

Starting your own business



*A guide
for women in
York Region*



YORK, SOUTH SIMCOE
TRAINING & ADJUSTMENT BOARD

Starting your own business

A guide for women in York Region

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Preface

Women entrepreneurs are making tracks!

- There are currently more than 800,000 women entrepreneurs in Canada and this figure has been growing at an average annual rate of 3.3 percent since 1989.
- Over the past 15 years, the number of women-run businesses has risen 60 per cent faster than those run by men.
- Ontario is the home of 40% of all women-run small businesses in the country.
- Currently, one in two self-employed women are in occupations with above average wages - up from only one third in 1989. This is primarily due to rising education levels and increased activity in more lucrative professions.
- One in five self-employed women was not born in Canada. On average, immigrant women tend to be younger and more educated than the Canadian population. Immigrant women, as their familiarity with the Canadian business environment increases, turn to self-employment at an impressive pace.
- More than 82% of women small business owners say that if given the choice, they would definitely open their own business again. As the number of self-employed women in Canada approaches one million by the end of the decade, women entrepreneurs are well positioned to play a more important role in the Canadian economy.

Sources: Statistics Canada, 2004 CIBC Small Business Outlook Poll, and CIBC World Markets

The purpose of this booklet:

Starting a new business is challenging. There are many factors involved - some you can control, and others you can't. However, you can increase your chances of success through self-reflection, research and planning.

The purpose of this booklet is to give you a starting point. It provides you with information, tools and resources.

This step-by-step booklet will guide you to starting up a small business. The order of the steps may vary; however, it's important that all are followed.

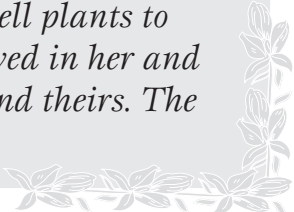
The booklet relays to you the story of Gail Green, a fictional woman who started her own business. The story describes the steps she needed to take and the decisions she made to be successful in her business. Below each "chapter" of her story, there is a summary of ideas and information to help you through each step of the business planning process.



Gail Green - A Business Story

Gail Green has a passion for gardening. What began as a hobby is now something she would like to do as a business. After several years of offering gardening advice to friends and family, Gail believes there is a market for her services. She is confident, outgoing and creative and has what it takes to be a business owner.

Gail has wanted to start her own gardening business for a while but she knew that she had to plan. She saved up some start-up money and took a horticulture certificate course to acquire specific knowledge and earn industry credentials. To attend this training, she had to coordinate reliable childcare for her children. She then obtained a part-time job at a small garden centre, which provided her with some income until she is able to draw a salary from her business. The garden centre owners were happy to promote her services and arranged to sell plants to Gail's business at a discounted price. They believed in her and saw her business as an opportunity to help expand theirs. The time was right and Gail decided to go for it.



STEP One - Assess Your Readiness

Ask yourself: Do I have what it takes to be self-employed? Is now the right time? Is this the right business for me?

This booklet assists you in doing research and planning for your business. However, first you need to take an honest look at yourself, your skills, your passions, your dreams, and your current circumstances to determine whether your business idea is right for you and at this time in your life.

Ask yourself these questions:

Is there anything in my life I need to address first? Childcare? Income while I start up the business? Support from my family and friends? Self-confidence?

Do I have the right mind-set to be self-employed? Am I prepared to take responsibility for all aspects of my business? Am I prepared to overcome the obstacles and setbacks I may face? Am I willing to ask for advice and support?

Will the day-to-day work I need to do mesh with my personality? Will I be spending my days alone, yet I'm a people person? Will I be tied to strict deadlines, yet I can't stand stress? Do I need to be aggressive in sales, yet I am shy?

Do I have realistic expectations? How much income do I need in order to live? How much time and energy am I able to put into my business? Do I want to work 9-5 or do I want flexible hours? Am I willing and able to give my business the time it needs to get off the ground?

Do I have the skills and qualifications to start this business? Are there any gaps in my knowledge or skills? Do I need credentials? Do I have enough confidence in my abilities to sell my product or services? Am I prepared to develop new skills as my business grows?

Here are some websites and books that can give you an idea of what it takes to start a business and help you determine if you have what it takes:

Online Self-Assessment Tools

Toronto Business Development Centre

www.tbdc.com/surveys/entre/

Business Development Bank of Canada

www.bdc.ca/en/i_am/woman_entrepreneur/default.htm

BC WorkInfoNet

www.workinfnet.bc.ca

Thomson and Nelson

www.knowlessmallbusiness4e.nelson.com/assessment.html

Entrepreneur Test

www.2h.com/entrepreneur-tests.html

Ontario Work Info Net

www.onwin.ca/english/index.cfm

Publications

Secrets of Self-Employment

Edwards, Sarah and Paul

Provides useful tips on making the emotional and psychological shift towards self-employment.

Do What You Are

Tieger, Paul D. & Barron-Tieger, Barbara

A useful guide for discovering the perfect career through the secrets of personality type.

What Next? The complete guide to taking control of your working life.

Moses, Barbara

A practical guide for anyone searching for work satisfaction, balance and career success.

Boom, Bust and Echo

Foot, David K.

Provides a basic introduction to demographic shifts and their impact on employment and self employment opportunities.



