide the Products/Services

What are basic clerical duties?

The title of clerical support worker refers to individuals who support or assist co-workers with a wide range of tasks. Some of the most common jobs that fall into this category include typing documents, filing, answering phones, managing mailings, data entry, photocopying, faxing and sorting and delivering incoming mail. Clerical support professionals may also be responsible for maintaining and ordering supplies, and handling other tasks as assigned, such as ordering food for meetings. By taking on these responsibilities and taking them off of others’ plates, they help keep the office running smoothly and ensure that everything remains organized.

Although general clerical support focuses on these general tasks, in some businesses or departments clerical support may be focused on specific activities or require more specialized knowledge. For instance, clerical activities in a finance department may include bookkeeping tasks, managing accounts payable and accounts receivable, assisting with payroll, or sorting and verifying expense reports. If you work in a government office, you may be responsible for filing permits or managing mailers. Regardless of the setting, though, most clerical support involves repetitive, defined tasks, and not strategic or operational work

Self-Check 1	Activity
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1. To provide clerical support to ensure the efficient operation of the product or service what processes to be undertaken Basic Clerical Support. Disuses

2. What most appealed to you when starting your own business? – put mark

Create my own employment	
Do something I enjoy/am passionate about	
No boss	
Avoid office politics	
Escaping corporate life	
Be around my family more	
Opportunity to make more money than if employed	
Improved lifestyle	
Ability to work from home	
Being in control	
General flexibility	
Other	

3. What will be your biggest challenges when starting your own business?

Staffing issues	
Increasing red tape or bureaucracy	
Lack of guidance and support	
Feeling isolated	
Health issues	
Lack of clear vision	
Keeping up with technology	
Gaining business credibility	
Lack of confidence	
Getting the business model right	
Staying motivated	
Getting paid/cash flow	
Dealing with too many aspects of the business	



Not enough hours in the day	
Finding clients or customers	

4. What would you do with a spare birr 5,000? Discuss

Invest some of it in my business and spend some of it on other things	
Spend the money on personal/household items	
Invest the money outside my business	
Invest the money in developing my business	
Don't know	
Other	

5. Discuss what methods do you use to generate new business?

Method 1. -----

Method 2. -----

Method 3. -----

Method n.....-----



Self-Check -2	Activity
---------------	----------

Task 1 - Use this link to download a business plan template http://www.smallbusiness.wa.gov.au/business-plan/
Have a look at this template and see the detail and depth of this document. What do you think?
What is included within a business plan?
How could the development of a business plan help to the success of a business?



Instruction Sheet -2	LG21:Compare personal skills and aspirations with micro Basic Clerical Support opportunities
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This learning guide is developed to provide you the necessary information regarding the following content coverage and topics –

- Identifying Personal reasons for entering into a micro basic clerical support in realistic terms of own **personal commitments, expectations and capabilities**
- Identifying Personal capabilities are matched realistically with basic clerical support opportunities
- Identifying Personal commitments, expectations and capabilities are examined to realistically impacts on the preferred basic clerical support opportunity
- Examining Options to address and minimize the negative impacts and strengthen the positive impacts of these issues

This guide will also assist you to attain the learning outcome stated in the cover page. Specifically, upon completion of this Learning Guide, you will be able to –

- Identify Personal reasons for entering into a micro basic clerical support in realistic terms of own **personal commitments, expectations and capabilities**
- Identify Personal capabilities are matched realistically with basic clerical support opportunities
- Identify Personal commitments, expectations and capabilities are examined to realistically impacts on the preferred basic clerical support opportunity
- Examine Options to address and minimize the negative impacts and strengthen the positive impacts of these issues

Learning Instructions:

7. Read the specific objectives of this Learning Guide.
8. Follow the instructions described

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9. Read the information written in the “Information Sheet”. Try to understand what are being discussed. Ask you teacher for assistance if you have hard time understanding them.

10. Accomplish the “Self-checks”.

Information Sheet-2	LO -2 Compare personal skills and aspirations with micro business opportunities
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2.1 Personal reasons are identified for entering into a micro basic clerical support in realistic terms of own personal commitments, expectations and capabilities

Your business should suit your skills, personality and lifestyle and be sufficiently challenging enough to hold your interest. You are more likely to succeed if there is a good match between your business venture and your skills, interests and motivations. Think about why you’re going into business. For most people it’s a combination of many factors including:

- a desire to make money;
- greater autonomy and freedom;
- an opportunity to work at something they enjoy doing; or
- the prospect of building an enterprise they can eventually pass on to their children.

If you haven’t decided what type of business you will operate, what are you passionate about that could be a business opportunity?

