

# GROWING YOUR BUSINESS

A guide to decision-making and resources



**WOMEN'S  
ENTERPRISE  
CENTRE**

[womensenterprise.ca](http://womensenterprise.ca)



*It's your business.  
Start. Grow. Succeed.*

Women's Enterprise Centre is the leading business resource for BC women who are starting, growing or purchasing a business. Our team of professionals provides business loans, skills training, advice, mentors, resources and a supportive community to help women start, grow and succeed in their business.

With offices and business advisors throughout the province, we provide essential resources and services designed to build business capacity and fuel success. Our professional team understands and relates to the unique circumstances of women business owners, providing tools and confidence through a supportive, individual and practical approach.

From our offices in Kelowna, Vancouver, and Victoria, we serve the 146,000 women who own and operate businesses across the province, most of whom have fewer than 20 employees.

For more information on Women's Enterprise Centre services for BC women, other resource guides and learning guides on specific business topics such as market research, business financial management, marketing, or growing your business please visit [womensenterprise.ca](http://womensenterprise.ca) or call us at 1.800.643.7014.

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grow

# ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide is intended to help BC business owners make decisions about business growth that are right for them. It provides an overview of important factors to think about and lists available resources for doing more research and getting advice. This guide provides tools to organize the information and assess the business and personal needs to make informed and good decisions—not only on what is good for the business, but what is good for the business owner.

## What is business growth?

Business growth can mean many things to individuals. In this guide, business growth is defined as:

- Increased sales
- Increased profits and/or
- Change in current business to maintain sales and profits.

Increased sales or profits are the usual things that come to mind when one says business growth. Business growth, however, may also mean changing to maintain current sales or profits. For example, you may need to grow new clients because a major, steady client has left. You may need to introduce new products or services or stop offering some current ones based on changes in market demands. In both these cases you may not be increasing your sales or profits, just changing your business to maintain what you have.

# HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide provides a five-step process you can use to make decisions about growing your business based on the needs of both your business and yourself.

**Step 1:** Why do you want to grow your business?

**Step 2:** If you want to grow your business and know why, how do you want to achieve this?

**Step 3:** Once you decide how you want to grow your business, you must determine what the business needs to grow in that way.

**Step 4:** If, after completing the first three steps, you believe this is something you are prepared to do, you must think about what you need to do or learn to do in order to make it happen.

**Step 5:** No matter what decisions you make during the first four steps, you should think about what the next steps will be for you and your business.

## STEP 1

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*Why do you want to grow your business?*

Each section of this guide provides an overview of one of the steps and some common questions and factors you may need to think about to make good decisions. Please keep a notepad and pen or your computer handy so you can record your thoughts and answers. This will help you research and organize the information you need to make decisions for your unique situation. For more information, references to other resources are provided in the back of this guide.

## STEP 2

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*How do you want to grow your business?*

At the end of each section you are asked what you want to do about growing your business based on what you have learned, and whether or not you want to grow your business. You may wish to do more research before making a decision.

At any point, you may decide that growing your business is not the right thing to do, or that the timing isn't right. You are asked to think about what your Next Steps (section five) will be, no matter what your decisions are or at what point you choose to make them. Whether you decide to grow your business or not, you will have an understanding of the reason for your decision. You will have some information to develop an action plan for what you will do as next steps—personally and in business.

## STEP 3

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*What does your business need to grow?*

### Just a beginning

This guide provides some common information and questions you should ask yourself in making decisions about growing your business. It is not intended to provide all the information you will need or questions you should ask in determining if you want to grow and how to go about it. These are only some common ones to help you do your research and get you thinking about the type of information you will need.

## STEP 4

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*What do you need to do to grow?*

### It's all about you

This guide is intended to help you feel good about your decisions and know why these are the right ones for you, not what other people think you should do. Remember this is all about you and making business decisions that are best for you.

## STEP 5

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*Next steps*

# STEP 1: WHY DO YOU WANT TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS?

The first decision you must clarify is why you want to grow your business. What is motivating you to think about this? It is important to be clear on your reasons because it will help you to make the right decisions about business growth.

The following are some common reasons people want to grow their business.

## A. Business reasons

- **More demand than product or services:** Have you been a victim of your own success and are not able to provide enough products or services for all your customers' orders or requests?
- **Decreasing demand for your existing offering:** Do most of your clients and potential clients already have enough of your products or services and so you must develop new products or services to stay in business?
- **Change in competition or the business environment:** Is your market becoming more competitive so you must grow just to stay in business or maintain current profits (e.g. competitors are selling the same product or service at lower cost). Have some of your competitors closed shop so you see an opportunity to grow?
- **Change in client base:** Have some of your major clients left so that you must find new ones to maintain your sales level? Are you getting requests for your products or services from people you did not think were potential clients or are out of your geographic service area?
- **Change in client needs:** Are your clients asking for new or modified versions of your products or services? Are they asking for it to be packaged differently or sold in smaller or larger lots?
- **Ownership:** Do you want to grow so that you can buy your own building? Or do you want to buy the equipment you are leasing? Or do you want to build the business up so you can eventually sell it for a higher return?
- **Covering your costs:** Are your sales levels covering all your costs? Is your business generating enough revenue to allow you to pay yourself or your employees generously enough?

