



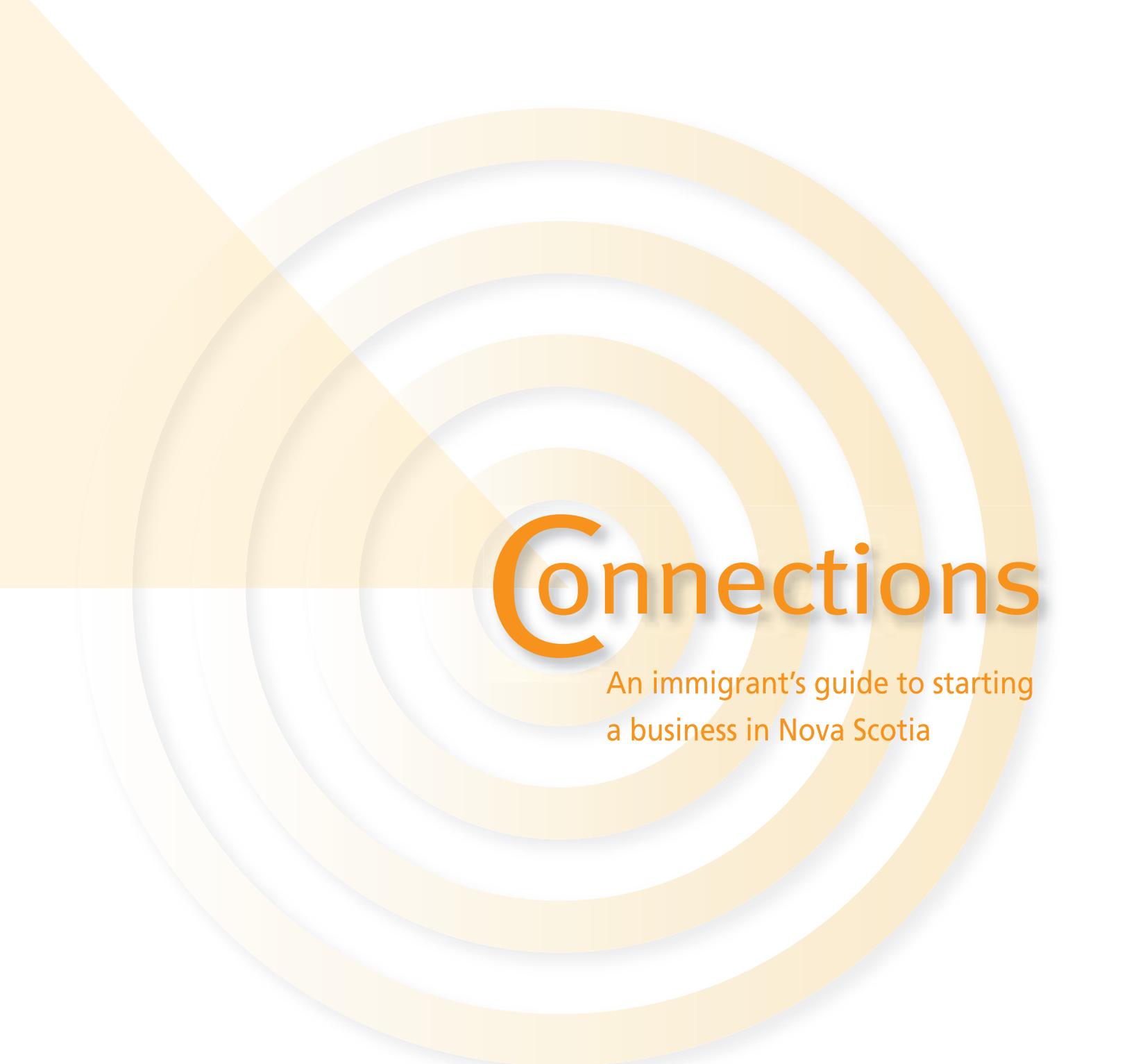
Connections

An immigrant's guide to starting
a business in Nova Scotia

This book was produced in collaboration by
Canada Business - Nova Scotia and
Immigrant Settlement and Integration Services

Canada Business
Nova Scotia

isis | Immigrant Settlement & Integration Services
Services d'établissement & d'intégration des immigrants



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How to Use This Guide

Welcome to Connections: An introduction to starting a business in Nova Scotia for immigrants.

This book will help you understand the Nova Scotia business culture and walk you through the process of starting a business here.

This guide is meant to help you get started. It does not provide every detail you will have to consider. Be sure to do your research and make use of all of the resources available to you.

You do not have to read Connections cover to cover the day you begin reading it. As it is meant to introduce you to the business start-up process, we recommend that you give yourself at least one day to work through each section and that you try the Activity Zone tasks before you move forward.

Each lesson in the book should be learned in order. We suggest that you read all sections, including those that you feel confident with already, so you get a feel for the full business start-up process.

The guide also has some special features:



Make your connection!

These boxes tell you how to contact people who can help you with the lesson at hand



Activity zone

Extra opportunity to think about the issues and to ask yourself the right questions



The inside track

Information that is related to Canadian business culture



Are you having trouble reading?

Directions on how to deal with any text that may be difficult to understand



Tricks of the trade

Helpful hints and directions to useful resources



Advice from entrepreneurs

Advice from entrepreneurs who immigrated to Nova Scotia

Section 1.

Things Unique to You as an Immigrant Entrepreneur

Starting up a business is a complex process. This guide is designed to walk you through that process here in Nova Scotia. However, before you get started, there are a few things unique to you as an immigrant entrepreneur that you need to consider:

- Your immigration status
- Your language skills
- Credentials recognition, and
- Establishing a credit history in Canada.



Advice from entrepreneurs



“I had never been an entrepreneur before this. I didn't find it easy and realized there was a lot of bureaucratic hoops to jump through to get started. But the good thing about Canada is that the information is all out there. It's a level playing field. As long as you follow the rules, you can move forward. After that, it's up to your business model whether you succeed or not,” quips Ferdinand.

Nova Scotia potters are very talented and produce beautiful pieces. We hope to find a few who could adapt their style to accommodate ikebana. The result will truly be a blending of cultures. The ultimate dream is to be able to export Nova Scotia-made pottery to Japan someday! ”

Ferdinand and Miyako
Ballesteros

Section 1. Things Unique to You as an Immigrant Entrepreneur

Your immigration status

If you want to operate a business and you are an immigrant, it is very important to understand the immigration process and your immigration status before you begin the business start-up process.

Generally, if you wish to move permanently to Canada to start and operate a business, you have to be a permanent resident (landed immigrant) or have Canadian citizenship. The laws and regulations surrounding your immigration status can be complex, so you should ensure you get your information directly from Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

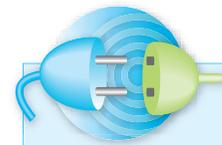
If you are not sure of your status or your immigration file, or if you have other immigration-related questions, contact Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC).

Foreign workers

Information about bringing foreign workers to Canada may be obtained on the CIC website www.cic.gc.ca and the Service Canada website: www.servicecanada.gc.ca

International students

International students who meet immigration requirements may be allowed to work in some circumstances. For further details and information, contact CIC. (In Canada only).



Make your connection!

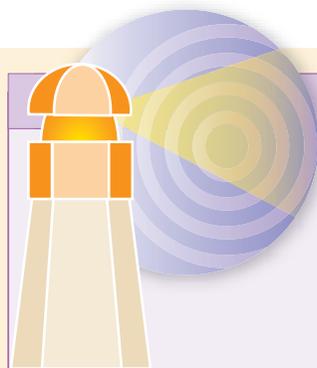
Citizenship and Immigration Canada can be reached toll free at:

1 888 242-2100

Call centre agents are available to answer your questions Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. local time. They can provide information on CIC services and programs as well as the status of your immigration application.

You can also visit the CIC website for online services including downloadable forms and guides, self assessments and checking the status of your immigration file.

www.cic.gc.ca



Are you having trouble reading?

- Try looking things up in a dictionary.
- Ask people you know who speak English for help.
- Type the word or phrase into an Internet search engine and find other examples of how it is used.
- Try out a language course. To find one, look up schools - language in the yellow pages of your local phone book.

Your language skills

It is very important that you develop a good understanding of at least one of Canada's official languages. If English or French is not your first language, it is recommended that you take "second language" training to hone your skills. Proficiency in an official language will enable you to communicate with your customers, employees and suppliers, as well as to negotiate business deals or contracts.

There are two different assessments that can be administered to evaluate your language skills: The Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) assesses English and the Niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens (NCLC) assesses French.

The CLB and NCLC are the standards used across Canada to describe language ability. The benchmarks describe what a person can do (a task), and how well he or she can do it, at each level and for each skill (listening, speaking, reading and writing). The CLB and NCLC describe what people who are learning a new language can do in daily life.

If you are not sure which language you want to improve first, consider which official language you are most comfortable with right now and consult the chart below. It provides information on the "mother tongue" of people in Nova Scotia (mother tongue refers to the language a person first learned in childhood and still understands) and Canada as a whole.

Things you need to know before your assessment:

- When you go to your assessment, bring your permanent resident card, Minister's Permit, or "letter of intent" from Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC).
- Allow at least two hours for the assessment. An advanced assessment may take four hours. Assessment times include an intake interview and orientation to programs available.
- Interpretation services can be provided to you during the assessment if you ask for them ahead of time.
- After completion of the assessment, the assessor will introduce you to English programs such as schools specializing in teaching English as a second language, classes and levels, sector-specific English programs and conversation groups available in the area.
- Private English as a second language lessons may also be available. If you are interested in private lessons (which are usually more costly than classroom sessions), ask at your assessment about how to contact a private instructor.



Make your connection!

For more information about language assessment, contact **ISIS** at

902-423-3607

or the **Metro-Region Immigrant Language Services (MILS)** at

902-464-2868

For more information about English language training visit the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration website:

www.novascotiainmigration.com

or look up schools - language in the yellow pages of the local phone book.

Language(s) first learned in childhood and still understood

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2006

Language(s) first learned in childhood and still understood	Nova Scotia		Canada	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
English only	832,105	92.32%	17,882,775	57.77%
French only	32,540	3.61%	6,817,655	22.04%
Both English and French	2,100	0.23%	98,625	0.32%
Other languages	34,620	3.84%	6,147,840	19.87%
Total	901,365	100.00%	30,946,895	100.00%

Credentials recognition

Depending on the type of business you wish to operate, you may be required to go through the foreign credentials recognition process. This is usually the case for professional services such as accounting, engineering, medicine, teaching and law, which are provincially licensed to meet minimum professional standards.

If you plan to offer a service that requires a license, it will be necessary to contact the professional association or regulatory body responsible for that profession. Depending on your occupation, you may need to meet particular requirements before going into that business.

Be sure to start the accreditation process as soon as possible! Depending on your profession, it could take quite some time for this to be completed.

You may wish to obtain a Canadian equivalency statement through an international credentials assessment service. They need translated documents and, for a fee (usually about \$100), they will determine the Canadian equivalency. One such organization is the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Nova Scotia (ATINS): www.atins.org

Documents can be translated through ISIS's Translation and Interpretation Services, which provide translations solely of identification documents needed for settlement purposes in Canada. This is a para-professional level service that includes translating the following documents:

- Identification cards, driver's licenses, passports
- Certificates of birth, marriage, death, and divorce
- General educational university diplomas or degrees
- High school diplomas and academic transcripts
- Certificates of professional or vocational training

You may want to contact the professional association that acts as a licensing body. A list of some of the most common professional associations can be found on the ISIS website: www.isisns.ca/iep.php

If you do not have a license yourself, you can still run a business if you employ other licensed individuals to do the work. In this case, your function must be limited to management.

Establish a credit history in Canada

Building a solid Canadian credit history is very important in financial matters in Canada. You may have some cash saved to use during your first few months in Canada, but at some point, you will need to purchase inventory from your suppliers, rent a car, install a phone, lease space for your business or have a Canadian credit card to be able to make purchases over the Internet. In all these cases your credit history will be checked.



Make your connection!

For more information about various assessment services, try visiting the following Web sites:

The Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials:

www.cicic.ca

Work Destinations:

www.workdestinations.org/index.jsp

For more information about credentials recognition, contact **Service Canada:**

1-888-854-1805

TTY 1-800-926-9105

www.credentials.gc.ca

Even if you had a sound credit history in your home country, you need to establish a Canadian credit history to enable financial institutions and other lenders to assess your eligibility for credit. Credit history from your home country will not be taken into consideration in Canada.

Your credit history is the record of how you have borrowed and repaid debts. Banks and other lenders pay credit bureaus to collect and report this data. They use it to evaluate your credit history by producing a 'credit score'.

What goes into your credit score

Many factors are considered and put into a mathematical formula. These may include:

- Whether or not you pay your bills and loans on time
- How much money you owe
- How long your accounts have been open
- What types of credit you use
- How often and how recently you have applied for credit
- Collection notices issued and judgments delivered for non-payment

How you can start building a good credit history

- Begin to build your credit history as soon as you arrive in Canada
- Start small and build carefully
- Ask a bank or credit union to give you a secured credit card. If it will not, go to another institution
- Using the credit card to buy things will build your credit history. It is best to pay the full monthly amount by the due date to avoid paying high interest fees and maintain a good credit history.
- After getting the secured credit card, you can apply for other in-store credit cards from retailers where you often shop. This will diversify your credit history sources, which is beneficial, but remember to limit your credit card holdings to three or four at the most.

What lenders look for

- A record of responsible borrowing which can be seen on a credit score
- Stability: the longer you stay at the same address and/or job, the better

How a secured credit card works

- You deposit cash in an account and request a credit card with a limit to match that amount (for example, \$500 or \$1,000)
- Such cards look and work just like regular credit cards.
- After six months, you can apply for another credit card. Use it to broaden your history.
- After one year of using the secured card you can ask your financial institution to release the money you gave as security and you can continue using the card.

This is only an introduction to credit history. Your financial institution can provide you with more information.

Pick up your copy of the credit history brochure at ISIS or any larger bank branch.

Section 1 Activity Zone



Activity #1

Contact Citizenship and Immigration Canada at 1-888-242-2100 or on-line at www.cic.gc.ca and ask for the status of your immigration file.