Avoid the trap of going into a business that may be perfect for someone else, but not for you. A business selling a product that your family uses, recommends and loves may be a good choice. However, the business still needs to be viable and provide adequate income to meet your needs and those of your family.

Life in small business can be inspiring, exciting and fun, but on the down side, it can be lonely, frustrating, stressful and risky. It may involve risk to your personal assets, relationships, reputation and some would say, risk to your sanity. It can involve longer

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hours and more problems than you anticipated, the disappointment of losing sales, and fluctuating income and money worries.

To run a successful business you need to have the support of your family. Often they'll be the ones who pitch in to get something done, who you bounce ideas off and the ones who help with administrative and clerical support. Before embarking on your new business discuss it with your partner, children and so on. Make sure that everyone is prepared for the highs and lows of running a business. Starting and running a business can be physically and emotionally taxing. In the initial stages it is likely that you will be responsible for every aspect of the business including:

- marketing and sales;
- accounts and procurement; and
- supplying the product or service.

Running a business can be demanding and stressful so you need to make sure that you have the physical and emotional ability to cope. Make sure that you realistically plan how you will operate your business and ensure you can meet the challenges of owning your own business. Many business owners can burn out after only a few years of being in business. To avoid burnout manage your hours and ensure that you take time off to refresh.

Successful business operators are self-starters, they have the commitment and self-discipline to organize themselves and get things done. To succeed in business, you are likely to need a whole range of personal qualities or attributes such as:

- commitment, focus and self-discipline
- drive, ambition and initiative
- perseverance, tenacity and staying power
- flexibility and adaptability
- willingness to work hard and to learn new skills
- ability to handle stress and plan for holidays
- prepared to work long hours
- the physical and mental stamina to keep going





Self-Check 1	Activity task
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1. Why do you think people go into business?
2. What would the positives of going into a business be?
3. What would some negatives of going into business be?
4. What advice would you give to people who are going into a micro business? What characteristics do people need?

Self-Check 2	Activity task
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Discuss the skills and knowledge required to develop and operate the business opportunity

1. Personal skills and knowledge may include:

- Ability to priorities obligations and commitments
- Communication skills both with own community and other communities
- Cultural knowledge and sensitivities
- financial management skills and business knowledge
- life skills (including assertiveness)
- literacy and numeracy skills
- time management
- marketing and selling skills
- planning skills
- positive relationships with family, customers, suppliers, staff and community
- self-promotion and self-image
- specific industry and local knowledge

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Self-Check-3	Activity task
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1. Define Business information and terminology may include terms frequently used in business such as

- balance sheet
- cost
- liabilities
- margin
- mark-up
- pricing
- profit
- return
- sales
- information relating to businesses such as:
- compliance with legislation, regulations and codes of practice
- financial management
- marketing
- information technology (including e-business)
- production
- quality assurance

Self-Check 4	Activity task
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Discuss the appropriate learning opportunities to rectify gaps in personal skills and knowledge learning opportunities may include:

- coaching, mentoring and/or supervision
- courses
- informal training
- personal study
- recognition of competence or skills recognition
- work experience
- workplace training

2.2 Personal capabilities are matched realistically with the identified basic clerical support opportunities

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Being a member of the clerical support staff can be an ideal way to begin work at an organization. Most clerical jobs require minimal education and allow workers to learn valuable office skills on the job. Meanwhile, daily interaction with employees at all levels is valuable exposure if you aspire to move up in a company

Duties

Clerical support staffers are distinguished by their job titles, which also determine their duties. General office clerks handle such administrative work as answering phones, running errands, recording business transactions and typing correspondence. Information clerks collect, organize and locate records, and submit reports to other employees or the general public. Accounting clerks, also known as auditing clerks and bookkeepers, record financial transactions through spreadsheets and financial software, reconcile amounts, and produce accounting reports such as balance sheets. Material recording clerks handle the information needed to keep supply chains functioning efficiently, including managing shipping schedules and controlling inventory.

Qualifications

For most clerical positions, no educational qualifications are typically needed beyond a high school diploma or General Educational Development credential. Employers typically train clerical support staff on the job either by pairing them with more experienced clerks or placing them under the supervision of a manager. Because computers are used extensively in business -- to track shipments, manage inventory and store customer information, for example -- familiarity with hardware and software programs be an advantage when job hunting. Many trade schools and community colleges offer subjects and certificates that can be helpful to clerical work, such as using spreadsheets and word processors, or basic accounting procedures.

Advancement

Clerical workers who gain some experience and additional training can advance to higher-level positions, such as supervisor. They can often obtain additional education on the company dime as long as the degree benefits the company, such as when a

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general office clerks earns a Bachelor of Arts degree in business administration to become a department manager. With effort and time, clerks can even advance to become chief executive officers, such as in the case of Charles White. He started as a note clerk for Victoria Bank and Trust in 1958 and became the chief executive officer of International Bank of Commerce-Corpus Christi in 1995, according to the Corpus Christi Caller.

