

Why Become an Entrepreneur?
People attracted to entrepreneurship by advantages of starting a business
Jeanne Holden (2007)

(The following one-page essay is taken from the U.S. Department of State publication, *Principles of Entrepreneurship*.)

Why Become an Entrepreneur?

What leads a person to strike out on his own and start a business? Perhaps a person has been laid off once or more. Sometimes a person is frustrated with his or her current job and doesn't see any better career prospects on the horizon. Sometimes a person realizes that his or her job is in jeopardy. A firm may be contemplating cutbacks that could end a job or limit career or salary prospects. Perhaps a person already has been passed over for promotion. Perhaps a person sees no opportunities in existing businesses for someone with his or her interests and skills.

Some people are actually repulsed by the idea of working for someone else. They object to a system where reward is often based on seniority rather than accomplishment, or where they have to conform to a corporate culture. Other people decide to become entrepreneurs because they are disillusioned by the bureaucracy or politics involved in getting ahead in an established business or profession. Some are tired of trying to promote a product, service, or way of doing business that is outside the mainstream operations of a large company. In contrast, some people are attracted to entrepreneurship by the advantages of starting a business. These include:

- Entrepreneurs are their own bosses. They make the decisions. They choose whom to do business with and what work they will do. They decide what hours to work, as well as what to pay and whether to take vacations.
- Entrepreneurship offers a greater possibility of achieving significant financial rewards than working for someone else.
- It provides the ability to be involved in the total operation of the business, from concept to design and creation, from sales to business operations and customer response.
- It offers the prestige of being the person in charge.
- It gives an individual the opportunity to build equity, which can be kept, sold, or passed on to the next generation.
- Entrepreneurship creates an opportunity for a person to make a contribution. Most new entrepreneurs help the local economy. A few – through their innovations –

contribute to society as a whole. One example is entrepreneur Steve Jobs, who co-founded Apple in 1976, and ignited the subsequent revolution in desktop computers.

Some people evaluate the possibilities for jobs and careers where they live and make a conscious decision to pursue entrepreneurship.

No one reason is more valid than another; none guarantee success. However, a strong desire to start a business, combined with a good idea, careful planning, and hard work, can lead to a very engaging and profitable endeavor.

[Author Jeanne Holden is a free-lance writer with expertise in economic issues. She worked as a writer-editor in the U.S. Information Agency for 17 years.]