



SURPRISE | arizona

Doing Business In Surprise

Chapter 1

November 2005

Chapter 1: Starting Your New Business

Starting and managing a business requires motivation, desire and talent. It also takes research and planning. Like a chess game, success in small business starts with decisive and correct opening moves. Although initial mistakes may not be fatal, it takes skill, discipline and hard work to regain the advantage.

Within this chapter:

- *Pre-business checklist*

To increase your chance for success, take the time up front to explore and evaluate your business and personal goals. Then use this information to build a comprehensive and well thought-out business plan that will help you reach these goals.

The process of developing a business plan will help you think through some important issues that you may not have considered yet. Your plan will become a valuable tool as you set out to raise money for your business. It should also provide milestones to gauge your success.

Before starting out, list your reasons for wanting to go into business. Some of the more common reasons for starting a business are:

- You want to be your own boss.
- You want financial independence.
- You want creative freedom.
- You want to fully use your skills and knowledge.

Next, you need to determine what business is "right for you." Ask yourself these questions:

- What do I like to do with my time?
- What technical skills have I learned or developed?
- What do others say I am good at?
- How much time do I have to run a successful business?
- Do I have any hobbies or interests that are marketable?

Then you should identify the niche your business will fill. Conduct the necessary research to answer these questions:

- Is my idea practical and will it fill a need?

Starting Your New Business

Additional Resources

- What is my competition?
- What is my business advantage over existing firms?
- Can I deliver a better quality service?
- Can I create a demand for my business?

The final step before developing your plan is the pre-business checklist. As you ask yourself the following questions, remember there are no best or right reasons for starting your own business, but it is important to understand what this venture involves.

Pre-Business Checklist

- *What business am I interested in starting?*
- *What services or products will I sell?*
- *Where will I be located?*
- *What skills and experience do I bring to the business?*
- *What will be my legal structure?*
- *What will I name my business?*
- *What equipment or supplies will I need?*
- *What insurance coverage will be needed?*
- *What financing will I need?*
- *What are my resources?*

Starting Your New Business

“As soon as you can afford it, find someone else to do the aspects of your business in which you are weak, or those that are non-revenue producing.”

Other Considerations for Entrepreneurship

Every day, people are striking out and achieving economic and creative independence by turning their skills into dollars.

KEEPING A FEW KEY THINGS IN MIND

No one can tell you what type of business will be satisfying and profitable for you. Ultimately, it's a decision only you can make. Consider your experience, knowledge, skills, contacts, location, time, products, interests, equipment and potential customer base. Pursue one of your hobbies, talents and/or passions! When you do something you really enjoy, you will stay motivated.

Don't quit your "day job" to go into business for yourself. Start your new business part-time. Take on several small projects to accumulate experience and references.

Stay away from come-on ads or "seminars" luring you with the prospect of making big money from home. As they say, if it sounds too good to be true, it usually is. When checking out one of these companies, remember, the Better Business Bureau is not a government agency; they preach, "Investigate before you invest." They only issue "reliability" reports on businesses and attempt to warn about scams and how to avoid them. Be cautious of references provided to you by the company in question, as they might not be actual consumers of their product or services. Before attending any seminar, trade show, conference or exhibit touting any home business opportunities, ask around as to whether it is worth the time and financial investment. Some are; some are not.

As soon as you've decided you want to start your own business, change your lifestyle. In other words, gear down financially. You'll find that you'll need to begin investing money into your new business venture and the sooner the better.

Once you make the transition to full-time at your new business, you should either have enough income saved to sustain for at least 18 months, ideally for 2 years or have a part-time job. It normally takes that long for a business to establish a steady client base.

Network and make lots of connections. Let everyone know what you do. You can't start this process too soon.

Starting Your New Business

Find a mentor or business coach---even if it's a friend with an optimistic attitude and some common sense advice. Connect with others who work at home.

You will work just as hard (probably harder) for yourself than you ever did working for someone else. Most business owners are workaholics and burnout is not uncommon. People won't take you seriously. They can't believe you can actually work on your own and get any "real" work done, or wonder why you don't have a "real" job." "Can you really make a living at that?"

Isolation can be tough. You should enjoy your own company and like to work alone. Those who have enjoyed an atmosphere of corporate peer support may have more difficulty making the transition to their own entrepreneurial operation. Your own business may give you more time with your children, but you'll need to line up day care alternatives for the times when you need a break.

YOUR BUSINESS NAME

When choosing a business name, avoid those beginning with "A" or the one that starts with your first name, or names with cute spellings. Customers won't be able to find you in the phone book. You also need to consider whether you plan to sell the business one day.

RESOURCES

Ask your business associates or the Northwest Valley Chamber of Commerce or review the Arizona Small Business Association directories for the name of an accountant, lawyer, banker, bookkeeper, and insurance agent. You'll need them sooner than you think.

PHONE TIPS

Answer your phone with your business name or "Good Morning/Good Afternoon, this is Pat," not simply "Hello." Always identify yourself by using your name.

