

SHOULD YOU WORK FOR YOURSELF?



The following 10 questions will help you decide whether you have the desire, the ability, and the temperament for success as a solo worker.

- 1. Do you crave independence?** Most professionals like to work autonomously, preferring to control their own work environment and decision-making. But contented solo workers also prefer to operate without affiliation to a larger controlling unit, and don't require others for guidance in conducting their business. Ask yourself whether you prefer to work collaboratively or at least with others around to share ideas and the workload. If you do, a group environment that encourages autonomy will suit you better than the solo life.
 - 2. Do you thrive when you're in charge?** Solo workers readily accept responsibility for failure as long as they can take all the credit for a good result. Decide whether you thrive when everything rests on your shoulders and your decisions.
 - 3. Are you comfortable wearing many hats?** Successful solo workers act as project manager, worker bee, office manager, director of human resources, business manager, strategic planner and VP for business development, all of which can consume as much as half of every day. You don't have to like all of these roles, but you do have to be willing to assume them if you can't afford to delegate them.
 - 4. Do you consider yourself enterprising?** To be successful on your own, you must be adventurous about new situations and people. To generate business, you need a strong talent for spotting and taking advantage of opportunities. You can't rely on telephone ads to keep your operation afloat. Networking must be a regular and enjoyable part of every week.
 - 5. Are you technologically literate and proficient?** To compete effectively, you'll have to operate as cost-effectively as possible. That means lessening the need for clerical assistance. Plan to type your own correspondence and answer your own phone. Consider your voicemail system and email address to be automated secretaries.
 - 6. Do you possess a high tolerance for risk?** As a solo worker, you won't know when or whether business will come, how long you'll have it, or if it will generate enough money to yield a living wage. In order to experience satisfaction as a solo worker, you must be comfortable with the part of you that does not mind being confused or wrong, makes impossible wishes, likes surprises and ultimately is willing to take a leap of faith.
 - 7. Are you a self-starter?** Solo workers don't need anyone looking over their shoulders because they're internally motivated to do what needs to be done. Look back at your childhood. Were you a kid who frequently complained about being bored when left to your own devices? Or were you one of those children who could amuse yourself for hours? Make certain that you have the requisite initiative before you commit to the path.
 - 8. Are you resourceful?** Not only do solos have to be go-getters, they have to know where to go to get. To succeed, you must be good at finding answers and unafraid of asking questions, requesting input and seeking help.
 - 9. Does working solo fit with your long-range plans?** Working on your own can cause long-term career problems if you aren't successful in creating a profitable enterprise. Future employers may view you as someone who chose self-employment by default when you couldn't find anyone else to hire you, or when you were asked to leave a prior employer. On the other hand, if you're looking for temporary flexibility to raise children, go to school, or spend time on creative endeavors, working part-time as a solo may suit you perfectly.
- Are you strongly drawn to working alone?** Don't decide to work solo by default, believing it to be the only option available to escape some of the downsides of being employed. Make certain that your desire to work on your own stems from your attraction to all of its benefits and a true acceptance of all of its disadvantages.

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