Gail's Story

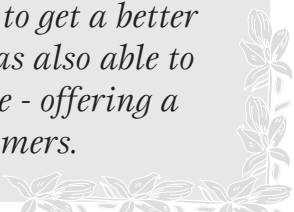
From her previous experience in helping friends and family, Gail had a good idea about what her customers would want. Most people contacted her for her expertise on

- *The kind of plants to put in their gardens*
- *Information on garden layout and design*
- *New plant varieties*
- *Soil and sun conditions needed by plant varieties*

She decided to do some additional research so she designed a questionnaire. She gave it out to neighbours, people she knew from her childrens' school, volunteer activities, and to several people she didn't know, who had been referred by friends.

The survey asked questions about gardening needs, prices people would pay, existing sources of gardening support, and services they would like to get that they weren't currently receiving. She also asked demographic questions - such as age, lifestyle, and location of home - to establish a profile of her potential customers.

From the 40 surveys she got back, Gail was able to get a better idea of services, pricing, and competition. She was also able to determine the factor that would make her unique - offering a website with information and resources for customers.



Step Two – How to Conduct Market Research

You need to know if there is a market for your product or services. This allows you to make effective choices for your business like: where to locate, how to advertise, what to charge, and what to offer. Find out as much as you can about your customers needs:

- Where do they shop now?
- How much do they pay?
- Do they currently have unmet needs?
- Who is your typical customer?
- What is the age range for your target customer?
- Would both men and women buy this?
- Does ethnicity play a factor in the decision to buy?

- Where do these customers live?
- What roles do income, lifestyle and family situation play in the buying decision?
- What is their buying pattern?

Visit www.ysstab.on.ca for a template to assist you in **How to Conduct a Market Research Survey**.

Gail's Story

In order to determine the competition, Gail visited a number of local gardening stores to see what they offered in terms of information, advice, and resources.

She also visited a couple of gardening shows, so she could get information from other businesses outside of the area where she lived. Since there was no competitive threat from these businesses, Gail was able to ask about pricing, timeframes to deliver services, and seasonality of their businesses.

From this research, Gail was able to determine that although she had competition in the marketplace, she would be able to start her business, provided she had a unique offering.

Based on her customer research, she knew that customers wanted access to a user-friendly website; from her competitive research, she found that none of her competitors had websites, so decided that would be her unique offering.

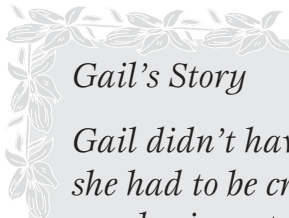
Step Three - Know your Competition

Market research includes finding out as much as possible about your competition.

- Who is currently selling similar products or services?
- What is their niche (who do they serve – where)? How do you differ?
- What can you learn from their mistakes and successes?
- What are their future plans?
- How are they not meeting the needs of their customers?

To collect this information, you need to go into the community and start asking questions.

- Look through the Yellow Pages or ask people where they have purchased similar products or services.
- Use the Internet as a research tool and look through local newspapers and business directories - anything you can use to get an idea of who is competing for the same customers.
- Talk to owners of similar businesses to determine the current and potential growth of the industry. Most industries have associations where competitors help each other. It is to their benefit to raise the profile and the standards by which people in their industry work.



Gail's Story

Gail didn't have a lot of money to do expensive advertising, so she had to be creative about how she was going to promote her new business to other people.

Gail knew she had to invest a significant portion of her marketing budget in a great website, since that was going to be what helped her to stand out from the competition. Her husband had a colleague with a new (but growing) web design business, so she asked them to develop her site for her. She also hired a photographer to take some great photos of her work (after she had asked those friends for permission) and planned to use the photos both on her website, business card, and ads. Gail also included her website in all her advertising and communication so she could attract people to the website.

She researched a few local magazines and newspapers and decided she would run a couple of ads in them - the cost was low, and the people who read those magazines were aimed at the same target market as her business.

She approached the editor of a local paper and asked whether she could submit some articles about gardening; the editor offered to publish a few to see the response and since he couldn't pay her for the articles, agreed to include her contact information with the article, so customers could contact her directly. She also bought a booth at a local farmer's market where she

was able to meet other “green” people on a weekly basis, and was able to build awareness of her business directly.

Gail documented all of her marketing tactics and made sure that when someone called her about her services, she asked where they had heard about Green Thumb Gardening Services. This was important so she knew what advertising and promotional activities were most successful.



Step Four – How to Develop a Marketing Plan

A marketing plan is a document that details the actions necessary to achieve marketing objectives. A marketing plan may be a year, to five years in length. A one year plan is referred to as an annual marketing plan. A marketing plan is part of an overall business plan. A solid marketing strategy is the foundation of a well-written marketing plan. While a marketing plan contains a list of actions, a marketing plan without a strategic foundation, is of little use.

A marketing plan must:

- Describe and explain the current situation
- Specify the expected results (objectives)
- Identify the resources that will be needed (including financing, time and skills)
- Describe the action steps to meet your objectives
- Devise a method of monitoring results and adjusting the plan where necessary

For a template on **How to develop a Marketing Plan**, go to www.ysstab.on.ca

Consider low-cost/high impact ways to market your business. Most new businesses don't have much of a marketing or advertising budget, so newspapers or TV ads are typically out of reach. Be creative and consider how to let people know about your business:

- Self promote by going into local stores or businesses to market your service or product in person.
- Offer to speak at a local organization or business association so you can increase awareness of your business.
- Consider bartering your service or product with another business owner - you both profit without having to spend money and you have someone else who has tried and may recommend your business.

