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EMPOWERING LTUs

Empowering long-term unemployed older workers through coaching & personal branding

**Part 2: Handbook on empowerment strategies and training tools to motivate
and activate long-term unemployed workers back to work.**

TOPIC 5

The Entrepreneur Mindset

*“It doesn’t make sense to hire smart people and then tell them what to do;
we hire smart people so that they can tell us what to do”*

Steve Jobs



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Introduction

Intrapreneurship is considered one of the most important and valuable competences for the re-integration of long term unemployed (LTU) to the labour market. While opinions vary and scholars share divergent views on the definition of intrapreneurship, it is widely accepted that the concept was first coined in 1978 by Gifford Pinchot, even if practiced for many years beforehand, defined as *“A person within an existing organization who takes direct responsibility for turning an idea into a profitable finished product through assertive risk-taking and innovation”* while stating eloquently that *“Intrapreneurship is to existing businesses what entrepreneurship is to the larger market”*. ([EU project Intraprise training platform](#)).

In this respect, the current chapter deals with ways and techniques to cultivate the LTU “Entrepreneur Mindset”, focusing on intrapreneurship and the competences it entails, key for enhancing their employability potential.

Based on the **“Skills & Competences Inventory”** included in the current Handbook, the skillset related to intrapreneurship entails fundamental skills, such as positive thinking, self-awareness and creative thinking-idea generation, skills that go hand-in-hand with other vital skills such as teamwork, self-confidence, self-motivation, organisation, planning and flexibility. As such, the present chapter focuses mostly on how 45+ LTU can be prepared to accept and lead a positive change, gain awareness of their abilities and strengths as well as upskill, according to the principles and through the use of tools of **Positive Psychology**.

A **theoretical background** is laid down here below, accompanied by **exercises** intended for both LTUs and their coaches/ trainers/ career advisors **in the form of “tips”** (i.e.: Tips for LTUs and Tips for Career Advisors).

1. Why “The Entrepreneur Mindset”?

In other words, how do the objectives of this Handbook for Empowering Long-Term Unemployed (LTU) Older Workers through Coaching and Personal Branding and “The Entrepreneur Mindset” relate?

There is no better way to prepare students, employees, jobseekers or professionals seeking to take the next step in their careers, i.e. the economically active population in general, irrespective of their age and gender, for the world of the 21st century, than through cultivating their skills in entrepreneurship. Because, learning the entrepreneurial mindset is a critically valuable 21st century skill and those acquiring and demonstrating it *“have outsized success in their careers - no matter what they do - because by definition they become resourceful and adaptable.”*¹

The entrepreneur mindset and the skills it presupposes are relevant to everyone and not only to entrepreneurs and wannabe entrepreneurs. It includes initiative and self-direction, risk-taking, flexibility and adaptability, creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem solving, the ability to see opportunities, marshal resources and create value, innovative spirit, agility, resourcefulness, self-awareness, etc. These skills are highly valued by employers across the EU.

Actually, *“Entrepreneurship refers to an individual’s ability to turn ideas into action. It includes creativity, innovation and risk taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. This supports everyone in day-to-day life at home and in society, makes employees more aware of the context of their work and better able to seize opportunities, and provides a foundation for entrepreneurs establishing a social or commercial activity.”*²

Developing the inter-disciplinary skills that lead to the acquisition of an “entrepreneurial mindset”, people are getting equipped with a set of attitudes, skills and behaviors that are key for their employability and even more, key for professional and personal success and distinction, whether they aspire to work for a company, start their own business, devote themselves to academic research, public service or freelancing.

Therefore, the Entrepreneur Mindset, consistent with the learning objectives of this Handbook, is deemed crucial and of utmost importance to Long Term Unemployed over the age of 45, especially its dimension on **“Intrapreneurship”**, identified by the LTU Skills & Competences Inventory as “the most important competence needed by LTUs to actively re-enter the labour market and play an active role in the society. Intrapreneurship, i.e. “the act of behaving like an entrepreneur while working within a large organization, is known as the practice of a corporate management style that integrates risk-taking and innovation approaches, as well as the reward and motivational techniques,

¹ Kane Neil, “The entrepreneurial mindset”, Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Michigan State University <https://entrepreneurship.msu.edu/the-entrepreneurial-mindset/>

² Commission Communication “Fostering entrepreneurial mindsets through education and learning”. COM(2006) 33 final.

that are more traditionally thought of as being the province of entrepreneurship.”³ To put it simply, intrapreneurship is like talking about entrepreneurship, with some minor twists here and there, about, for example, where it happens.



