



SAIL WITH YOUR STRENGTHS TO ENTREPRENEURIAL SUCCESS

**Or the S-Boat Meets the VIA:
*Using the Small Business Owner Assessment Tool[®]
with the VIA Strengths Survey***

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HELLO, NEW SMALL BUSINESS OWNER!

You started your business with a dream.

You created goals you really care about.

Now how will you realize them?

If you want to address your business issues with confidence and energy, you will need to develop more than a business plan. You will also need to develop greater awareness of two personal resources:

- (1) your dominant business aptitudes and how to leverage them
- (2) your personal strengths and how to harness them to meet challenges

Identifying your business aptitudes and personal strengths

(1) What does your business aptitude profile reveal?

Most successful small business owners embody a floating balance of three different trait dimensions, which we call Entrepreneur, Manager and Specialist (EMS), a model inspired by Michael Gerber's classic analysis in *The E-Myth Revisited*. You can improve the growth, viability, and operational success of your business when you learn to blend all three, which are fully described in a later section.

To assess your own EMS profile, complete the **Small Business Owner Assessment Tool**, or S-Boat, on the following pages. This is a brief self-scoring survey will permit you to pinpoint areas that you will need to emphasize or de-emphasize in order to achieve success.

(2) What personal strengths could you leverage?

Leveraging your character strengths will add meaning and energy to your developing enterprise. A positive psychology coach can be a catalyst for this. Identify your top five "signature strengths" by taking the free **VIA Character Strengths Survey** at www.viame.org. Using your top strengths allows you to get into flow, feel authentic, and achieve more. Then enter your results on page 5.

PART A: TAKE THE S-BOAT TO DISCOVER YOUR ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

For each statement, circle a number from 1 to 5 to indicate your level of agreement using this scale:

1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral (neither disagree nor agree), 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree.

- ___ 1. Planning and organizing are two of my strong points.
- ___ 2. I am good at seeing the big picture.
- ___ 3. I like to get the work done to get the product out the door.
- ___ 4. I am good at executing action plans.
- ___ 5. I am comfortable making major decisions on my own.
- ___ 6. I am most comfortable when I am in control of the work flow.
- ___ 7. It is important to know when and how to delegate.
- ___ 8. I am good at what I do, so I started my own business.
- ___ 9. Supervising is important to get things done.
- ___ 10. I enjoy the technical aspects of my job.
- ___ 11. I constantly come up with new, unique ideas for making money.
- ___ 12. My biggest interest is the business's product or service.
- ___ 13. I like to identify future business opportunities and possibilities.
- ___ 14. Maintaining stability and consistency while being very flexible is a very important part of my role.
- ___ 15. I am not afraid of trying a new approach even if it means making a mistake.

CALCULATING YOUR S-BOAT SCORES

YOUR RAW S-BOAT SCORES

In the blanks, please enter your numerical score for each of the items as indicated to give you a score for each of the three traits, Entrepreneur, Manager, and Specialist. (The maximum subtotal score for each trait is 25, and the maximum overall Total Score is 75.)

Entrepreneur (E):

2 _____

5 _____

#11 _____

#13 _____

#15 _____

E Subtotal: _____

Specialist (S):

3 _____

6 _____

8 _____

#10 _____

#12 _____

S Subtotal: _____

Manager (M):

1 _____

4 _____

7 _____

9 _____

#14 _____

M Subtotal: _____

Now enter your subtotals from above and then total them:

E subtotal: _____

M subtotal: _____

S subtotal: _____

Total Score: _____

HOW TO DETERMINE YOUR S-BOAT EMS PROFILE

Divide each of the three above Subtotals by the Total Score.

Example: If your M subtotal was 10 and your total score was 50, your M% is 10/50, which equals 20%. [Note: Due to rounding, the sum of the parts may not equal exactly 100%.]