2.3 Personal commitments, expectations and capabilities are examined to realistically identify impacts on the preferred basic clerical support opportunity

Here are realistically identified basic clerical support opportunity have examined so far:

1. Self-management and personal wellness

Build personal and professional development strategies and goals with a clear focus on effectively managing stress and balancing work/life commitments.

- Assess personal feelings and effectively keep emotions in perspective.
- Showcase empathy and understanding with others.
- Cultivate and foster habits of wellness to increase focus, productivity and impact.
- Develop and demonstrate resiliency within a professional setting and other stressful situations.
- Gain awareness of available wellness resources and support and ask for help when needed.

2. Active listening and effective communication

Accurately receive and interpret verbal and non-verbal messages from direct reports, peers, colleagues, and supervisors. Clearly and effectively articulate thoughts and to varied audiences in writing and in presentation.

- Adapt speaking approaches to suit different audiences.
- Communicate effectively and professionally through diverse channels (social media, emails, verbal communication).
- Express ideas in a coherent manner.
- Write/edit letters, position papers, proposals, web content and complex technical reports clearly and effectively.

3. Critical thinking and problem solving

Exercise sound reasoning to analyze issues, make decisions, overcome problems, address ambiguity and find relevant information.

- Obtain, interpret, and use knowledge, facts, and data to resolve problems.
- Demonstrate creativity, originality and inventiveness.
- Easily adapt new technologies and applications to address work challenges and apply computing skills to solve problems.

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4. Teamwork and collaboration

Build collaborative relationships with colleagues and clients representing diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, religions, lifestyles, disciplines, and viewpoints.

- Assume various roles within a team structure.
- Effectively manage and negotiate different personalities in order to reach a common goal.
- Understand how to problem solve when encountering challenging workplace dynamics.

5. Leadership and project management

Develop professional, working relationships with colleagues, peers, and supervisors/advisors, and leverage the strengths of others to achieve common goals.

- Develop a strategically conceptualized plan to identify and achieve goals.
- Utilize interpersonal skills to coach, develop, motivate and gain buy-in from others.
- Organize, prioritize and delegate work.
- Identify opportunity areas to more successfully achieve goals.
- Leverage diverse talent pool to maximize team results.

6. Professionalism and work ethic

Demonstrate personal accountability and effective work habits (e.g., punctuality, working productively with others and time/workload management), and understand the impact of non-verbal communication on professional image.

- Demonstrate integrity and behave ethically.
- Make responsible decisions that consider the interests of the larger community.
- Assume responsibility when mistakes are made and learn from them in future situations.
- Communicate with colleagues in language appropriate for the work. environment and suitable for a diverse environment.
- Go above and beyond to make positive impressions.
- Understand data privacy and security issues particular to the workplace.

7. Career Management

Identify and express one's skills, strengths, knowledge and experiences relevant to both the desired position and career goals, and identify areas necessary for professional growth.

- Assess current role and how it will lead to future prospects.
- Understand and take necessary steps to find and pursue opportunities.

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- Articulate impact on workplace by effectively communicating and illustrating skills, competencies, knowledge and experiences.
- Self-advocate for professional development and advancement.
- Understand current industry's market and relationship to the overall economy.

Many higher education institutions have developed their own customized competencies for their students, and we hope that this approach at Penn will be similarly helpful for us as administrative staff as well as to the students we serve. It is clear that the role of career advisers is not necessarily to assist them in gaining all of these competencies. Many fall outside of the reach of a career services office. But we can certainly play a key part in helping students understand the importance of these traits from the prospective of employers, to point them towards experiences that help them develop and practice these competencies, and perhaps most important, to help them be able to communicate the competencies they do have in clear, illustrative and relevant ways during their job search and career development.

2.4 Options are examined to address and minimize the negative impacts and strengthen the positive impacts of these issues

Bringing energy and initiative to your job every day shows commitment. Caring more about your work and your organization will show in the results you produce. Showing commitment can demonstrate your leadership potential to managers and lead to career opportunities. Additionally, an effective and dedicated manager is the most influential factor in employees' commitment about why they commit to their jobs.

Professionalism

Attending to the details of your job demonstrates commitment to the workplace culture. For example, being punctual and prepared when at work, respecting workplace property and policies or attending meetings when expected shows that you can handle job obligations. Respecting office rules regarding such things as dress code, personal phone use or office romances shows maturity and professionalism. Too many breeches of workplace basics can undermine your credibility when your commitment needs to shine. Going beyond basics by putting in extra hours, taking up others' slack and delivering extra service to others shows leadership-level dedication.