Therefore, the current chapter pertains to skills relevant to intrapreneurship as listed in **LTU Skills & Competences Inventory** and approaches enabling their cultivation, especially through positive change.

³ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intrapreneurship>

2. Thinking in an entrepreneurial way

Entrepreneurial skills combine personal, technical and management skills. Here we focus mostly on the soft skills long term unemployed should possess to demonstrate entrepreneurial mindset so as to increase their employability potential and stay competitive in today's demanding labour market.

To become an intrapreneur, one has to think in an entrepreneurial way in the first place! Entrepreneurial thinking is about imagining new combinations of certain means leading to imagined ends whereas nothing is given or pre-determined: the entrepreneur is working on ways to arrive to the imagined end by deploying given means.

So, how does an entrepreneur think? **'Entrepreneurial' entrepreneurs:**

- *Are not limiting themselves...imagined ends*
- *Acknowledge and know their passions in life, determining them as agents of change...know who they are*
- *Constantly observe, imagine, think of new combinations of what is going on around them and in what ways it could be different, re-visit what they know, what they strongly believe or are able for – all of this as everyday habits...know what they know, what is at their disposal (given means)*
- *Constantly explore how to trust others, who to trust, what can others offer, what they can offer to others, how others can be engaged to same commitment...whom they know and who they are in turn*
- *Create 'pictures' and think in terms of a journey that keeps together certain persons along the way (partners, co-workers, investors, shareholders), heading for rather uncharted waters...imagined ends*
- *Learn from surprises and 'obstacles' because these are inextricably coupled with the imagined ends, it is part and parcel of the whole attitude...there is no pre-determined end which conditions the present. The effects along the way – including obstacles, failure, surprises – are those which give form to the goal eventually.*
- *Make and unmake plans, adapt, re-organize, re-orient themselves and those collaborating with them*

Source: EU funded project Intraprise, Module 3, Unit 1



Activity for LTUs: HOW ENTREPRENEURIAL ARE YOU?

Go through the following table and reflect on the knowledge, skills and attitudes an entrepreneur should demonstrate. Which ones do you possess? Which ones do you need to develop?

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	ATTITUDES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Opportunity identification — Economy rules — Ethical positioning of enterprises — Innovation & creativity — Accounting, business planning, marketing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Planning; Organisation; Management — Leading & delegation — Analysis — Communication — Evaluation — Presentation — Negotiation — Independent and teamwork — Strengths & weaknesses identification — Risk-assessment & risk-taking — Seeing the 'bigger picture' and Ideas connection — Commitment and team mobilisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Initiative, independence & innovation — Motivation — Determination to meet objectives — Risk propensity — Ambition/drive — Persistence — Commitment — Self-belief; Self-efficacy — Self-awareness — Social confidence — Creativity & imagination — Curiosity — Toleration of failure

3. Key intrapreneurship skills for LTUs

According to a survey by Ernst & Young⁴, internal company entrepreneurs or “intrapreneurs” need specific characteristics in order to lead a rapidly growing organization because “large and well-established companies often comprise rigid structures that can stifle the entrepreneurial spirit”. In this respect, the following skills and characteristics are deemed crucial for becoming a successful intrapreneur:

- Knowledge of the internal and external environment
- Vision and willingness to challenge the status quo
- Diplomatic attitude and ability to lead cross-functional teams
- Ability to build a professional-support network
- Ability to persevere, even in the face of uncertainty

In view of possessing the above-mentioned skillset, the 45+ long term unemployed should be first equipped with some fundamental skills and competences such as self-awareness, problem solving, opportunity spotting, creative thinking-idea generation, and, of course, positive thinking, along with other key fundamental skills such as teamwork, self-confidence, self-motivation, organisation and planning, flexibility, that are presented in other chapters of the present handbook. In paragraphs below, we predominantly focus on: positive thinking, self-awareness and efficacy, and idea generation/ creative thinking as the key skills to build one’s intrapreneurial profile.