Activity #2

Sign up for a Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB).

Activity #3

- a) Make a list of the credentials that you would like recognized in Canada.
- b) Find out how to get them assessed for use in Nova Scotia.
- c) Find out what other credentials you will need that you do not currently have to operate your business.

Activity #4

Go to a local bank and apply for a secured credit card.

Section 2.

Will it Really Work?

Owning your own business is a big commitment: your time, money and security will all be tied up in your work. Before you make that commitment, make sure that going into business is what you really want.

Will you have family support and understanding? Will you be trading in a secure income for the risks of being an entrepreneur? Are you sure you know what all the risks are?



Advice from entrepreneurs



“For aspiring or current entrepreneurs, my advice is to NEVER give up, believe in yourself and accept that you have no choice BUT to succeed in whatever venture you are into. Draw inspiration from whoever or whatever inspires you - for me it was my motivational books, audio cds. Lastly, network, network, network, get out there and represent your business so your business is VISIBLE.”

Mufaro Chakabuda
CEO and founder of the Maritime Centre
for African Dance Inc, (MCAD Inc).

Section 2. Will it Really Work?

Getting to know yourself

Owning your own business is a big commitment: your time, money and security will all be tied up in your work. Before you make that commitment, make sure that going into business is what you really want.

Will you have family support and understanding? Will you be trading in a secure income for the risks of being an entrepreneur? Are you sure you know what all the risks are?

In order to evaluate whether you are ready for entrepreneurship, you also need to know whether you have the skills and experience necessary to open a business or how to get those skills. One way to objectively evaluate your readiness is to do a self-assessment.

A self-assessment is an inventory of your previous education, training, experience, skills, knowledge and interests. It will help you discover what you are good at, what you need to improve on, and what kind of business you should or shouldn't open. Complete the self assessment in this section's Activity Zone to get a better idea of what you are capable of. After that, try doing a few more to be sure you have been thorough.



The inside track

When thinking about opening a business, it is important to know:

- What you like
- What you don't like
- What you are good at
- What areas you need to work on

Successful entrepreneurs recognize their own abilities and their weaknesses. They will set up a business that will allow them to make the best use of their skills while allowing them to improve in weaker areas. In some cases, entrepreneurs will only use their strengths and will hire people who are strong in their weak areas. If you choose this way of doing things, be sure your business can afford to pay another person regularly.



Make your connection!

Self assessments can be found in a variety of locations.

Canada Business-Nova Scotia at
1-888-576-4444

has a variety of self assessment tools available that you can use either in person or over the Internet.

CONTACT

ISIS/Business Development Services (BDS)

*www.isisns.ca or
business@isisns.ca*

to check out the next workshop:
Step 1 Introduction to Business Start-up

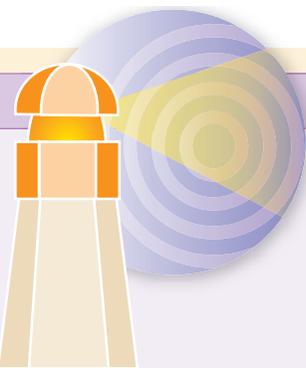
You can also try visiting one of the following Web sites:

Business Development Bank of Canada:

www.bdc.ca/en/business_tools

Canadian Bankers Association:

www.cba.ca/en/viewPub.asp?fl=6&sl=23&docid=40&pg=3



Are you having trouble reading?

- Try looking things up in a dictionary.
- Type the word or phrase into an Internet search engine and find other examples of how it is used.
- Ask people you know who speak English for help.
- Try out a language course. To find one, look up schools - language in the yellow pages of your local phone book.

Business ideas

There are many factors that determine the success of a business, including the entrepreneur, financing and external forces but the business idea is crucial. It plays a major role in the overall success of a business venture. However, it is part of the early stage of business development that often goes unnoticed by those who are interested in getting into business.

Going with an idea "whose time has come" means that the market already exists or can be developed for the product or service that you have to offer. If you would prefer to work with a business that is already established rather than start one from scratch, you can purchase a business that already exists or you can purchase a franchise.

The fit between you and your idea

The idea is only part of the mix that will lead to success. It must be a good "fit" for you if you are going to make it work.

To test whether or not the idea can indeed become a good opportunity, it must be assessed. An idea can only become an opportunity if the activity is possible and there is a good fit between the entrepreneur, the business and the market.

To be successful in business, you have to have a combination of desire, ability and a good market in which to sell your product or service. If you have desire and ability, but find your market is too small to turn a profit, it might be better to make your business idea a hobby, rather than a primary source of income.

If you have desire and a great market, but lack business skills, you have a gap that will require you to be trained or to hire people who have those skills. Lastly, if you have the ability and a market but no special desire or you are not motivated to run your business, your business might fail.



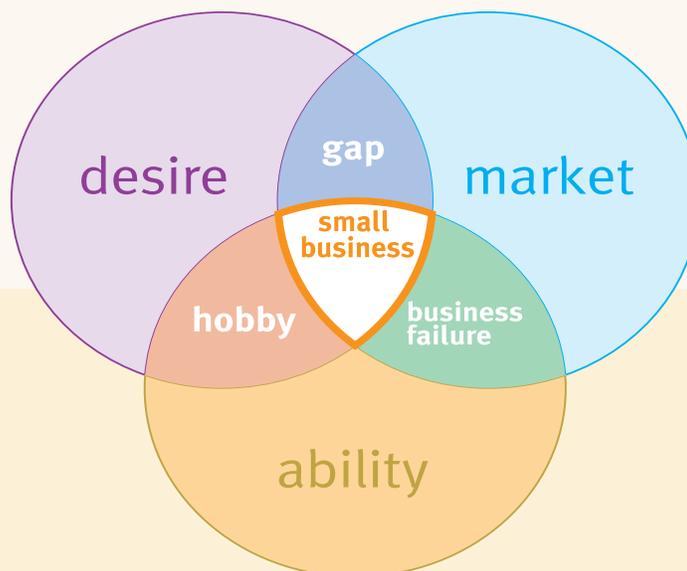
Make your connection!

Find start-up basics, market information, and helpful advice on different types of businesses by visiting:

**The Nova Scotia
Business Idea Explorer:**
www.gov.ns.ca/econ/nsx/

Small Business Model

Source: Adopted by ISIS and Centre for Women in Business.



When generating ideas, it is important to understand the market but not to limit yourself at the same time. An idea that might seem impossible may just be the idea that links you to a real opportunity. So while you are generating ideas, keep your mind open to all possibilities.

People often start businesses in a field that they know well. Be willing to explore ideas that are outside your present field of vision. The new area may just be the one that is the right opportunity for you. Once you have decided on a few ideas, evaluate them by using market research techniques.

S.W.O.T. analysis

One of the commonly used market research tools is S.W.O.T. analysis which stands for **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats** related to your business. Strengths and weaknesses are internal factors that you can control; for example, the strength of your business might be excellent customer service or low prices; weaknesses might be high rent, or a poor location. External factors are the ones which are beyond our control, such as trends that can positively affect the business and create opportunities or strong competition and high import duties that can be threats. Analyzing these four components might help you better understand your potential idea and open up your mind to adjusting it.

For more information about S.W.O.T. analysis, visit the website:
www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMC_05.htm

Innovation for small business

While innovation can mean using technology to make your business stronger, it can also mean finding a way to do things more efficiently. Innovation does not need to include technology, although it often does.

Sometimes being an entrepreneur means you need to think “outside the box”. Outside the box is a figure of speech in Canada that means to do something differently from the way you normally would. In the case of thinking outside the box, you are looking for creative ways to overcome the obstacles that every entrepreneur eventually encounters.

For example, if you are going to sell imported cookies, the first thing you might think of is opening your own store, but what about asking schools and charities whether they would like to sell them for fundraisers? Have you considered selling them on the Internet?

Some questions to ask yourself before you start your business

- What does everybody do when they do this?
- Could this be done a different way?
- Is this the most efficient way I could be generating profits?
- How is this usually done in my country of origin?
- Is this done differently here?
- Is there a way I can take advantage of a cultural difference?
- What do I need to do to make my idea a reality?



The **inside** track

If you have a business idea that requires a high level of technological engagement and innovation, there are special programs and services available to you, including business incubation (which means another organization provides some of the facilities you will need) and special financing programs.

For further information, contact the **Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency** at

1-800-565-1228

You can also visit the website at
www.acoa-apec.gc.ca

Buying a small business

Purchasing a franchise

When you purchase a franchise, you are buying the right to use a business name and business practices that have already been successful in another location. There will be a franchise fee and you may be required to pay a fee in the form of a percentage of your profits to the company that owns the name you are using. Franchises involve a lot of laws and regulations, so be sure to do your research first if you are thinking about this option.

To locate a franchise opportunity:

- Read the business opportunities section of the classified ads in newspapers.
- Read franchise trade journals, which can be located with the help of your local public library.
- Apply to work at the franchise outlet of a business that interests you.
- Attend franchise trade shows.

Before moving ahead, you should also consider whether the franchise you have in mind is a good fit for you. Ask yourself:

- What is the local market like?
- How do I know the franchise will be successful?
- Is the franchise I am interested in available in my area?
- Do I have previous experience that will help me?
- Do I have enough money to purchase the franchise?
- Will there be cultural or language barriers with the organization I will be purchasing the franchise from? If so, how will I deal with them?

Research the franchisor itself. Look into things like the financial state of the parent company as well as the success enjoyed by other franchisees. You can also contact organizations like the Canadian Franchise Association for more information. **Consult a lawyer before you sign any contract.**

Purchasing an existing business

Some business owners in Nova Scotia will be old enough to retire soon and some of them will be putting their businesses up for sale. Buying a business that is already established has some advantages. For example, you can see whether or not the location of the business is good considering what it's selling, whether sales are growing or declining, plus you may be able to keep employees who are already trained and contributing to the success of the business.

It isn't easy to find a business that's up for sale when you are new to any region of Canada; it can take a lot of networking and research to find a business venture that is right for you.



Make your
connection!

For more information
contact the **Canadian
Franchise Association** at:

1-800-665-4232

or **www.cfa.ca**

The CFA represents almost 500
franchise businesses that follow
the organization's code
of ethics.

To ask about buying
business, call:

**The Nova Scotia Regional
Development Authorities**

1-866-713-3588

Or the **Community Business
Development Corporations**

1-888-303-2232

CONTACT

**ISIS/Business Development
Services (BDS)**

www.isisns.ca or
business@isisns.ca

to check out the next workshop:

**Business Skills
Development Training**

A few suggestions to get you started:

- Tell people that you are interested in buying a business but haven't located one yet. It's amazing how far word-of-mouth will take you.
- Contact your local Regional Development Authority (RDA) and Community Business Development Corporation (CBDC) to get information on business opportunities, workshops or events that might help you find what you are looking for.
- Become a member of the local Chamber of Commerce and start to network. You may meet an entrepreneur who wants to sell.
- Network as much as you can. You never know when someone will hear you talking and present you with an opportunity.
- Try contacting a business broker. For example, www.bizbrokerdirectory.com
- Read the "business opportunities" section of the classified ads in the local newspaper.
- Check business-for-sale listings on the Multiple Listings Service (MLS) website. www.mls.ca

A few things to keep in mind

- Do your own research before you buy to confirm the business is a good investment. You want good value for your money.
- Take your time and make sure everything you are given is correct and true before you commit to buying the business.
- Examine at least three years of tax filings and financial statements. Ask an accountant to help you if you are not an expert in this area.
- Don't "fall in love" with the business before you do your homework. Find out why the business is being sold: there may be more than one reason.
- Don't pay too much for things like patents.
- Buy a business you understand: stick with what you know.
- Base your decision on potential profits, not the price of the business.
- Don't spend all your money on the purchase of the business. There may be additional costs in the future.
- Ask the current owner to share his or her secrets of success with you.

It is also extremely important to get professionals, like a lawyer and an accountant, to help you make an informed decision. They are more familiar with the local landscape and can help you avoid some of the difficulties that may otherwise arise.

If you can establish that the business is a good investment and a good fit for you, **keep researching!** For example, how steady are the profits? Some businesses have a sales cycle, while others move along at a steady pace. Sometimes these cycles are over years, sometimes over weeks or months. It's also a good idea to consider whether there will continue to be a market for the business's products or services. Use your network to find out whether there are other things you need to consider before buying the type of business you are interested in.



**Make your
connection!**

To obtain free market research information, contact:

CBNS:

(for help developing your research strategy and access to statistics)

1575 Brunswick St. Halifax, NS
B3J 2G1

E-mail: Info.cb.ns@acoa-apeca.gc.ca

www.canadabusiness.ca/ns

1-888-576-4444

CONTACT

ISIS/Business Development Services (BDS)

www.isisns.ca or
business@isisns.ca

to check out the next

Three Steps for Small Business Workshops

Strategis:

(For statistics and business information)

www.strategis.ic.gc.ca

Statistics Canada:

(for statistics)

1888 Brunswick St.
1st floor

Halifax, NS B3J 2G7

E-mail: infostats@statcan.gc.ca

www.statcan.gc.ca

1-800-263-1136

Nova Scotia Department of Finance:

(for provincial statistics)

P.O. Box 187

Halifax, NS B3J 2N3

www.gov.ns.ca/finance

902-424-5554

Finally, get to know the current state of the business. Some businesses carry debts, or offer warranties that you will have to honour later. You also need to find out whether there are good employees on staff who will stay if you take over as their manager as well as whether you will be able to continue to use the same suppliers and service providers the former owner used (at the same price).

Conducting Market Research

Get to know your customers and competitors. It is important to find out as much as you can about the people you want to sell to, the competition you might face, industry trends, and your potential market share. Remember to keep your market research for later; you will need it for your business plan if you decide to go ahead. In fact, some entrepreneurs choose to start their business plan at this point (see Section 5 for details on how to write a business plan in Canada).

Researching the customer

The first thing you need to do is to consider whether the market will want your product or service. Once you've done that, you might want to see whether other people, like a group of potential customers or a business counsellor, agree with you.