## B. Personal reasons

- **Higher income:** Do you want more personal income? If yes, ask yourself why? Do you feel you are working too hard for the money you take home?
- **Better work/life balance:** Do you want to grow so that you can afford to hire someone to take over some of your work load and leave you more time for your family or just personal time? Or do you want to grow enough to hire someone to do the work you hate doing?
- **More prestige or recognition:** Do you want to be recognized as a leader in your market or as a major player in the business community? Is this important to you and your personal satisfaction?
- **Personal growth:** Do you want to have more variety in the work you do? Are you bored with providing the same product or service? Do you want to be able to learn to do something new?
- **Better society or quality of life:** Do you want to grow so that you can give back to the community or society? Are you passionate about making a difference in the world or improving the quality of life for people, e.g. helping to clean up the environment?

In asking yourself why you want to grow your business, you may find that the answer is that you really do not want to. If you cannot think of a good reason to grow your business you probably are not ready to. If your reasons are not really about the business, you should define what the reasons are and determine if growing your business will get you what you want or if you need to do something different personally.

## Decision time...

What is your reason for wanting to grow?

*List all the reasons you want to grow. You may have many, both personal and business. Some of your reasons may be stated above or they may be very different. What is important is that you are true to yourself and clearly know why you are thinking of growing your business.*

Do you want to grow your business? Yes or No?

*Look at the reasons you have for wanting to grow your business. Are they good reasons? Will growing your business help you achieve what you want?*

Next steps

**YES I want to grow my business** – Work through the next section of this guide.

**NO I'm not ready to grow my business at this time** – Go to Step 5 (p. 35) to find the next steps you can take towards achieving your business and personal goals.

## Victoria's story...

*A native of the UK with a background in the spa industry, Victoria Carr was surprised when she moved to Vancouver and immediately noticed a gap in the market for a high-end boutique spa.*

*With the education, skills and experience to provide the highest-quality esthetic services, Carr decided to fill that gap herself.*

*Carr first launched her business slowly by offering facials in the back of a hair studio, and over time the quality and consistency of her facials created a loyal following. She moved into a small space with two treatment rooms, but once again demand for her services became so great she didn't have the capacity to meet her clients' needs.*

*After another expansion, Carr is now the proud owner of Breathe Spa, a full-service spa with three staff members and five treatment rooms*

*in a beautiful heritage building in downtown Vancouver. The space allows her to meet the needs of all her customers.*

*The steady pace at which Breathe Spa grew was a result of Carr's clever positioning—she found a niche market and provided quality service, and her customer base increased.*

*Of course, growth didn't happen automatically. Carr has always been behind the business, pushing it to develop into the exclusive high-end spa it is today.*

*"The first step to growing your business is to know what your vision is, and the second step is to never lose sight of that vision. No matter what challenges come up, keep working towards it."*



Victoria Carr  
BREATHE SPA  
Vancouver  
[breathespa.net](http://breathespa.net)

“  
*My clients are my compass, and seeing how satisfied they are after visiting us lets me know that I'm on the right track with the business.*  
”

# STEP 2: HOW DO YOU WANT TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS?

If you have decided that you really do want to grow your business, the next question is: How do you want to grow your business? Do you want to:

- Increase sales
- Increase profits
- Or both
- Or are you trying to maintain sales and/or profits?

To help you with these decisions, this section outlines some common strategies to grow sales or profits. If you need to change your business to maintain sales or profits, one or more of these strategies may help you. These lists are not exhaustive and are intended to help you start thinking about how to make an informed decision. Only you can thoroughly assess your situation and decide which strategies are best for you or create unique ones based on you and your business.

## A. Common strategies to increase sales

### 1. Sell more to current customers

Think about better meeting the needs of the customers you already have. It's easier to sell more to an existing customer than it is to get a new one. So ask yourself: Is there an opportunity to increase the number of purchases customers make or increase the size of each sale? Can you provide them with additional services?

For example, you could not only provide software but also load it onto your customer's systems. Can your product or service replace something they are currently purchasing from another supplier? For example, can your baked goods also be used as healthy snacks?

### 2. Sell to more customers

If you sell to more customers, you will increase your sales. Are you ready to sell to new customers in your current market or new customers in new geographic areas? This may relate to your marketing strategy. Consider whether you are reaching all your potential customers in the geographic area you already operate in. Can you increase your market share or have a broader and more varied target market?

Should you consider expanding your business internationally? Selling to customers in other countries creates the opportunity to increase your sales volume and may offer a solution to dealing with seasonal fluctuations in the domestic market. Market research can reveal new market opportunities and consumers' needs in other countries.

## Lisa's story...

*An active mom who loves the outdoors, Lisa Will found it nearly impossible to find quality warm infant footwear for her young son. Keen to begin a business, she spotted this market opportunity and launched "Stonz" in June, 2004.*

*Stonz is now one of the major manufacturers of versatile children's outdoor gear including booties, mittz, rain boots and super lightweight winter boots.*

*A growth loan from Women's Enterprise Centre enabled Will to build up inventory, expand her product line and tap into new world markets.*

*Introducing new product lines has been one of the key ingredients to Will's business growth. After the success of the booties, Stonz launched additional products to*

*outfit babies and children as they continue growing, including a hard-soled extraordinary light-weight boot that withstands cold to -58F!*

*Will has also looked beyond borders for growth opportunities. Stonz ships throughout Canada and around the world including to Japan, Europe and the US.*

*"As an entrepreneur, it is important to know where, what and when to let go!"*

*Having a dedicated staff has been instrumental to her business expansion. "Great employees will want only the best for the business and themselves."*



Lisa Will  
STONZ WEAR  
Vancouver  
[stonzwear.com](http://stonzwear.com)

“  
*A smart team is key to business growth. Train good people to help and grow with you, allowing you to work on the business, not only in it.*  
”

How much profit your business can generate in a foreign economy will depend on many factors. You will need to prepare your company before crossing the border. What is your competitive advantage? Does your product fulfill export regulations? What is your export strategy?

