

QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWS WITH OWNERS OF SMALL BUSINESSES.



Overview Questions / Foundation:

1. Is this your first business?
How long has it been operating?
How many businesses have you started so far?
How many are still in operation?

2. What was the impetus for your first business
(Education? Work experience? Opportunity?)
Was this the same for any other businesses?

3. Did you partner with anybody in this
business?
If yes, what expertise did they have that made
the business stronger?

IF APPLICABLE: For other businesses did you
have a partner and what expertise did they
bring? Does anyone else help you run the
business? Partner? Family member(s)? How
to they help?

4. What have been some of the key sources
of information or advice you have used (or are
currently using) to help run your business?
Government? Local NGOs? Other business-
people (mentors)?

5. What were the key obstacles to starting your
business? Bureaucracy? Competition? Finding
the correct workers? Money?

Overall, how easy would you say it is to start a
firm?

6. What kind of support should one expect from
the government (local, national) when starting a
business?

Financing / Sales Oriented Questions:

7. Did your business need a lot of start-up
financing?

What type of sources of financing have you
used? All self-financed? Banks? Government
loans? Government incentives (EU? Local?)
Venture Capital?

8. What type of financing do you use to keep
your business going? All self-financed?
Government? Banks?

9. Did you make any business assumptions
and targets when you created your original
business? (e.g., financial? Number of
customers to be reached?)

Did you reach these targets?

If exceeded, why? If lowered, why?

Marketing Oriented Questions:

10. Who are your customers? What area of the city / country do they come from? Approximately what percentage of your customers live in the area of your business? Do you have a regular customer base? How has your customer base evolved? Naturally (word of mouth)? Marketing? Etc.

11. Do you advertise your business? If yes, how? If no, why?

a. Do you use any traditional communication tools to help run your business? Newspaper? Flyers?

b. Do you use digital communication tools such as social media to run your business? If yes, what kind and how do they help?

12. How did you choose the location for your business? Is the location of your business, relevant for its success? Did you consider other locations and how did you settle on this one? Do you think your business is operating in a good location?

13. How has the physical location that you started your business been an advantage to you? A disadvantage?

Training and Consulting Questions:

14. Do or did you use any training or consultancy related to your business/businesses?

What type of training systems or consultancy have you used?

Were these financed by you or another entity (government)?

15. How helpful have local organizations such as NGOs / Chamber of Commerce / Local municipality been in helping you with your business?

(e.g., Acquiring money? Renovations? Supporting you? Etc.)?

Concluding Questions:

16. If you were to start your business again, what would you do differently?

What would you do the same or more of?

17. What local actions should be taken to encourage people to start their business?