

Setting Up to Be Your Own Boss

[Look before you leap – and pack your own chute]

Handout

Suggested steps and resources to improve your small business skills today and every day in the future:

Three Basic Steps:

- Start with those closest to you
- Survey Small Business Literature
- Focus on Particular Resources

1. Start with those Closest:

- The People around you in this room
 - Learn what they do that relates to your business. It may be a skill you will have to perform or contract with them to perform for you.
- Your agency/company of employment:
 - Look at the **organizational chart** of the agency/company of your current employment. Every box indicates business skills that you will probably need to perform or hire an expert to perform for you.
 - **Managers** those boxes can be current mentors for starting your own business; some have done it. They can tell you what is involved with that function. They may be future clients. Begin your marketing research now: ask if they would use you as a consultant, how much would they pay, for what services, who do they know who might? Would they recommend you now for moonlighting consulting? If you are not currently involved in working in those areas of your company, ask if you can assist at any related task. Do all of this with your business associates, too, whether they manage a function or not.
 - During this research, you should also pay attention to your **benefits**: especially retirement and medical coverage. Find out how much income this amounts to over and above your regular pay (can be as much as half or equal to your salary). These are figures that'll need factoring into your business and financial plans if you need to maintain this coverage.

- **Forms and Contracts:** From those same organizations, as well as any you deal with in your daily employment, begin collecting all the forms and contracts they and you use to conduct business. They will be quick guides and templates to design all these necessary documents for your own business.
 - Stationary, business cards, expense accounts, contracts, petty cash receipts, accounting forms; tax forms inc. 1099, orientation material, budgets, bids and proposals, etc.

2. Survey Small Business Literature:

- The **people** around you as expert resources for what they find useful.
- Your **company/agency** of your current employment and their professional development bookshelves, training department course catalogue and resources/magazines.
- **Public Bookshelves:**
 - Library
 - Bookstores, browse the Small Business Section at places like:
 - Barnes and Noble
 - Borders Books and Music

These have a range of Small Business how-to books including the ever popular "Idiot's Guides to..." and "... for Dummies" books.

Look through tables of contents. Sample pages. See if the writing as well as the topics appeal to you. Be sure it is aimed at (1) your type of business – e.g. services vs. product and (2) your business size – entrepreneur vs. extended organization with many employees.

- **Nolo Press:**

If you live in the East Bay you are blessed with this best one-stop sites for getting most of what you need. There are three ways to get its resources:

 - On its website: www.nolo.com
 - Through its 800 number: 800-992-6656
 - Visit its bookstore at: 950 Parker Street, Berkeley 94710

3. Focus on Particular Resources: (listed by business skill category)

- **Business Plan:**

The One Page Business Plan, Jim Horan

A concise method for developing everything from your Vision and Mission through Objective, Strategies and Plans. A simple starting place, although light on the Market Research component. Available through 800-852-4890 or from the author at jimhoran@onepagebizplan.com

The Consultant's Quick Start Guide, Elaine Beech

Action plans for you first year in business

Complete Book of Business Plans, Joseph Covello & Brian Hazelgren

Simple steps to writing a business plan with many examples

Microsoft Office Small Business Tools includes the Microsoft Business Planner that includes sample outline and plan as well as a Business Plan Wizard

- **Market Research:**

Let's Play for Real, Mahan Khalsa

Good starting point for learning questioning and conversational techniques for "consultative selling" or "strategic selling," meaning getting to know what your potential clients needs and how you can partner with them to solve their concern.

- **Legal Structure:**

The Small Business Start-Up Kit for California, Peri Pakrod, J.D. (N)

Includes how to choose the best business structure from Proprietorships, Partnerships, Limited Corporation, Corporation, S Corp.

- **Financial Management and Planning:**

Financial Management for Small Business, Edward Rausch

Describes how to exercise financial control only at critical times or in specific areas to free you for other business concerns and

responsibilities. If you are starting-up see especially the section on "Budgeting Your Financial Plan". Good basic topic entries for a ledger for Profit & Loss statement. Also some discussion on how the various legal structures affect your financial management.