### **3. Add new products or services to your business**

You can add new products or services to increase your sales and profits. Be careful not to add a product or service just because it seems like a good opportunity. It should be something that complements your current products.

The more focused your products/services are, the stronger your business identity. If your business offers too broad a mix of products and services, you will confuse your customers and may reduce your sales. You may be seen as a "Jane of all trades and a master of none."

Think about products and services that you and your staff already have some experience with or could easily incorporate into your current operations so you will not have a costly learning curve. Think about ones that can be part of your current advertising and promotions programs and will not increase these costs. Think about what you do better than anyone else: What you are becoming known for and can do more of?

## **B. Common strategies to increase profits**

### **1. Reduce overhead costs and operating expenses**

Reducing overhead costs and operating expenses means more money for the same amount of effort and sales. In business, overhead costs or operating expenses refer to a group of expenses that are necessary for your business to stay functioning, but cannot be directly associated with any one product or service.

These expenses include such things as rent, utilities, wages (that are not direct labour costs), information systems, materials (that are not a direct input), accounting fees, advertising, depreciation, insurance, interest, legal fees, repairs, supplies, taxes, telephone bills, travel and utilities costs.

### **2. Reduce direct costs**

Direct costs are those that can be linked directly to a product or a service, such as materials that go into your product. Shipping or sales fees can be included as direct costs if they are paid per item. You may be able to reduce your direct costs by negotiating better terms with your suppliers, especially if you propose the reduced fee per item based on an anticipated increase in sales as you grow. Try to negotiate rates based on certain threshold amounts.

### **3. Nurture your best customers and say no to your worst**

Do you know who your best customers are? Eighty per cent of revenues come from twenty per cent of clients. Customers who are easy to deal with cost you less to do business and increase both your sales and profits. Good customers know that your products and services are value for their money. They become a great marketing and sales force for you by referring others to your business. You want to nurture these clients because they add more profit than new clients who cost you time and resources to attract and win.

Do you know who your worst customers are? A common rule of thumb is that 20% of your clients create 80% of your problems, increasing costs, or maybe even costing you more than you are charging them for your product or service. Do you know who these customers are? As women, we often have trouble saying no. We want to please everyone. It is not true that the customer is always right. You may not want the business of some customers, and it is OK to hold your ground on your terms and conditions.

#### **4. Eliminate lower margin products or services**

It may not seem possible to grow your business by selling less, but it is. Products or services that have lower profit margins may be taking a great deal of your time and resources. If you could channel this time and resources to the higher-profit products and services you could increase their sales and your overall profit. You may find that you are actually losing money by carrying certain products and services.

#### **5. Increase the price of your products and services**

If there seems to be more demand for your products and services than you are able to supply readily, consider increasing your price. If you keep your costs and production the same, you should make a bigger profit. You may want to increase the quality or features of your products and services so customers see more value to match a higher price. However care must be taken so that the increased price does not reduce your sales so much that your overhead costs are now higher per product or service, thereby eliminating any profit or even reducing it.

## Decision time...

What is your growth strategy?

*In your notebook or computer, outline what your growth strategy will be. It may be one or more of the common strategies outlined above or it may be an entirely different approach that you want to take. If you are struggling with developing a viable growth strategy, you may not want to grow at this time.*

Do you want to grow your business? Yes or No?

*Look at the growth strategy you are thinking about. Is it something you want to do? Are you and your business ready to grow?*

Next steps

**YES I want to grow my business** – Work through the next section of this guide.

**NO I'm not ready to grow my business at this time** – Go to Step 5 (p. 35) to find the next steps you can take towards achieving your business and personal goals.

# STEP 3: WHAT DOES YOUR BUSINESS NEED TO GROW?

Once you decide what your growth strategy is, you will need to determine what your business will need to do to grow. To grow, every business should evaluate the following key requirements of its operations and determine what it needs to do differently:

- Products/services
- Price
- Customers and geographic market
- Marketing
- Sales and distribution channels

To achieve growth, you must have good supporting operations:

- Business structure
- Processes and systems
- Office/production space and equipment
- Resources – human and financial

This section outlines some common things you should think about relative to each of the above basic business requirements and help you assess if your business has or is able to get what it takes to successfully implement your growth strategy.

Under each requirement you are provided with factors you should think about and questions to help you assess where your business is at today and what it must do or get to grow. Some of the requirements are intertwined. For example, if you want to buy a business, are you able to get the financing to do so?

## A GOOD PRODUCT/SERVICE CAN HELP YOU:

- Sell more to current customers
- Sell to more customers
- Add new products or services to your business
- Eliminate lower-margin products or services
- Increase the price of your product

## A. Product/Service

The good product or service is one for which there is enough demand to meet your financial goals over the long term. It is one you are proud to be providing. You must think about if you have a product or service that can help you grow. Perhaps you can go along as you are, but there is no more room for growth.

### Assess your product

The process of assessing your product or service for growth is the same as defining a product or service during start-up. If you did not go through a structured process during start-up, you may want to research information on how this can be done during start-up as well as for growth.

### Focus on your core competencies

Think about concentrating on your core products and services and those that give you an advantage over your competitors. By providing these better than other businesses, you will gain a reputation for providing quality and this will position you to grow through new customers and old ones who are willing to pay for better quality.

