



## Canada-Ontario Business Service Centre

### Home-Based Business

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#### Summary

Starting your own business at home can be a viable business opportunity. This document will give you some idea of the types of businesses which can be operated from the home and provide some tips on start-up, pros and cons, and available resources.

#### Tips on Starting a Home-Based Business

- Pick a home business idea that interests you, for which you have a talent or expertise, for which there is a need, and which you can afford to finance.
- Do your market research. In a home business, as in any business, getting as much information as possible on your customers, competition, suppliers and market area before you start is essential.
- Do a complete business plan, including financial planning, before beginning.
- Check on and obtain all necessary licenses, permits and registrations for your line of business. This includes checking with your city/town/R.M. to see if it's legal to operate your business from home.
- Have business cards, stationery, brochures, etc., printed by professionals. A polished, professional look is particularly important for home-operated businesses.
- Advertise. Scan and target T.V. and radio stations, newspapers, magazines and newsletters geared to your market. Use public and special libraries to access this information. Canadian Advertising Rates and Data (CARD) lists Canadian publications, T.V. and radio stations, and their advertising rates.
- Self-market. Go to stores, companies, etc., to market your service or product in person. Be sure to spend some time finding out about your potential customers before you try to "sell" them.
- Designate and design a work area that is separate from the mainstream of your home activities. Install a separate business phone, fax and Internet connections.
- Check on any extra insurance needs. Shop around for policies, but make sure that you're adequately covered.
- Make use of free publicity. Send out news releases, present your product or service to a newspaper editor, radio or T.V. producer if applicable.
- Don't overlook management/bookkeeping. Lack of managerial expertise is one of the single highest causes of business failure. Take courses, seek expert advice or hire help, but do learn basic management skills before you start.
- Talk to owners of similar businesses outside your market area to get an idea of the potential and status of that line of business.
- Join trade associations, business community associations, (i.e., chambers of commerce), business networks or clubs to help establish contacts.
- Check both federal and provincial taxation requirements with Canada Revenue Agency and the Provincial Retail Sales Tax Office in the provinces where these are applicable. Find out about allowable deductions for automobile expenses, business meals and entertainment, and home offices expenses for self-employed persons.

#### Home-Based Business Ideas

It's important to note that some of the businesses below may be subject to the approval of local authorities (i.e. health, zoning, etc.)

##### Arts-related Businesses:

Antique Refinishing and Repair  
Appraisals - Art, Antique, etc.  
Art Dealership  
Artist  
Cartoonist

##### Miscellaneous Businesses:

Candy Making  
Catering  
Cooking/Baking  
Dog/Cat Breeding  
Dog/Cat Grooming

Costume Design  
 Entertainer  
 Film Production  
 Illustration/Graphic Arts  
 Music/Dance Lessons  
 Photography  
 Publishing

**Rentals****Business Services:**

Accounting  
 Advertising/Public Relations  
 Answering Service  
 Architecture  
 Billing Service  
 Buying  
 Calligraphy  
 Collection Agency  
 Consulting  
 Coupon Clipping Service  
 Data Processing  
 Detective Agency  
 Editing/Proofreading  
 Entertainment Bureau  
 Home Economics  
 Importing  
 Interior Design  
 Inventor's Bureau  
 Lobbying  
 Messenger Service  
 Personnel Agency/Executive Recruitment  
 Research  
 Software Development and Sales  
 Stationery—Design and Production  
 Technical Writing  
 Telephone Solicitation/Surveying  
 Trade Show/Convention Organization  
 Translation  
 Typing/Secretarial/Word Processing  
 Writing

**Personal Services:**

Astrology  
 Baby Items/Stork Deliveries  
 Babysitting/Day Care  
 Beauty Salon/Barber/Beauty Consultant  
 Bed and Breakfast  
 Chimney Sweeping  
 Cleaning  
 Cooking Lessons  
 Counselling  
 Dentist's Office  
 Doctor's Office  
 Gift Basket Service  
 Important Dates (Reminder Service for Birthdays, Anniversaries, etc.)  
 Insurance Agency  
 Lawyer's Office  
 Limousine Service  
 Mobile Home Rental Registry  
 Party Planning  
 Plant/Pet/House Sitting  
 Private Investment  
 Real Estate  
 Resume Writing  
 Sewing/Tailoring/Dressmaking  
 Shopping Service  
 Sports Lessons  
 Telegrams—Singing, Cookie, Balloon  
 Tours, Transportation Services (Children, Seniors, etc.)  
 Travel Agency  
 Videotaping Special Occasions  
 Vocational Counselling