- Who will buy your product or service?
- Where do they live?
- What are they like (age, gender, do they have children, etc.)?
- Why would they buy your product or service?
- How often would they buy it?
- Where would they buy it from? A store? A tradeshow? On the Internet?
- Do your buyers have preferences regarding your product or service?
- Will you be able to build customer loyalty for your brand?
- What sort of image do you want your product or service to have?

Researching the competition

You will also need to do research on your competition. To get information on the types of businesses that are operating in your area, try searching on the Internet and contact organizations that have access to databases that list companies by location and services (Canada Business - Nova Scotia has several that are available free of charge). Databases can help you collect information, but remember that you will have to interpret that information yourself.

- Who are your competitors?
- What are their strengths and weaknesses?
- How do you compare to them?
- How do you think they will react when you open your business?
- Will people be willing to purchase your product or service from a new source or are they already loyal to another business?
- Is there existing good will for your business?



Tricks of the trade

Your local public library is a great way to access free information on how to successfully run your business in Nova Scotia. At the library, you will find business articles, books and business directories that are industry-related as well as many other helpful resources.

While you are there, ask a reference librarian to help you find what you are looking for or book an appointment if you want them to focus specifically on your questions.

Librarians are able to help you with finding sources and with using complex statistical data presented in some of the publications.

To locate the public library nearest you, look in the Yellow Pages or visit their website

halifaxpubliclibraries.ca

Can you make a profit?

Finally, you will have to decide how much money you will charge for your product or service. At this point, you need to make sure that you can cover all your business costs and still make a profit. Again, keep your work so you can add this information to your business plan later on. While deciding on pricing, think about the cost of your materials, labour costs and overhead, such as workspace, business supplies, transportation (like a car and gas), delivery fees, telecommunications, taxes and insurance. Suppliers should be happy to help.

To get accurate information, contact potential suppliers for estimates on supplies and check the average wages for employees in your industry if you will be hiring staff (the same organizations that help you with your market research can help you with your search for this information). If you will be hiring employees, you will also be responsible for additional employee benefits like holiday pay, Employment Insurance and the Canada Pension Plan.

The economy can and does change and the cost of delivering your product or service might increase over time, so be sure to consider that it might be more expensive to run your business next year than today. You might have to raise prices.

Once you know how much you have to charge to cover your own costs, you have to decide how much extra you will charge to make a profit. This is called “mark-up,” and it can be a very tough decision. While you are doing this to make money, the price you set can be too high or too low to hold the interest of your customers.

Questions to consider when determining mark-up

- Will price be important to your consumers?
- What are your direct competitors charging for similar products or services?
- Will you be offering price rebates, such as introductory offers or year-end clearance sales?
- Are you going to match your competitors or try a lower price?
- If you are charging more than your competitors, why will people pay more for your product or service?
- Will you accept returns and offer refunds if people are not happy with what you are selling? If so, how much might this cost?
- Will you use coupons as part of your advertising?
- Will you offer extras like gift wrapping or free installation?
- Will you offer discounts when large quantities are purchased?
- Will you offer warranties on your product or service?

At this point, it may be difficult to estimate all your costs, so add in a little extra to cover the unexpected.

Section 2 Activity Zone



Activity #1

Here is a self-assessment to get you thinking about your transferable skills and training. Transferable skills are the skills that can be used in different occupations rather than just one.

First, go through the questions and answer yes or no. Then go back and look at all the questions for which you answered NO. Try to think about what you can do to gain this knowledge or these skills, if you are not going to hire someone who can do it for you. Are there courses that you can take? Are there people who can help you?

Education

- Is certification or registration required for your business in Nova Scotia?
- Do you have the certificate, diploma or degree required to work in your occupation?
- If you received training in another country, do you need to upgrade your certification?
- If so, have you collected information about certification in Canada?
- If not, do you know where to get this information?
- Do you have other training that you need for running your business?

Managerial skills

- Can you confidently handle a budget and operate accounts for your business?
- Can you confidently recruit and hire the right people to work for you?
- Are you comfortable training, evaluating and, if necessary, firing staff?

Personal support

Who do you have to help you?
...family? ...partners?
...friends? ...professionals?

Training and upgrading

- Do you need training or upgrading before opening a business?
- Do you know where you can get training in your field?
- Do you know what English skills you need to work on?
- Do you know where to find English and conversation classes that fit your needs?

Technology

- Can you use a word processing program to create documents?
- Can you use a spreadsheet to balance business finances?
- Do you have an e-mail address?
- Are you able to use bookkeeping, billing and accounting software?

Other Questions:

- Are you able to operate office equipment (photocopier, fax machine) efficiently?
- Are you able to use the Internet to do research on competitors, order office supplies, or conduct business?

Eventually, you will have to upgrade all of your skills, but it is important to pace yourself and to upgrade the most important skills first. Choose three things that you answered NO to and start looking for ways to develop them. Remember to start by building on your strengths and finding ways to compensate for your weaknesses.

Activity #2

There are many other things to consider before opening a business. Search for another self-assessment online using the resources in this section. Remember that it is important to do a few self-assessments to ensure that you are truly prepared.

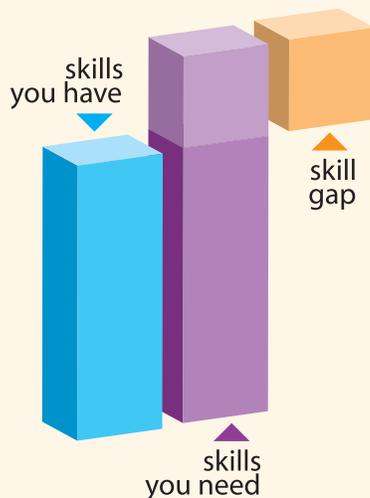
Section 2 Activity Zone



Activity #3

Try thinking beyond the obvious. All of us have skills, experience and strengths in different areas that might not seem to be connected with our formal education or business goals. In this activity, designed by the Centre for Entrepreneurship Education and Development, answer these four questions to discover more about yourself and your business idea. Next, use your answers to develop a personal plan.

- Describe your idea in three or four sentences.
- List five things about yourself you haven't shared on a résumé, such as hobbies, interests, accomplishments, awards, jobs or businesses you were good at or liked doing.
- Why are you the right person to be doing your business, at this time, in this place?
- What is your biggest obstacle (now) to getting your business up and running?



A challenge of being an entrepreneur is that you have many responsibilities to your business at one time: you manage, you market, you account, you order, you sell, and more. Most people are not good at everything and know their strengths and weaknesses. Successful entrepreneurs know what they will succeed in and what they struggle with. They also know when to ask for help. This is why an honest self-assessment is important and will enhance your chances of success.

Once you assess your personal characteristics and make an inventory of your skills and training, you can focus on making a personal plan. You know what you are good at and what you need improvement in. Take a look at the skills you are missing and whether or not they create a gap. Next, you need to decide how you will fill those gaps.

What to do with your skill gap:

- Hire an expert
- Learn how to do it yourself

A few suggestions for do-it-yourself skill development

- Education (college, university, workshops, seminars)
- Volunteering / job placement / job shadowing
- Working
- ESL school
- Community programs

Section 3.

Why Culture Matters

The way of doing business is different from country to country. In order to be successful in your venture, it is important to understand the cultural diversity, perceptions, stereotypes and values of the new country. Understanding accepted behaviours is a key to being successful in business.

Often cultural mistakes in business can cost you, a consumer, or even a business deal, regardless of the time and effort invested. Behaviour accepted in one culture may be misunderstood or even offensive in another culture.



Advice from entrepreneurs



“Be careful applying business experience from your home country to Nova Scotia. What worked out well at home will not necessarily be a success here. Talk to as many people as possible who have been living here for a while and analyse the competition.”

Rainer W. Bressmer
TecBox International LTD.

Section 3. Why Culture Matters

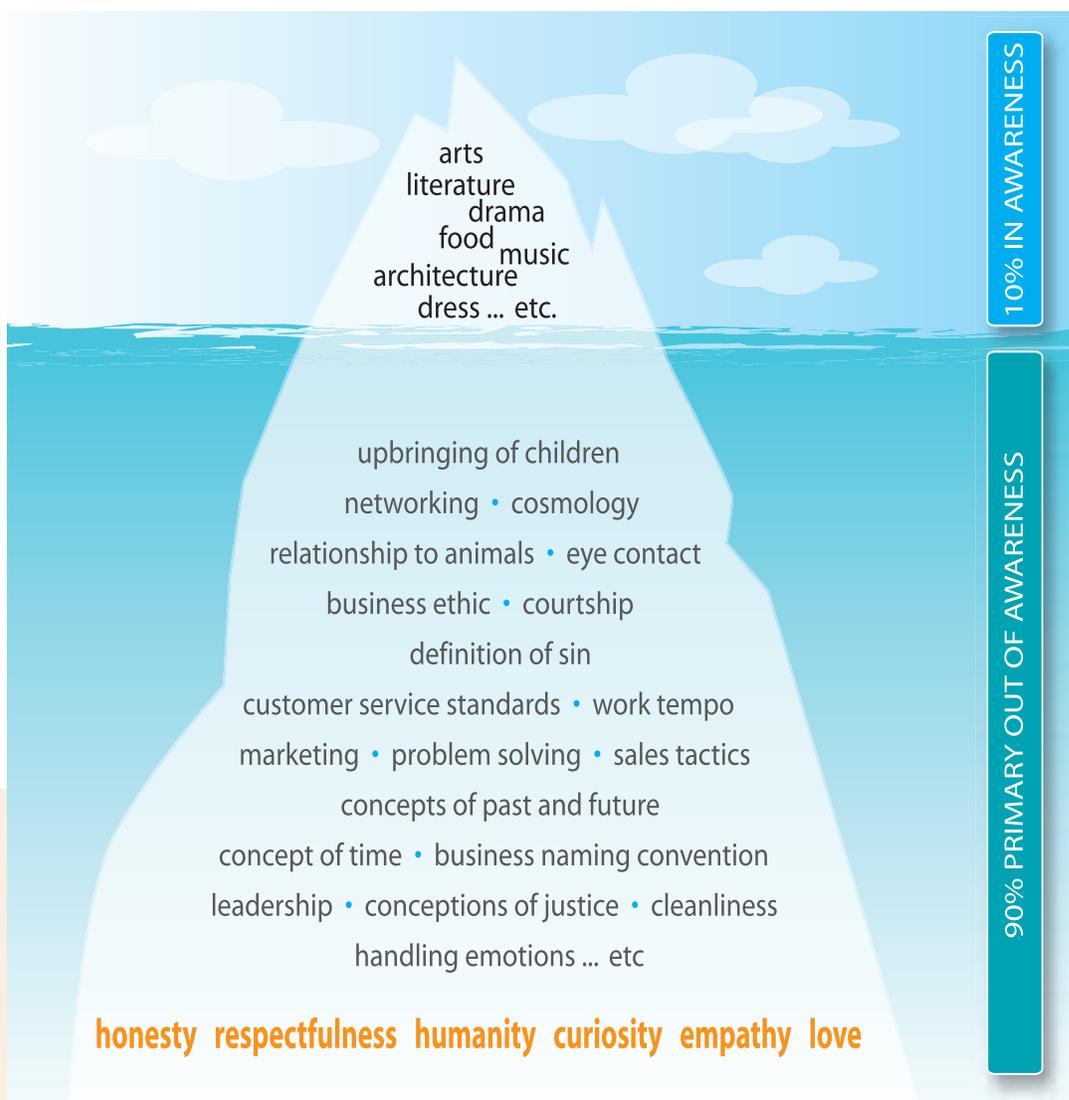
Why culture matters when you start your own business

We can imagine a culture being a huge iceberg like the one in the picture below. We can see a little of it, in the same way we can see how we behave on the surface. But the biggest and most important part - our cultural values - is hidden below the surface. Values are vital to the way we operate in the world but we rarely think of them consciously. We acquire values at a very early age that become part of our culture.

Unless we deliberately try to discover them, we don't really know what they are or, more importantly, what effect they have on people from other cultures. If you take away the cultural norms and values, you come down to the universal characteristics that are common among all people, shown below the iceberg.

Cultural Iceberg

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Three things that every entrepreneur who is new to Canada should do

To be successful in Canada, you need to examine your own culture and develop an understanding of the culture you are about to join. Here are a few points to help you start thinking about cross-cultural management.

1. Become more aware of your cultural heritage

Explore your own heritage, place of origin, time of immigration, reasons for immigration, spoken languages, religion, jobs, status, beliefs, family history and roots. Canada is a highly multi-cultural country and it is important to understand how your values, customs and behaviours have been shaped by culture in your home country so you will be more understanding of the cultures you encounter in Canada.

2. Examine your values and beliefs

What is really important to you in business? How do you like things to be done? For example, do you engage in “small talk?” People who are direct and don’t engage in “small talk” before conducting business might be seen as insensitive by people who like to have a personal connection before business negotiations start. Also, consider that a person who values humour and optimism might discover that they are uncomfortable with individuals who are pessimistic or those whom they see as complainers.

3. Gain culture-specific awareness and understanding

- Anticipate the behaviours of others and observe their reactions to your behaviour
- Learn through books, Web sites, the arts and technology
- Talk to your neighbours, friends and colleagues, and network (see Section 4)
- Participate in the daily life of another culture; celebrate its holidays
- Become active in community projects (school, religious organizations or community groups)
- Join a local organization
- Become a volunteer in an area you want to know more about
- Observe body language and people’s reactions to you

Tips for successful cross-cultural management

- Make attempts to understand the world from the point of view of others
- Keep an open mind
- Take risks
- Practice behaviour that might feel unfamiliar at first
- Be flexible
- Have an open heart and a sense of humour
- Have a willingness to accept other perspectives
- Set aside some beliefs that are cherished and make room for others whose values are unknown
- Be open to changes in what you think and say, and in how you interact with others
- Experiment with adding your own cultural flavour to groups or contacts
- Adapt your management style to fit with those you find already in place

The basic assumptions of culture are the most difficult to understand, but the most important when you are doing business in a new country. Try out the Activity Zone in this section to start thinking about the differences and similarities between doing business in your country of origin and doing business in Canada. You might be surprised with what you discover!

