Business Communication

Discussing Marketplace Trends

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Content

Lesson at a Glance

Explore the topic and discuss its main ideas.

A. READ AND REFLECT Read the text and discuss its content with a partner. 1.1

Starting a business offers freedom and opportunity, but it comes with real risks. Most new businesses face one main challenge: they must solve a real problem for customers, not just follow the founder's personal interests. Successful businesses usually begin with research. Entrepreneurs study what customers need, what competitors offer, and whether their idea can make a profit. Early testing helps them see if the product solves the problem in a way people will pay for. Feedback from early customers often leads to changes in the design, price, or target market. For example, Airbnb's founders first rented air mattresses in their apartment during a design conference when hotels were completely booked. Early users wanted real beds and entire apartments, not just air mattresses. The founders changed their business based on this feedback, turning their idea into a global company for renting homes. Once a business starts running, new pressures appear. Entrepreneurs must manage limited money, respond to competitors' actions, and adapt when the market changes. They need to explain their vision clearly to investors, partners, and employees. Poor communication or slow decisions can create serious problems. Many new businesses fail within five years. Others survive and grow by making careful choices and listening to market feedback. Success often depends on how well entrepreneurs balance their goals with practical limits.

B. TOPIC DISCUSSION Discuss the following points with a partner.

1. What is the most important first step when starting a new business?
2. What kinds of problems do entrepreneurs face once a business starts operating?
3. If you could start a business, what would it be?

Learn and **practice** key business vocabulary.

C. VOCABULARY BUILDING Complete the sentences and identify the meaning of each idiom.

Topic Language

a. brand recognition
b. business model
c. entrepreneur
d. innovation
e. market conditions
f. product-market fit
g. scalability
h. track record
i. traction
j. venture capital

1. Growing sales show that a start-up is gaining ___.
2. A successful start-up needs a clear ___ to explain how it will make money.
3. Some start-ups seek ___ from investors to fund growth.
4. Start-ups must consider ___ before launching a new product.
5. A strong ___ of success can help attract investors.
6. Developing new ideas through ___ can help a start-up compete.
7. Investors consider ___ when judging how easily a business can grow.
8. Effective marketing can help build ___ among customers.
9. A successful ___ needs to respond quickly to change.
10. A start-up achieves ___ when its product meets a genuine market need.

Idioms

1. I'm willing to **bet the farm** on this new business idea.
   a. risk everything b. invest cautiously c. wait for better conditions
2. We shouldn't **put all our eggs in one basket** by investing everything in one company.
   a. focus on safer investments b. avoid investing too much money c. depend on one investment
3. Demand is increasing quickly, so **the market is ripe for** a new low-cost competitor.
   a. competition is increasing b. conditions are favorable c. demand is unpredictable

Complete and **role-play** a business dialogue using the target language.

D. LANGUAGE PRACTICE Complete and role-play a business dialogue using the target language. 1.2

Haley: Mike, as an entrepreneur, how important do you think ___________ [1] is for a start-up?
Mike: It's extremely important, Haley. It's a key factor in gaining _____ [2], especially in competitive markets.
Haley: So, in a market like tech, how have you made your start-up stand out?
Mike: Through innovation, mainly. We developed a clear ___________ [3] and focused on achieving ___________ [4] by listening closely to our customers.
Haley: What kind of financial challenges have you faced? Did you have to ________ [5] to get started?
Mike: Not quite. We first built a strong track record to attract investors. That helped us secure our first round of ________ [6]. Fortunately, the market was ripe for new tech when we launched.
Haley: So, _______ [7] is crucial too for attracting investors?
Mike: Definitely. For any start-up, I'd suggest thoroughly understanding the ___________ [8] and having a clear, adaptable plan for growth.

Interpret and **discuss** business data, trends, and key insights.

E. INFOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS Study the infographic and discuss the questions that follow.