Skillset

Being ambitious and having an open mindset is a must. the rest you can learn.

			
Independent	Optimistic	Vision	Building
<i>Project management</i>	<i>Creative energy</i>	<i>Business thinking</i>	<i>No nonsense</i>
You love to work towards ambitious results and enjoy the freedom of creating your own guidelines.	You have lots of energy and love to shape every problem into a new opportunity: change is hard work.	You are a future-thinker, and combine customer insights with strategy to generate new ideas that make SD Worx better.	Desk research and analysis is a start but ends as soon as possible. How can you test a new business idea without putting them into action?

Image taken from “*The perfect intrapreneur: a skillset*”, *The Innovation Blog*

⁴ “Intrapreneurship key to innovation, growth in recovery: Ernst & Young”, Newswire.ca, November 2017 <http://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/intrapreneurship-key-to-innovation-growth-in-recovery-ernst-young-546268762.html>

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4. Why “Positive Thinking”?

In the early 1980s, a new approach to psychotherapy emerged, called Solution-Oriented Therapy.

“This new approach asserted that helping people discover their strengths, competencies, and indigenous solutions might be a more effective and more rapid approach to change (O’Hanlon & Weiner-Davis, 1989, 2003). Because people already had solutions and strengths but were not applying them, no new skills needed to be taught or mastered. No outside values were imposed. Instead of giving people outside knowledge from an expert, they could change using evoked abilities and resources from within them and their social environments. Soon after, the “solution-focused brief therapy” approach, which has since spread far and wide⁵.”

Focusing on our strengths, competences, abilities, successes we have demonstrated throughout our personal and professional life so far helps us improve and take ourselves to the next level. This is the fundamental Positive Psychology adheres to, since “who you are as a person, what you live and bring, will affect everything that you do⁶”.



⁵ O’Hanlon, William Hudson, *The therapist’s notebook on positive psychology: activities, exercises, and handouts*, 2012.

⁶ Carmel Proctor, *Positive Psychology Interventions in Practice*. Springer, 2017.

Therefore, **by helping ourselves change in positive directions, we are getting closer to our goals and aspirations.** In the case of LTUs, that is to re-enter the demanding labour market with competence, confidence, aspiration and safety and stay competitive.

According to the Positive Psychology, that is grounded on the belief that people want to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives, to cultivate what is best within them, and to enhance their experiences of love, work, and play (Positive Psychology Center, 2016), building factors such as resilience, coping skills, protective factors, and strengths **help people not just to face and manage the problems of life, but flourish in their everyday existence**⁷.

To build capacity, Positive Psychology emphasises the following areas - positive attitudes and emotions⁸:

- Life satisfaction
- Loving and pleasant friendships and love relationships
- Engaging and meaningful activities and work
- Spirituality and meaning in life
- The importance of values and life goals that might help achieve or optimise them
- Kindness and compassion
- Hope
- Optimism
- Forgiveness
- Gratitude
- Contentment

Therefore, even before identifying & appreciating our strengths and developing self-awareness, LTUs need to cultivate and practice positive emotions on a daily basis.

⁷ O'Hanlon, William Hudson, *The therapist's notebook on positive psychology: activities, exercises, and handouts*. 2012

⁸ Idem

Positive Emotions that shall be part of LTUs daily life:



Source: *Representative positive emotions* (Fredrickson, 2013)

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/between-cultures/201611/positive-emotions-and-wellbeing>

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Tips for LTUs: Personal Development Routine for LTUs to cultivate positive thinking while seeking a job

1. Set a clear schedule for job search

Job searching is a full-time job. Every day you have to do something:

- Search for job vacancies in Job Sites and Social Media;
- Set clear and specific goals for your search;
- Take advantage of social media ;
- Inform people you know that you are searching for new career challenges;
- Create a list of some companies you want to work for - find extra information about them and send your resume;
- Keep record for all the job postings you have replied to;
- Adjust by case your resume and cover letter and keep record;
- Develop your interview skills by practicing on your own or with a friend;
- Never say never and always welcome new opportunities.

