

# SKILLS CARDS

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How to use  
Example  
Cards

# Skills Cards

The Skills Cards help you to determine if you have what it takes to start your own business. To be successful you need not only a good idea, but also the skills to implement it. The Skills Cards describe fourteen skills that are important for entrepreneurs. By scoring your own entrepreneurial skills you know which skills you have and which you need to improve.

## Tips for use

You can use the Skills Cards on your own. They can also be used in a group to serve as the basis for a discussion about entrepreneurial skills. The Skills Cards deal with your personality, so it is advised to use the cards in a setting where your trust the people and you can get honest and correct feedback.

Look at the example of FitnessTracker to see how the Skills Cards can be used.

## How to use

With the Skills Cards you investigate whether you have a diverse set of skills needed to start and grow a business. Every skill also has a catch, turning the skill into a hindrance when it is pushed too far. Awareness of these pitfalls will help you to use your skills well.

## Step 1 - determine your skills

On each card there is a definition of a skill. Give your skills a score on a scale from 1 to 5. On each card is defined what a score of 1 means and what a score of 5 means. Divide the cards into three stacks according to the scores you provide:

- Good (4 and 5): These are skills that you know you have. You can clearly identify yourself with the description on the card.
- Average (2 and 3): These are skills that you possess to a certain extent, however there is still room for improvement.
- Bad (1): Skills that you do not have. You know yourself and you know this is not your strong suit.

Look at the piles, how is the distribution of the cards? Are many in the 'good' pile, or do you have your work cut out for you?

## Step 2 - examine each stack.

Examine the skills from the 'good' pile. Investigate whether the pitfalls apply to you. If they do, have a look if and how you can circumvent them. For example, reflecting sufficiently on your actions or asking for feedback from employees or business partners.

Skills that are on the 'average' pile are partly under control. Research how you can become better in these skills. Step out of your comfort zone and see if you can work on this skill independently.

Now look at the 'bad' pile. Can you improve skills from this pile?  
Think of following a course to get better in this skill or hiring an  
employee who has this skill.

# Example FitnessTracker

<b>industry</b>	Digital gadgets
<b>products &amp; services</b>	Sport wearables
<b>size of business</b>	27 employees
<b>revenue</b>	€ 1,720,000
<b>location</b>	Enschede



FitnessTracker, like its name predicts, tracks all matters related to personal fitness. Previously, the company focused on top athletes for whom they developed specialist heart meters. Now FitnessTracker wants to try a new market. The rise of the internet of things (IoT) and the popularity of fitness applications for mobile phones make the consumer market promising. Wearables in particular, such as the watch they have developed, are popular. This is the product that FitnessTracker wants use to enter the consumer market.

## FitnessTracker Skills Cards

For the launch of the new FitnessTracker product, a new department is being set up. Two employees from the existing company will lead this department as if it were a stand-alone company. To investigate their entrepreneurial skills, they play with the skills cards. After they made three piles, they discuss the choices that they made that will influence the future department. They appear to have little experience with leadership. Because they are going to hire people to make the software of the sports watch, they decide that they want to see a quick improvement in this skill. To do this they are going to do a course.

# skills cards

## 1 Goal oriented

Successful entrepreneurship starts with setting clear objectives and working towards them. Focus and a goal-oriented attitude provides direction for your company and increases the chance that goals are achieved.



- 1 You start immediately and just go and see where you end up.
- 5 You aim high and have a great need to measure your performance at fixed points in time.

### Pitfalls

You have little flexibility and thus are often unable to respond to change.

The need to get to your goal creates an unpleasant work atmosphere or collaboration.

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## 2 Independent

Starting a company gives you the freedom to decide how you want to handle things. It also means that you often have to depend on yourself.



- 1 You enjoy getting work assigned to you and rather leave decision-making to others.
- 5 You know exactly how you want to organize your business and are not afraid to make decisions.

### Pitfalls

You insist on checking everything yourself and don't let go. This way your company cannot grow.

Employees experience little freedom because they do not get to make their own decisions.

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## 3 Perseverance

Especially in the early years of a start-up not everything goes well. With plenty setbacks that you have to overcome. A good entrepreneur has a clear vision and works purposefully in the face of adversity.



- 1 You have difficulty persevering when faced with hardship you often just change your focus to other projects.
- 5 You believe in your ideas, even if you face adversity you push through. You often manage to bring difficult projects to a good end.

### Pitfalls

Not all projects can succeed, you have to acknowledge this and leave some projects behind.

Unnecessary stubbornness can result in continuing a project against better judgment.

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# skills cards

## 4 Creative

Entrepreneurship requires the capacity to play with ideas and, despite limitations, find new solutions. Entrepreneurs are often creative and see opportunities where others do not see them.



- 1 You often look to others for new ideas and solutions.
- 5 You don't like to follow the beaten track and often come up with new or better solutions to problems.

### Pitfalls

The beaten track is well used for a reason, in some cases it might be better to learn from existing solutions instead of re-inventing the wheel.