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Putting Customers First

Striving for customer satisfaction shows your commitment to your employer’s objectives. Even if your job doesn’t involve interacting with customers directly, your job plays a role in keeping your organization’s customer base loyal and growing. Handling every task with the idea fresh in your mind that your work impacts customers, company profits and your paycheck may also boost your pride in your work and lead to improved job performance.

Teamwork

Making significant contributions to any group task shows commitment to your work team. Displaying confidence in your ideas, skills and solutions is a trait that employers value. Being a reliable follower shows commitment to your team’s objectives and an understanding of the part you play in a bigger picture. Taking leadership roles and organizing team members to cooperate with each other, or collaborate with other groups, shows a commitment to big picture achievement

Keep Motivation Strong

Keeping yourself and your co-workers or subordinates motivated can show your commitment to the overall challenges and demands of your business. It can be challenging keeping up high performance standards when your co-workers’ commitment to their jobs wanes. Encouraging employees to develop new skills, improve operations and process or take new risks to advance the business can awaken new levels of commitment.

Honesty

Dishonesty sometimes creeps into the workplace through a variety of practices: stealing personal property, sabotaging a coworker's client presentation, or taking someone's idea and making it your own. As an employee with a strong work ethic, you know better than this. Refrain from lying or cheating to make others look bad. Instead, take responsibility for mistakes, own up to failures and keep the lines of communication open with everyone involved.

Discretion

Workplace gossip can be destructive. If you gossip about your peers, bosses or even clients, it's bad for business and morale. Rely on your good workplace ethics and refuse to engage in gossip or even listen it. Gently encourage others to mind their own business, or else address the person or situation head-on so that assumptions and badmouthing can stop. Doing so helps eliminate resentment among coworkers and helps keep morale up.

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Respect for Diversity

People with a good work ethic understand the importance of a diverse workplace. When you value everybody's contributions – regardless of ability, age, gender or race – it allows for more creativity and better problem solving. Diversity in the workplace contributes to successful client interactions. Overall, employee morale is higher.

Respects Others

Your strong work ethic shows up in your behavior and practices. You are rarely late. You respect everyone's time, from coworkers to clients to interviewees. You're polite, conscientious of people's feelings and considerate of workers in a shared workspace. Use your time wisely so that deadlines are met. Keep personal phone conversations quiet so as not to disrupt others. Out of respect, hear and consider everyone's opinions.

Cooperative

Having a good work ethic means you cooperate with others. While work may not always be satisfying or enjoyable, you see the bigger picture and do what is necessary for the team and company. Instead of debating every issue and finding reasons why things can't get done, you use strong conflict resolution skills to solve problems and manage the workload.

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Instruction Sheet 1	LG22:Access Basic Clerical Support learning opportunities, mentoring and advice
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This learning guide is developed to provide you the necessary information regarding the following content coverage and topics –

- Listing The skills and knowledge required to develop and operate the basic clerical support opportunity
- **Identifying Basic clerical support information and terminology** and interpreted
- **Identifying** Gaps in **personal skills and knowledge** which are needed for the business
- **Identifying** Appropriate **learning opportunities** to rectify gaps in personal skills and knowledge
- **Identifying** Potential mentors, advisers, networks and sources of assistance for the business

This guide will also assist you to attain the learning outcome stated in the cover page. Specifically, upon completion of this Learning Guide, you will be able to

- List The skills and knowledge required to develop and operate the basic clerical support opportunity
- **Identify Basic clerical support information and terminology** and interpreted
- **Identify** Gaps in **personal skills and knowledge** which are needed for the business
- **Identify** Appropriate **learning opportunities** to rectify gaps in personal skills and knowledge
- **Identify** Potential mentors, advisers, networks and sources of assistance for the business

Learning Instructions:

1. Read the specific objectives of this Learning Guide.
2. Follow the instructions described in number --- to --.
3. Read the information written in the “Information Sheets ---”. Try to understand what are being discussed. Ask you teacher for assistance if you have hard time understanding them.

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4. Accomplish the “Self-check ----” in page ___.
5. Ask from your teacher the key to correction (key answers) or you can request your teacher to correct your work. (You are to get the key answer only after you finished answering the Self-check ----).
6. If you earned a satisfactory evaluation proceed to “Information Sheet ----”. However, if your rating is unsatisfactory, see your teacher for further instructions or go back to Learning Activity #-----.
7. Submit your accomplished Self-check----. This will form part of your training portfolio.
8. Read the information written in the “Information Sheet ----”. Try to understand what are being discussed. Ask you teacher for assistance if you have hard time understanding them.
9. Accomplish the “Self-check ---” in page ___. Ask from your teacher the key to correction (key answers) or you can request your teacher to correct your work. (You are to get the key answer only after you finished answering the Self-check ----).