Section 3 Activity Zone



Activity #1

Here are a few questions to get you thinking about how different aspects of culture can influence your business. While you are answering these questions, think about how you would answer them in your home country first and then about how they would normally be answered in Canada. To get the most out of this activity, pair up with a Canadian-born partner and answer the questions together from the point of view of the country of origin; then compare notes. And don't worry: there are no perfect answers.

Management

- What is the role of a manager?
- How are power and responsibility divided between managers and staff?
- Do we all have clearly defined roles?
- Are we equal or is the system hierarchical?

Theory versus practice

- Are we goal- or process-oriented?
- Are our minds practical or do we tend to be very theoretical and academic?
- Do we put theory into practice?

Feedback

- Are we sensitive to feedback or criticism?
- Are we used to being supervised?

Individual versus collective

- Do we value competition or harmony at the workplace?
- Is the benefit of the group more important than our personal benefit?
- Are we humble about our achievements or do we publicly present them?

Conflict issues

- What does the word "conflict" mean in your country of origin?
- Do people talk about it peacefully?
- How do we handle it?
- Do we avoid it or discuss it?

Perception of time

- Are deadlines and commitments flexible or fixed?
- Is time perceived as a precious entity or something we have plenty of?
- How do we look at and deal with delays?

Goal planning

- Do we plan short-term or long-term?
- Do we know what the future brings?
- Do we want to control 100% at events?

Negotiation

- Do we get emotional when negotiating or do we keep our emotions private?
- Do we write proposals or do we negotiate verbally?

Section 4.

Nova Scotia's Business Culture

The business community in Nova Scotia is small and people tend to do business with the people they know.

It is very important to pay attention to relationship building; it can and will pay off in the long run.

This section provides some tips on Nova Scotia's basic business culture, how to network and how to conduct yourself in specific business situations. Remember that as an entrepreneur, you are always an ambassador for your business, even when you are not selling your products or services.



Advice from entrepreneurs



“Not only read, study the local newspaper regularly. It shows Nova Scotians that you have a sincere interest in your new home. It will further your understanding of the society you are living in, which is at the same time the environment where you want your business to thrive.”

*Dr. Annette Siebers,
Scientific Communication & Consulting*

Section 4. Nova Scotia's Business Culture

The business community in Nova Scotia is small and people tend to do business with the people they know.

It is very important to pay attention to relationship building; it can and will pay off in the long run.

The basics

- Shake hands and introduce yourself when meeting people for the first time. Always shake hands firmly when meeting or departing, but not so hard that you hurt the other person.
- It is common for business associates to call each other by their first names. The only exceptions are academics with PhDs and medical doctors. It is proper to address them by their formal title initially and to become more casual later.
- Punctuality is demanded for business meetings; usually, five minutes early is considered on time.
- If you are going to be late for a business meeting, a phone call is expected prior to the start time. Also, be sure to apologize briefly when you meet in person.
- It is considered rude for people to speak in a foreign language in the presence of others who do not understand what is being said.
- It is expected that you take your sunglasses off when speaking to someone.
- Cell phones should be turned off for meetings. If you are expecting a call that you cannot miss, set the ringer to vibrate and quietly step out of the room when the call comes through. If you cannot leave quietly, excuse yourself and offer apologies for the interruption.



The inside track

When meeting someone for the first time in an extremely formal situation, you can use a title then last name, but even in these situations, Canadians quickly move to a first-name basis.

Mr. - Male

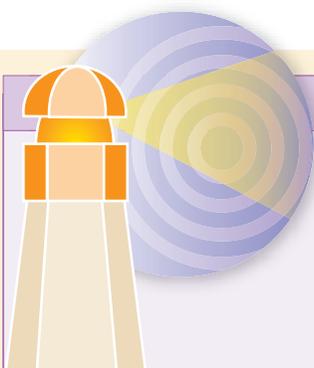
Ms. - Female

pronounced "Miz"

If you are not sure whether a woman is married or not married

Mrs. - Female married

Miss - Female not married



Are you having trouble reading?

- Try looking things up in a dictionary.
- Type the word or phrase into an Internet search engine and find other examples of how it is used.
- Ask people you know who speak English for help.
- Try out a language course. To find one, look up schools - language in the yellow pages of your local phone book.

How to dress

- A conservative, well-dressed appearance is important in Canadian business culture.
- For business meetings men should wear a suit and tie and women should wear pants or a suit.
- You may occasionally go somewhere, like a business course, where dress is “business casual.” This means that you do not wear a suit, but you still wear dress pants (women have the option of wearing a skirt) and a nice shirt. Men may wear a tie for business casual if they wish, but it is not required.
- In most businesses, scents (perfumes) are not allowed because of allergies.
- Some businesses have “casual days” for charity. On these days, employers allow their employees to wear jeans if they donate a small amount (usually a dollar or two) to charity. Remember that you still have to dress appropriately for business meetings on these days.

Using appropriate body language

- Direct, but not too intense, eye contact is acceptable when talking, in order to display interest and sincerity.
- The standard distance between two people should be approximately two feet or 60 cm. Canadians need their personal space. When people invade their personal space, they feel uncomfortable. Canadians generally don’t touch very much while conversing.
- Public emotion is restrained. Most Canadians avoid arguing or attracting attention in public.
- If you see an acquaintance in the distance, a wave is an appropriate acknowledgement.
- If you need to point, use your index finger. Generally, pointing is considered impolite.
- Common courtesies such as holding the door open for the person behind you are appreciated and often expected.
- Remember that women and men are treated exactly the same way in business in Canada. If a woman asks you a question, make eye contact and direct your response to her.

Discussing business formally

- Generally, meetings begin within five minutes of their scheduled time.
- The person who organizes the meeting is usually the one who launches the business discussion.
- Business discussions in Canada are typically fairly logical and can involve high-level negotiations. However, negotiations completed in business meetings are often revisited at a later date and altered.
- Negotiations often begin with a basic offer. To open the negotiation process, make a counter offer and be prepared to demonstrate the logic behind your change in terms or price.



The inside track

Commonly accepted etiquette while discussing business:

- Business cards are exchanged between business people at their first meeting.
- Tolerance, calmness and reasonableness are behaviours valued by many Canadians.
- Negotiations must lead to a direct action plan.
- Data and substantial facts are considered the most reliable forms of evidence; feelings are not much of a priority.
- Rhetoric or overly aggressive statements are not generally accepted and can result in spoiled business relationships.
- It is appropriate to end a meeting with some informal talk about the weather, sports, traffic in the area or an event in the business community.

- Be prepared not to get everything you ask for: Canadians often ask for more than they really want because they are expecting you to make a counter-offer.
- If you will be negotiating a complex business deal (for example, the purchase of a business or a long-term contract), retain a lawyer. They are highly skilled in negotiations and will help you take care of your interests throughout the process.

Networking

Networking basically means meeting new people and building relationships with those interested in your business. It is by going out and meeting people that you will learn about people or programs that might be able to help you. Everywhere in Canada, who you know can be just as important as what you know. This is especially true for Nova Scotia.

Networking is also a great way to promote your business and it is usually inexpensive.

Invite yourself

Don't wait for someone to invite you - when you are just starting out, you have to find your own events to attend. Call CBNS at 1-888-576-4444 to find networking opportunities.

Dress appropriately

At most networking events, people wear business suits. If you do not have a suit, wear a conservative outfit, such as pants and a nice shirt.

Arrive about five minutes late

This is one of the few situations where it is appropriate to be a bit late in Nova Scotia. Most networking events don't start exactly on time because people take a while to arrive. It's a good idea to ensure you will not be the first person there so you don't feel awkward, but not so late that you are walking in after a meal or speech has started.

Jump right in

The hardest part of networking is learning to walk over to a complete stranger and introducing yourself. Remember that everybody in the room will be doing it as well. If you are really uncomfortable, bring a "buddy" with you for the first time. Confidence will come with knowing more people who can introduce you to further contacts.

Be prepared to shake hands

Shaking hands is how you open a conversation at a networking function, whether you know the other person or not. Your hand shake should be a firm squeeze, but not so firm as to hurt the other person. Say "Hello, I'm (give your first and last name)," and hold out your right hand.



The **inside** track

Most Chambers of Commerce and professional organizations are membership-based.

To make sure that the organization is right for you before you join and pay membership fees, you can research them online and find out what kind of programs they have for new members and whether they are right for you.

If you are still not sure you want to join, call and ask to attend their next event for free. Most organizations will be happy to have you in attendance, and the contact you made over the phone might give you someone to speak with when you go.

Make eye contact and smile

In Canada, the best way to put people at ease with you is to smile and to look them in the eye while you are speaking with them.

Make small talk

Once you have introduced yourself and the other person has had the chance to do the same, it is good to have a few questions ready. For example, ask them what they do at the company they work for. If you have no idea what it is, ask them to explain it to you.

Pay attention

The best way to keep people interested in you is to be interested. Ask questions about anything the other person tells you about, even if it doesn't directly relate to your business. Sometimes, it's the contact that's important rather than the potential for business association. You never know who they will introduce you to at a later date.

Discuss common ground

Make comments about the event you are attending, the local business culture, or ask what industry they work in and compare your experience in dealing with suppliers or where you each find information on government programs or services. Ask open ended questions that begin with who, what, where, why and how.

Listen a lot and talk a little

Don't spend too much time talking about yourself. You will have an easier time making contacts and understanding if there are any opportunities for business if you listen carefully to what the other person has to say.

Always have business cards with you

Business cards are how contact information is exchanged in Canada. If you do not have one on hand, your contact may forget who you are later. If you do not have them yet, you can have business cards made at a local stationary store for a relatively low cost. Even if you don't have the business yet, you can make business cards with basic contact information.

Set a goal

Set a goal for yourself, like meeting three or four new people when you go out to network. Meeting a lot of people at an event doesn't mean that you have made meaningful contacts. Look for quality, not quantity in your networking. It is more valuable to meet three good contacts than 30 that you won't even remember a few days later.



The inside track

Networking events aren't the only way you can increase the number of business contacts you have. **In Nova Scotia, many business people also play or watch sports** like golf, curling, softball and hockey.

While people rarely speak formally about business when they are participating in sporting events, the informal conversations that take place here can be essential to later success in formal business talks.

Taking part might help you make social connections that will help you settle in as well as help you do business. Golf courses can be found in the phone book and most offer lessons for a fee.

For the other sports, which require teams, try calling a local recreation centre.



Make your connection!

CONTACT

ISIS/Business Development Services (BDS)

*www.isisns.ca or
business@isisns.ca*

to check out the next

Networking Seminar or Networking Opportunities

Spend a little time with people you already know

This may not be possible at first, but as you network more and more, you will find that you are more likely to bump into people you have already met. Networking events are a good opportunity to check in with them and to see how their businesses and projects are going. Shake hands with them and try to ask about things they've already told you about.

Don't make a sales pitch

Remember, this is not the time to sell. You are only networking to make contacts and connections. Focus on getting to know the people around you.

While you are networking remember to be sincere and above all, patient. It takes time to build relationships and trust. Depending on how often you see a person, it can be more than a year before a networking relationship pays off in business. Until then, enjoy them as a social contact at events and only speak of business casually. You will have to use your intuition to know when you can speak of business more formally.

Success through Networking

Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• define measurable goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• develop strategies & tactics
Networking activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• attend networking events• attend courses• participate in social activities, cultural events, church, school, sports, neighbourhood & community activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• research Internet/business service centres• join organizations/industry associations
Choosing contacts follow-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• decide who to follow-up with• send follow-up e-mails	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• make follow-up calls ... etc.• set-up meetings
Getting your foot in the door	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• hold meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• present your ideas, products or services
Business deal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• negotiate deal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• sign contract
References	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ask clients to connect you with potential new clients• repeat business clients who come back• word of mouth	

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When you are developing your networking strategy, it is very important to understand the social processes involved. It is a good idea to start building your strategy by defining your networking goals. Networking goals can be as simple as deciding how many new people you want to meet while you are networking that day or as complex as defining how many networking activities will lead to prospects and to further business deals.

Having smaller goals can help you at the beginning since they will lead to the bigger goals. It is very important not to get discouraged if you do not see results right away. Most experienced networkers will plan their networking strategy starting with the long term goals, which can help them to decide on the number and nature of smaller and more immediate goals. It would be good to revise this strategy from time to time to assess how your networking is helping your business and if there is anything that needs to be changed or adjusted.

Goals

You can take the following approach:

- How many events do I have to attend to achieve my goals?
- What are the best ways for me to meet people?
- When is the best time to network (what season, what time of the day, etc.)?

Or you can start defining your strategy with quantitative goals:

If I wish to make one business deal this month, I will have to attend X number of networking events to meet X number of potential prospects which will lead to X number of meetings to get one business deal. As you progress in your networking abilities and get to know yourself and the nature of the business environment, you will be able to define X with more accuracy.

Take time for networking

Once your goals are defined, it is probably a good time to start looking for activities that include networking. Networking can happen everywhere, from business meetings to church, schools, walking your dog or participating in social events. Once you have defined where to meet people, go and meet them!

Choosing contacts and follow-ups

As you attend more and more events, you will most likely meet a lot of people, but the key to success is to choose the right people to follow up with.

If you ask people whether you can call or e-mail them in the next few days, it is important to do so. If you do not keep your word, that fact is probably the one thing your new acquaintances will remember about you.

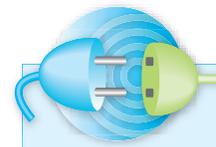
Once you have followed up with prospects and set up the appointments, it is time for the next step.

Getting your foot in the door

If you managed to target your prospects well, at the end of this step you should walk out with one or more business deals.

Business deals and references

Once you have closed the deal, whether it was a contract for a service or a product that has been sold, there is always an opportunity to get more business. Ask your prospects if they know other people or businesses who might need your product or service. Encourage them to help you out by recommending your business and remind them to come back to you if they are satisfied. And remember that networking never ends.



**Make your
connection!**

Start networking by contacting local organizations such as the chamber of commerce or trade associations.

Memberships provide you with excellent networking opportunities and often include other benefits such as business magazines, online membership directories, and discounts on things like business expo booth rentals, advertising and so forth.

