

5 Reasons Why Entrepreneurs Don't Thrive in School

Why some entrepreneurs are better off skipping the formal education route.

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My brother [Adam](#) and I, like a lot of really successful entrepreneurs, never finished college. Our grades in school were very good, but we didn't go on to college after high school. We simply had too many ambitions to put them on hold for several years while earning degrees.

From Thomas Edison to Mark Zuckerberg and hundreds more, we have plenty of evidence that it's possible to succeed without extensive formal education. Here are five reasons why some champion entrepreneurs don't thrive in school.

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1. They have a need to think outside the box.

You don't succeed as an entrepreneur by doing the same thing everyone else is doing. While our classmates were focused on sports or getting a job at a local fast food place, my brother and I were selling them electronics we imported from overseas and saving for our next big venture.

Unfortunately, too many schools expect all students to follow the same curriculum and attend the same classes. This approach leaves little room for those with the entrepreneurial mindset to flex their creative muscle and try new things.

Entrepreneurs tend to [break the mold](#), bringing consumers a solution to a problem that no other product or service has been able to fix. That's much more rewarding in an entrepreneur's eyes than acing a subject they'll never use after school.

2. They value their independence.

School is all about doing what others tell you to do -- projects, papers, exams and more.

Entrepreneurship involves a lot of independent thought and action, which is restricted when you have an instructor waiting for you to hand back an assignment you never wanted to do in the first place. As a result, entrepreneurs may feel like their independence is stifled in a school setting.

Some people are just born to give directions, not take them. It's why we encourage entrepreneurs to [delegate](#) the tasks that don't excite them.

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3. They prize practical experience over book smarts.

From junior high to the most prestigious MBA programs, students are required to read about, write about, and take tests on hypothetical information. Though some hard sciences may involve

practical learning environments, most curriculums ask students to *think* about real-world scenarios instead of becoming involved in them directly.

Entrepreneurs value experiences over speculation. They want to get out there and build their knowledge through action, not studying a textbook. There's no doubt that Adam and I learned more throughout our childhood entrepreneurial experiences than what a business class could have taught us.

4. They love education but not the institution.

Entrepreneurs are some of the world's greatest risk-takers, and as a result, they're students of probability. Going to school won't guarantee future success, so some entrepreneurs (aspiring or otherwise) may choose to learn in unconventional ways. Podcasts, audiobooks, e-books and [online courses](#) involving business, marketing, leadership and so on are more accessible than ever, which means there are plenty of ways to learn outside the traditional school system.

Some learning methods are simply more effective at making things happen than a classroom course ever could be.

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5. They know success is about more than just getting an A.

As an entrepreneur, you're always being reminded that success isn't always measured by the amount of money your business brings in. The same concept can be applied to grades. Too many students fixate on earning the A rather than storing the information long-term, networking with their peers or building experiences that can be added to their resumes.

Entrepreneurs who don't exactly thrive in school are often focused on achieving success in other ways, like by creating their first website or making valuable connections. My brother and I always saw grades in school as a game. We knew people who could fake their way to good grades by cramming for tests or even cheating, and we never understood the point of playing that game when the only reward was a letter on our report cards. It always made more sense to work toward something real that would benefit us long-term.

There's nothing wrong with choosing the formal education route if that's what you want to do. I'm not here to judge that path. But, many people with entrepreneurial mindsets just don't thrive in school, whether it's because they yearn for more independence or like to learn by doing, and it's great to see that path becoming more accepted as well.