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Information Sheet-3	LO – 3 Access Basic Clerical Support learning opportunities, mentoring and advice Referring regularities
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3.1 The skills and knowledge required are listed to develop and operate the basic clerical support opportunity

What type of person are you? What skills and knowledge do you have? What required skills for business do you currently not possess and therefore what do you need to improve?

It is important to consider vital business skills needed in your field. What you lack needs to be detected so that you can improve, learn and develop.





3.2 Basic clerical support information and terminology are identified and interpreted

Employers look for workers with knowledge, combination of skills, personal traits, and attitudes. They include:

- Well-organized
- Courteous
- Reliable
- Strong work ethic
- Productivity
- Professionalism
- Problem-solving and critical thinking skills
- Good technical, interpersonal and communication skills
- Customer focus
- Discretion
- Multitasking ability
- Teamwork and collaboration skills

3.3 Gaps in personal skills and knowledge which are needed are identified for the business

There will always be what we call ‘skill gaps’ – at any workplace, in any industry. However, for result-driven businesses – where leveraging on employees’ performance is of the utmost importance – skill gaps are the biggest detriment to attaining business goals. And when it comes to employee training and development, the most important concern is how to properly identify skill gaps, and coming up with interventions to address those.

What are skill gaps?

There is actually no set skills gap definition, but **the general consensus is that these are deficiencies in performance caused by lack of skills for the workplace** – or the lack of development thereof. Another definition can be the evident contrast between the ideal performance and the employees’ actual performance.

In terms of short-term strategy, the organization’s goal is to bridge these gaps through different interventions (training, developmental, and organizational, etc.).

The immediate goal is to mitigate the effect on business metrics as soon as possible.

The business’ long-term goal, on the other hand, is to address these skill gaps by improving certain processes and rectify root causes. The desired result is to avoid these instances of competency gaps from ever happening again.

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How to Identify Skill Gaps in the Workplace?

The first step is to take a closer look at the performance of employees in order to identify skill gaps. This involves gathering data in order to determine competency gaps and find root causes that need addressing. As a side note, this process is also critical in the identification of training needs of employees.

Looking at the wrong data or administering the wrong approach can have severe consequences when it comes to your company's training, development, and even operational processes and interventions. And for that reason, we'd like to focus on data gathering methodologies when it comes to identifying gaps for essential skills for the workplace. There are numerous methodologies that you can employ in data-gathering. The best approach, however, is to utilize at least three. Not only will it give you different perspectives on the issue, but will also provide you more insight on what the real issues and root causes are. More importantly, multiple data sources can be used to cross-validate data, confirm analysis results, and ultimately, properly ratify and identify skill gaps.

For training professionals, determining competency gaps is one of the most effective methods of determining training needs. Not only that, it doesn't only determine what skills need to be trained or developed in the short-term, but it also affects T & D strategy in the long run. Here are five approaches that you can use to gather data and assess your employees:

1. Key Performance Indicators

In any business, key performance indicators (KPIs) determine how a person contributes to the business as an employee. Not only that, it also determines career progression, compensation, rewards, benefits, and even retention. KPIs are also very accurate indicators of competency gaps in the workplace.

KPIs are the best sources to use in order to identify skill gaps. Individual employees may have some issues with their KPIs and performance. These isolated instances can be immediately remediated with appropriate interventions. The most important indicators to watch out for though are overall performance trends. Trends are usually signs that there is something wrong with a process and would require more work as compared to one-off interventions.

2. Employee Assessments

Assessments are excellent ways to identify skill gaps. And how can you assess your employees? That's easy: tests and quizzes are one thing but other methods also include practical assessments or role play.

Assessments are excellent ways to identify skill gaps.

One key point here is to base the assessments on real work scenarios, to identify the actual skill gaps. As for how this can be implemented fast and effectively good approach to identify skill gaps is through feedback. There is an appraisal method called the 360-Degree Review. Feedback on an employee's performance is solicited from peers, managers, and direct reports of an employee. Sometimes it also includes customers, clients, and vendors as well.

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This appraisal approach can be adapted as a data gathering method too. Instead of getting feedback on a particular employee, you can get responses regarding certain **performance issues of employees** as a whole. And don't forget to get feedback from the employees themselves too. They would be the best persons to ask about what skills they think they need more work on. You can employ different activities to do this. The most efficient one is through the use of employee surveys because these easy to create and quick to deploy. Surveys can be quite limiting though.

Other approaches include focus-group discussions and interviews. While these may take up more time, the face-to-face interaction allows the interviewer to ask follow-up questions or have the respondents expound on their feedback.