- Write articles for local newspapers and newsletters.
- Build a referral system so your customers bring you new business as a result of being satisfied with the service you provided them.
- Be sure to spend some time finding out about your potential customers before you try to “sell” them.
- Craft a thirty second “elevator speech” about your business.
- Always carry your business cards – always! Talk to people when you’re out: You never know who might be a potential customer or who might know someone who might be.
- Join trade associations, business community associations (i.e. Chambers of Commerce), business networks, professional associations or clubs to help establish contacts, and develop partnerships and networks.

Information on how to prepare a marketing plan can be found in the following books:

101 Ways To Promote Yourself

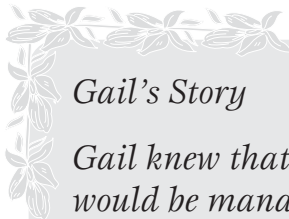
Pinskey, Raleigh

Offers key tips and insights for marketing and increasing visibility of a small business.

The Complete Canadian Small Business Guide

Gray, Diana L. and Douglas A.

A comprehensive guide on starting and managing a small business in Canada.



Gail's Story

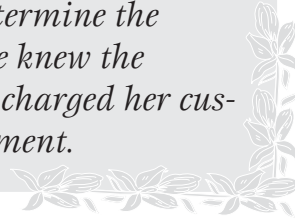
Gail knew that the hardest part about starting a business would be managing her financial plan and cash flow. As she was developing her business plan, Gail kept careful track of the costs of:

- *Supplies*
- *Advertising*
- *Phone and fax lines*
- *Website design fee*
- *On-going costs like monthly website fees*
- *Office supply costs like computer paper*

Gail had \$5000 to initially invest in her business and she was planning to get a line of credit from her bank. Her plan was to

use part of her house to run her business, and she had already started work on some small renovations to that space. She already had a computer and printer, but needed to buy some technical software, a fax machine, and scanner. She also got a business phone line that would only ring in her office.

Gail knew that she had to be able to track her income and expenses, so she used an Excel spreadsheet to determine the inflow and outflow of cash into her business. She knew the spreadsheet also had to include GST - what she charged her customers and what she had to remit to the government.



Step Five - Develop a Cash Flow Projection

Cash flow is the amount of cash a company generates and uses during a specific period of time. A cash flow statement tells you how much actual money the company has generated. Cash flow shows you how the company has performed in managing inflows (revenue) and outflows (expenses) of cash. It provides a picture of the company's ability to pay bills, creditors and finance growth.

As the name suggests, a cash flow will help you determine:

- Where your money comes from
- Where it goes
- How much is left over (for personal draw or investing back into the business)

Visit www.ysstab.on.ca for a sample **Small Business Cash Flow Projection**.

Don't overlook the importance of bookkeeping knowledge in your business. Lack of bookkeeping or financial planning expertise is one of the single highest causes of business failure. Take courses, seek expert advice or hire help, but do learn basic bookkeeping skills before you start.

Additional help with business plan preparation and financing can be obtained through all major banks. Check their websites for detailed tools and tips.

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Web Site</i>
BMO Bank of Montreal	www.bmo.com
CIBC	www.cibc.com
National Bank of Canada	www.nbc.ca
Scotia Bank	www.scotiabank.com
Royal Bank Financial Group	www.rbc.com
TD Canada Trust	www.tdcanadatrust.com

Additional financing information can be obtained through:

Business Development Bank of Canada 1-888-463-6232
www.bdc.ca

The BDC has increased the availability of financing for fast-growing, women-owned firms in Canada. BDC aims to provide women entrepreneurs with the necessary resources so they can expand their business and seek new market opportunities outside of Canada. The Business Development Bank of Canada provides women entrepreneurs with both access to financing as well as consulting services to help foster business growth and development.

Women entrepreneurs and access to financing
www.bdc.ca/en/i_am/woman_entrepreneur/article/Women_access_financing.htm

Woman Entrepreneur
www.bdc.ca/en/i_am/woman_entrepreneur/default.htm
 see the document Women Entrepreneurs' Fund

Women's Centre of York Region Loan Fund
 (905) 727-5837 x 203 Email: admin@wcyr.ca
 This loan fund enables graduates of Enterprising Women to access small amounts of money in order to start/grow their business.

South Lake Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC)
 (formerly Business Loan Centre)
 (905) 476-1244 www.southlakecfdc.org
 CFDCs support community economic development by assisting Ontario's rural communities to strengthen and diversify their economies. Through federal support, CFDCs administer local investment funds to help finance existing small business for start-up, expansion or stabilization plans that help maintain or create jobs.

Industry Canada

Canada Small Business Financing Program (CSBF)

(613) 954-5540 www.strategis.ic.gc.ca

CSBF makes it easier for small business to get term business improvement loans to finance the purchase of improvement or fixed assets for new or expanded operations. This program eliminates the need for owners to provide personal assets as security to support their financing requirements. Contact the lender of your choice. See documents: *Sources of Financing & Sources of Micro-credit Financing*

Additional financial resources for start-up businesses:

Service Canada

www.canada.gc.ca/

Targeted wage subsidies. Up to 60% for up to 78 weeks
Student career placements, up to 50% of the applicable
Provincial minimum wage rate.