Focusing on core products and services and not getting spread too thin has an added advantage. If you and your employees and distributors are experienced in providing it efficiently, it will translate into lower costs and greater profit.

### Consider new products

If demand for your product or service is slowing or has levelled off, you may need to develop new products and services.



#### » ASSESSING YOUR FIRM'S PRODUCT/SERVICE:

1. Are you seeing demand increasing for your products and services or is it slowing?
2. Which of your products and services show the most potential?
3. Which ones provide the most net profit?
4. Which ones take a great deal of resources but are hard to sell or get a good price for? Are there products/services that are actually costing you money?
5. Are there products or services that could enhance your existing offerings and would be natural add-ons?
6. Are there new products or services that would complement the ones you have now?
7. Is there a whole new line of products and services that your existing customers or potential new customers seem to need and you could offer?
8. Why do you think that this product or service will be a success?

## B. Pricing

If you find it hard to produce enough to keep up with orders, your price may be too low. Increasing your price may make your business more manageable while making more money at the same production level. Are you leaving money on the table for your transactions?

If your pricing is not leaving enough money after costs to pay yourself a wage, you should consider raising your price. You need to think as a business, not a charity. Better pricing of your product or service may mean, however, that you should lower your price so that you sell more, thereby making more money overall.

The process of determining the pricing is the same as when you started up, except you now have some information about what your current price does to your business both relative to sales and profits.

If you are considering a price reduction or increase, the following tables may help you determine how your profit may be affected.



*Simplify what it is you're trying to do. Take whatever opportunity you see and boil it down to some simple key metrics, and then focus on those. There's a tendency for us to create complexity, and that creates a host of tangential approaches.*



Christine Magee, President  
Sleep Country Canada



#### AN APPROPRIATE PRICING STRATEGY CAN HELP YOU:

- Sell more to current customers
- Sell to more customers
- Increase the price of your product

## Compensating for price discounting

		Present Margin								
		20%	25%	30%	35%	40%	45%	50%	55%	60%
		Percentage your sales volume must increase by to produce the exact same profit:								
Price Reduction	2%	11	9	7	6	5	5	4	4	3
	4%	25	19	15	13	11	10	9	8	7
	6%	43	32	25	21	18	15	14	12	11
	8%	67	47	36	30	25	22	19	17	15
	10%	100	67	50	40	33	29	25	22	20
	12%	150	92	67	52	43	36	32	28	25
	14%	233	127	88	67	54	45	39	34	30
	16%	400	178	114	84	67	55	47	41	36
	18%	900	257	150	106	82	67	56	49	43
	20%	-	400	200	133	100	80	67	57	50
	25%	-	-	500	250	167	125	100	83	71
30%	-	-	-	600	300	200	150	120	100	

## Compensating for sales decline following a price increase

		Present Margin								
		20%	25%	30%	35%	40%	45%	50%	55%	60%
		Percentage your sales volume could be reduced by to produce the exact same profit:								
Price Increase	2%	9	7	6	5	5	4	4	4	3
	4%	17	14	12	10	9	8	7	7	6
	6%	23	19	17	15	13	12	11	10	9
	8%	29	24	21	19	17	15	14	13	12
	10%	33	29	25	22	20	18	17	15	14
	12%	38	32	29	26	23	21	19	18	17
	14%	41	36	32	29	26	24	22	20	19
	16%	44	39	35	31	29	26	24	23	21
	18%	47	42	38	34	31	29	26	25	23
	20%	50	44	40	36	33	31	29	27	25
	25%	56	50	45	42	38	36	33	31	29
30%	60	55	50	46	43	40	38	35	33	

From Bestwick & Partners, Chartered Accountants, Nanaimo, BC

### » ASSESSING YOUR FIRM'S PRICING:

1. Does your price cover all your costs, including a salary for yourself?
2. What market research have you done or are you able to do to determine what your product or service should be priced at?
3. Are you providing more quality or service than your competitors, but charging the same price?
4. What do you think will happen if you raise your prices? Have you asked your customers?
5. How would you explain an increase in price to your customers so that they get to know you and your product or service better and feel it still provides value for money?
6. Could you sell a great deal more if you lowered your price just a little? How could you test this idea in your market?
7. If you operate in more than one geographic region, will all regions have the same price?

## C. Customers and geographic market

Good customers are needed to make you money and keep your business going. Nurturing your best customers can create a free marketing team for you as they spread the word and refer others to your business.

Knowing your customers can help you:

- customize your products and services to their needs and gain a loyal following
- raise your prices while maintaining your current sales levels
- identify and add new products and services to your business
- identify the changes that will be most profitable and have enough of a demand to be worth spending resources on

### **Build an optimal customer base**

This may also mean severing business relations with the ones that are too demanding and always complain about your price or use up your resources and support with little return.

Do you know your customers and their needs? Get to know your customers and group them according to what you need to make good decisions, such as:

- Problem
- Easy to deal with
- Regular/frequent
- Occasional
- Large
- Small

Use the groupings that make sense for your business to determine which customers you want more of. Customers may belong to more than one group.

### **Consider other regions**

Building a good customer base also means determining what geographic regions these customers are in. Most people, when they start a business, only think locally. Is it time that you expanded province-wide, across Canada or internationally?