Once you join a networking organization, regular attendance and being active at the meetings and events is extremely important because it will enable you to reach your goals. More and more people will know you and your business and refer others to you, just as you will do the same for them in turn. Personal referrals and marketing through "word of mouth" are especially effective in Nova Scotia.

To get started, check out CBNS's website calendar of events at

www.canadabusiness.ca/ns

Attending business lunches

Canadians love to have lunch together when they are doing business. Sometimes, it will be a formal luncheon with speeches and networking, but most of the time it will just be you and one or two other people.

If you are going to lunch with business associates through the week, be sure to dress as though you are going to a business meeting. In Canada, these meals rarely involve a great deal of formal business talk. They are used to discuss business informally. If you go to lunch with colleagues on the weekend, wear business casual clothing unless you are sure others will be wearing suits. Typically, Canadians do not wear suits during the day on weekends.

Dining culture in Nova Scotia

- Wait until everyone at your table has been served before you start eating.
- It is considered rude to speak with food in your mouth.
- Even if you were invited out, at the end of the meal, always offer to pick up your fair share of the bill. You can usually indicate your intent to pay at the start of the meal by asking your waiter for separate bills.
- If you are in a restaurant, it is expected that you leave 10 to 15 percent of your total bill on the table as a tip for your server.
- To avoid embarrassment, it helps to know what each utensil is for and which bread plate is yours. Just wait for one or two people at your table to start eating and follow their lead. Many Canadians often get this rule mixed up and use humour to point it out.



The inside track

In Canada, people will sometimes laugh a little and say “Let’s do lunch,” to indicate that a business relationship is good and that they would like to continue to do business with someone.

The business lunch is a great way to sustain good working relationships.

Invite people out to lunch when you feel you have known them long enough to have a good conversation.

Section 4 Activity Zone



Activity #1

Prepare the networking statement that you will use when you introduce yourself to others. For example, a few sentences about who you are, what your business is about and what values and benefits it offers to consumers. You will generally start with something like “Hi, I’m Jamar Prei from Company X,” but you will still need to have something prepared for when others ask you about yourself or your business.

The **Success through networking** diagram will help you with timing and general tips.

Success through Networking

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first
15 sec

- State the obvious!!
- Comment on the event or the weather or ask person’s name if no name badge.
- Try and incorporate their names into the conversation at least three times to help you remember their name.

next
30 sec

- Employ the discovery process to start relationship building.
- Start by stating: Tell me a bit about yourself!

next
2 min

- Initiate the exchanges of networking statements, which is a 30-second promotional, or our elevator speech as some people call it.
- The speech is split up into 3 sections;
 - 1) Who you are?
 - 2) What you do?
 - 3) What type of client you normally do it with?

last
15 sec

- Don’t overstay your welcome.
- They, like you, are there to meet as many people as they can in the short time allowed at networking events.
- Thank them for their time and ask them if they would mind if you would give them call in the near future. Exchange business cards.

next
2 days

- If you told them you would follow up then do so!
- You lose your credibility with the prospect if you say you will but forget or even put it off.

Sample responses

If they ask about your business:

Right now, we specialize in importing cameras from a variety of different countries, offering both affordable and top-notch products. We are also hoping to expand our services to include customized, on-site training for amateur photographers. How about you?

If they ask about you:

I’ve been in business in Canada for about three months now and things are going fairly well. Since my background is in engineering, it made sense to start a business in the same sector. But I’ve only been in Canada since last fall, so there have been a few surprises along the way.

Or:

I’ve been in business for about three months now and things are going fairly well. I finished my MBA a couple of years ago and have been amazed at how useful it has been in getting things off the ground. But I’ve only been in Canada since last fall, so there have been a few surprises along the way.

Activity #2

Section 4 Activity Zone



Activity #3

Look at the photos below and think about the messages communicated by the body language the people display. Do they have the same meaning in your country and in Canada? Are there any gestures you have never seen before? Show the pictures to a person born in Canada and compare his or her reactions and interpretations.



Section 5.

The Business Start-up Process in Nova Scotia

By now, you should have established:

- Your immigration status
- Your language skills
- Your credentials (and have had them recognized in Nova Scotia if you did not earn them here)
- Your credit history
- Your personal suitability to run a business, by completing self assessments
- Your business idea
- Your business idea's viability

Now that you have all of these things taken care of, it is time to start the real work: the business start-up process.



Advice from entrepreneurs



“It is easy to deal with business formalities here in Nova Scotia. You will register your business and open a bank account without much effort. More difficult is to make the business community trust you. Join the Chamber of Commerce, join your professional association... Let people know you and your business better.”

Alexandre Pavlovski
GreenPower Labs

Section 5. The Business Start-up Process in Nova Scotia

The business plan is a living document

A business plan is extremely important because it is a map of how you are going to start and run a successful business.

It is a written document that says who you are, what you plan to do, where your business will be located, when you expect to start working, how you will manage your business, the profits you expect to make, the risks you will face, and how you will deal with those risks.

Financers and suppliers will ask you to present your business plan to see whether you have done things properly. If you do not have a completed business plan, you will likely experience difficulty gaining access to financing.

You should start your business plan as soon as you decide to go into business, but you will probably not complete it until much later on. Below is a list of essential actions you will take while you work toward starting your own business. You will later add these details to your business plan. Additional information on each of these actions starts further on in the chapter.

Action: Learn about intellectual property (IP)

Action: Choose and register your business name

Action: Choose a business structure

Action: Learn about the permits and licenses you are going to need

Action: If you want to hire staff, learn about being an employer in Nova Scotia

Action: If you want to hire staff, learn about recruiting employees

Action: Choose a location for your business

Action: Complete the first full draft of your business plan

Action: Obtain business insurance

Action: Learn about crime and security

Action: Market your business



Tricks of the trade

If you want more information on business planning, you can contact

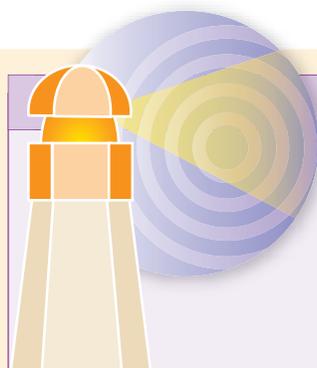
Canada Business - Nova Scotia

1-888-576-4444.

The **Centre's walk-in library** has books on how to write a business plan as well as over 250 sample business plans on different types of businesses to help you get started.

Or you can contact ISIS/Business Development Services for a business plan workshop or one-on-one business plan counseling.

If you want someone to help you write your business plan, contact CBNS and ask for their latest **list of business consultants**. Some consultants will charge a fee. There are organizations that may help you for free, but they may require more time and a longer wait to work with you.



Are you having trouble reading?

- Try looking things up in a dictionary.
- Type the word or phrase into an Internet search engine and find other examples of how it is used.
- Ask people you know who speak English for help.
- Try out a language course. To find one, look up schools - language in the yellow pages of your local phone book.

The basics of creating a business plan

How long should my business plan be?

Most business plans are between 20 and 30 pages long. The exact length tends to vary depending on how complex your business is. You should also add one page for a cover page that states your business's name, your name, your contact information and the date of the plan.

Your business plan should be long enough to provide a solid overview of everything you intend to do, why you want to do it, how you are going to do it and what you expect the outcome to be.

What kind of language should I use?

Use formal language in your business plan. If you would like an example of the appropriate writing style, call Canada Business - Nova Scotia for a business plan sample. Avoid the pronouns I and we in the plan. Instead, refer to both yourself and your business in the third person, as "the owner" and "the business". You should also use sub-headings in each section to help organize your thoughts and to make the plan easier for other people to understand.

Your business plan should be free of spelling, grammatical and punctuation mistakes so be sure to have someone else review it before you start using it. Even the best writers need editors to look over their work.

What do I include?

Your business plan will be a complex document. Do not expect to sit down and write it in a day or two. It is something you will have to work on throughout the process of setting up your business. A brief description of some of the sections follows:

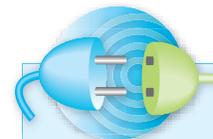
- **Executive summary**
This section gives a brief overview of your whole plan. Even though it is the first section in a business plan, it will be easier to write last because it summarizes the rest of your plan: what you are planning to do, what your product or service is, why your business will be successful, your goals and your schedule. This section should be no longer than one page.
- **Table of contents**
This is a separate page that lists all the headings and sub-headings and the page on which each starts.
- **Project costs and funding**
This section demonstrates how much you expect to spend as well as how much funding you have now and how much you think you will need in the future. Be specific and provide dollar amounts.
- **Products or services**
This section describes what you will be selling, what makes it special and why people will buy from you. Also state whether you are offering guarantees or warranties on your products or services. This is also the place to include patent and licensing information.



Tricks of the trade

Many organizations provide free templates, writing guides and sample plans to help you develop a professional business plan. Access them through the Canada Business website at:
www.canadabusiness.ca/eng/guide/2089

You may also find information for your business plan online through the provincial government's Nova Scotia Business Idea Explorer at
www.gov.ns.ca/econ/nsx



Make your connection!

CONTACT

ISIS/Business Development Services (BDS)

www.isisns.ca or
business@isisns.ca

to check out the next

Business Plan Workshop
and our **One-on-one Business Plan Counseling**

- **Market share**

The market share section states how many people will be interested in your product or service as well as details on your competition and how they will react to your business. It basically shows how many people are available to buy your product or service.

- **Marketing plan**

Your marketing plan presents your research on pricing and promotion and states any plans you have to advertise or market your product. Include information on your clients' or customers' needs as well as how you intend to catch their attention with your product or service (for example, through packaging, location, advertising or a combination). Include your research into pricing and state the prices and profit margins you are planning for.

- **Operating requirements**

This is where you outline what assets you require to operate your business. The section often identifies the type of space a business will need (for example, a store front or an office) and special requirements such as extra electricity, air conditioning or drainage. You will also have to attach copies of your permits and licenses.

- **Management**

In this section, provide information on owners and managers: explain who they are and how their education and experience makes them good candidates for their positions. This is where larger businesses show the proposed organization chart of the company, including a brief job description of each position. Smaller businesses with three employees or less do not typically prepare an organization chart.

- **Personnel**

Include this section if you will be hiring employees. This is where you provide a list of positions and a description of what employees will do and whether they will work as full-time, part-time, seasonal or temporary employees. Also list the skills and training they need to work for you and how you will pay them (for example, hourly wage or commission).

- **Financial projections**

This section includes a three-year cash flow, balance sheet and profit or loss statement. These are standard in Canadian financial reporting. If you aren't sure how to calculate them yourself, or you are new to the rules of Canadian accounting, consider hiring an accountant or bookkeeper to create them for you.

- **Appendix**

This section is where you should attach any supporting documentation for your business that has not been included elsewhere in the document. For example, most organizations that give loans to businesses in Canada will ask you to submit a "statement of personal net worth" with any loan application, along with a copy of your resumé.

- **References**

References include people like your accountant, consultant, insurance company, lawyer and banker.



The **inside** track

It is a good idea to develop and maintain a good relationship with your lender.

Although they are not there to make it difficult, you will need to work together to get financing. Listen to him or her and follow these tips:

- Always make your payments a day or two before the payment is due.
- Be polite while you are dealing with your lender face to face. Remember the etiquette tips in Section 4.
- If your payment will be late, contact the lender as far in advance as possible and explain the situation.
- Be honest if you are having trouble making your payments. Sometimes lenders will help you by lowering the minimum amount required.
- Late or reduced payments are emergency measures. Do not indicate that you are having financial difficulty unless you absolutely **MUST** make a late payment, or reduce your payment. If a lender becomes concerned that your business is not doing well, it may "call your loan" and require you to pay it back in full immediately. This may also occur if you stop making payments.

Obtaining financing for your business

Many new business owners need financing. If you are applying for a loan with a bank, credit union or government program, be prepared to submit your business plan. In some cases, the lender will ask you to change your plan based on their suggestions. Typically, lenders also require a Canadian credit history or proof of foreign income. For information on how to develop a Canadian credit history, see Section 1.

Sources of financing

- Friends and family may be willing to loan you money to get started
- Banks and credit unions
- Special credit terms from your suppliers. They may be willing to wait for payment if you ask in advance.
- The government has a variety of programs to help businesses. Canada Business - Nova Scotia keeps a large database of financing programs for businesses.
- Creative resourcefulness - You may not have to pay for everything you need, or you may be able to purchase the items you need to run your business at lower cost if you buy them used. You may also be able to barter services with other businesses. For example, you may be able to pay your bookkeeper by developing a website for them.

Why retain a lawyer

To start and operate a business, you may need the advice of a lawyer who specializes in business law. While it can be tempting to try to do everything yourself, mistakes made at the early stages of a business start-up (or even after your business is running smoothly) can be very costly. It is best to start out by speaking with a lawyer before you begin to avoid making legal mistakes in the first place. Before you see the lawyer, write down the questions that you have and be prepared to answer the lawyer's questions about your plans for setting up the business.

For example, a lawyer can help you with:

- Buying a business
- Choosing the right structure for your business
- Partnership agreements
- Drafting contracts and reviewing lease agreements
- Understanding local laws pertaining to your business.

You might also want to ask about employment laws and succession planning.

You can also have your lawyer look over any contracts or lease agreements before you sign them to ensure you are fully aware of your rights and obligations. A lawyer can assist you in drafting special clauses to include in a contract or lease to ensure that your interests are protected.

A lawyer can also represent you in court if the need arises.



Make your connection!

You will want to choose a lawyer who has knowledge of business law and practice.

For information on how to find a lawyer, contact the **Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia's Legal Information Line and Lawyer Referral Service** at

902-454-2198

The society is on the Internet at **www.legalinfo.org**

Friends or other business people may be able to recommend a lawyer.

You can also look in the yellow pages on the phonebook under Lawyers Commercial-corporate law.

When you contact a lawyer, don't be afraid to ask about legal fees and other costs.

When you need an accountant

If you are new to Canada or are not familiar with the Canadian tax system, you should consult an accountant or bookkeeper who can help you learn about Canadian tax guidelines and set up your accounting system.