Sources of Start-up Funding

FUNDING SOURCE	% USING SOURCE
Owner Savings	64.4%
Bank Loan	16.5%
Credit Cards	9.1%
Family & Friends	4.5%
Venture Capital	0.5%

U.S. Census Bureau, Annual Survey of Entrepreneurs (2016)

The Start-up Development Cycle

- Discovery – Identify the customer problem.
- Validation – Confirm that customers want the solution.
- Efficiency – Refine the product and customer-acquisition process.
- Scale – Expand a repeatable, efficient business model.
- Sustain – Maintain growth while strengthening the organization.
- Conservation – Protect the company's established position and value.

Stage sequence: Startup Genome, Premature Scaling (2012)

Apply the target language through **structured discussion.**

F. LANGUAGE IN ACTION Discuss the questions with a partner using the words in the box.

1. What makes a start-up attractive to investors?
2. When should a start-up change its business model?
3. How can a start-up test whether customers want its product?

Useful Vocabulary

- ☐ market conditions
- ☐ product-market fit
- ☐ scalability
- ☐ traction
- ☐ venture capital

Research, **summarize**, and **present** recent news.

G. MARKET WATCH Find a recent news story about **a successful business start-up** and report on it.

Business News Report

Headline: ___
Source: ___ Date: ___
Business: ___

Report Back

1. What does the company do?
2. Why is it in the news?
3. What helped the company succeed?
4. What can new entrepreneurs learn from this company?

Evaluate a real-world business case and **propose** solutions.

H. CASE STUDY ANALYSIS Discuss the following case study. 1.3

Case Study: Too Good To Go

Too Good To Go is a start-up founded in Denmark in 2015 with a simple idea: reduce food waste while helping businesses and consumers save money. Restaurants, bakeries, and supermarkets often throw away unsold food at the end of the day. Too Good To Go created a mobile app that allows these businesses to sell surplus food at a low price to nearby customers instead of discarding it.

In the early stages, the company did not focus on rapid global expansion. Instead, it concentrated on building trust with local food businesses. Many restaurants were initially hesitant, worrying that discounted food might damage their brand image. To address this, Too Good To Go emphasized sustainability and social responsibility rather than low prices. The company also made the app easy to use for both businesses and customers, reducing training time and operational friction.

Another challenge was achieving balance between supply and demand. If customers opened the app and found no food available, they would stop using it. Too Good To Go therefore focused on signing up enough partner businesses before heavily marketing to users, ensuring reliable daily availability. Participation rates increased steadily as daily listings became more predictable.

Today, the company operates in multiple countries and has saved millions of meals from being wasted. Its success shows that start-ups can grow by solving everyday problems, building partnerships carefully, and aligning profit with social values.

Create and **present** a short business story using the target language.

I. BUSINESS STORY BUILDING Choose three images and create a short business story. 1.4

- ☐ Introduce the business or situation.
- ☐ Describe a problem.
- ☐ Explain the solution.
- ☐ Describe the outcome.
- ☐ Use and underline three vocabulary words.

Story Planner Images: ___ ___ ___
Problem: ___
Solution: ___
Outcome: ___

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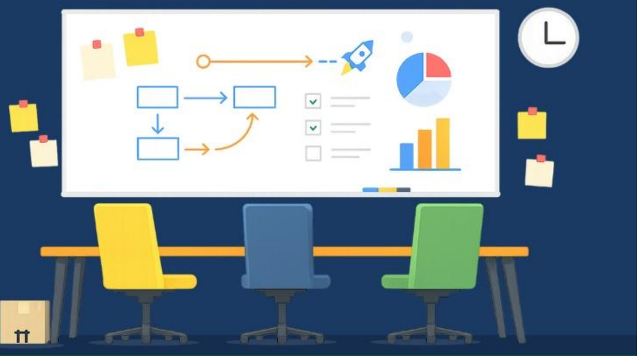
How Start-ups Succeed



How Long New Businesses Survive

1 YEAR	79.6%
3 YEARS	61.4%
5 YEARS	50.6%
10 YEARS	34.7%

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Business Employment Dynamics (2024)