Small Time Operator, Bernard Kamoroff, CPA (N)
Keep books, Pay taxes. One of the "classics"

Working for Yourself, Stephen Fishman, (N)
Laws and Taxes for Independent Contractors, Freelancers and Consultants

Small Business Accounting, Daniel Sitarz (N)
Maybe the replacement to "Financial Management for Small Businesses"

- **Marketing and Sales:**

Kick Start Your Dream Business, Romanus Wolter (N) also available through www.briia.com and Amazon.com
Grass roots marketing concepts and strategies at their best.

Marketing without Advertising, Michael Phillips and Salli Rasberry (N)
Mostly for larger businesses but worth looking at for ideas and awareness of the consequences of how your business presents itself.

The Practical Guide to Designing Presentations or Training, Alex Campbell
A computer based self-study manual with simple tools and easy action steps to walk you through every major decision point for content development and organization for a presentation. Includes Preparation and Drafting worksheets. This is not a "sales training" manual. Available through www.thepracticalguide.com or 510/847-0818

Make Your Site Sell! 2002, Ken Evoy
"The definitive work on making any web site sell." If you get only one source on building and using a web site to sell, this is it.
Available at www.myss.sitesell.com

- **Legal Protection:**

Consultant and Independent Contractor Agreements, Stephen Fishman (N)

All the instructions and forms you need to freelance fearlessly or outsource with confidence... includes CD of forms templates. Great starting place for contract and invoice terms and agreements with clients and sub-contractors.

*Pay attention to what distinguishes contract labor from an employee. Some of these issues (like liability insurance) are good reasons to start your business ventures as a sub-contractor to larger established firms.

Legal Forms for Starting and Running a Small Business, Fred Sterngold (N)

Just what the title says.

If you are attending University, try to take a course at the Law School in *Copyright...* and then get a good copyright lawyer for *intellectual property* like William Mandel, 101 Vallejo St., San Francisco 94111; 415/781-4400

Alameda County Bar Association, <http://www.acbanet.org/>
Provides Attorney Referral service and some low-cost advice.

- **Professional Development and Support in Small Business Skills:**

- SCORE, (Service Corps of Retired Executives) an educational adjunct of the Small Business Administration. 455 Market St. STE 600, SF 94105
Primary objective is to assist small business owners prepare the necessary documents (like business plans and loan applications) to obtain small business start-up loans.

They also offer, however, free business advice and training to small business owners through one-on-one hourly office consulting/mentoring as well as formal business training seminars on a variety of topics.

Main office is in San Francisco (415/744- 6827) with many offices around the Bay Area. You can find the closest office to you by calling 800/634-0245 or through www.score.org. At the web site you can also review the seminars offered and scheduled dates.

One caveat: the primary orientation of SCORE is toward bricks-and-mortar, product based businesses. But even for consulting/contracting services they can counsel you through **developing a business plan** and help you understand your **cash flow** issues and determine your **break-even** point.

- Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center, 275 Fifth Street, San Francisco. Particularly oriented to help women and minority owned business get established and prosper. Offers weeks-long training classes on feasibility studies, action planning for growth and marketing matters. (range \$400-600)

Also help small business owners with financial understanding and loan packaging. They maintain a "Business Incubator" for selected individuals that includes low cost office space, individual consulting and business support services to promote your business. Information at www.rencenter.org or 415/541-8580

- Crawford Consulting Group will help you explore your business's strengths and weaknesses to market and improve accordingly. Excellent for creating business development action plans. www.crawfordcg.com or Andrew Crawford at 415/595-4620 or andrew.crawford@crawfordcg.com
- The Coaching Company. US is committed to ensuring organization success through your personal effectiveness. Tony Snapes had coached many US and British entrepreneurs make the transition of starting their own business. Also an excellent source for methods for objective measures of successful business outcomes. tsnapes@mail.com or 415/550-1345

(N = a Nolo Press Book available at their store)