More importantly, the 360-Degree Review approach is also a good way of getting qualitative data. We all know that numbers do not tell the entire story. One of the best ways of finding out what's really happening is directly asking those who are involved with business operations.

4. Observations

There is a management concept that posits that in order to understand the most common issues in the workplace; you would need to spend time on the front lines. This practice is definitely quite useful because it gives someone – the data gatherer, for example – a firsthand experience of what's going in an employee's work environment. Observing employees at work is the perfect opportunity to find out how different factors come into play when there are apparent skill gaps. It was mentioned that numbers don't really tell the story in all its entirety.

First-hand observation helps you find the 'missing pieces' – information not usually found in KPIs and employee feedback – to help you piece the skill-gap puzzle together.

Observations also give you (or the management) more insight on the real situation. There are even some instances where you might even discover some information or root causes that aren't easily visible to the staff.

5. Benchmarking Performance. Another approach to identify skill gaps in the workplace is by bench-marking the performance of the organization's top performers. This sets a point of reference on what the needed skills for success in the workplace are.

Observation is usually the main activity used when benchmarking top performers. This process draws out the best practices from your 'A-employees.' To add, it also gives a demonstration of the ideal competencies at work. These, in turn, can be used as skill templates – an employee profile for soft skills for the workplace – for example. As part of a short-term strategy, you can compare the skills of employees identified as having skill gaps with that of the template. You can then base the appropriate interventions from there.

As part of a long-term strategy, you can base the entire employee cycle on that proven template. You can focus hiring based on that benchmarked profile. You can also train and develop the skills as dictated by the rubric. Then you may assess performance using the template and reward employees that exemplify the benchmarked skills.

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3.4 Appropriate learning opportunities are identified to rectify gaps in personal skills and knowledge

A skills gap is the difference between skills that employers want or need, and skills their workforce offer. Conducting a skills gap analysis helps you identify skills you need to meet your business goals. It can also inform your employee development and hiring programs. **Here’s how to conduct a skills gap analysis:**

Step 1: Plan

You can perform a skills gap analysis on two levels:

- **Individual:** You can identify the skills a job requires and compare them to an employee’s actual skill level.
- **Team/company:** You can determine if your employees have the skills to work on an upcoming project or if you need to hire externally. This analysis can help you target your employee training programs to develop the skills you need.

Here’s an overview of skills gap analyses, including scope, examples of when to conduct a skills gap analysis and ways to close skills gaps:

Scope	Who is in charge of the process	When to conduct a skills gap analysis	How to respond to skills gaps
Individual level	Team leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in employee’s duties • Poor performance review • Need for new skills for a promotion or new project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Training ✓ Succession Planning ✓ Mentoring initiatives
Team/company level	Team leader HR External consultants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problems meeting business goals • Strategy shifts that require new skills or developing old ones • Using new technologies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Hiring ✓ Training programs ✓ Mentoring initiatives

HR can initiate team and company-wide skills gap analyses by holding a meeting with managers to explain the process. It can also be a good idea to hire an external

consultant to conduct a skills gap analysis. Hiring an outside evaluator can make the process more objective and will free up staff time to focus on other relevant work.

Step 2: Identify important skills

Some employers say they have difficulty filling jobs because of skill gaps. But others argue that skill gaps are a product of unrealistic expectations. Identify the skills you need by answering two questions:

- What skills do we value as a company?
- What skills do our employees need to do their jobs well now and in the future?

Consider your company’s job descriptions, business objectives and company values. Think of the new skills your company might need in coming years. You could also survey team members on what skills they think are missing. Their insights could prove invaluable and involving your employees can help them feel that they’re contributing to your company’s growth.

Here’s an example of how to list and prioritize skills employees, teams and companies need:

	Importance	Skill level required
Leadership	High	Excellent
SAP knowledge	Moderate	Good
Initiative	High	Excellent

Numerical rating scales can be a more practical way to assess skills gaps when you want to aggregate individual scores. You could use a five-point or three-point system.



Ensure you have explicitly defined scales. For example, a scale of 1 to 5 could range from poor to excellent, or inexperienced to expert.

Step 3: Measure current skills

To measure skill levels, you could use:

- Surveys and assessments.
- Interviews with employees.
- Feedback from performance reviews.
- Skills management software, like Skills DB Pro and Track Star that can make a skills gap analysis much less time-consuming.

Alternatively, you can measure skills by creating a skills spreadsheet specific to each individual position. For example:

Position: Telesales Representative

	Importance	Required level	Actual level
Negotiation skills	High	5	4
CRM software	High	3	3
Excel	Moderate	4	2

Sometimes, a skills gap can result from limited experience, especially in the case of new hires. Consider on-the-job coaching as a way to close a skills gap, instead of formal training. An employee with the scores listed above probably doesn't need training in Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software. But, they do have negotiation and Excel skills gaps. Negotiation skills are marked as more important than Excel, so employee training and development should begin there.