Unicorn Start-ups by sector

1. **Artificial Intelligence**
   - OpenAI
   - Anthropic
   - DeepSeek
   - Mistral AI
2. **Financial Technology**
   - Stripe
   - Revolut
   - Ramp
   - Plaid
3. **E-commerce**
   - Shein
   - Xiaohongshu
   - Trendyol
   - GoPuff
4. **Space and Defence**
   - SpaceX
   - Anduril
   - Helsing
   - Sierra Space

Crunchbase Unicorn Board (July 2026)

What Research Reveals About Start-ups

Experience Matters More Than Youth
Older founders and those with industry experience are more likely to build successful businesses and achieve long-term growth.[1]

Build the Right Team
Founding teams with diverse skills and expertise are more likely to achieve stronger growth, higher sales, and better long-term performance.[2]

Leadership Can Be Learned
Management training and people-management advice can improve company growth, leadership effectiveness, and overall business performance.[3]

Experience Compounds
Founders with previous startup experience often achieve higher sales, stronger productivity, better long-term performance, and greater business success.[4]

Founders Shape Company Stability
Founder leadership influences employee retention, organizational stability, and the long-term success of growing businesses.[5]

[1] Azoulay et al., American Economic Review: Insights (2020)
[2] U.S. Census Bureau, CES-WP-20-45 (2020)
[3] Chatterji et al., Strategic Management Journal (2019)
[4] NBER, The Productivity Advantage of Serial Entrepreneurs (2017)
[5] U.S. Census Bureau, CES-WP-26-21 (2026)

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Maintain growth while strengthening the organization.

Conservation
Protect the company's established position and value.

Stage sequence: Startup Genome, Premature Scaling (2012)

1. Which factor is most important for start-up success? Why?
2. Which unicorn company has the strongest business idea? Why?
3. Why do most start-ups rely on their own savings rather than venture capital?
4. Which research finding surprised you the most? Why?
5. Which development stage would be most challenging for a new start-up? Why?

F. LANGUAGE IN ACTION Discuss the questions with a partner using the words in the box.

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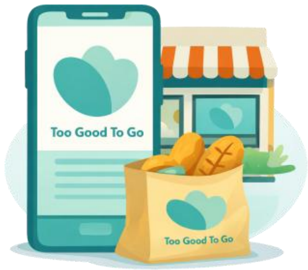

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Today, the company operates in multiple countries and has saved millions of meals from being wasted. Its success shows that start-ups can grow by solving everyday problems, building partnerships carefully, and aligning profit with social values.

1. What problem did Too Good To Go aim to solve as a start-up?
   a. Expanding global food delivery
   b. Increasing restaurant profits quickly
   c. Reducing food waste

2. Why did Too Good To Go focus first on local businesses?
   a. To avoid competition with large apps
   b. To build trust and partnerships
   c. To reduce marketing costs

3. How did the company respond to restaurant concerns about low prices?
   a. By offering higher discounts
   b. By limiting customer access
   c. By emphasizing sustainability values

4. Why was balancing supply and demand important for the app's success?
   a. Users needed reliable daily availability
   b. Businesses wanted higher prices
   c. Marketing costs increased rapidly

5. What does the case show about successful start-ups?
   a. Fast expansion is always necessary
   b. Profit must come before social goals
   c. Careful growth and partnerships support success

Discussion

1. Which part of Too Good To Go's idea do you think helps people the most?
2. Why do you think some restaurants were worried about using this app?
3. Who do you think benefits more from this app: businesses or customers?

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1.4

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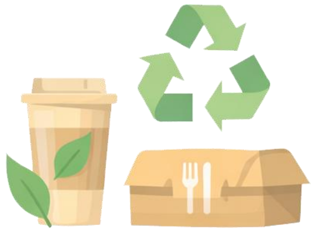

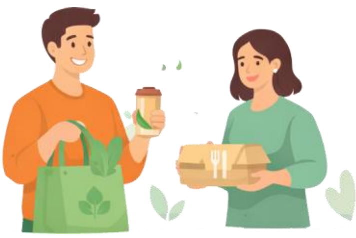

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