There are many potential benefits to expanding your business geographically, including:

- increasing your potential customer base
- counteracting seasonal highs and lows in your domestic market, allowing you to do business year-round
- overcoming a depressed local market, allowing you to charge fair market value for your product or service
- reaching customers in other geographic regions may be willing to pay more for the same product or service
- supporting your firm's output when the local market is too small or when the market becomes saturated

### THE OPTIMAL CUSTOMERS AND GEOGRAPHIC MARKET CAN HELP YOU:

- Sell more to current customers
- Sell to more customers
- Add new products or services to your business
- Increase the price of your product
- Nurture your best customers



## Inna's story...

*Inna Shekhtman launched Red Dog Deli Raw Food Company Inc. with a group of friends in 2004 to give pet owners the tools and options to make healthier choices for their pets. After her business partners moved away to pursue other endeavours, Shekhtman became the sole owner of the company.*

*Red Dog Deli is a manufacturer of premium raw pet food, offering products made with free-range, non-medicated meat and organic vegetables.*

*From a small 600 sq. ft. warehouse on Mitchell Island, BC to a state-of-the-art, 7,200 sq. ft. food manufacturing facility in North Vancouver, Red Dog has had quite a growth journey.*

*"I had to learn a lot of new skills very quickly, including how to prepare and read financial statements, and many other skills involved in running a business," says Shekhtman.*

*To help Shekhtman maintain her growth trajectory, Women's Enterprise Centre provided her with growth financing. Additional support from Women's Enterprise Centre such as business advisory services, a mentor and skills training helped Shekhtman manage her exponential growth effectively.*

*Shekhtman acknowledges the importance of a strong support network. "Earlier, I used to micro-manage. Now, I appreciate the importance of investing time in building my team and finding the right connections and mentors to help me grow my business."*

*Now that she is well into the expansion phase, Shekhtman aims to continue growing her brand, work with veterinarians to develop her products and get certified to move into international markets.*

Inna Shekhtman  
RED DOG DELI RAW FOOD  
COMPANY INC.

Vancouver  
reddogdeli.com

“

*It is crucial to delegate daily operations to your team so that you can focus on working on the business instead of in the business.*

”



“  
*I am a huge community supporter and it comes through in our store. We get the compliment all the time that the “feeling is so good here.” We regard our customers as our family and it shows in our customer relations.*”

Meagan Hughes, Owner  
 Cottage Quilting, Kelowna  
 WEC Loan Client

The whole purpose of marketing is for it to result in a sale, so if you do not have a good sales force and distribution channel to make the sale, all marketing resources are wasted.

» **ASSESSING YOUR FIRM'S MARKETING:**

1. *Do you have a marketing plan for growth?*
2. *Is your company a “brand?” Do you need to think about branding?*
3. *Are you directing your marketing material to the right people? Do you know who your best customers and potential customers are?*
4. *Do you know enough about the market, customers and potential customers to create a meaningful message?*
5. *How can you get to know your customers and potential customers better?*
6. *Have you got any tools or databases that help you know your customers better and manage your relationship with them? Do you track and follow-up with customers? Are you able to do this systematically?*
7. *Should you get professional marketing help?*
8. *Have you assessed how many more sales you have because of the marketing you do? Are you tracking to see how effective your marketing efforts are?*
9. *Do you know which of your marketing actions give you the biggest bang for your buck?*
10. *Will you have to use different marketing materials and mediums for the different geographic regions?*
11. *Should you use social media to market your product?*

**EFFECTIVE SALES AND DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS CAN HELP YOU:**

- Sell more to current customers
- Sell to more customers
- Add new products or services to your business
- Reduce direct costs

**E. Sales and distribution channels**

Expanding your sales force and distribution channels can increase your sales, if you choose the right ones. The more places people can buy your products or services, the easier it becomes for more people to buy from you—and to buy more. Changing how your product or service is delivered or sold may greatly reduce your sales and shipping costs.

Consider innovative ways of selling and distributing your product or service. Increasing your sales force may not mean hiring more people; it may mean exploring online distribution options or getting your product or service into a retail store. For example, will the grocery store carry your organic vegetables?

**Take advantage of Supplier Diversity**

In Canada, a company is called a “diverse supplier” if it is 51% or more owned, operated, and controlled by a woman, aboriginal, minority, or LGBT. Identifying as a diverse supplier, either through a certification process or by self-registering, can open up opportunities in Canada and help you do business in the US.





## » WHO DO YOU PARTNER WITH?

- 1. Complementors:** Provide goods or services that make your goods or services more attractive to the consumer.
- 2. Co-opetitors:** Potential competitors who help you to tap into business that you might not otherwise be able to access on your own. The pie you can create by working together is much bigger.
- 3. Collaborators:** Help to build alliances that create a win-win, both for the organizations involved and for the community.

- Expand into another geographic area
- Assist each other in some other way

If you need someone to help you in any of these areas, you may wish to rethink your current business structure.

If you are a sole proprietor, you may need to incorporate to be able to hire staff and also limit your financial risk exposure. You may choose to grow what you have from within, adding both human and capital resources at a planned and managed pace.

COMPARING BUSINESS STRUCTURES	
ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Partnership	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easy to form</li> <li>• Limited regulation</li> <li>• Broader management base, bodies/skill-sets/money to invest in company</li> <li>• Dissolution only requires one partner's consent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Owners are 100% liable</li> <li>• Difficult to find compatible partners</li> <li>• Partners can bind each other legally without prior approval</li> <li>• Divided authority</li> </ul>
Incorporation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited liability – falls on corporation, not you</li> <li>• Shares can be sold for capital</li> <li>• Potential tax advantages (see an accountant)</li> <li>• Separate legal existence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lenders will still require Director's personal guarantees</li> <li>• Closely regulated</li> <li>• More expensive to form – may require use of a lawyer</li> <li>• Extensive records required, minutes and year-end statements must be filed – requiring an accountant</li> </ul>

### Expansion strategies

You may wish to grow more quickly through one of the other approaches:

- **Partnerships:** Two or more people or companies agree to jointly own a business.
- **Alliances:** An agreement between two companies to cooperate in some way, usually to reduce costs or improve service to their customers while remaining separate companies. Neither owns or is involved in the other's operations.
- **Buy a business:** A purchase where you or your company would now wholly own another company and you integrate it into your business.