Practice telephone etiquette that projects a professional image. Pay attention to background noise such as children playing, dogs barking or television sets in operation that could leave your client with a negative image of you and your business.

Get an answering machine with Call Waiting, or preferably Voice Mes-

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Activating Phones

Call or email Qwest or Cox for advice on home office phone service.

Qwest: 800-603-6000 web page at <http://pcat.qwest.com/pcat/smallBusiness.do?salesChannel=sbus>

Cox: 623-594-7298 web page http://coxbusiness.com/systems/az_phoenix/

saging. Whichever you choose, be sure that incoming calls are answered every time. Most customers will call someone else if they get a busy signal.

Dedicated Phone Line

Obtain a separate phone line for your business. The deadline for a Phoenix Metro phone book listing is December. The deadline for the suburb directories is July. If you decide to get a business line, your costs will be nearly double. If you can't afford a business line and if a Yellow Pages listing and a listing in the business section of The White Pages are not important to you, consider an inexpensive alternative such as Customer Ringing. This service provides a separate phone number associated with your current residential line, but with a distinctive ring. Caller ID is helpful if you need to screen calls during business hours.

SETTING UP YOUR OFFICE AND EQUIPMENT

It is perfectly acceptable to use a post office box (unless you're selling a product) for security or privacy reasons. When you rent mailboxes, you can often use the store's street address, and your box number becomes your suite number.

Since you'll be spending a lot of time there, your office should have a pleasant atmosphere and, if possible, a window with a decent view. At the very least, you'll need a desk, a comfortable chair, good lighting, a telephone and basic supplies. If customers come to you for appointments, both you and your office should look professional.

Buy a computer and a fax machine or computer fax modem. Businesses that automate and computerize their tasks are more productive and technologically advanced. Your customers will find this to be an advantage.

MANAGING YOUR TIME

At first you'll want to be the "everything to everybody" business owner. Eventually you'll need to establish regular business hours because you'll need to get a life!

Don't feel guilty about taking time off.

As soon as you can afford it, pay someone else to do the aspects of your business in which you are weak, or those that are non-revenue producing. Bookkeeping, clerical chores, database or mailing list management, bank-

APPENDIX A: Useful Contacts and Websites

Office of Economic Development—City of Surprise

12425 W. Bell Rd., Bldg. D-100
Surprise, AZ 85374
Phone: (623) 875-4273
Fax: (623)875-5049
Web site: www.surpriseaz.com
E-mail: econdev@surpriseaz.com

Determining where to start is not always easy. If you aren't sure who to contact or what steps to take, Surprise's Economic Development Department is a great place to begin.

The Economic Development staff will be happy to assist you in determining a path to start your business, expand an existing business, or find a new location. The Economic Development Department offers business firms an ombudsmen service to assist with the City's development process, increase understanding of regulations and assess project needs. Staff can also provide introductions to other departments or additional resources.

The Economic Development Department has services designed for both new and existing businesses—from small entrepreneurial operations to Fortune 500 firms. Services include confidential consultations, assistance with site selection, introduction to private and public sector development and real estate representatives and providing demographic information to assist potential new business owners.

Surprise's Office of Economic Development actively promotes and preserves the economic strength of the city to ensure that Surprise is the preferred location for new, existing and expanding organizations.

Northwest Valley Chamber of Commerce

12801 W. Bell Rd., Suite 14
Surprise, AZ 85374
Phone: (623) 583-0692
Fax: (623) 583-0694
Web Site: www.northwestvalley.com
E-mail: chamber@northwestvalley.com

The Northwest Valley Chamber of Commerce is a private, not-for-profit business organization providing a wealth of information for any size business. For more than 42 years, the Northwest Valley Chamber of Commerce has been a leading advocate for businesses. The Chamber also acts as an ombudsman for resolution of public policy issues that affect the business community at a local, county or state level.

As one of the largest Chambers in metropolitan Phoenix, members are given many opportunities to market their businesses and to enhance their business skills through individual counseling, group workshops and networking activities. The chamber also hosts monthly seminars and events to assist our members.

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Maricopa County Regional Library - Surprise

16089 N. Bullard Ave.
Surprise, AZ 85374
Phone: 623-544-6371

Web Site: maricopa.gov/library

The Surprise Library is a great business resource and contains various business materials, government and legal documents and “how to” publications on such topics as how to start a business, how to get a loan and how to write a business plan. The Northwest Regional Library is located in the Surprise Recreation Complex in the City of Surprise. This 23,000 sq. ft. facility is the District’s newest “state of the art” Regional Library with a collection of over 40,000 items in all formats and offers over 60 Internet-accessible computers throughout the building. It is a model of the latest technology in the library and information field in terms of customer service with self-checkout, self-check in and Smart Library Cards.

Arizona Department of Commerce

1700 W. Washington St., Suite 600 Phoenix, AZ 85007
Phone: (602) 771-1100 Toll free: (800) 528-8421 Fax: (602) 771-1209
Web site: www.azcommerce.com E-mail: webmaster@azcommerce.com

The Arizona Business Assistance Center, a division of the Arizona Department of Commerce, provides a variety of resources to assist anyone interested in starting, expanding or relocating a business in the state. The Arizona Business Assistance Center has three components and are located at the Arizona Department of Commerce.

