

Test: Personal situation

Becoming self-employed is no walk in the park. It tends to be an uphill struggle that is dependent on favourable conditions. Your personal circumstances must allow for this change, and you will need the support of your family. Your professional and entrepreneurial know-how are also extremely important. So pack your "entrepreneurial rucksack", and make sure you have everything you need in case of emergencies. Take the following test to check your personal situation.

Central questions: Why do you want to become self-employed?

Rate your personal reasons on a scale of 1 (weak) to 5 (strong). Check the following: Do you want to get out of your current situation, or have you made a conscious decision to become self-employed? The difference is important. You'll only be able to overcome the often challenging initial phase of self-employment if you go into it intentionally as a lifestyle change, rather than as an emergency solution.

The higher you rate your reasons for embarking on self-employment in the green area, the more successful you are likely to be. Answers in the red area should be questioned critically.

	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> I am dissatisfied in my job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> I no longer want to be unemployed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> I don't want to have a boss "above me" anymore.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> I don't earn enough money in my job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> I have a business idea that I would like to bring to fruition.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> I have gained so much management experience and entrepreneurial know-how that the idea of being self-employed excites me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> I would like to shape my own working life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> I have wanted to become self-employed for a long time and now feel certain that this is the right time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Clarify your suitability for the further requirements of self-employment by means of the check-list below. The more times you respond with a confident 'Yes', the more closely you fulfil the requirements for a successful business start-up. Make a note of how you plan to make up for any shortcomings.

Attitude towards self-employment

	Yes	Shortcomings / measures
Are the goals that you wish to fulfil through self-employment realistic?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you thought through your business idea carefully, and are you confident that you have a chance of success?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Will you spend enough time preparing your start-up?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Can you realistically picture your future day-to-day life as a self-employed person?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you know any entrepreneurs (e.g. among your friends or acquaintances)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Personal requirements

	Yes	Shortcomings / measures
Can you foresee what kind of physical and emotional stresses you will experience, particularly in the first few years?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are you physically fit and healthy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you try to keep fit?	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Have you spoken with your family about what will change if you become self-employed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you have the support of your family?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are you prepared to work above-average hours, particularly during the first few years (including evenings and weekends)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are you prepared to forgo holidays, particularly during the first few years?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you keep a clear head even when things get heated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you recover quickly from stressful situations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you implement the goals that you have set yourself?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you tackle unpleasant issues and try to find solutions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you see setbacks and disappointments as challenges to do better next time?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you have the impression that you grow through your work?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you ask for help if you are not able to solve a specific problem yourself?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you accept criticism without feeling insecure?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you had the experience of learning from your mistakes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you know your personal limitations and potential?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are you able to assess the positive and negative elements in risks and make decisions on this basis?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you have personal contacts who will be able to help you if you become self-employed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you enjoy talking to people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you have the impression that you are able to convince your business partners with your arguments and motivate them with your ideas?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you find it easy to put yourself in another person's position?	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Attitude to money

	Yes	Shortcomings / measures
Are you able to sleep at night even if you do not have a fixed income?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are you prepared and in a position to limit yourself financially in the initial phase?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are you disciplined with money, and can you set aside a certain amount (e.g. for loan repayments and taxes) even if it means doing without new acquisitions (e.g. new car, new desk) for a while?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you found out about financing possibilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you already have a good relationship with the account manager of your bank?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you have sufficient financial reserves to get through the initial period (minimum six months)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Would your partner/spouse cover your joint living expenses for the initial phase?	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Professional know-how

	Yes	Shortcomings / measures
Does your previous professional activity correspond to the projects and branch in which you wish to become self-employed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you have verifiable qualifications to convince others that you are a "master of your profession"?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are you conversant with the computer software generally used in your branch?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you know what you can and, more importantly, what you cannot do?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are you able to overcome professional shortcomings (training, partners, colleagues)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are you familiar with the future forecasts for your branch?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you make sure you are always up to date from a professional point of view?	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Entrepreneurial know-how

	Yes	Shortcomings / measures
Do you have commercial or managerial know-how? For example, do you know how a profitability and liquidity plan is created, what simple bookkeeping looks like or what VAT is all about?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you know what kind of official/formal obligations you have to fulfil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you have experience in leading and managing staff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are you able to delegate tasks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are you familiar with marketing and sales?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you ever led sales negotiations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you already have contacts with potential clients, suppliers and/or cooperation partners?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you know what is involved in looking for a site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you know where you can obtain information and advice?	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Source: Federal Ministry for Economics and Labour: Start-up aid: The successful route to self-employment