

Programme to improve interpersonal skills for business management:

Getxo Town Council

In the Department of Economic Promotion of the Getxo City Council, we consider the need to, in addition to preparing entrepreneurs and small business owners in business management, offer them training in interpersonal skills that could help them in the management of the business. We detected the lack of individual advice, since we consider it important to balance technical knowledge, management knowledge and the entrepreneurial skills necessary to manage a business.

Key components:

Entrecomp framework

The framework used is Entrecomp, which identifies the competences needed for a person wishing to become an entrepreneur. The Entrecomp model is based on the "interpretive/integrative" approach, considering that entrepreneurial competence involves a set of skills and aptitudes, which are learned through experience and training (Bird, 1995). The underlying philosophy of this model is that entrepreneurial competences can be developed throughout life (they can be learned) and that the basic skills required are socio-emotional (Lifecomp model).

The programme details these skills and basic strategies as well as tools for their development. For each of the 14 competences identified, a connection to Goleman's framework is established with a working process to develop it. These show different learning resources, recommendations and difficulties when putting them into practice, based on research that supports this connection as well as the validity of each tool. For example, we know that Mindfulness helps to manage difficult emotions such as fear and anger linked to stress, a fundamental skill to develop the risk management competence contained in the Entrecomp framework.

Structured piloting

The programme is structured into 9 sessions with the following contents:

1. Self-awareness, ethics, sustainability, motivation and perseverance.
2. Self-awareness, vision, mobilisation of internal resources, identification of opportunities, assessment of ideas.
3. Self-awareness, learning from experience, initiative.
4. Initiative, sustainability, perseverance and managing uncertainty and risk.
5. Mobilising and working with others.
6. Creativity, learning from experience, planning and management.
7. Motivation and perseverance, vision, planning and management.
8. Planning and management, taking the initiative, working with others.
9. Project end.

Limited number of participants and continuous group work for a period of time

This is an **8-week programme** with a maximum number of participants of 15, working in groups on intrapersonal and interpersonal competences for business management, complemented by individual coaching afterwards.

Individual coaching

After working on group, the programme offers individual coaching that helps to consolidate the previous work.

Theory and practice

It is also known that if a person has a high emotional intelligence, it does not mean that he or she has learned the competences of the Entrecomp framework, but only that he or she is well prepared to do the job. Therefore, once the practices have been carried out with each underlying skill, we apply it to develop the corresponding entrepreneurial competence. For example, a person may be highly socially aware but if they have not yet developed the competence of working in a team with other people, they may not be a good collaborator.

Evaluation of progress

A novelty of this programme is that its effectiveness is assessed by the ESCI evaluation tool, an initial test and another carried out at the end of the journey (it is a validated self-assessment test).

Raise awareness about the importance of self-care for entrepreneurial people

The programme also aims to raise awareness of the importance of self-care for entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs' most valuable asset is themselves and, if they are not operating at 100%, neither will their businesses.

Outcome

The tests given before and after the sessions indicate that the process generally improved all the competences worked on.

The people who attended the training evaluated the process as highly satisfactory.

A high percentage of the participants managed to unblock issues related to their work environment with this process and were able to analyse it from a different point of view.

The programme was seen as necessary for the entrepreneurship process.