It is a good idea to find an accountant when starting a new business in order to establish the company's tax structure. Bookkeeping and payroll can be maintained by the owner or bookkeeper, but an accountant can help if you are unsure about Canadian accounting guidelines or tax laws and he or she can make sure that taxes are being paid. An accountant can also help you with your business plan, work on financial statements and forecasts, select bookkeeping software and advise on setting the mark-up on your products or services.

Managing receipts

- If you own your business, it is important that you keep all of your business-related receipts in order to reduce its income and pay less tax. It is also important to keep them in case you are ever audited.
- You should keep track of when and where you made your purchases. It is a good idea to write down on the back of the receipt the purpose of the purchase. For example, if you take a client out for lunch, you should write on the back of the receipt who you had lunch with, so the correct deduction can be made when it comes time to file your taxes. If the purchase and date are not clear on the receipt, you should write the details on the back.

How and where to find an accountant

Ask your friends, your banker, or people you have met at networking events for recommendations. Ask whether they have used the accountant themselves and whether they are pleased with the service they received. However, what they found useful may not be useful to you so don't be shy about asking potential accountants questions.

How to prepare for a meeting with an accountant

Have all your banking information ready, your accounting books and documents, certificate of business registration, business number, payroll information, tax number, your Social Insurance Number (SIN) as well as your birth date. You may also need the SINs and birthdates of your family members if they work with you.

Your consultation meeting should be free. After you explain your needs, the accountant or bookkeeper should provide you with an estimate of how much you can expect to pay for their services.

You may need an accountant once or twice a year or you may need accounting assistance throughout the year. Depending on your own experience and training, you may only need a bookkeeper but if your company is complex or incorporated, you will need an accountant to supplement the bookkeeper's work.

There are different kinds of accountants. This is important to remember because different types of accountants charge different rates. There are Certified General Accountants (CGAs), Certified Managerial Accountants (CMAs), and Chartered Accountants (CAs). Bookkeepers are experienced but may not have a professional designation and charge lower fees.

There are different types of accounting credentials in Canada. Here is what each one means:

Certified General Accountants (CGA): Typically work for the general public, but can be found in government or corporations.

Certified Managerial Accountants (CMA): Typically work for government or corporations, but some work with the general public.

Chartered Accountants (CA): Typically work for an accounting firm, however some work for corporations as well. For more information, visit www.ns.cofars.ca/accountants.

Bookkeepers: Usually do not have a professional designation and are, therefore, less expensive. A bookkeeper is useful for keeping track of your finances on a day-to-day basis but cannot provide the formal audits that are sometimes required. If you cannot afford an accountant, it is advisable to hire a bookkeeper.

If you will be running a small business, it is advisable that you start by contacting a bookkeeper, CGA or CMA, as CA tend to work for larger, more expensive, firms. If an accountant tells you your business is too small for him or her, ask for a referral to another firm or an accountant who would consider accepting you as a client.

Creating a business plan step by step

Action: Learn about Intellectual Property

The best way to stop someone else from making money from your idea is to contact the Canadian Intellectual Property Office (CIPO). CIPO is a government organization that protects rights associated with inventions, names of products and services, and copyrighted works.

They will sit down with you and tell you how to look after any brand or special name, product or invention you might have. They will also tell you if you are accidentally copying someone else. This information could protect you from a lawsuit later on.

In Canada, the right to use or sell business names and some products can belong to someone. This is called intellectual property. For example, if you invent something new, you can stop other people from copying it by filing for a patent.

Contact CIPO if

- You have a new idea or product
- You plan to import a new product that is not already in Canada
- You wish to use a new product name
- You have an advertising campaign or product image (brand) in mind
- You are dealing with copyright in any way (this can involve written material, music, photographs, dances, etc.); or
- You are choosing a business name.



**Make your
connection!**

For more information,
contact the **Canadian
Intellectual Property Office** at:

1-888-576-4444

or

1-866-997-1936

You can also visit the website at:

www.cipo.gc.ca

Action: Choose and register your business name

Once you have completed your research and are prepared to begin the process of opening your business, choose a name for your business and register it with the government. When you register your business, you receive a nine digit Business Number. This number is required to pay taxes (see Section 6 for details), apply for licences and import or export goods.

In Canada, business names are often descriptive, so be sure to choose a name that tells people about the products and services you will be offering. Also, be sure that your name will be easy to remember. For example, “Halifax bookkeepers, financial analysts and accountants” will not be easily remembered by potential clients. Choose something shorter that will catch people’s attention like “The Money Managers.”

Tips for choosing a business name

- Your name should be easy to pronounce in the language of your target market.
- Your business name should describe the services you offer.
- Choose a short name that is easy for people to remember.
- Your name should distinguish you from your competitors.
- Canadians do not always name businesses after themselves or their family members. Check to see what the standard is for your type of business.

Once you decide on your business name, contact the *Registry of Joint Stock Companies* (RJSC) to register your business. You will have to conduct a name search at this point to make sure that no one else is already using the name you selected. This takes a couple of days. If your name is not accepted, you have to select a different name and go through a name search again.

If your name is accepted, continue with your registration: fill out the forms provided by the RJSC (they are available online), submit them and pay the fees. The RJSC will mail you a Certificate of Registration.

Once you are registered, contact the Registry of Joint Stock Companies once a year to renew your registration. You will receive a letter in the mail to remind you of the date.

If you are going to have business locations outside Nova Scotia, in another province or territory, you will be required to follow the procedures for registering your business of that region.



The inside track

You can name your business after yourself, but this is not a common practice among Canadian business owners.

If you choose to do this, you may be limiting recognition of your business as your name may not reflect the type of business you will be operating. Your business should seem to be separate from you and more important than you in the eyes of your clients and customers. If you are using your own name as your business name, it can be difficult to separate personal problems from your business and vice-versa.

The Registry of Joint Stock Companies at Service Nova Scotia has a set of instructions to help you select your business name. The Name Reservation Request Instructions are available at

www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr/pdf/rjsc/NAMREQ.PDF

Action: Choose a business structure

There are three main types of business structures in Canada, each with different features. The structure you choose can affect whether your business will attract investors, partners and other financial backers, as well as how your business grows in the future.

The three main types of businesses are:

- Sole proprietorship
- Partnership
- Corporation

It is a good idea to talk to a lawyer who specializes in small businesses before making your final decision. A lawyer can help you with partnership contracts and articles of incorporation. They can also help you register a corporation so that everything is done correctly.

Sole proprietorships

Many entrepreneurs choose to start with this business structure because of its simplicity. Sole proprietorship means you are the only person responsible for the business. You are also the one to decide what to do with any the profits or losses your business might produce.

With this business structure, you cannot pay yourself a salary or wage. You will have to make “drawings” from your business and record them in your financial records. This is an area where an accountant or bookkeeper can be useful.

The downside of this form of business ownership is that creditors have the right to make claims against anything you own if you get into financial trouble, whether the property is related to your business or not. Your home, for example, could be seized to pay off your debts if you cannot pay them through the business. This is known as unlimited liability or personal liability.

Partnerships

In a partnership, you share the responsibility of the business with your partners. In some partnerships, everyone shares responsibility for managing the business and each person is equally responsible for the business’s debts and obligations. In others, some partners only contribute cash and are responsible for debts only if they are specified in the original agreement. Also, in a partnership, profits can be split based on the proportion of the business each partner owns.

If this is the model you choose, all partners should sign a **partnership agreement**, created and notarized by a lawyer. Each partnership is slightly different, so be sure you go beyond signing a standard document: it is a good idea to have the agreement tailored to your business. A lawyer can do this for you, but if you choose to do it yourself, be sure you ask your lawyer to check over your work for accuracy before signing.



Tricks of the trade

Businesses can be registered in different ways:

Online:

www.rjsc.ca
and go to “Who needs to Register?” on the left-hand menu.

By phone:

1-800-225-8227

In person:

Visit the RJSC at the Maritime Centre, located at 1505 Barrington Street in Halifax (go to the 9th Floor)

Or you can visit the **Access Nova Scotia Centre** nearest you.

In Halifax, they are located at 300 Horseshoe Lake Drive in the Bayers Lake Business Park, phone number

1-800-670-4357

For information on other Access Nova Scotia locations, check Service Nova Scotia’s website at

www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr.

By mail:

Registry of Joint Stock Companies
P.O. Box 1529
Halifax, NS B3J 2Y4

Corporations

A corporation is managed separately from its owners, who are typically referred to as “shareholders.” Shareholders are not considered to be responsible for a business’s debts, obligations or actions because the business is regarded as an individual entity under the law. There is, however, still a personal liability because directors must run the company for the benefit of the shareholders.

If you wish to use this business structure, talk to your lawyer first because there are different kinds of corporations. Some are privately held; others sell shares to the public. In addition, you can incorporate at the federal or provincial level.

A corporation is identified by any one of the following terms: Limited, Ltd., Incorporated, Inc., Corporation or Corp. Whichever term the corporation uses, it must appear with the business’s name on all documents and stationery as it appears on the original incorporation documents.

Other information on business structures

A co-operative is another legal incorporation structure. A co-operative is usually formed when a group of people wish to start a business together, to meet a common need, or to maximize a common opportunity. A co-operative must operate on the same principles as any other business structure, but differ in that they are democratically controlled, based on one member, one vote, have open and voluntary membership, and profits are distributed as patronage dividends.

There are over 6,500 co-operative businesses in Canada.

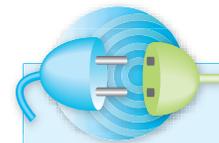
Pros and cons of the three most common legal structures

	Sole proprietorship	Partnership	Corporation
Legal status	Does not exist as a separate legal entity. Proprietorship = ownership	Does not exist as a separate legal entity. Partnership = partners as owners	Corporation is treated as a separate legal entity from its incorporators. Corporation = shareholder ownership
Control	Owner has total control	Partners’ agreement determines control between partners	Directors and shareholders
Profits	To the owner	To partners according to the partnership agreement	To shareholders according to their percentage of the shares
Debts	The owner is responsible (unlimited liability)	Partners individually and collectively responsible = Joint and several liability	Responsibility limited to the amount of the purchased shares = Limited liability
Taxation	The owner is taxed as an individual on the income of the business as if he or she was employed	Partners are taxed individually according to the agreed share of the income	The corporation pays corporate taxes separately from its directors and shareholders
Assets	The owner can claim the part of personal assets used for the business, such as a car, as expenses against taxable income.		In this case, you cannot claim receipts from using your own car as a business expense.



Tricks of the trade

The CBNS library has copies of forms for partnership agreements, contracts, transfers and assignments, leases and tenancies, confidentiality, buying and selling, and much more.



Make your connection!

For more information on cooperatives, contact the Nova Scotia Co-operative Council at:

902-893-8966

Or visit the website:

www.nsko-opcouncil.ca

Action: Learn about permits and licenses

Every type of business in Nova Scotia has its own requirements for permits and licenses. Contact the organizations listed in the Make your connection! box below early in the business development process to ensure that you are properly prepared to deal with the government, other businesses and the Canadian public.

Discover which permits and licenses are required in Nova Scotia for your business in a few easy steps by using BizPal - an online, searchable directory.

BizPal walks you through a series of questions about the nature of your business and provides you with a complete and personalized list of permits and licenses you may need to obtain, based on your responses. For more information, visit www.bizpal.ca

Action: Learn about being an employer in Nova Scotia

If you intend to hire employees, start by learning about the responsibilities you will have as an employer. There are many regulations you will have to learn about, so be patient while you work through this step.

Payroll numbers

If you are going to have employees, you need a payroll account number. Your payroll account number will be the business number you obtained when you registered your business plus extra digits assigned to you by Canada Revenue Agency (CRA).

When you are ready to hire employees

To hire an employee, ask them for their Social Insurance Number and have them fill out a form from CRA called **TD1 - Personal Tax Credits Return**. You will need this to complete their payroll deductions - income tax and contributions to government programs - when they begin working for you. To obtain a copy of this form, contact CRA or visit the agency's website at www.cra-arc.gc.ca



Make your connection!

The following organizations can help you identify the permits and licenses your business needs:

Canada Business - Nova Scotia

1575 Brunswick Street,
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2G1
(free parking for clients)

Ph: 902-426-8604

Fax: 902-426-6530

1-888-576-4444

E-mail: Info.cb.ns@acoa-apeca.gc.ca
www.canadabusiness.ca/ns

ISIS/BDS

Take a Business Skills Development workshop to learn about business start-up requirements.

E-mail: business@isisns.ca

Access Nova Scotia Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations

Access Nova Scotia, 300 Horseshoe Lake Drive, Bayers Lake Business Park, Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3S 0B7

1-800-670-4357

E-mail: askus@gov.ns.ca

www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr/business

Access Nova Scotia has additional locations throughout the province. To find the Access Nova Scotia location nearest you, call

1-800-670-4357

Halifax Tax Services Office Canada Revenue Agency

Ralston Building, 1557 Hollis Street,
P.O. Box 638 Halifax, NS B3J 2T5

1-800-959-5525

Ph. (outside of Canada): 902-426-5150

Fax: 902-426-7170

www.cra-arc.gc.ca

Your local municipal government

You can find out how to contact your local municipal government by looking it up in the blue pages of your phone book or by calling Canada Business - Nova Scotia.

Professional associations

To offer certain services in Canada, you have to be a member of a professional association. Even if you are not required to be a member, it is still a good idea to find out whether there is a local association you can join. Professional associations can help you network and gain credibility as a professional. To find a professional association, you can contact either ISIS or CBNS.

Your obligations related to payroll deductions

- If you are an employer, you must deduct Canada Pension Plan (CPP) contributions, Employment Insurance (EI) premiums, and income tax from amounts you pay to your employees.
- Report employees' income and deductions on their information returns (T4 or T4A) by the end of February of the following calendar year.
- As an employer, you are also required to pay a contribution toward each employee's CPP and EI.
- The deductions that you hold must be submitted to the government regularly, soon after you begin to pay your new employees. To obtain the exact date you need to begin submitting these funds to CRA, visit the agency's website at www.cra-arc.gc.ca or call 1-800-959-5525.

