



## Episode 4: The challenges of the Italian startup scene

This is the worksheet for Episode 4 of the Smart Startup English Podcast.

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### Warm-up questions

What comes to mind when you think of Italy? You may be thinking of good food, sunny days and a beautiful language. Historically, it has also been a center of creativity - from Leonardo da Vinci during the Renaissance to the big names in fashion nowadays. But how is the startup world doing? When it comes to friendly startup ecosystems, how does Italy compare to the rest of Europe?

### Vocabulary 1

Match the words on the left (a-g) with the correct definition on the right (1-7).

- |                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| a. red tape                    | 1. to start a business                        |
| b. to set up a business        | 2. to take advantage of a favorable situation |
| c. it's not all doom and gloom | 3. to deal with something successfully        |
| d. to step up your game        | 4. very high prices                           |
| e. prohibitive prices          | 5. bureaucracy                                |
| f. to overcome something       | 6. to work hard and improve; get better       |
| g. to cash in on something     | 7. it's not all bad news                      |

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## Vocabulary 2

Complete the sentences with the correct form of the words from the list.

**step   cash   hamper   face   red   overcome   off   set   prohibitive**

1. I didn't realize that getting my business \_\_\_\_\_ the ground would prove to be so difficult. It took me almost two years to get started.
2. Bureaucracy and high taxes are two of the factors that \_\_\_\_\_ the growth of the Italian startup scene.
3. Musement is a very successful Italian startup that managed to \_\_\_\_\_ in on the popularity of Italy as a travel destination.
4. One of the major challenges that Italian entrepreneurs have to \_\_\_\_\_ is poor access to funding. It's hard for Italian startups to attract foreign investors.
5. The amount of bureaucracy that you have to go through before you can start a company in Italy is discouraging a lot of young and well-educated people from even trying to \_\_\_\_\_ up a business.
6. The consensus is that Italy has to \_\_\_\_\_ up its game if it wants to keep up with other innovation hubs in Europe. Italy has to relax some regulations and make it easier for entrepreneurs to start a small business.
7. We really want to rent a new office space in the new co-working space, but we can't afford the \_\_\_\_\_ prices.
8. I really don't think I can start a new business without the help of a specialized lawyer. It would take me months to go through the \_\_\_\_\_ tape all by myself. There's just too much paperwork!
9. Out of all the challenges I've had to \_\_\_\_\_ in my life, nothing compares to having to declare bankruptcy when I couldn't get my business off the ground.

### Vocabulary 3

Choose the correct answer to fill in the blank space in the following sentences.

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ tax rates and prohibitive regulations make it hard for small startups to thrive in certain countries.

- A. inflating
- B. soaring
- C. big

2. Italy's startup scene may not be the best in Europe. But it's not all doom and \_\_\_\_\_. In 2016, Italy boasted around 5,500 startups employing almost 22,000 people.

- A. fume
- B. boom
- C. gloom

3. Rebrandly, a startup that provides a custom URL shortener for sharing branded links, is cashing \_\_\_\_\_ on the rising popularity of branded content.

- A. in
- B. off
- C. after

4. Italy's young entrepreneurs often have to move to other countries if they want to gain access to resources they can use to put their ideas \_\_\_\_\_ practice.

- A. at
- B. into
- C. on

5. We wanted to scale up the business, but we decided that the \_\_\_\_\_ costs were too high for us to scale up successfully.

- A. prohibition
- B. prohibitive
- C. prohibited

### **Speaking prompt**

What would you do if you wanted to start a business in a country where the overall conditions were not very good? How would you overcome challenges such as red tape and low access to funding?

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### **Writing prompt**

Creandum is a Swedish investment firm that's looking to invest in new startups. You believe that the startup you're working for would be a great addition to the Creandum portfolio, and your startup could definitely use the funding. Write an email to one of the advisors at Creandum explaining why it would be a great time to invest in your startup.

*Do you want to get feedback on your email (maximum 300 words) directly from a Business English trainer? Email us at [info@smartstartupenglish.com](mailto:info@smartstartupenglish.com) to learn more about what feedback packages we offer.*

## **Answer key**

### **Vocabulary 1**

a - 5  
b - 1  
c - 7

d - 6  
e - 4  
f - 3

g - 2

### **Vocabulary 2**

1 - off  
2 - hamper  
3 - cash

4 - face/overcome  
5 - set  
6 - step

7 - prohibitive  
8 - red  
9 - overcome/face

### **Vocabulary 3**

1 - B  
2 - C  
3 - A

4 - B  
5 - B

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