**Retail Businesses:**

Furniture Retail  
 Home Retailing & Selling (Amway, Avon)  
 Mail Order

**Manufacturing/Design/Repair:**

Clothing Design  
 Doll Manufacture and Repair  
 Furniture Manufacture and Repair  
 Jewellery Design and Repair  
 Repair—Electrical, Appliance, etc.

**Trades:**

Carpentry  
 Contracting  
 Electrician  
 Landscape Design/Gardener/Horticulture  
 Vegetable Growing  
 Plumbing

**Pros and Cons of Working at Home**● **Pros:**

- Lower costs: office/store rental, commuting, tax deductions, child care.
- Time saved: work when most productive, combine work and home chores, commuting time.
- Own boss: set own priorities, direct financial benefit when doing well.

- Can be home with family.
- **Cons:**
  - **Work space:** may be hard to set up a permanent, separate work space. If you must see clients/customers in your home it can involve costly renovations or you may have problems creating a professional image.
  - **Time:** can be difficult to find quiet time to work or, conversely, work may cut into your family/personal life; it may be hard to "get started".
  - **Travel:** if you visit clients in their office/store it may require a lot of time and will involve higher costs.
  - **Isolation.**

### Resources

The Canada business service centre in your province/territory provides a number of services to potential and existing business people. We can inform entrepreneurs of government programs and services, of business training courses, of periodicals which may be subscribed to, of "how to" books to be purchased or acquired from the local library and of other sources of information.

### Samples of Books Available Regarding Home-Based Business

- *Dollars on Your Doorstep* - Gregory Kishel and Patricia Kishel
- *Home Business Opportunities, A Treasury of* - Russ Von Hoeschler
- *Home Business: The New Reality* - Barbara Orser
- *Homemade Money* - Edna Sheedy
- *Women Working Home: The Home-Based Business Guide and Directory* - Marion Behr and Wendy Lazar

### Samples of Books on Specific Businesses

### Arts Related

- *How to Make Money in the Antiques and Collectibles Business* -Elyse Sommer
- *How to Survive and Prosper as an Artist* -Caroll Michels
- *Promoting and Selling Your Art* -Carol Katchen
- *Sell Your Photographs* -Natalie Canavor
- *Selling Your Handcrafts* -William Garrison
- *Start and Run a Profitable Craft Business* - William Hynes

### Business Services

- *Successful Conference and Convention Planning* -Robert Drain and Neil Oakley
- *Words for Sale* -Eve Drobot and Hal Tennant, editors
- *Starting and Building Your Own Accounting Business* -Jack Fox
- *Start and Run a Profitable Consulting Business* -Douglas Gray
- *Complete Guide to a Successful Small Client Tax Practice* -Ralph Guyette
- *Making Money with Your Microcomputer* - Robert Traister and Rich Ingram

### Miscellaneous

- *Get Rich Through Multi-Level Selling* -Gini Graham Scott
- *Marketing Your Product* -Douglas Gray
- *Successful Catering* -Bernard Splaver
- *Marketing Your Service* - Jean Withers and Carol Vipperman

### Retail

- *Successful Direct Selling* -Ronald Bernstein
- *How You Too Can Make at Least \$1 Million in the Mail-Order Business* -Gerardo Joffe
- *Sell it by Mail: Making Your Product the One They Buy* -James Lumley
- *\$36 000 a Year in Your Own Home Merchandising Business* - Barry Masser

### Related Reading

- Biz Office (<http://www.bizoffice.com>)
- Business Know-how (<http://www.businessknowhow.com>)
- Starting a Home-based Business a manual for success  
(<http://www.cse.gov.bc.ca/reportspublications/publications/hbb2000.pdf>)

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