Canada Customs and Revenue

(416) 973-3816 www.ccr-aadrc.gc.ca/sred

Tax credits and refunds for developing new or improved products, processes or materials under Scientific Research and Experimental Development (SR&ED) Program.



Gail's Story

Gail was very detailed in her cash flow, and included monthly costs for insurance, phone line, bank service fees, as well as one-time costs for the website design and paid advertising. She also included a projection of her income - based on her market research - which took into account the business' busy times of the year, and what she could realistically manage given her own availability to work in the business. From those calculations, Gail was able to view her cash flow on a monthly basis. Because of her start-up costs, and the seasonality of her business, Gail realized that she wouldn't break even until the 8th month in business, and could anticipate a small profit by the end of the year.

Gail decided to register her business, as she knew she wanted to apply for a business loan. She knew that one of the requirements

for a business loan, was that the business needed to be registered with the provincial government.

She decided on the name Green Thumb, as she felt that name told people what her business did.

Gail did a name search using the Ontario Government's on-line registration process and was able to search for other companies with the same name. She did find another company called Green Thumb in another part of Ontario, so decided to call her business Green Thumb Gardening Services, to differentiate herself from that other business. Gail followed a recommendation that she should do a web search for other companies globally who may have the same name as she may decide in year 3 or 4 to move to online sales for some of the more unique Canadian products she offers.

She also learned that she could get a Provincial Sales Tax (PST) number as she would be selling products to her customers and would also be buying products wholesale from suppliers. With a PST number and vendor permit, she could buy wholesale goods without paying the PST.

Gail also applied for a Goods and Services Tax (GST) number, as she anticipated earning more than \$30,000 per year. Having a GST number meant that she would need to charge GST for her services, but could also claim the GST she paid for business expenses.



Step Six - Set up Your Business

a) Choose a business structure

There are three types of business structures in Canada. A new business owner needs to decide which structure is best suited for his/her business needs, liability concerns, and financial needs. Most businesses start as either a sole proprietorship or partnership as they are the least costly, and easiest to implement. A lawyer isn't required for either of these options. Incorporation is a more complex legal structure which costs about \$1500 and usually the legal support of a lawyer to put in place.

Sole Proprietorship:

A form of business organization in which one person is the sole owner. In effect, there is no distinction between the owner's and the business' responsibility regarding the commitments made on behalf of the business. This structure is best suited for small businesses as all of the benefits and liabilities of the business flow through to the individual.

Partnership:

A form of business ownership made up of two or more people. Partners share an agreed upon percentage in the responsibility, profits and liabilities of their business. This structure is best suited for two or more individuals who are starting a business with a common purpose and different (yet compatible) skill sets. The business should be one that has limited liability.

Incorporation:

This is a process that legally makes a business a separate entity from its' owners. The business operates as a corporation. In Canada a corporation is endowed with all the legal abilities of a person such that it can own property, carry on business, borrow, lend, sue or be sued. Shareholders of the corporation do not own the business or assets of the corporation and except in certain exceptional circumstances are not personally responsible for the liabilities of the corporation. The corporation is, by far the most common business structure employed in Canada. It works well for any business that has liability.

b) Investigate By-Law Requirements

Each municipality has different by-laws depending on the nature of the business. These by-laws can affect where and how you open a business and may restrict the kind of businesses that can be run from home. Contact your municipality directly for a clear understanding of the guidelines.

- **Town of Aurora**
www.town.aurora.on.ca/edc/e_page1.htm#2
- **Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury**
www.town.bradfordwestgwillimbury.on.ca/economic_development.cfm?nav=3
- **Town of East Gwillimbury**
www.eastgwillimbury.ca/BDCTemp/businesspackg.htm
- **Town of Georgina**
www.town.georgina.on.ca/services-gov.aspx

- **Township of King**
www.township.king.on.ca/public/departmentlist.cfm?action=showdetails&departmentid=5
- **Town of Markham**
www.markham.ca/markham/channels/edo/mission.htm
- **Town of Newmarket**
www.newmarket.ca/userfiles/HTML/nts_1_443_1.html
- **Town of Richmond Hill**
www.town.richmond-hill.on.ca/business/business.asp
- **City of Vaughan**
www.city.vaughan.on.ca/business/index.cfm
- **Town of Whitchurch Stouffville**
www.townofws.com/government/index.php?display=bylaws

c) Register your Business

A small business in Ontario may be registered as an **ONTARIO BUSINESS REGISTRATION** (also known as a “Form 1”) as a simple inexpensive way to set up your business. The registration is available as either a Sole Proprietor (for a single individual) or Partnership (for two or more individuals). The information required in registering a business registration is as follows:

- The business name
- Business address
- Principal place of business in Ontario
- Individual/s name and address (Post Office Boxes are not accepted)
- Activity carried on by the business
- Person authorizing the registration of the business

The advantage of an Ontario Business Registration is that it is an inexpensive and simple format to starting your business. The disadvantage is that there is little name protection of your business name and the business owner is fully responsible for all the debts and obligations related to his/her business. You can either register your business on-line through Ontario Business Connects (OBC) or in person at a Government Information Centre.