For more information on how to calculate deductions for employees, go to www.cra-arc.gc.ca/menu/TGTG_T-e.html

Labour standards code and regulations

There are many regulations around employing and terminating staff in Nova Scotia, including legislated requirements relating to minimum wages and vacation pay. There are also laws regarding overtime pay, holiday pay for employees who work on days like Canada Day and Christmas Day, and maternity or parental leave. To ensure that you are conducting your business appropriately, contact the Labour Standards Division of the Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Labour.

The division can tell you about the law with respect to:

- minimum wages
- holiday pay
- overtime
- notice periods
- vacations
- absence from work
- employing children
- keeping records
- ending employment

Workers Compensation

If you are hiring more than three employees, you are required to register with the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB). They provide workplace injury prevention and education services to all Nova Scotia employers and workers.



**Make your
connection!**

For more information on your responsibilities regarding payroll deductions, contact the **Canada Revenue Agency** at:

1-800-959-5525

or

902-426-5150

Or visit the website at:

www.cra.gc.ca/menu-e.html

To contact **Labour Standards Division**, call

1-888-315-0110

or visit the website at

www.gov.ns.ca/enla/employmentrights

To contact the **Workers' Compensation Board**, call

1-800-870-3331

or visit the website at

www.wcb.ns.ca



**Make your
connection!**

**The Canadian Human Rights
Commission can be reached
by phone at:**

902-426-8380

or **1-800-999-6899.**

**Its TTY (telephone device for
deaf persons) number:**

1-888-643-3304.

Or visit the website at

www.chrc-ccdp.ca

Human rights in Canada

The Canadian Human Rights Commission applies the Canadian Human Rights Act to ensure that the principles of equal opportunity and non-discrimination are followed in all areas of federal jurisdiction. Each province also has its own human rights legislation which applies to matters within provincial jurisdiction. As an employer, you must respect the human rights of your employees.

To learn more about human rights and how discrimination and harassment are defined in Canada, contact the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

Action: Learn about recruiting employees

Finding employees

In Nova Scotia, many businesses hire qualified employees who are already known to the owner or manager. If you do not have someone in mind, it is wise to go through a more formal hiring process.

When Nova Scotia businesses search for new staff, they advertise the position and wait for people to apply for the job. Many businesses advertise the position in the newspaper or online, but if you require your employee to have special skills, try contacting local trade associations. Also, be sure to provide an accurate description of the work your employee will be doing. Look at other job postings in the newspaper or website you will use to advertise in to get an idea of how to do this.

Typically, an applicant will submit a résumé showing their previous work experience and a cover letter with current contact information. Look over both documents. Well written applications can tell you a lot about a potential employee. Call the best qualified applicants for an interview.

Conducting a job interview

- The applicant and the interviewer(s) often shake hands at the start of an interview.
- Spend a moment telling the applicant a little more about the job when he or she first sits down.
- Usually, a job interview opens with a “warm-up question” that is meant to help the applicant feel more comfortable. One common question is “Tell me about yourself.” The candidate should use this opportunity to tell you about assets they think they can bring to the job they have applied for.
- Ask questions about experience and skills that directly relate to the job. Avoid personal questions. Do not ask female applicants whether they are married or pregnant.
- Ask questions about their past performance and behaviour: for example, ask your applicant to give you an example of a conflict they have been involved with in the workplace and what happened.
- It is perfectly acceptable to give an applicant a challenging test to complete or a scenario to think through to demonstrate his or her professional competence.
- Ask for references at the end of the interview so you can contact the applicant's former employers. Ask them about the applicant's work ethic and professional performance. It can also be helpful to know whether an applicant's previous employer would hire him or her again and why (or why not).

A few words about the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission

Nova Scotia's Human Rights Act protects against discrimination based on:

- Age
- Race/colour
- Religion/creed
- Ethnic or national origin
- Aboriginal origin
- Sex (including gender or pregnancy)
- Sexual orientation
- Physical or mental disability
- Family or marital status
- Source of income
- Irrational fear of contracting an illness or disease
- Association with groups or individuals or
- Political belief, affiliation or activity.

The act also prohibits sexual harassment in all areas of public life. It applies to all workplaces in Nova Scotia except those regulated by federal government.

The Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission is the independent government agency charged with administering the act and with educating people in Nova Scotia on race relations and other human rights-related issues.

The Commission is also able to offer information to businesses about proper practices in the workplace.

A copy of the Act is available at www.gov.ns.ca/humanrights or by contacting the Commission's office. The Act is available in French and English and in Braille (for people who are blind or have a visual disability) and on audio tape. The Commission also offers a wide range of educational materials which are available on our website or through their office.

Commission staff investigate and resolve complaints of discrimination filed by members of the public. Staff in their Race Relations and Affirmative Action Division provide services on a range of diversity topics and on how to prevent or deal with discrimination. Staff can also consult with organizations to help them establish their own policies, programs and services in these areas.

The Human Rights Commission tries to make itself accessible to all members of the public. The Commission's central office is located in Halifax. There are regional offices in Sydney, Digby and New Glasgow.



**Make your
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If you have questions about how the **Human Rights Act** applies to you as an employer, call

902-424-4111

or toll-free

1-877-269-7699

for more information.

Action: Choose the right location for your business

When talking about business success, people in North America often say “location, location, location.” They repeat the word three times because many people believe it to be the most important part of business success. For customers to buy your product or service, it has to be either easy to get to or it has to be easy for you to get to them.

You may not be able to determine the location of your business at this point, depending on the type of business you are creating and the finances you have available. If this is the case, start searching and keep this information in mind when the time comes to make your decision.

Things to consider when choosing the location for your business:

- Is the location easy to find?
- Will your business be in a good neighbourhood?
- Will you be close to your target customers?
- Are you far enough away from your competitors, or do you want to be close to them?
- Will you need parking for your customers? Is it available?
- Is the parking free? If it costs money, will your clients mind?
- Is it on a bus route?
- Will you have a storefront?
- If you want a storefront, are you in a place where a lot of people pass by during business hours?

Leasing your space

Most new businesses in Canada lease their first location. This allows for a cost-effective start without having to take out a commercial mortgage to buy and, perhaps, risking the loss of the property if the business closes. A lease is a legal document that obligates you to provide regular, timely payments to your landlord. The lease will probably require other things of you as well. Shopping malls, for example, often insist on uniform opening hours. Be sure to have your lawyer review your lease before you sign it. There are questions you should ask your landlord before you lease:

Questions to ask a potential landlord

- How long will the lease run?
- How much is the rent?
- Will the rent go up? If so, when and by how much?
- Can you sub-let?
- Can you renew your lease once the term is over?
- What happens if your landlord goes broke or out of business?
- What happens if your landlord sells the property?



Tricks of the trade

In Nova Scotia, you can have your lease written so that your landlord cannot lease to your competitors.

For example, if you will be running a drug store, you can include a condition in your lease that says the landlord will not lease to other businesses that might include a pharmacy. This is especially useful if you are going to be located in a mall or other space where there are a lot of other businesses.

If it is not in your lease initially, ask that it be added. Have a lawyer look over your lease in advance to ensure that you get what you want.

- Who is responsible for insurance?
- What building services do you get?
- Who pays for improvements?
- How much space are you renting?

Home-based business

Working out of your home can be a great way to get started. Certain types of businesses, like bookkeeping, professional services and Internet-based businesses are well-suited to a home office environment.

There are a few extra things you need to think about if you want to run your business out of your own home. It can be a great way to save money on a lease but there are some restrictions on how you can operate if you think this might be an option for you.

Some areas do not allow people to have home-based businesses. To find out for sure, contact your local municipal government and inquire about zoning to ensure you can legally operate a business out of your home. For more information, visit www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr

You also need to consider what permits and licenses you need and whether or not you can get them if you are operating out of your home. For example, if you wanted to open up a catering business, you could not use your own kitchen to prepare your food. Under the laws of the Province of Nova Scotia, you have to use a commercial kitchen that is completely separate from regular household activities (including preparing meals for your family).

Action: Complete the first full draft of your business plan

Once you have gotten this far, you need to start presenting your business plan to stakeholders in your business: insurance agents, financiers, suppliers and some of your service providers may ask to see a copy of your business plan. If you have not yet done so, look at a sample business plan for a business similar to yours to ensure you have not missed anything. This is also the time to decide on the image you want your business to have and to prepare yourself to speak to other professionals about it.

Action: Obtain business insurance

If you are going to buy equipment, inventory and stock for your business, protect it from property loss, damage, personnel disability and other disasters with business insurance.

There are a lot of different insurance products available to business owners. Standard policies protect against fire, theft and vandalism. There are also policies that protect you from some of the costs of legal action that may be taken against you by a client or a supplier.

Get life insurance for yourself and your partners (if you have them) so that the business will be able to continue to operate if anyone passes away. To find out what your insurance needs are, contact an insurance representative. Be sure to bring your business plan with you when you meet so they can give you an accurate estimate.



Tricks of the trade

Most insurance plans will have a deductible.

That means that you will be responsible for paying a minimum part of the amount you are insured for.

For example, if you rent a car for the day, the company will usually insure you for a certain amount of damage, in case you have an accident. In this case, let's say the deductible is \$500.

If the car is destroyed through no fault of your own, you will have to pay the deductible, \$500, and the insurance company will cover the rest.

Here are a few questions you should ask:

- What kind of insurance do I need?
- What is not covered in my policy?
- Are there risks or hazards for which I cannot buy insurance?
- What can I do to lower my insurance costs?
- Will my homeowners' policy cover my home business?
- If my business is home-based, do I need more liability coverage than my home insurance policy contains?
- What is my deductible and how does it affect my premium?
- Will my insurance go up if I make a claim? By how much?

Action: Learn about crime and security

Although running a business in Canada is relatively safe compared to other areas of the world, you still need to remember that there is a risk of your business falling victim to a crime. If that happens, remember there is a strong social safety net in place and the police and other support services are here to help you.

There are many crimes that a business in Nova Scotia may fall victim to. Some of these include:

- Scams
- Fraud
- Bad credit cards or cheques
- Harassment
- Break and enter
- Theft
- Counterfeit bills
- Vandalism
- Armed robbery



**Make your
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Anywhere in Nova Scotia, dial

911

**for any emergency, whether you
need police, an ambulance,
firefighters, or anything else.**

When someone answers
the phone, tell them where you
are and what is happening and
they will make sure the right
people come to help you
as soon as possible.

Protecting your business from crime

There are a few ways you can protect your business against crime. Some things you may want to try are:

Employee training

Talk to the local police and RCMP and ask about resources that can help you and your employees protect your business against crime.

Video surveillance systems

Purchase good quality equipment and change tapes frequently to keep the recordings clear. You can find security professionals in the telephone book yellow pages who can help you with the design of your security system, or you can contact your local police for more information.

Security alarm systems

There are many private companies that can install motion detectors and door alarms to monitor your business premises for intruders. Check the telephone book yellow pages.

Counterfeit bill identification

Check the Bank of Canada's website on identifying counterfeit bills at: www.bankofcanada.ca/en/banknotes/counterfeit

For more information, visit the Royal Canadian Mounted Police website at: www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca

You can also visit the Phonebusters website at www.phonebusters.com for information on how to protect your business from scams, fraud and identity theft.

What to do if your business is robbed

If your business is robbed, there are numerous resources available to assist you in coping with the situation. Here is what to do if it happens to you:

- Get to safety as soon as possible; don't take unnecessary risks.
- Call the police and report the robbery as soon as you are safe. If you are on your business's premises when the crime is committed, don't argue with the thief. Just do your best to keep yourself safe from harm and call the police as soon as you can.
- If the crime involves your physical location, don't touch anything. The police may want to check for fingerprints or look at your surveillance footage.
- Cooperate with the police in any way you can. The easier you make it for them to help you, the better chance they have of bringing the offender to justice and recovering what was taken.
- If you have experienced something you are insured against, report the incident to your insurance company. They may be able to help you recover some of your losses.

Action: Market your business

If you are going to make a business grow and prosper in Nova Scotia, you are going to have to do some marketing to tell people about your products and services. Look over the market research you did earlier and think about who your customers are and how you can best reach them. For example, if you are going to be selling a new software package to businesses, the community newspaper may not be the best place to advertise. However, if you are opening a corner store, the local paper might be the best place to start.

Marketing has to be tailored to the culture you are marketing to. This is where the market research you did earlier comes in handy. You should already know a little about the people you want to sell to. Now is the time to create a plan and put it into action. If you are not sure how to answer one of the questions below, try searching online and visiting your local library or CBNS and do some reading up on the subject.

A few things to consider about marketing

- What image do you want your business to have?
- What sort of sign will you have outside your business? Sometimes, just using your window space to advertise your products and services can be enough.
- Are you charging a competitive price for your product and should you advertise that fact?
- Are there local marketing associations, group advertising or special events that would raise the profile of your business?
- Would setting up a booth at trade shows help you meet potential customers?
- Would having pens or other promotional material stamped with your business name and contact information attract customers?
- Are you going to have a website? Will you be selling your products and services online?
- Is your best contact with your market through radio, television or newspapers?
- Would it be better just to hand out flyers?

Marketing using “word of mouth”

Do not underestimate the power of “word of mouth.” When people like your product or service, they tell their friends. If they are not satisfied with your product or service, they tell even more people. Because the economy is small in Nova Scotia, word of mouth can make or break your business success.



Tricks of the trade

In Canada, the customer service standard you offer can make or break your business.

When a potential customer approaches your business, they generally want to feel as though you are willing to cater to their needs.

This can include:

- Smiling and greeting your customers or clients,
- Making small concessions to make them satisfied with a product,
- Giving your customers personal space and letting them explore your products on their own and
- Offering and honouring warranties on products or services.

In the end, if you make your customers feel as though they are the most important people in the world to you, they will generate profits for your business.

To promote yourself by word of mouth:

Offer excellent customer service

The best way to get people referring new customers to you is to make your existing customers happy with what you have done for them.

Work with businesses that deal with your clients in related areas.

For example, a real estate agent may work with a lawyer, a banker and a mortgage broker. If each makes referrals to the others, the client of one may become the client of all.