Buying another business or forming a partnership or alliance with a business that complements or provides the same products or services as you is a quick way to increase sales. It provides production and service capacity but should also provide you with new and additional customers.

» ASSESSING YOUR FIRM'S BUSINESS STRUCTURE:

**Incorporation**

1. *Do you need liability protection for your personal assets relative to your business?*
2. *Will incorporation increase credibility with your customers or suppliers?*
3. *What will be the tax implications?*
4. *What are the accounting implications?*
5. *Do you have a record-keeping system so that you can file an annual report?*
6. *Are you finding it hard to raise money because you are not incorporated?*
7. *What will be your governance structure?*

**Partnership**

1. *Who might be good partners?*
2. *Are they interested in partnering with you?*
3. *What does each party bring to the table? What are the benefits? What are the downsides or concerns?*
4. *Do you have the same strategic direction, e.g. does one of you want to build a national chain of outlets and the other just earn a decent living?*
5. *What will be each of the partner's business roles?*
6. *How will profits, losses and risks be shared?*
7. *How will disagreements be resolved?*
8. *What will the legal partnership agreement look like?*
9. *What are the provisions for changing or dissolving the partnership?*
10. *What will be the restrictions on authority for expenditures?*

**Strategic alliance**

1. *Whom might you form an alliance with?*
2. *How will you approach them? Will they be interested in an alliance with you? Why should they be?*
3. *For what purpose?*
4. *What does each party bring to the table? What are the benefits? What are the downsides or concerns?*
5. *What will be each of the party's business roles?*
6. *Is this just a verbal agreement or will you have a legal agreement? Consider a legal agreement to avoid future problems even if it may add to the initial cost.*

“My greatest strength is determination. As an entrepreneur I've also learned to focus on my strengths and evaluate opportunities as opposed to going full steam ahead all the time.”

Brienna Remes, Co-owner  
Building Blocks Educational  
Childcare, Kelowna  
WEC Loan Client

### Buy a business

1. *What will the business add to your current business? Are there good synergies?*
  2. *How much will it cost?*
  3. *How will you keep enough cash flow to stay solvent? The most common business failure after buying another business is a lack of resources – both financial and human.*
  4. *Will you leave the business as a separate company or will you merge it into your current operations?*
  5. *How will you integrate the business into your operations? What is your plan for changing management of people, processes, policies and procedures?*
- 



#### IMPROVING PROCESSES AND SYSTEMS CAN HELP YOU:

- Sell to more customers
- Reduce overhead costs and operating expenses
- Reduce direct costs
- Nurture your best clients

## G. Processes and systems

Efficient processes and the use of information technology can not only reduce costs and improve operations but also help serve your customers better by delivering prompt services and information. As you grow, you will need to put more processes and controls in place to be able to manage your business and your growth.

### Document your processes and procedures

As your company grows, it can no longer have the processes and procedures “in someone’s head.” Processes must be systematically determined and procedures documented to ensure a consistent way of doing things so people can be trained and have clear direction on what and how to do their work.

You cannot constantly watch everyone, so people must be given the information they need to do their job and you need to have a means to communicate what you want them to do and know they are doing it.

### Manage risk

What would happen if key people left your business? Does someone know how to do what they were doing? Does someone know how to operate your systems? You want to make sure you have the information needed to keep operating even if any one person leaves.

### Benchmark your processes

The best way to reduce your costs is to define your processes and constantly monitor whether you can do them better. Collect data on your business and how it is operating—without numbers you do not know how well you are doing or where you are going.

For example, you may wish to monitor:

- **How many customers you have each day.** At what time of the day do they usually come? Determining customer patterns can help you focus your marketing, staffing and hours of operation.

## Carolyn's story...

*Carolyn Williams is the owner of The Bar Method in Vancouver, an exercise studio that provides an effective, fun and challenging workout in a welcoming and supportive community.*

*Passionate about health and fitness, Williams discovered "The Bar Method," a combination of ballet, pilates and yoga, in California and fell in love with the exercise program.*

*After moving to Vancouver, she decided to bring the workout program to the city. She started by teaching classes in her garage and soon built a dedicated group of followers.*

*Realizing the high demand for the fitness program, Williams opened her first studio, "The Bar Method," in October, 2010.*

*With her experience in fitness instruction and the popularity of*

*her exercise program, Williams felt there was huge potential for continued growth.*

*Women's Enterprise Centre provided her with a growth loan which helped her open a second location in West Vancouver in February, 2012.*

*Building a supportive community of followers has helped fuel Williams' growth. Her studio is not just a place to exercise but is a community of people coming together to challenge themselves both mentally and physically.*

*"Having incredible clients and teachers has motivated me to grow. My goal is to continue to grow the two locations as well as add new studios in and around Vancouver."*



Carolyn Williams  
THE BAR METHOD  
Vancouver

[vancouver.barmethod.com](http://vancouver.barmethod.com)

“  
Somebody once told me  
that there are limited  
amounts of tomorrows.  
If you know you need  
to make a change –  
don't wait.