2. Networking

Success presupposes relationships:

- Focus on using the Social media (Facebook, LinkedIn) and learn more about it;
- Start contacting people you know - make a list/ prioritize;
- Make sure your network knows what you do and what you are interested in ;
- Reach out to former colleagues or professionals that you appreciate - request them to provide referrals for you;
- Respect contacts as individuals - think people, not positions;
- Attend professional events and seminars;
- Create business cards;
- When attending a gathering or any other type of party, it is appropriate to mention in casual conversation that you are seeking employment.

3. Improve your skills

“I'm getting older while being taught all the time”, Solon the Athenian

- Find something to study that suits you or dig in an area you always wanted to;
- Read books and articles related to your field of interest on a daily basis;
- Acquire certifications;

- Advance your knowledge in a foreign language;
- Invest in developing your computer skills;
- Attend seminars and congresses;
- Find a hobby.

4. Daily physical activity

Regular exercise and physical activity helps you to:

- Improve mental health;
- Reduce stress levels;
- Improve mood and lift up energy levels;
- Sleep better;
- Prevent diseases;
- Reduce some of the effects of ageing;
- Have fun;
- Improve brain function;
- Keep your heart in great shape and your body in a regular weight.

By exercising more, you increase the chances of meeting new people and making friends!

5. Volunteering

Volunteering Increases the odds of finding employment and offers the opportunity to:

- Spend quality time and feel valued;
- Enhance your resume, gain new skills, experiences and confidence;
- Be part of a community - volunteering can help you feel part of something outside your friends and family;
- Keep yourself engaged and active in some form of work;
- Expand your network - volunteering brings people together and establishes strong relationships;
- Work on something fulfilling without stress;
- Achieve personal growth and self-esteem.

Volunteers share positive emotions, are healthier and live longer!

 **Tips for Career Advisors/ Coaches: Training an LTU to a Positive Attitude**

1. Recap all those mentioned above:

Job search



Networking



Skills empowerment



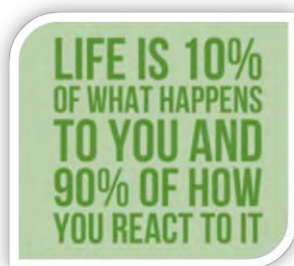
Physical activity



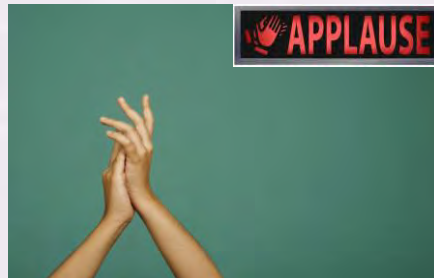
Volunteering



2. Remind them the 90/100 rule:



3. Recommend they increase their “Positive Emotions” through:



4. Motivate them to:

- Appreciate more;
- Provoke happy actions;
- Help others;
- Exercise – Gymnastics;
- Change Habits;
- Listen to music;
- Fight boredom.



5. Help them focus on their positive traits and prevent them from blaming themselves or using negative “language” when talking about themselves.

 **Activity for LTUs: How to implement positive thinking?**

Each LTU tells a story from when they have felt one of the above positive emotions. Then other LTUs comment on the story only with applause and positive comments that come to mind.

Other suggested positive psychology exercises <https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/positive-psychology-exercises/>

5. Self-Awareness and Self-Efficacy

Following what mentioned above, the positive thinking and the strength-based approach it implies, are key to develop ourselves and succeed, both personally and professionally.

At this stage, the question emerges: Are we aware of our abilities and competences? Have we realised and appreciated our strengths, weaknesses and overall potential? Can we communicate it to others?