Step 4: Act on the data

There are two ways to fill skills gaps: training and hiring. Decide which approach (or combination) works best for each skill gap.

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Train for skill gaps

More than half of companies train and develop their staff to fill open positions. Offer training for employees in skills you'd like to strengthen, for example using SAP or Excel. The right training can help you close gaps between current and desired skill levels. You can use professional training firms to arrange workshops, training sessions and seminars for your staff. Along with formal training, you can also offer:

- Subscriptions, online courses and educational material.
- Voluntary employee mentorship programs.
- Opportunities to attend events and conferences.
- Opportunities to obtain certifications like Project Management Professionals (PMP) or Professional Certified Marketer (PCM).

Hire for skill gaps

If your skills gaps are too wide to minimize with training, consider hiring to bring new knowledge and skills into your company. You could:

- **Modify your hiring process** to screen for skills your company needs. For example, you can add skills assessments (like writing samples) and numerical reasoning tests.
- **Use structured interviews** to reduce biases and ensure your criteria for choosing a new hire are strictly job-related.
- **Source passive candidates.** Often, candidates who have the skills you need aren't looking for a job. Use effective sourcing techniques (like recruiting on Twitter and sourcing using Boolean logic) to find and contact promising candidates.

Conducting a skills gap analysis can be time-consuming. But the results are worth it. Knowing which skills you need to grow as a business will help you hire – and retain – the right people.

3.5 Potential mentors, advisers, networks and sources of assistance are identified for the business

Business mentoring encourages entrepreneurs to think like business people. Would-be successful business owners need assistance from others who have an intimate knowledge of how business works. Many small business owners try to get that information from business books and classes. While these can be helpful on their own, they are more helpful alongside business mentoring. In a business mentoring

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relationship, a seasoned business owner meets with a new or potential business owner one-on-one to give advice and boost morale.

1. Asking questions and getting advice

The biggest benefit of having a business mentor is having someone you can ask questions and get advice. As a new business owner, you are likely to get more advice than you ask for from people like family members, friends and the people who own the store next door. While some of their advice may be sound, your mentor can help you sort out which you should follow while advising you on more complicated business matters that your friends or family would not know how to solve.

2. A different perspective

Business mentors can help you look at problems and situations from perspectives that you would not have thought of on your own. For example, as a new business owner, you may have trouble looking at your business through the eyes of a customer, potential investor or government official. Your business mentor, who has dealt with these people often, can help you understand how your business will look to these individuals.

3. Improving key skills

Mentors are not like advisers and consultants, who care only about the business venture. Instead, business mentors help you develop your business skills. For example, if your employees are constantly complaining that they don't understand project directions, your business mentor can work with you to help you improve how you communicate with your staff. This way, you will have a better understanding of how to communicate with your staff both now and in the future.

4. Venting with someone you trust

Owning a business can be stressful and frustrating. As a business owner you'll often need to vent with someone you trust. Business owners cannot vent to their partners, employees or customers without causing instability in the structure of the business. However, once you vent to a mentor, you can often start the process of working with the mentor to solve the cause of your frustration. For example, if lazy employees are

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plaguing your business, you may need to vent to your mentor before you can think positively enough about the employees in order to develop a plan to motivate them.

5. Expanding your network

Business mentors can put you in touch with contacts who can help you make your business more successful. The more networking you do, the more people you meet. And the more people you meet, the greater the odds are that you will have someone in your rolodex who can help you solve business problems. For example, your business mentor may introduce you to another of his mentees, an award-winning recent college grad who is looking for an entry level position in web design. Perhaps you are looking for someone to help you design your new company's website. Thanks to the mentor's contact, your search for a valuable asset may have just become easier.

6. Methods and strategies

In addition to simply giving advice and helping improve your personal business skills, business mentors can prepare you with a library of methods and strategies that you can pull from throughout your career as a business owner. They can not only tell you, from experience, how important it is to create a positive environment and boost morale, but they can also give you strategies for doing so. For example, mentors can help you learn strategies for observing employees to see if they are happy at work, dealing with irate customers or handling financial problems.

7. Long-Lasting relationships

Although some mentor-mentee relationships are short-lived, if you hit it off with your mentor, you can foster a long-lasting relationship through which you and your mentor can continue to collaborate for the rest of your career. This will give you the consistency and resources you need to maintain a successful business.

8. Confidence to make better decisions

Knowing that you have a credible mentor to turn to can give you confidence when facing difficult business situations. Similarly, good mentors will praise you when you have

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made good decisions. Praise can enable you to see yourself as a wise and experienced business person. Seeing yourself confidently this way will help you stand your ground when you must defend or stand by your business decisions.