NOTE: You do not have to register your business, but there are definite benefits to having a registered business, such as securing a business loan and having access to a vendor permit (for use in purchasing wholesale goods).

Government Information Centres

There are GICs throughout York Region where you can register your business.

***Aurora* - Government Information Centre**

50 Bloomington Road West, Aurora, ON L4G 3G8
(416) 326-1234 or 1-800-267-8097
www.serviceontario.ca

***Markham* - Markham Small Business Enterprise Centre**

1380 Rodick Road, Suite 100, Markham, ON L3R 4G5
(905) 248-2736
www.markham.ca

***Vaughan* - Vaughan Business Enterprise Centre**

9995 Keele Street, Maple, On L6A 1R6
(905) 417-0412
www.centrebusiness.com

***Georgina* - South Lake Community Futures Development Corporation**

183 The Queensway South, Keswick, ON L4P 2A3
(905) 476-1244
www.southlakecfdc.org

***Bradford* - The Bradford & District Chamber of Commerce**

95 Holland St, Unit 105, Bradford, ON
(905) 775-3037
www.bradfordchamber.on.ca

Registration can also be applied for on-line at www.serviceontario.ca

Additional information about registering a business can be obtained through:

Federal Government

1-888-576-4444 www.canada.gc.ca www.businessgateway.ca
Provides links to business registration, patents, tax and license registration, payroll deductions and many other FAQs.

Province of Ontario

1-800-567-2345 www.cbs.gov.on.ca
Most business permits and licensing are handled by local municipalities, so check with them first. Some are regulated by the province and the list is available on the web site. This site also contains many other useful links.

d) Determine your Insurance Needs

Insurance is an additional area that each new business needs to research. The amount and type of insurance will vary with each business, depending on the nature of the product or service, level of liability, how the products or services will be sold and volume of business revenues. New business owners should contact their own insurance agent or ask friends/family for a referral to an insurance agent. Many people also source insurance through the Chambers of Commerce of which they are a member. Some of the questions to consider are:

- What insurance needs do you have when working from home?
- What insurance do you need for commercial or industrial space?
- What insurance needs do you have for the services you offer?
- How do you get insurance?
- What are your liability issues?
- What insurance do you require on a personal level - medical, dental, life, disability, loss of income?
- What are the costs and terms you should plan for?

e) Determine your Legal Needs

Lawyers provide legal advice. This doesn't mean that they can make your business decisions for you. They should be able to identify legal issues that concern your small business, tell you what the law says about the issues and on your instructions, help you to address them. Typically a lawyer can guide you at every stage of your business.

When you are setting up a business a lawyer can:

- Help you decide whether your business should be a sole proprietorship, partnership or corporation
- Draft a partnership agreement or incorporate your company
- Review documents a lender may require you to sign
- Review leases of premises or equipment
- Act for you in the purchase of property
- Review franchise agreements
- Draft standard form contracts for use in your business
- Advise you how to best protect your ideas, trademarks and designs

When your business is up and running, your lawyer can:

- Help you negotiate contracts and put them in writing
- Help you collect unpaid bills
- Defend any lawsuits against you
- Advise you on hiring and firing of employees

- Advise you about taxes
- Advise you about doing business in other provinces and countries

If you decide to get out of business, a lawyer can help you:

- Sell your business
- Arrange for the transfer of the business to your children
- Dissolve a corporation

To find a lawyer, consider the following:

- Ask friends or colleagues for a referral
- Call a Lawyer Referral Service (Ontario 1-800-268-8326)
- Use a legal directory on-line or at your local library
- Contact the Canadian Bar Association
- Consult the phone book or Yellow Pages
- Contact your bank for a recommendation

f) Determine your Accounting Needs

Business owners need to stay on top of the financial picture and cash flow status of their businesses in order to:

- Track cash inflows and outflows
- Track who owes the business money and to whom the business owes money
- Enable the preparation of annual income statements for tax purposes
- Evaluate the year-to-date operation in terms of revenues earned, gross profit, and expenses paid, so that decisions can be made going forward to improve the profitability of the company

There are three options to managing a business' finances:

- You can purchase a software program off the shelf and do it yourself. The two most commonly used software packages for small business accounting are QuickBooks and Simply Accounting. These two programs are similar in cost and features.
- You can hire a bookkeeper. You may have to pay anywhere from \$20 to \$35 per hour for bookkeeping services.
- You can do the day-to-day data entry and have an accountant come in periodically to take care of the more advanced accounting. The cost will be higher, approximately \$70 to \$100 per hour, but should require fewer hours as you will be doing the day-to-day data entry.

g) Determine what Business Taxes you are required to pay and/or collect

All businesses must be aware of the various taxes that may apply to their product or service. Depending on the type and location of products or services being offered, federal, provincial and/or municipal business taxes may apply.

Goods and Services Tax - GST

The GST applies to most Canadian goods and if you qualify as a small supplier according to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), you may not have to register for the GST or remit the GST.

Generally, a small supplier is defined as a sole proprietor, partnership or corporation whose total taxable revenues before expenses are \$30,000 or less annually.