Self-Awareness is defined as *“the accurate appraisal and understanding of your abilities and preferences and their implications for your behaviour and their impact on others.”*⁹ It can be seen as a reality-testing against the facts of life.

There are many ways for LTUs to improve their self-awareness. The **“Appreciative Interview”** is one of the most effective tools for coaches and career advisors towards this direction. The Appreciative Interview was developed at the Case Western Reserve University's (Cleveland - USA) department of Organizational behavior, starting with a 1987 article by David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva. The title was *“Appreciative Inquiry Into Organizational Life”*. They felt that the overuse of *“problem solving”* hampered any kind of social improvement, and what was needed were new methods of inquiry that would help generate new ideas and models for how to organize. Appreciative Inquiry is about the coevolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations, and the relevant world around them and, as such, it adheres to the principles of **Positive Psychology**.

Actually, **Appreciative Inquiry (AI)** is a model that seeks to engage stakeholders in self-determined change:

- **Ap-pre’ci-ate**, v., 1. *valuing; the act of recognizing the best in people or the world around us; affirming past and present strengths, successes, and potentials; to perceive those things that give life (health, vitality, excellence) to living systems* 2. *to increase in value, e.g. the economy has appreciated in value. Synonyms: VALUING, PRIZING, ESTEEMING, and HONORING.*
- **In-quire’** (kwir), v., 1. *the act of exploration and discovery.* 2. *To ask questions; to be open to seeing new potentials and possibilities. Synonyms: DISCOVERY, SEARCH, and SYSTEMATIC EXPLORATION, STUDY.*

Appreciative interviews:

- Help us find out the best in our life: our SUCCESSES!
- Are designed to collect rich qualitative information in the form of stories that carry a wealth of meaning;
- Raise people’s morale by valuing their own personal experiences and contributions and by telling their stories associated with their own positive reference experiences;
- Gather new information about what is already working well.

⁹ Furnham Adrian Ph.D., *“Self Awareness”*, Psychology Today, 27 November 2015
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/sideways-view/201511/self-awareness>

Activity for Career Advisors/ Coaches: How to implement an Appreciative Interview

- Introducing Appreciative Interview to LTU as a Coach:

“I will be asking you questions about times when things were working in perfect conditions and why that was the case, because the more we know about what makes things work well, the more we can improve our performances in the future. I won’t be asking about problems or searching for ways to fix them. Instead, I need to hear about what is working well and the factors that make things work well; so if the interview strays a bit off-track, that’s what we can bring it back to. What these interviews are working towards is to help us understand the key **factors that really give life to intrapreneurship**. Do you have any questions?”
- Focus on asking questions about times when your interlocutor was watching things working out in the BEST way. Ask when, where, who, how;
- Be genuinely curious about their experiences, thoughts and feelings. Do not share your own experience;
- Some people will take longer to think about their answers – allow for silence;
- If somebody doesn’t want to or can’t answer any of the interview questions, that’s OK, let it go;
- Listen carefully so you can retell the highlights;
- Help them prioritize;
- Sit face to face, if possible;
- It’s not just the questions, it’s how you ask them:

The non-verbal elements of your communication (voice tone, body language, the surroundings of the interview) form a meta-message which influences people’s emotional state and shapes their expectations about the value and genuineness of the exercise. When you are genuinely focused and interested, the interviewee will experience being fully heard and understood, so empathy will develop rapidly;
- You are after stories, not opinions or analysis:

You want the interviewee to relive the experiences they are talking about and tell you what they thought and felt at the time, rather than examining them in a detached way and telling you what they think about them now. This way, you will get genuine rapport and it will be easier to develop mutual trust. What’s more, you will get genuine experiences rather than the ‘official line’ of what the interviewee thinks you want to hear;
- Once you have the story, move on to values and wishes:

The motivating power of values, life-giving factors and wishes comes from their emotional charge. The emotions that the interviewees’ stories awake in them will enable them to identify both what is really important about those experiences and what they want for the future;

— Deal with negativity:

Sometimes people need to express their negative thoughts/experiences/opinions first. Say that you will make a note of any 'negative' issues and come back to them later. The negatives can be discussed in terms of what the LTU would like to see instead. Deal with Negativity by using:

- Empathic listening: Allow the LTU to air their problems until they run out of steam, accepting their right to feel this way, but without sympathizing (which could reinforce their negativity). If they are not allowed to do this, you may not get any appreciative data from them. It is important to remain positive yourself so that you don't get dragged down by their negativity;
 - Return to the positive: After listening to a problem, say you are going back to focus on when things are working well, even if it was just a brief moment;
 - Reframe: Everything that people find wrong represents an absence of something they regard as ideal, so you can ask them 'what would it look like if this was working well?' or 'what would you want instead of this?'
- Introducing the appropriate questions (short version):
- Start with, "Tell me a story about a time when...."
 - Continue with "Tell me more"
 - Why do you feel that way?
 - Why was that important to you?
 - How did that affect you?
 - What was your contribution?
 - How has it changed you?
 - What do think was really making it work?
 - What was the organization doing that helped you do this? For example: information systems, leadership, resources, structures.
- Introducing the appropriate questions (longer version):
- Tell me one thing that you are really proud of. Considering all of your objectives, what are you proud of, what have you accomplished, and what are you doing that works? What have you done in your whole career that you are most proud of and why?
 - Please share the story of what you consider your most outstanding, significant professional achievement. What about you made this achievement important/possible?
 - Without being humble, what do you value most about yourself, as a professional? What are your best qualities/ strengths? Tell me three or four of them.

- What has been the best experience of your professional life – a time when you felt most alive, most engaged, and proud of yourself and your work? What's really important about this experience? What do you value most about it?
- Identify a time in your experience with your organization when you felt most effective and engaged. Describe this. How did you feel? What made this situation possible?
- What do you appreciate most in a colleague, a partner or a manager?
- Describe a leader who has influenced you. What did that person do? How did that person interact with you? Describe some specific instances in which you experienced this influence.
- Share with me an example of the best employee you've worked with (without names of course) and what was it about that person that you admired the most?"



Activity for LTUs and Career Advisors/ Coaches

Food for thought

- What were the most valuable outcomes of this interview?
- What was the most compelling story that came out?
- What were the most dominant emotions?
- What were the 1-3 issues that stood out the most during the interview?

6. Creativity - Idea Generation

Idea generation is part of the “ideation” phase, involving creativity and encompassing the generation, development and communication of an idea. Creativity is inherent in idea generation. In this respect, it is deemed key to creative thinking, innovation and growth.

In view of facilitating the ideation process here below we provide **an idea generation tool that is widely used for brainstorming purposes, the so-called “Mind Map”**, intended for use by both career advisors and LTUs.

Mind mapping: The creation of Mind Maps is a very popular practice and idea generation tool. Everything should start with simply writing down a central idea and then trying to think of related or even new ideas which form the branches and the connections between the ideas and the topics, and the issues which are related to those ideas. Mind Maps convert a long list of information into a colourful, memorable and organised diagram that makes sense.

Mind maps show the different issues related to an idea/ problem/ challenge and define the resources needed to implement the idea.

The Five Essential Characteristics of Mind Mapping are described as follows:¹⁰

1. The main idea, subject or focus is crystallized in a central image;
2. The main themes radiate from the central image as ‘branches’;
3. The branches comprise a key image or key word drawn or printed on its associated line;
4. Topics of lesser importance are represented as ‘twigs’ of the relevant branch;
5. The branches form a connected nodal structure.



Source: <http://www.usingmindmaps.com/using-mind-maps-for-business-ideas.html>

¹⁰ <http://www.mindmapping.com>



Activity for LTUs and Career Advisors/ Coaches: How to make a Mind Map?

1. Think about a specific problem or challenge and write it down in the centre of a page;
2. Draw a circle around it;
3. Brainstorm sub-themes of your main concept and draw branches to them from the centre. Add branches along the way each time new connections occur;
4. Connect lines between similar thoughts;
5. Study the Mind Map and reshape if necessary.

Generic Guidelines:

- Use single words or very short phrases summarising the key point of what you have in mind;
- To invoke thought, you can draw or add images.

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