9. A Gentle nudge

Starting a business is difficult, and many business owners face challenges early in the process. However, many business owners go through the same types of struggles. Hearing first-hand from your mentor about her experiences will help you realize that the struggles you are going through now will prepare you to be a better businessperson in the future.

10. A Chance to give back

Mentees are not the only people who benefit from business mentoring. Business mentors also experience benefits thanks to collaborative learning. By helping others improve their business skills, business mentors may improve their own skills. They may be inspired with new ideas, meet new contacts and learn new business strategies from their mentees.

Self-Check 1	Activity
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Give yourself a rating between 1 and 5 with the following skills (1=poor, 5=highly competent):

Skills	Rating 1-5
Management Skills:	
Planning	
Organizing	
Scheduling	
Assigning/delegating	
Prioritizing obligations and commitments	
Directing	
Setting Standards	



Work under stress	
Working with people	
Leading	
Time Management	
Stick to rules	
Financial Skills:	
Calculating	
Budgeting	
Predicting/projecting	
Recognizing financial problems	
Solving financial problems	
Investment principles	
Manage finances	
Basic bookkeeping	
Understanding of tax	
Clerical Skills:	
Filing	
Record keeping	
Typing (Speed and accuracy)	
Basic administration skills	
Data Entry	
Customer Service:	
Friendly and polite	
Answer phones	
Do you enjoy working with people	
Complaining customers	
Selling Skills:	
Persuading/Convincing	
Determining value	
Promoting Sales	



Knowledge of product	
Closing sales	
Communication skills:	
Reasoning	
Organizing	
Writing	
Listening	
Explaining	
Reading	
Public Speaking	
Correct English usage	
Good sense of timing	
Cultural knowledge and sensitivity	
Marketing/public relations:	
Planning campaigns	
Understanding media	
Understanding of marketing concepts	
Generic:	
Work under stress	
Work long hours	
Work without direction	
Motivating yourself as your own boss	

LAP test 1	Activity
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Major Task:

This will take you about 2 weeks to complete. You can work individually or in a pair.

1. Your task is to develop a business that you think could be a niche in its current market.
2. Your first page needs to be simply a brainstorm of all the different business ideas you have thought of.
3. Use this link to download a business plan template and complete it in reference to your business. This needs to be done to a professional standard and shown to your teacher in order to continue with the next step <http://www.smallbusiness.wa.gov.au/business-plan/>
4. Once the business plan is completed you need to produce a number of forms for your business to begin operation:
 - a. Business name
 - b. Work out how to apply for a Tax File Number (TFN)
 - c. Work out how to register your business name
 - d. Work out how to apply for an ABN
 - e. Explain what type of company insurance you need
 - f. If importing products from overseas, you will need to explain how to organize a shipping agent, and what taxes the Australian government will place on your item
 - g. Explain your marketing strategies
 - i. Consider target market
 - ii. Your Point of Difference
 - iii. SWOT analysis
 - iv. Marketing Mix (4 P's)
 - v. Your competitors
 - vi. Advertising strategies
 - vii. Marketing strategies (how do you plan to enter the market?)
 - viii. How do you intend to attract customers?



LAP test 2	Activity
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Interview a micro or small business owner and write their answers to the following questions. Submit your answers as a formal business report with title page, table of contents and your name and page number in footer at bottom right hand corner.

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1. Business name?
2. Name of person you interviewed and their role?
3. What does the business do?
4. How long the business has been in operation?
5. How many employees?
6. How many hours per week on average would they work?
7. Has the person ever worked under someone else's business?
8. Would they recommend you going into business?
9. Any strategies or advice to consider before entering into business?
10. What do they enjoy about working for themselves?
11. What do they not enjoy about working for themselves?
12. Add Your own Question
13. Add Your own Question
14. Add Your own Question
15. Add Your own Question

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Operation Sheet- 1	Need a business idea
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Purpose:

This learning outcome aims to provide trainees with the knowledge, skill and attitude teamwork. Understanding the concept of based business helps to don't need a lot of funding. Just energy, passion and the drive to succeed

Equipment, Tools and Materials:

- ✓ **Computer**
- ✓ **White board**
- ✓ **White board marker &Duster**
- ✓ **Lecture room**
- ✓ **Printer**
- ✓ **Paper**

Prepare business plan on bicycle repair. In many parts of the country, this business tends to be seasonal but you can find ways around that

Operation Sheet- 2	Need a business idea
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2. Consider the following website and read through some small business success stories. Try and find inspiration in these stories and again look for tips, which you could use. <http://www.inc.com/articles/201105/small-business-success-stories-zanes-cycles.html>

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