Network

Develop high-quality relationships with the people you meet in networking situations. The better they know you and your business, the more confidence they will have in referring people to you. This is especially true if they see you offering excellent customer service.

Section 6.

Taxation

A tax is a charge on people, property or income, collected to support the government. This money is used by the different levels of government to pay for roads, hospitals, police, education, and other services and programs that are part of Canadian culture.

In Canada, it is your duty to pay the correct amount of tax each year, on time, as well as file a tax return each year by the government's deadline and give the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) the necessary information to assess your tax return.

Filing a tax return also ensures that you receive the tax credits and benefits to which you are entitled.



Advice from entrepreneurs



“Get a business Mentor and volunteer in your community- this will help bridge the cultural gap and increase your networking opportunities.”

Pernille Fischer Boulter, CITP
President & CEO
Kisserup International Trade
Roots Inc. & Europe

Section 6. Taxation

Types of Taxes

Personal income tax	A tax on an individual's net income paid to the government, based on employment income, business-related income, and investment income. Personal income tax also includes pension income, income from rental properties, and capital gains.
Corporate income tax	A tax that a corporation has to pay to the government, based on the corporation's net income.
Sales tax	A tax on the selling price of goods or services. If you are self-employed, these taxes can be recovered by claiming input tax credits (ITCs).

How often you have to file taxes

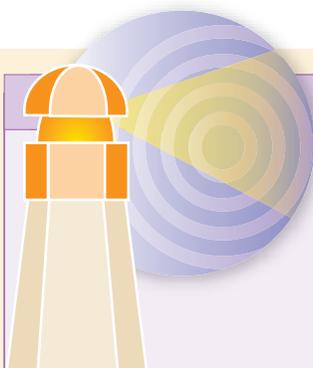
- Most people are required to file their tax returns by midnight, April 30 for the previous year.
- Business owners who are self-employed and their spouses are required to file an income tax return by June 15 (but any income tax due is payable by April 30 or is subject to interest penalties).
- If you owe tax, it has to be paid on or before April 30 of the year after the tax year. If you owe more than \$2,000 in any year, you may have to pay in instalments due on the 15th of March, June, September, and December.
- If you do not pay your taxes on time, you will be charged interest and penalties.

How and where to report taxes

Most taxes are paid to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). The CRA collects taxes and administers laws for the federal government and most provinces and territories.

To file your personal taxes, you need the General Income Tax and Benefit package from the CRA. The package includes a guide, tax return, related schedules, and provincial schedules. There are several ways to get your tax package - by Internet, by phone, or in person at CRA offices and Canada Post outlets during the filing season. If you have questions about your tax and benefit return, please call 1-800-959-8281.

All corporations that do business in Canada have to file a T2 corporate income tax return each tax year, even if there is no tax owing. The only exception is a registered charity. Registered charities are required to file an annual information return. Visit www.cra-arc.gc.ca or call 1-800-959-5525.



Are you having trouble reading?

- Try looking things up in a dictionary.
- Ask people you know who speak English for help.
- Type the word or phrase into an Internet search engine and find other examples of how it is used.
- Try out a language course. To find one, look up schools - language in the yellow pages of your local phone book.

Types of taxable income for business owners

Income from self-employment

- If you are self-employed, you have more options for tax planning than employed individuals have.
- When you are self-employed and earn business income, there is no tax withheld from you when you receive the income, unlike when you are employed by someone else. But you may have to pay tax later.
- If you have business-related expenses, you can deduct them from your gross income. This lowers your net income and you may pay less tax.
- Employment Insurance (EI) is only for those who are employed by others; entrepreneurs are not covered by EI when running their own businesses.
- If you are self-employed, Canada Pension Plan (CPP) requires you to pay both employer and employee contributions. When you file your tax return, you may be eligible to receive the employer portion back.

Income from a corporation

The corporation is a distinct legal entity. For tax purposes, the corporation's income is calculated similarly to personal income tax.

You can withdraw funds from the corporation through dividends distributed to all shareholders. This is a favoured way to draw funds. In addition, you can set up a loan from the corporation to yourself in order to withdraw funds. If you are the owner of a corporation, you can even pay yourself a salary from the corporation or determine a dividend and salary combination that works best for you.

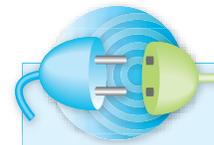
Business Occupancy Tax

If you are a tenant or property owner who occupies or uses commercial space, or operates a home-based business, you might be assessed for business occupancy tax. There are 55 municipal units in Nova Scotia, each with its own individual tax rate. Certain businesses in each municipality pay a Business Occupancy Tax based on an assessment made by Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

For the assessment office closest to you, please consult the blue pages of your telephone book under "Property Assessment", "Property Information" or "Assessment" or visit www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr

What is harmonized sales tax (HST)?

HST stands for Harmonized Sales Tax, a tax on the sale of goods and services. It consists of two tax rates combined: the 5 percent federal Goods and Services Tax (GST), and the 10 percent Nova Scotia Provincial Sales Tax (PST).



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CONTACT

**ISIS/Business Development
Services (BDS)**

*www.isisns.ca or
business@isisns.ca*

To take a course on taxes for
small business.

Who is obliged to charge HST?

If your business has annual sales of taxable goods or services worth more than \$30,000, you have to charge HST. It is very important that you register for HST when required. You should register ahead of time if you know you will make sales worth more than \$30,000 in your first year of business. If that threshold takes a while to achieve, register as soon as you exceed \$30,000 in sales.

If your revenue does not exceed \$30,000 you can decide not to register for HST. In that case you are not obliged to charge HST for your products or services. However you will have to pay HST on goods and services that you purchase for your business. Not charging HST means your customers pay lower prices. On the other hand, you cannot claim any HST that you paid to buy your business.

How to register for the HST

When you registered your business (see Section 5), you received a nine-digit business number. When you register for HST, you will be given a 15-digit number that is the same first nine digits of your business number, with the addition of two letters and four numbers at the end. For more information, visit the website www.businessregistration.gc.ca

What else do I need to know about the HST?

- If you are self-employed, you can apply for a refund, called input tax credits (ITCs), for the HST you pay on business purchases.
- In order to claim ITCs, you must register with the CRA to collect HST although you are not required to do so unless sales revenues are greater than \$30,000.
- Once you register for HST ITC refunds, you have to charge HST on anything from which you earn revenue by selling goods or services.
- You must keep accurate records of your claimed ITCs. Accurate records must also be kept of sales, expenses and HST collected.
- Although claims for ITCs are made without sending any documentation or receipts, you must keep supporting documents in case of an audit.
- All receipts must show the vendor's name, the date, the amount of HST, the vendor's nine-digit HST number, the method of payment (cash, cheque, credit card, etc.), and a description of the items purchased.

If you have questions, call 1-800-959-5525 to speak with an agent, or download the Guide for Canadian Small Businesses at www.cra-arc.gc.ca/E/pub/tg/rc4070

How can charging HST help me survive the early stages of business?

The start-up phase is usually described as a period when business spends more money than it generates, so saving all your receipts for equipment purchased and other costs that you might have means that ITCs can contribute to the cash flow of your new venture. Business expenses that generate ITCs include:

- Goods for reselling
- Advertisement costs
- Equipment such as furniture, vehicles and computers
- Operating expenses such as rent, utilities, office supplies and equipment rentals

If you would like to speak with Canada Revenue Agency to answer any questions you may have, call 1-800-959-5525.

Section 6 Activity Zone



Activity #1

List all sources of income for your business and then all the expenses. Write down how much you can deduct.

Activity #2

Contact the Canada Revenue Agency and find out what taxes you will be charged. An accountant can help you with this as well.

Taking the next step in your journey

You are not alone in your business venture. There is a strong base of support for small businesses in Nova Scotia, in the form of numerous organizations tailored to meet the needs of you and your business. Their collective expertise spans every industry and every business structure.

Support for your business may be found in the form of:

- Business counselling
- Venture capital
- Industry associations
- Chambers of commerce
- Legal advice
- Professional associations
- Help understanding laws pertaining to immigration and foreign workers in Canada
- Information on how to operate a business
- Market research information and training
- Computer training
- Language training
- Information on networking events

CBNS provides the first point of contact for a variety of government programs and non-profit organizations that will help you. To obtain further information on how to access support within any of these areas, please contact the CBNS:

Call: 1-888-576-4444

Click: www.canadabusiness.ca/ns

Visit: 1575 Brunswick Street, Halifax NS

Contact ISIS/Business Development Services (BDS) for an appointment to talk about your business ideas:

Email: business@isisns.ca

Click: www.isisns.ca

Visit: 6069 Mumford Road, Suite 2021, Halifax, NS

Good luck in your venture!

This book was produced in collaboration by
**Canada Business - Nova Scotia and
Immigrant Settlement and Integration Services**

Canada Business Nova Scotia

Canada Business - Nova Scotia (CBNS)

As part of a national network of Canada Business Service Centres, with locations in each province and territory across the country, we are the first point of contact for relevant and up-to-date information on federal and provincial government programs, services and regulations for business.

CBNS offers knowledgeable, bilingual Business Information Officers who are ready to guide you to the information and resources that will best suit your individual needs. CBNS services are absolutely free.

Here are just some of the areas the CBNS can assist you with:

- Business Start-up and Planning
- Financing
- E-Business
- Marketing and Market Research
- Importing and Exporting
- Human Resources
- Management
- Inventions
- Taxation
- Regulations
- Supplier Listings

The organization has a collection of Information Guides on popular business topics. For example, if you have come to Canada as a Business Class Immigrant, or as another type of immigrant, you may be interested in the Immigrating to Nova Scotia Info-Guide.

The on-site Resource Library contains three Internet-enabled public workstations, an extensive collection of print publications, and access to many relevant and informative databases to help you with your research.

Outside Halifax, clients are invited to visit one of 15 Community Business Resource Network sites across Nova Scotia. Services at these sites include access to Internet-enabled public computers and our more popular books and resources.

A comprehensive website is another resource for entrepreneurs. At www.canadabusiness.ca/ns, you can search for information by topic or keyword search, check out upcoming business events in the Events Calendar, or learn about the resources and services of the organization's on-site partners.

Business Information Officers who speak both English and French are available in person, by phone, fax or e-mail, waiting to assist you with your information needs. Click, call or visit CBNS today.

Click: www.canadabusiness.ca/ns

E-mail: Info.cb.ns@acoa-apec.ca

Call: 1-888-576-4444 1-800-457-8466 (TTY)

Visit: 1575 Brunswick Street, Halifax NS

MEMBER OF THE
**Canada Business
Network**



Immigrant Settlement & Integration Services
Services d'établissement & d'intégration des immigrants

Immigrant Settlement and Integration Services (ISIS)

ISIS' mission is to welcome immigrants and to work in partnership to offer services and create opportunities that enable them to participate fully in Canadian life. ISIS is the leading deliverer of settlement services in Atlantic Canada and provides the full range of programs and services to 3,500+ immigrant clients annually in 34 communities across Nova Scotia. ISIS is also the primary contact in Nova Scotia on refugee, settlement and immigration issues for 2,000+ organizations, employers, government departments and individuals annually.

ISIS was created by the merger of Halifax Immigrant Learning Centre (HILC) and Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association (MISA) on December 1, 2009. After many years of close collaboration, the two organizations combined to develop their growing synergy, better integrate services and create a more holistic approach for clients. With over 115 staff members from over thirty countries of origin, ISIS is the largest immigrant-serving agency in Atlantic Canada. ISIS' staff is dedicated, diverse, highly professional, qualified and experienced in their field. More than 80% of the staff have lived and worked internationally as well as in Canada, adding a wealth of cross-cultural understanding and competence.

Working with numerous partners, ISIS serves clients with a clear focus on the goal of social and economic integration. Programs and services range from refugee resettlement to business counselling, from literacy-level English language training to integrated language and pre-employment programs for specific professions. As well as offering direct, client-centred services, ISIS works to create a truly welcoming community. Over 450 trained and active volunteers assist staff in keeping ISIS firmly linked with business, community groups, other service agencies and former clients.

Business Development Services (BDS)

ISIS/BDS provides services and support to immigrants at all stages of business start-up and development.

- One-on-one business counseling at ISIS and on-site at businesses
- Development of business plans
- Business workshops and seminars
- Networking & Showcase events
- Online Business Directory

For more information contact BDS staff in person, by phone or e-mail – click www.isisns.ca

Phone: (902) 423-3607

Toll-free: 1-866-431-6472

Email: business@isisns.ca

**Visit: 6960 Mumford Road, Suite 2120
Halifax, NS**

Resources

Canada Business Products

Dial 1-888-576-4444 to obtain printed copies of these publications

Your guide to SERVICES for BUSINESS in Atlantic Canada

Starting a Business

www.canadabusiness.ca/eng/125

Marketing and Sales

www.canadabusiness.ca/eng/89

Naming Your Business

www.canadabusiness.ca/eng/guide/1280

Export, Import and Foreign Investment

www.canadabusiness.ca/eng/105

Business Planning

www.canadabusiness.ca/eng/86

How to get Money for Your Business

www.canadabusiness.ca/eng/82/150

Selling to Governments

www.canadabusiness.ca/eng/90

Permits and Licenses

www.canadabusiness.ca/eng/126/155

Immigrant Settlement and Integration Services Products

Dial 1-902-423-3607 or email business@isisns.ca to obtain more information about these publications

Canadian Tax Guide, 2004

Everything Ventured Something Gained: Profiles of Immigrant Entrepreneurs in Nova Scotia, 2006

www.isis.ns.ca/WhatsNew/EVSG.htm

Evaluating Your Business Idea Workshop textbook, 2010

Other Resources

Word of Mouth: The World's Best-Known Marketing Secret, Entrepreneur.com, 2002

www.entrepreneur.com/marketing/marketingideas/networking/article53188.html

Business Plan Guide, Centre for Women in Business, 2010

Your Guide to Small Business:

Everything you need to know to start up and run your own venture in Ontario,

Ontario Ministry of Small Business and Entrepreneurship, 2006

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Notes



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Connections

An immigrant's guide
to starting a business
in Nova Scotia

This book is also available
in PDF format at:
www.canadabusiness.ca/ns

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