

YOUNG POLES: OWN BUSINESS AS A CAREER PATH

How do young Poles understand and what are their thoughts on entrepreneurship? What career path do they find the most desirable? How is running one's own business perceived by business owners, and how by people who are planning to start their own business? These and other questions are answered in the survey of the Citi Handlowy Foundation and the THINK! Foundation "Young people and entrepreneurship", carried out by the Fundacja Stocznia foundation.

For most young Poles, a career of an entrepreneur is one of the most desirable paths of development. Two thirds of them are already considering opening their own business, and an overwhelming majority refers to running their own business as the best career choice. For many young people, it is an opportunity to free one's creativity and spread the wings. Meanwhile, the dream of independence ends as soon as they open their own business – then, only 27 percent of young people believe that running their own business gives them independence. Nonetheless, most young entrepreneurs still consider this path very educational, says Dorota Szostek-Rustecka, President of the Management Board of Citi Handlowy Foundation.

The time when running one's own business was the pinnacle of one's professional life is long gone. Today, many young people see having their own business as an amazing career path. Interestingly enough, over 50% see entrepreneurship, above all, as a possibility to use their knowledge and skills, whereas 45% – as a way to make money. 43% associate it, first and foremost, with creativity, and almost 40% refer to it as a possibility to "spread one's wings". According to the respondents, an entrepreneurial person is characterized by the ability to obtain knowledge and new skills anywhere, not only through education. The ability to make good use of one's knowledge and skills turns out to be a more important characteristic of an entrepreneurial person than just making money.

It is also worth comparing the assumptions about running one's own business and the reality of it. Business owners perceive "self-employment" completely differently to those who have no experience in this area. Only 27% of entrepreneurs refer to their work as "independent" (vs. 48% of people without their own business) and, similarly, only 37% of them find it responsible (vs. 60%). Having one's own business is seen as educational by over 50% of entrepreneurs, and by 44% of respondents who are not running any business.

"It is only natural that the assumptions about running one's own business should not coincide with the reality. It is commonly believed that the decision to establish one's own business is the easiest step, and it is only then that the challenge begins. That's why the assistance programs for young entrepreneurs are so important. Those who are opening a business, and those whose business is just starting out. Young people value especially the possibility to obtain knowledge from experienced practitioners. Therefore, each of our assistance programs for entrepreneurship includes long-term mentoring with experienced entrepreneurs and managers, says Dorota Szostek-Rustecka, President of the Management Board of Citi Handlowy Foundation.

It should be especially emphasized that most respondents have positive connotations with entrepreneurship and do not raise any ethical reservations. Only behaviors that are deemed immoral or that balance at the edge of law are viewed negatively, for example, selling face masks at inflated prices. At the same time, many respondents reckon that, although entrepreneurial attitudes are realized by running one's own business, entrepreneurship can take on many forms. An entrepreneurial attitude can be manifested in various other practices and areas of life, such as a full-time job, having a career in a corporation, trading on the Internet, taking care of the house and planning a vacation.

"Not everyone feels fulfilled when working for someone else and not everyone can find satisfaction from being someone's employee. We also don't know what the future will hold in terms of the trends on the labor market. For many, one's own business could be an interesting alternative, especially during the pandemic, which has revealed many challenges and social needs. A time has come to build a new reality, search for new solutions and new applications of already marketed products and

services. It is a good time to take the initiative and implement a business idea. The economy needs ideas, initiatives and the involvement of young people in searching for and creating their own job and their place in the market. Self-employment can bring a lot of satisfaction and benefits, not only in terms of income, summarizes Anna Bichta, President of the Management Board of the THINK! Knowledge Society Foundation.

The full survey report is available at: <https://www.citibank.pl/poland/kronenberg/polish/files/mlodzi-a-przedsiębiorczość.pdf>

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