”

“ My goals for the business are to grow big enough that we can be of help to as many kids as we can while staying small enough to still provide the excellent service that we are so well known for.

”

Shantelle Soto, Co-owner  
Stepping Stones Therapy,  
Victoria  
WEC Loan Client

- **How fast you invoice and collect on invoices.** If you are not billing or collecting on your invoices on time, the business is losing money.
- **Your inventory levels and turnover.** Inventory needs to be managed so the business does not carry a great deal of inventory and tie up money.

### Evaluate the benefits of automation

Automation through information technology can greatly improve efficiency and accuracy in required business transactions such as billing or tracking product delivery. There are software packages to automate many things, but some of these can be costly so it is not necessarily better to automate.

Most companies have automated some aspects of finance/accounting, accounts payable and receivable, payroll (if done in-house), project and work planning and customer relationships. You need to do a cost-benefit analysis to determine the cost of using a system relative to doing it manually. A technology solution is not always best, so ensure you do your homework.



### » ASSESSING YOUR FIRM'S PROCESSES AND SYSTEMS:

1. Do you have policies and procedures?
2. Do you have your processes defined and your procedures documented?
3. Do you find that your workplace is disorganized?
4. Is the quality of your product/service inconsistent? Do your customers return things or complain because it is not as good as the previous one?
5. Do you find your employees are often asking you the same question about how to do something? Should these be documented?
6. Are you worried because you are not sure what your employees are doing when you are not there?
7. Are there a great deal of errors and re-work?
8. What systems do you currently have? What do they cost you to run every year? Do they give you the information and reports you need to run your business?
9. What routine data/information is taking a great deal of your time? Can it be automated?
10. Do you have trouble finding the information you need?
11. Are there a great number of errors in some of your processes such as billing?
12. Have you benchmarked your key processes? Do you monitor these metrics? Can you reduce your costs?

## H. Office/Production space and equipment

Office or production space and equipment is needed to produce enough to meet the demands of your market. Have you outgrown your space? Are you bursting at the seams or unable to meet demand for your product or service because you have no more production capacity?

If you are at capacity in your office, production space or equipment, you cannot hire more people or increase production. In addition, the right office or production space is good for employee morale and can help you attract and retain the right people.

### Determine your needs

The problem with buying or leasing more space or equipment is that you may only need a small amount more, but you will need to take on a large amount more because it is not available in smaller increments.

For example, you may need 10% more capacity, but to do this you need to buy another machine. You cannot buy 10% of a machine. You usually cannot rent just one more office next door. Generally you will need to lease or buy space that will house several offices.

More space may not mean necessarily in your own space. Depending on your needs, you may consider day office rentals, co-working environments, co-locating or working remotely.

### Assess your costs

The right office or production space and equipment can reduce your costs by being more efficient or ensuring you only pay for what you need. Do you have more space than you need? Are you in a high-rent district, when you do not need to be?

### YOUR OFFICE, PRODUCTION SPACE AND EQUIPMENT CAN HELP YOU:

- Sell more to your customers
- Sell to more customers
- Add new products or services
- Reduce overhead costs and operating expenses



### » ASSESSING YOUR FIRM'S OFFICE/PRODUCTION SPACE AND EQUIPMENT:

1. *What size office or production space will you need in the future? How soon? Should you take on space now that you will grow into?*
2. *If you take on more space now, can you sublet some of it until you need it?*
3. *Should you lease or should you buy? If you want to buy, can you get the financing?*
4. *What is the threshold for increase in sales that you can service with your current space?*
5. *Do you need an expensive high traffic store front? Will the increased business more than make up for the increased cost?*
6. *What is the next smallest amount of space or equipment you can rent or buy? For example, do you need 20% more space to increase your sales by 2%?*
7. *Do you need another machine because your current one is running at full capacity? If you do not know when you will grow to use the second machine to its full capacity, can you partner with someone or lease production time?*



## a) What skills and abilities does the business need?

As a business grows, it needs more or sometimes different skills and abilities. Often the first help people seek are various professions and specific skill areas:

- **Administration:** Every business has its share of administrative work which includes book-keeping, answering phones, sorting mail, invoicing and paying bills, data management, etc.
- **Systems Support:** No business is able to function without some computer systems these days. Your business needs may have grown to need some complex systems applications. Or you may not be skilled at hooking up printers, routers, or other more sophisticated technology supports. This may include building and maintaining a website.
- **Accountant:** Every business must file taxes. As a business grows, the accounting records and needs may become more complex and beyond your skill base.
- **Human Resources:** Your people are your greatest asset. Finding the right people and retaining them may require professional help and reduce your costs. For example, it is very expensive to replace people who quit because there are inadequate human resource policies and procedures. It is expensive to pay people more than you should for the skills and experience they have. You can look at online job postings to see what other companies pay for similar jobs.
- **Lawyer:** Although it is doubtful that you will need a full-time lawyer as part of your business, you may look at options to acquire these skills as needed.

Depending on the type of business you are in and how you operate, other common skills sets needed are:

- **Production or Service:** If you have grown or plan on growing beyond what you personally are able to produce or provide services for, you will need to hire more production or service staff.
- **Sales and Marketing:** If you want to grow your business, you may need to hire a marketing specialist and/or increase your sales staff.
- **Warehousing/Distribution:** As more product is produced, it will have to be stored somewhere and the means of distributing it may become more complex. This may require warehousing or logistics expertise.