You may want to register for GST even if you are a small supplier. If you don't register, you will not be able to charge your customers and clients GST. Nor will you be able to use the GST you pay on business purchases to get Input Tax Credits.

For more information on GST, please refer to:

www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tax/business/topics/gst/menu-e.html

Provincial Sales Tax – PST

The Provincial or Retail Sales Tax is a provincial tax that is imposed on the consumer or user of:

- most goods
- certain services
- admission prices
- insurance premiums used for consumers in Ontario

Businesses that sell taxable goods or provide a taxable service are required to obtain a Vendor Permit under the Retail Sales Tax Act and are responsible for collecting and remitting the tax.

For more information on PST, please refer to:

www.trd.fin.gov.on.ca/userfiles/HTML/cma_3_2491_1.html

For further information, visit these websites:

Provincial Tax Forms and Publications

www.trd.fin.gov.on.ca/userfiles/HTML/cma_3_9237_1.html

Small Business Tax Help

www.trd.fin.gov.on.ca/userfiles/HTML/cma_3_160_1.html

CRA Business Tax Web Page

www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tax/business/menu-e.html

see the document Taxation Info-Guide

Income Tax Information

Business owners must be aware of the requirements of the Income Tax Act that may apply to their product or service. There are different tax implications for incorporated and non-incorporated businesses. For information specific to your organization you should consult an accountant or financial professional.

For further information:

CRA - Business Inquiries Information Lline

Call: 1-800-959-5525

Ontario Small Business Guide

This booklet will guide you through various aspects of Retail Sales Tax, Corporations Tax and Employer Health Tax. This booklet also answers some of the frequently asked questions of small business owners regarding tax obligations.

www.trd.fin.gov.on.ca/userfiles/HTML/cma_3_160_1.html

Visit these Web sites:

Ontario Income Tax

www.trd.fin.gov.on.ca/userfiles/HTML/cma_3_160_1.html

Canada Revenue Taxes Menu


www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tax/business/menu-e.html

see the document: Taxation Info-Guide



Gail's Story

Gail completed her business plan and took it to some professionals for advice. She asked a friend already in business to review it for her, as well as her banker and an accountant. She also got some ongoing assistance from a business coach who specialized in small businesses. Using their suggestions, she updated her plan and set about starting her business.



Step Seven - Create a Business Plan

A business plan is essential to having a successful business. It's a written plan of action, which outlines the direction for your business. It is a road map that should be updated each year, as your business needs, goals and challenges change.

At this point you should have enough information to write up a business plan. There are many formats you can use for such a plan, but they all include the following:

- How the company will be managed and owned.
- Product(s) and or service(s) you will offer.
- Materials and resources you'll need.
- Potential strengths and weaknesses of your company.
- Your company's short and long-term plans.
- The market and industry in which your business is positioned (including suppliers, customers, competitors, threats, opportunities).
- Human resource plan (staffing, structure)
- Marketing, sales and production plans.
- Operational costs.
- Amount, sources and types of financing the business may require, including personal resources you may need to tap into.
- Sales and cash flow forecasts.

It may sound like a lot, but rest assured, there are many courses, websites, books, resource centres and business coaches in the community to assist you.

York Region Small Business Enterprise Centre

(905) 830-4444 X1517 E-mail: yrsbec@region.york.ca

www.region.york.on.ca/Business/Small+Business+Enterprise+Centre/default+Small+Business+Home+Page.htm

Services are offered from startup to 5 years in business for companies with less than 10 employees. Services vary from centre to centre but generally include free startup information and tools, one-on-one business case consultations, research information, free or low cost seminars, workshops, courses and conferences and referrals to government programs financial providers and business professionals. Four locations serving: Whitchurch-Stouffville, King, Aurora, Newmarket, East Gwillimbury, Georgina, Markham, Vaughan and Richmond Hill.

Markham Small Business Enterprise Centre
(905) 248-2736 E-mail: sandratam@markham.ca
Serving: Markham and surrounding areas.

Richmond Hill Small Business Enterprise Centre
(905) 771-2523 E-mail: mdisano@richmondhill.ca
Serving: Richmond Hill and surrounding areas.

Vaughan Business Enterprise Centre
(905) 417-0412 E-mail: teresa@centrebusiness.com
Serving: Vaughan and surrounding areas.

Job Skills - Self Employment Benefits Program
130 Davis Drive, Unit 14, Newmarket Plaza, Newmarket
(905) 898-5138 www.jobskills.org
Offers training for new business entrepreneurs while collecting E.I. benefits.

YMCA - Self Employment Benefits Program
4855 14th Avenue, Unit 3, Markham
(905) 948-9622 www.ymcatoronto.org
Offers training for new business entrepreneurs while collecting E.I. benefits.

Seneca College - Self Employment Benefits Program
24 Wright Street, Richmond Hill
(905) 770-5211 www.senecac.on.ca
Offers training for new business entrepreneurs while collecting E.I. benefits.

Women's Centre of York Region
(905) 727-5837 x 203 Email: admin@wcyr.ca
WCYR offers a 5-month entrepreneurial training program - Enterprising Women that provides the tools to develop a valid business plan and a one-year cash flow. The program usually runs from November to April.

Women's Enterprise & Resource Centre
(416) 247-7181 www.microskills.ca/werc.html
The Women's Enterprise & Resource Centre is a community-based business centre for women who are developing micro-enterprises and small businesses. It offers programs, services, and resources to women entrepreneurs for business start-up and operation.