E subtotal/Total Score = Your E percentage: _____

M subtotal /Total Score = Your M percentage: _____

S subtotal/Total Score = Your S percentage: _____

UNDERSTANDING YOUR S-BOAT EMS PROFILE

Each of the three traits contributes to a successful enterprise. A successful businessperson will typically have scores that are moderate to high (subtotal of 15 or higher) on each trait with balance across all three of them (roughly 33% each trait type). In other words, absolute and relative quantities matter. You can intentionally strive to enhance and balance these qualities as desired for entrepreneurial success.

The goal of this instrument is to provide a springboard for reflection, discussion and action. Check your knowledge of yourself against the interpretive material below to bring your strengths and challenges into focus and to move into fruitful action. A professional coach can be a valuable partner here.

Note: While these traits are described as pure types of individuals, remember that the successful businessperson will have an optimally balanced blend of all three types, as outlined in the classic guide, The E-Myth Revisited by Michael Gerber (2001). [Note: We have replaced “technician” with “specialist.”]

THE THREE TRAIT DIMENSIONS

The **Entrepreneur** is the visionary who sees the future possibilities. This is the creative personality who can think outside of the box and discover business opportunities that others cannot see. The entrepreneur loves to dream big and can sometimes create chaos for the people who work for him or her.

The **Manager** is the key person to keeping the business functioning. Without the manager, there would be no planning, no order or predictability. The manager utilizes past information and historical facts to maintain the status quo. The manager looks at every opportunity as a problem while working hard to create a viable solution.

The **Specialist** is the doer, loves keeping busy and getting things accomplished. The specialist operates in the present and he or she is more comfortable doing one thing at a time. The specialist can get lost in the daily minutiae, less interested in ideas for the future than in “how to do it.” For the specialist, all ideas need to be reduced to a methodology that works if they are to be of any value.

FOR GREATER AWARENESS AND EFFECTIVE ACTION

Review your scores on the E, M, and S dimensions and answer the following questions.

1. *What is your dominant trait?*
2. *Where is there balance? A lack of balance?*
3. *Which scores fall below 15?*
4. *Where do you need to put more emphasis? Which trait do you need to develop more fully to enjoy greater business success? What resources can you access for this?*
5. *Where might you put less emphasis?*
6. *What will you take away from this exercise?*

PART B.

IDENTIFY AND INTEGRATE YOUR SIGNATURE STRENGTHS

Research shows that we feel better and accomplish more when we are exercising our own personal strengths. Positive psychologists, using research on universal virtues, have created a questionnaire that will help you identify your own strengths, i.e., your “signature strengths.” These qualities reflect what is best about you, your deepest virtues, rather than abilities or talents.

Take the test free at www.viame.org and receive a list of your strengths in rank order. Then list your five top strengths here. These are your “signature strengths.” [You can also opt for a full professional interpretation for a fee.]

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER.

Looking back at your S-BOAT results, which of the three dimensions (E/M/S) most needs a boost?

1. How can you use any or all of your signature strengths to focus more on the individual items [refer to the test items] one at a time? Write this out as fully as you can, being as creative as possible.

Examples: Someone who uncomfortable with making decisions could use a strength such as curiosity to look for relevant evidence or find out how an admired role model might act in a similar situation. Someone who needs to focus more on executing plans could find ways to incorporate strengths of leadership, teamwork, or self-regulation.

2. How can you use your signature strengths to tone down an overactive dimension? Again, be as creative and complete as you can.

3. What will you take away from this exercise? What are you willing to commit yourself to doing differently around these dimensions in order to be more successful?

4. How can you create accountability around making the above changes? Consider teaming with a valued colleague or professional coach or in some way making your plan public, as it is more likely to succeed.

ABOUT THIS BOOKLET

The S-BOAT was developed by five coaches (Sallie Felton, Nick Head, Raman Mace, Gayle Scroggs, and Tracey Williams) in a Small Business Coaching class taught by Anne Durand, M.C.C, at MentorCoach™. They owe their inspiration to Michael Gerber's book, *The E-Myth Revisited*.

The integration of the S-BOAT with the VIA was made later by Dr. Gayle Scroggs. Please address inquiries or comments to her: gayle@essencecoaching.com. She maintains the copyright of this booklet and grants permission for its use as long as it includes attribution to her with her contact data and the material below.

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