

Are you an innovator  
or executor? take this  
quiz to find out.



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

A traditional view of entrepreneurs is that they are creative individuals who tinker in garages, lack social skills and can't run anything. So when their innovation starts gaining traction, they need to bring in an MBA to run the company. Of course, this is not always true as many innovative entrepreneurs continue to run their own business successfully for years.

The important point is you need both innovation and execution skills in your organization. You have to continually create new products and services that meet real needs in the market and you have to be able to execute on your business concept. If you are strong on both of these skills you are in great shape to grow your company. If you are strong on one or the other, you may need a partner who has the skill set that you lack.

The quiz below will help you see if you are an innovator, executor or both. The six questions for each concept are characteristic of people who tend to have that orientation. If you answer " YES" to five of the six questions for either concept, you are fairly strong on that orientation. If you answer " YES" less than five times, you are not as strong on that concept.

### **Innovation.**

1. I like to provide leadership in unstructured situations.

YES      NO

2. I try to do things differently than they have been done in the past.

YES      NO

3. I like to re-define problems before working on solutions.

YES      NO

4. I question existing assumptions when trying to solve problems.

YES NO

5. I like to discover new problems and find solutions.

YES NO

6. I like to be original, independent, and unconventional.

YES NO

## **Execution.**

1. I like to exercise control in established organizational structures.

YES NO

2. I seek solutions to problems through tried and proven methods.

YES NO

3. I try to eliminate problems by improving efficiency and continuity.

YES NO

4. I prefer to solve existing problems rather than find new ones to address.

YES NO

5. I can maintain high accuracy in detailed work without getting bored.

YES NO

6. I like to be very methodical, precise, reliable and dependable.

YES NO

In my book, " ", I feature dozens of remarkable entrepreneurs who have successfully merged livelihood and lifestyle in places they want to live. While some of these have found team members to help with either innovation or execution, many have developed their skills in both areas. From meeting these business builders, I believe it is possible to enhance both innovation

and execution skills. Here are some things you can do to make improvements.

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### **Improving innovation.**

Innovation is a process, not a natural gift. It requires spending a great deal of time in the field with your customers. See how they respond to your products. See how they respond to your competitors' products. Find out what they like and don't like about existing solutions being offered. Ask them to help you create better solutions to their problems and pain points. Find out how they would like various products designed and delivered. Including your customers in your product development strategy will enhance your ability to innovate. Again, innovation is a process, and the process can be learned.

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### **Improving execution.**

Execution is all about setting and achieving goals that are critical to growing your business. Successful entrepreneurs set weekly, monthly and quarterly goals. The first step is to establish the critical goals you must achieve to move your business forward. The second step is to define the activities required to achieve each goal. For example, if your goal is to improve sales by 20 percent this quarter, important activities might include visiting existing customers to increase their orders, calling on 10 new customers each day and following up with each potential customer within three days. You will significantly improve your execution skills if you set critical goals regularly and complete activities important to achieving your goals.

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In sum, the ability to innovate and the ability to execute are both important to building a successful business. Continue to develop your skills in both areas, and as your business grows, bring in team members who can help you create new products and services, and set and achieve critical business objectives. Good luck building your company.