Industry Canada
(416) 973-8800 www.abc-eac.ic.gc.ca
Support services to help develop business plans, partnerships, joint ventures for women of aboriginal origin.

**Canada Business Service Centres (CBSC)
& Canada-Ontario Business Service Centres (COSBC)**

1-800-567-2345 www.cbosc.org/ontario

Provides information guides on business start-up, employment and training, exporting, importing and taxation. The Ontario link provides accurate, timely and relevant business information related to Ontario.

Network for Women Entrepreneurs

1-888-300-9308 www.cobosc.org/nwe

Provides direct access for Ontario businesswomen to people, programs and services required to start, operate and grow their businesses.



Gail's Story

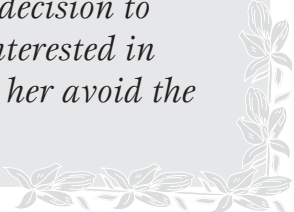
After reviewing her business at the end of Year 1, Gail had some successes and some setbacks. Her website was well used when people found it, but it was very expensive to do effective web marketing. She discovered that she needed to change the content of her website frequently in order to bring people back, so she took a course on website maintenance, so she could do this herself. She used the slower seasons of her business to do that work.

She did learn that there was the opportunity to offer educational workshops for local community groups and schools, so she focused on developing that aspect of her business. She also had great response to her newspaper articles, and used both the articles and the workshops as a way to increase awareness of her services and her website.

Gail also sought out other business people through local networks and joined a local gardening association; she found she needed both in order to reduce her feeling of isolation when working from home, and also to build her business through word of mouth.

At the end of Year 1, Gail had met a number of her business goals. She updated her business plan, based on the actual business figures (compared to the projected costs/income she had originally used) and set herself new goals for her second year in business.

As a technologically savvy woman, Gail considered setting up a Blog, which she could update regularly. Blogs are little or no cost and offer the advantage of being able to be updated on a minute by minute basis. Seeing that savvy business people are now moving to a website and using a blog to educate, comment and market products and services, Gail made a decision to move in that direction. It will show that she is interested in using an emerging technology and this will help her avoid the costly expense of regular updates.



Step Eight - Continually re-evaluate the direction of your business, stay connected and get support when you need it.

a) Dealing with Isolation

If you have never worked alone, it may be a challenging experience. Some people enjoy the quiet and limited distractions, while others find it hard to work without other people around. Consider your own working style when deciding where you will locate your business. If you decide to work from home (or by yourself), consider the following:

- Join networking groups where you need to leave the home office to attend meetings during the day.
- Make time to get out during the day for a walk, coffee with a colleague or have a lunch meeting.
- Work for part of the day from a local library.
- Consider finding a partner with whom you can work.
- Go out and visit customers rather than having them come to you.

b) Self-Motivation

Take time to recharge your batteries and refresh your perspective so you don't become frustrated with your business. Consider developing a personal motivation plan to take advantage of opportunities that will help you maintain your motivation. Here are a few suggestions:

- *Identify an area in your business or personal life that you would like improve.* Consider taking a night course or weekend seminar to boost your energy, confidence, and equip you with new skills and insights.
- *Join or create a sales support group (a specific type of networking group).* Meeting with other like-minded people can help you see your business from a different perspective. An effective group will have between six and eight members from various industries. It usually meets several times a year. With the

right chemistry between members, these meetings will motivate you to try new approaches and market your business more effectively.

- ***Regular exercise helps you work more efficiently and effectively.*** You'll often come up with more creative solutions when you're on the tennis court or running track.
- ***Read or listen to motivational material.*** A well-written book that offers sound advice can provide you with some tips and suggestions that you may not have considered.
- ***Take time off.*** Even a long weekend away from your business can be restful. A true vacation also means completely avoiding email and voicemail and returning with renewed focus and energy.
- ***Associate with positive people and distance yourself from negative individuals.*** Negative individuals drain your energy, fail to support your goals and de-motivate you. Positive and optimistic people will uplift your spirits and help you through challenging times.
- ***Develop a structure in your life where you can create time for charting your goals, reflecting on your successes, and revamping as needed.*** Seek out other business owners to create a support structure.

c) Establishing a Work/Life Balance

For home-based entrepreneurs, making the distinction between home life and work life is the most difficult task, because work takes place in the home. To maintain the stability of your home life and possibly your sanity, follow these seven tips to keep your office from completely invading your home.

- Clearly differentiate your workspace from the rest of the house
- Set definite work hours
- Have a signal that makes it clear when you don't want to be disturbed
- Learn how to say "No, I'm working now" and stick to it
- Use a separate business phone line
- Soundproof your office (if possible)
- Have a separate outside entrance (if bringing in clients into your home)

Even if you're not running a family business, your business still impacts the lives of everyone in your family. So how do you manage to be a good spouse and parent while powering your way to the top of the business world? Here are some tips that, while they won't guarantee happiness 24/7, may help harmonize your home and work lives.