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## 5 Flexible

Entrepreneurs often end up in unexpected situations. A flexible attitude ensures that you can respond quickly and correctly to such a situation. Even if that means that you have to deviate from existing goals.



- 1 You are quite stubborn and don't like to deviate from your plans
- 5 You do aren't easily rendered speechless and quickly adjust your plans if the situation demands it.

### Pitfalls

Consider others, not everyone can respond to new situations so quickly.

Be aware that you do not come across as fickle, being able to adjust to a new situation is something different than saying yes to everyone.

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## 6 Risk aware

Investing comes with risks. Being risk aware is shown in how you actively and consciously interact with these risks.



- 1 You do not like to take risks. Your attitude is reactive and often question yourself about the right approach to risks.
- 5 You deal with risk proactively often seeing risks as opportunities for growth for yourself and your company.

### Pitfalls

Be aware of how many risks you take, you cannot build in a (financial) buffer for too many risks at once.

The line between taking risks proactively and imprudence is thin. Make sure you always understand the consequences of your decisions.

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# skills cards

## 7 Leadership

Even freelancers sometimes hire help. Do you have, or plan on having employees? Good leadership qualities will then come in handy. Task and targeted management of employees helps the growth of your company and your employees.



- 1 You like staying on top of things and have trouble leaving employees in charge.
- 5 You find it easy to transfer tasks and responsibilities to employees.

### Pitfalls

Employees are given more responsibility than they can handle and are unsure about your role.

There are no clear agreements about responsibilities, employees do not know what they should and should not decide about.

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## 8 Market-oriented

A market-oriented attitude shows you are interested in who your competitors are and what is happening in the market and with your customers. This way your product will always add value for customers.



- 1 You are product-oriented. You think mainly about the qualities of your product without knowing what competitors offer or what customers want.
- 5 You have a clear picture of what competitors do, what your customers want and developments in your market.

### Pitfalls

You continuously adjust your product / service to the wishes of your customer and this way lose sight of your goals.

You constantly compare yourself to the best parties in your market. Consider differences with your company, like budget and manpower.

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## 9 Financial insight

As entrepreneur you need a certain amount of insight and interest in financial matters. There are people who can advise you, but you have to make the final decisions. Financial decisions have great effects on the health of the company.



- 1 You just do not occupy yourself with the financial side of your business and let others make important choices.
- 5 You are fully aware of the financial ins and outs of your company.

### Pitfalls

Obsessing over the numbers can make you forget the human side of your business.

Your pursuit of a financially sound business hinders your ability to take risks which prevents growth of your business.

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# skills cards

## 10 Planning

As an entrepreneur you do many different tasks. It is important to organize them well if you aim to keep your deadlines. Clear planning and prioritization are essential.



- 1 You often get carried away by the task that demands the most attention from you now.
- 5 You keep a structured list of everything you need to do. You know exactly which matters you need to tackle first and which can wait.

### Pitfalls

There is no space in your planning for unexpected things, which means you have limited flexibility.

You do not review your schedule. Prioritization of tasks can change with time, you have to deal with this actively.

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## 11 Negotiate

In almost all matters concerning a company it is important to negotiate. If not, you always pay too much for what you buy, and others pay too little for what you offer.



- 1 You are modest and struggle to confront others.
- 5 You know what you are worth and get good deals both for what you sell and for items that you buy.

### Pitfalls

Negotiation is like a competition for you, you always want to get the best deal. In the end people do not like doing business with you.

You often go for the lowest priced items, however this way you end up with poor quality.

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## 12 Social

To make an idea a reality people and networks are indispensable. Being approachable and easy to connect with helps the growth of your network, getting your product out there and as such the growth of the company.



- 1 You do not like large groups of people and have difficulty striking up a conversation.
- 5 You feel at ease when you are among people and easily make new contacts.

### Pitfalls

At events you talk to many people, but you often forget to promote your company.

You are literally looking over a person's shoulder to find out if more important people are coming in, this is not very friendly.

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## 13 Realistic

As much as we would want to, not everyone can become as successful as Facebook, Uber or McDonalds overnight. Set yourself and your employees realistic and achievable goals.



- 1 Your goals are sky-high and there is a lack of evaluation.
- 5 You have big dreams for your company, but you know how to set goals that are feasible and realistic.

### Pitfalls

You are overly realistic, so much so that employees have difficult pitching more creative ideas to you.

A too realistic attitude suppresses an optimistic attitude which can be useful for some bad moments in the company.

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## 14 Analytical

It is important that you sometimes take a step back and look at your company rationally. This helps to keep the long-term goals in mind.



- 1 You do not dwell on projects that go wrong but continue to the next thing without thinking how you might improve.
- 5 You know yourself, analyse situations and learn from your mistakes.

### Pitfalls

You have a hard time going forward you analyse every situation, which takes too much time.

An analytical approach is often rational but can feel distant.

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