

40 CHALLENGES

KEY COMPETENCES FOR 10
ENTREPRENEURIAL SUCCESS



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Most educational systems focus on improving "hard" skills, which entail assimilating knowledge, the study of concrete subjects, written expression techniques, and experience in using certain tools, among other things. However, there are other equally or even more important skills that not as much time has been dedicated to.

Soft skills, social and communication capabilities, are being assigned ever greater importance in the workplace. Hence, the European Union is upholding and promoting them through projects such as 40 Challenges, in which six partners from five countries participated, including the University of Cordoba.

The purpose of this project was the creation of a mobile app that is free to download and aimed mainly at entrepreneurs with limited training, but who want to get started in the business world. Thanks to this tool, users can self-diagnose their soft skills and develop them to an optimal level, explains Francisco José Saco, project coordinator at the UCO, along with Sandra Sánchez and Fernando Fuentes.

The application they have developed focuses on 10 skills: teamwork, leadership, creativity,



adaptability, conflict management, initiative, decision-making, self-motivation, listening skills and customer service. For each of them, they have proposed 4 challenges that facilitate their learning.

There are then, 40 challenges in all, hence the name of this European project. "What we did was identify the key soft skills for 21st-century entrepreneurs, and develop each one by applying the challenge-based learning methodology."

Starting from a previous test, the tool is open to any user and offers two types of follow-up. One can do so autonomously, or with the guidance of an expert. Since the platform offers one the option of signing up and seeking the help of a facilitator, each partner has defined a series of entities to carry out a review of the entrepreneur's progress and help motivate him.

In order for any user to have access to it, the

application was designed so that it can be used by all those interested in it: "we tried to make it attractive for any entrepreneur who is in a situation in which he or she needs to develop these skills," explained Saco. In addition, it has been translated into five languages, and can be useful for any professional sector because it is transversal.

The 40 Challenges project creates a soft skills self-diagnosis tool for entrepreneurs, and fosters their development through 40 challenges

The UCO researcher believes that, although learning soft skills is difficult, it all depends on of repetition until the skills are automated. Perseverance is what allows people to evolve, ultimately creating habits through reiteration.



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