- Call a “family meeting” - Discuss ways you can share the responsibility of the home, including childcare and household chores.
- Don't try to be a superhero and handle everything alone - Ask yourself, “Is my partner providing suitable support? Are the children pitching in?” Have you divided both childcare and house work in your household? Prioritize what absolutely needs to be done in both work and home on a daily basis.
- Take advantage of technology - Stay accessible via cell phones, pagers, email and fax. If something happens at home, how easily can you be reached?
- Watch for burnout - Live by the motto “If I don't take care of myself, I won't be able to take care of another.”

Unfortunately, building a business isn't easy. There are tough choices to make, a million things to do, and the potential for many stressful situations. Before you pull your hair out, take a deep breath and try these tips for reducing your stress.

Create a master list of goals

- Break your larger goals into realistic short-term goals and break the short-term goals into realistic steps you can take immediately.
- Prioritize these goals according to your resources, time available, skills and bigger vision.

Take one step at a time

- Instead of coming to a halt when you get frustrated, simply decide on the best action you can take and take it.
- Recognize that the process of building a business is a long term process - it doesn't happen overnight, so look at what steps need to be undertaken in order to achieve your vision.

Evaluate and learn from your actions

- At the end of the day, congratulate yourself for what you've accomplished and let go of what you have not.

Realize you don't have to do this alone

- As you grow your business, many tasks may become routine and could be accomplished by someone else. Develop a list of these tasks and delegate them so you can concentrate on growing your business.

d) Suggestions from successful business owners

- Maintain a positive attitude
- Stay committed and believe in yourself
- Be patient
- Enjoy what you are doing
- Be persistent
- Use and revise your business plan
- Focus on what is within your control
- Start small and keep it simple
- Focus on excellent customer service
- Pay attention to cash flow, bookkeeping and accounting; if you can't do these yourself, hire someone who can
- Have a support system (friends, family, advisors) that you use as a sounding board or for generating ideas
- Use networks for social (isolation), emotional (sharing) resources/advice/support) and professional (new leads, ongoing professional development) support
- Join networking groups, chambers of commerce or industry organizations
- Attend events where you'll meet new people
- Draw on your passions, strengths and experience
- Hire a business coach or consultant to work with you on a regular basis (weekly or bi-monthly). They can support you in clarifying and moving towards your business vision, and can create important structures of accountability and momentum

Resources

Organizations that can help you:

A Commitment to Training and Employment for Women (ACTEW)

ACTEW is a provincial group comprised of different supporters, trainers, agencies, and organizations delivering employment and training services to women.

Visit the website: www.actew.org/

Women Entrepreneurs of Canada (WEC)

A federally incorporated, non-profit organization. It was founded in Toronto in 1992 to serve the interests of established women entrepreneurs. WEC provides a dynamic environment, high-quality programming and opportunities for women entrepreneurs to enrich and enhance their personal and professional lives.

Visit the website: www.wec.ca

The Business and Professional Women's Club of Ontario

This is a private organization that works towards improving economic and employment conditions for women.

Visit the website: www.bpwontario.org/

Women in a Home Office

A network for women who work from home, providing both support through their website as well as monthly chapter meeting and tele-conferences calls.

Visit the website: www.womeninahomeoffice.com/

eWomenNetwork

Connecting and promoting women and providing them access to needed resources is what eWomenNetwork is all about.

Visit the website: www.eWomenNetwork.com

Entrewomen

Entrewomen is a non-profit on-line project, which connects women to mentors and networking groups, provides access to online training and business information, and facilitates the growth of entrepreneurial alliances. Entrewomen also offers a free listing in their Marketplace.

Visit the website: www.entrewomen.ca/

Women Entrepreneurs

As part of their commitment to help women entrepreneurs achieve their aspirations, the RBC Royal Bank provides an online community for sharing news, contacts, experiences and resources for Canadian women interested in growing their businesses.

Visit the website: www.royalbank.com/sme/women/

Step Ahead

A not-for-profit volunteer organization providing educational and practical learning opportunities for women business owners.

Visit the website: www.steпаheadonline.com/

Canadian Association of Women Executives & Entrepreneurs (CAWEE)

A networking and social alliance of innovative entrepreneurs, successful small business owners and business leaders from some of Canada's most influential organizations.

Visit the website: www.cawee.net/index.html

Business Women Networking Association BWNA

To provide a networking forum for women in business within the general region of York, as well as celebrating the success of women in business, providing support and information on issues unique to women in business and promoting entrepreneurship.

Visit the website: www.bwna.biz/

W.I.N.G.S.

Promotes positive networking and mentoring among women.

Visit the website: www.wingscanada.com

PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

Xchange-PROFITguide.com

www.profitguide.com/enewsletters/xchange/

WomanOwned.com

www.womanowned.com/

GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR PLANS

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This booklet is written as a source of information only. The information contained in this booklet should by no means be considered a substitute for the advice of qualified professionals. All efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of the information as of the date of printing.

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Starting your own business *A guide for women in York Region*

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**The Mandate of the
York, South Simcoe Training & Adjustment Board**

The mandate is to ensure that training will always be available to fit the needs of employers and workers within our community (York Region and Bradford West Gwillimbury).

We will work with our community partners to promote and facilitate the development of a skilled, relevant inclusive and adaptive labour force.

We're planning to find solutions to build tomorrow's workplace.



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Ministry of Training,
Colleges and Universities

Starting your own business

A guide for women in York Region



Serving the communities of
York Region and
Bradford West Gwillimbury



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