Arizona Business Connection

Web site: <http://www.commerce.state.az.us> “Small Business Services” page; then go to “Arizona Business Connection - [Walks you through what you need to know to start or expand your business](#)”.

Phone: (602) 771-1196 Toll free: (800) 542-5684

The Arizona Business Connection’s Web site provides regulation and licensing information for starting a business. At this Web site, you may also create a customized information package to print at your convenience. This office also produces the free publications, Guide to Establishing and Operating a Business, Small Business Book and Entrepreneur’s Encyclopedia, available at the Chamber of Commerce and Regional Library. To obtain copies of these publications, visit the Library or call (623) 544-6371 or drop by the Northwest Valley Chamber of Commerce at 12801 West Bell Rd., Ste. 14, Surprise, AZ 85374. Phone (623) 583-0692

Fax (623) 583-0694. Web page chamber@northwestvalley.com

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Office of Minority/Women-Owned Business Enterprise Services

Phone: 602-262-6790

<http://www.azcommerce.com/mwbedir/>

The Office of Minority/Women-Owned Business Enterprise Services acts as a resource and advocate for women and minorities who own businesses by helping them market their products and services to state agencies and other companies. The office publishes a directory of women and minority-owned businesses that is distributed to state agencies, local corporations and financial institutions.

Small Business Advocate—Governor's Council on Small Business

1700 West Washington, Suite 220 Phoenix, AZ 85007

Email: gcsb@azcommerce.com

Telephone: 602-771-1173

Fax: 602-771-1209

The Small Business Advocate maintains ongoing communication between the Governor's Office and small business. The advocacy office works with chambers of commerce and other groups to develop policies and programs relevant to small business, supports state legislation that benefits the business community, and interacts with state agencies to improve relationships between state departments and the small business community.

Arizona Secretary of State's Trademark and Trade Name Office

Phoenix Customer Service Center

14 N. 18th Ave just across street from the Capitol Executive Tower

Mailing Address 1700 West Washington, 7th Floor Phoenix, Az 85007-2888

Phone (602) 542-6187 or 800.458.5842

Web site www.azsos.gov/business_services/trademarksandtradenames.htm

Email trades@azsos.gov

Arizona Corporation Commission

1300 W. Washington Street Phoenix, AZ 85007 (602) 542-3230

www.cc.state.az.us

<http://www.cc.state.az.us/corp/filings/forms/packets.htm>

Maricopa County Recorder

Main Office (Downtown) 111 S. Third Ave., Phoenix AZ 85003

Phone: 602-506-3535

Southeast Office (Mesa) 222 E. Javelina, Mesa AZ 85210

Phone: 602-506-3535

<http://recorder.maricopa.gov>

Arizona Department of Revenue (ADOR)

2902 W. Agua Fria Freeway Phoenix, AZ 85027

Phone: (602) 255-2060 Forms by Phone: (602) 542-4260

Web site: www.revenue.state.az.us Forms by Fax: (602) 542-3756

"Business Basics: A Guide to Taxes for Arizona Businesses," is found online at <http://www.revenue.state.az.us/brochure/622.pdf>



SURPRISE
ARIZONA

Beyond Expectations

**City of Surprise
Economic Development
Department**

12425 West Bell Road
Building B

Phone: 623.875.4273

Fax: 623.875.5049

E-mail: econdev@surpriseaz.com

City of Surprise

Small Business Assistance Program (SBAP)

Interested in starting your own business? We'll help you get your business started and serve as an on-going resource. We'll work with you as long as you need help.

Through the SBAP, Surprise offers one-on-one coaching and counseling to existing and would-be entrepreneurs, helping them establish business plans and access private and public resources. Our Economic Development staff is complemented by a network of volunteers with business expertise. Go to www.surpriseaz.com—Economic Development Department—or call 623.875.4273 for more information.



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Email: chamber@northwestvalley.com

Welcome Business Partners!

The Northwest Valley Chamber of Commerce encourages you to become a business partner with the Chamber and become active in one of the most vibrant business organizations in metropolitan Phoenix.

The Chamber is adept at providing assistance with marketing your product or service, finance options for your business, leads, seminars and workshops, several networking options as well as events to showcase your products.

Chamber members are at the very heart of the region's success. Through their commitment to the community, they create a partnership between local businesses and residents. Chamber members provide more than membership dues. They are volunteers, leaders and advocates for optimum quality of life in the Northwest Valley.

Long before there were thousands of rooftops in the area, there was the Chamber of Commerce. Early business owners recognized the potential of the Northwest Valley and banded together to create a thriving economy and a great place to live. We thank the early pioneers in the region. They created the strong base for the growth and accomplishment that was to follow years later.

Join us; won't you? We're always looking for people who share our values and goals: pursuing all of the good things in life, right here in the Northwest Valley. Stop by the Chamber office any weekday and learn a lot about local life.