In determining what skills and experience you need to add and what you will have this person doing, it is very important to outline what you want the person to achieve (performance targets). People usually think of tasks when instead they should outline the reason for the tasks and what they want to accomplish.

## RESOURCES ARE NEEDED TO GET ANYTHING ELSE YOUR BUSINESS NEEDS FOR GROWTH INCLUDING:

- Business structure
- Processes and systems
- Products and services
- Customers and geographic market
- Marketing
- Sales and distribution channels

“ My short-term goal is to create an internal system to develop leadership within our organization. As a coach and a teacher I loved watching my athletes grow and develop as individuals. As an entrepreneur, I love watching our team grow and develop as coaches, managers and leaders. ”

Jennifer Hood, Owner  
Jump Gymnastics, Vancouver  
WEC Loan Client

“ As a technology company, we’re competing against Microsoft, against Amazon—big companies that come in with big signing bonuses, saying, ‘Come work for us.’ We’ve had to protect against that, and one thing we’ve done is create a really fun, open work environment. We learned that even when you don’t think you have one, you do have a corporate culture. And when you want to expand, you have to be very conscious of what it is.

”

Shannon Rogers, President  
Global Relay  
#1 on 2015 PROFIT W100

## b) How might the business get these skills and manage them?

There are a number of options to get the help your business needs. Often businesses use a combination of these approaches.

- **Train your current staff:** Your current staff may be under-utilized or could be trained to do more. Most people want more responsibility and challenges and like to learn new things. If you give people more responsibility, expect to also increase their pay.
- **Hire full-time or part-time staff:** Think about if you need to hire a full-time person who can do a number of tasks you currently perform or if you only need someone part-time. There are people who prefer each of these arrangements.
- **Temporary help:** There are temporary employment agencies that can provide skilled short-term help on a flexible basis, or give you the opportunity to see how someone performs before you hire them full- or part-time. While there is a fee for this service, the agency manages the paperwork and payroll and you reduce your risks and legal obligations.
- **Contract:** Contract people are available for almost any type of work you need, including management. Their fee may seem to be more than an employee’s salary; however, consider that you do not pay them any employee benefits (e.g. holidays), nor have a long-term commitment.

A good written contract is needed which outlines what the person will deliver for the fee you will pay them. If the work you are contracting for is for a long time, check with Revenue Canada and employment laws to ensure that this arrangement is not an “employee” situation.

- **Outsource:** Outsourcing is when you hire another company to do some of your work for a set fee. They can often do it for a fee less than it is costing you because it is the type of work they specialize in and can do it much more efficiently (and often better). Any work can be outsourced if it is best for your business: production, office functions, sales, or other needs.
- **Share staff:** Can you share staff with another business? For example, some businesses share an answering service or a human resources specialist. You must determine how the costs will be shared and how work priorities will be set before entering into this arrangement.



## » ASSESSING YOUR FIRM’S HUMAN RESOURCES:

1. *Should you get more help? If yes, what kind of help do you need and how will you get it?*
2. *What is the cost of your time? What will it cost you to hire someone or contract out the work?*

3. *Are you losing sales because often no one answers the phone or calls get missed?*
4. *Is your paperwork overwhelming? Are you losing money because you cannot get your invoices out on time or have creditors calling you because the bills are not paid on time?*
5. *Are you finding that you are "in over your head" on some of the growing needs of your business such as accounting, human resources or legal issues?*
6. *How much work do you have for another person? Could you keep someone busy every day all day, or would it be less than that?*
7. *Is the work in cycles so that it is only at certain times of the year you need extra help?*
8. *Do you have a payroll system? Are you set up to pay the required government deductions?*
9. *Is there work in your operations that other companies specialize in that will never be part of your core business?*
10. *What skills or competencies do you need? Why? What will the person be doing? How often or how much time do you think this work will take? How much will each option cost you to obtain these skills/competencies?*
11. *Have you defined what a good job looks like? Not only what the person should be doing, but why? How would you measure performance? How will you assess if you are getting value for money?*
12. *How will you compensate people in the company? Salary, commission, bonuses, shares in the company or a combination?*
13. *If you want to introduce a new product or service, do you have the skills or people to do it?*

## J. Financial resources

No matter what you want to do to grow, you will need to think about the cost and how you will get the money. This is both related to the strategies you choose to grow and what your business must do to grow. For example, if you are setting up an option for people to buy your product online, you will have to invest in new technology.

When you started up your business, you probably did a business plan and financial plan which identified sources and other important financial business factors such as cash flow. The steps you must take now are the same, except you already have a track record and hopefully have built a relationship with a lender. You must determine:

- What you need money for
- How much you need
- How you will get it

### FINANCIAL RESOURCES CAN HELP YOU:

- Sell more to current customers
- Sell to more customers
- Add new products or services to your business
- Reduce overhead costs/operating expenses
- Reduce direct costs
- Nurture your best clients
- Increase the price of your product or service

“ Never underestimate your operating costs when applying for financing! Always apply for more money than you think you'll need. We budgeted for the least amount of money we thought we would need to operate the business, and then applied for more financing beyond that to compensate for all the unseen things that could cost us or jeopardize our operating cash-flow.

”

Tara Black &  
Marion Neuhauser, Owners  
Origin Gluten-Free  
Bakery, Victoria  
WEC Loan Clients

» ASSESSING YOUR FIRM'S FINANCIAL RESOURCES:

1. Will you need more money to grow? For example, if you want to introduce a new product or service, will it take a large capital investment?
2. What do you need more money for?
3. Where will you get the money? For example, if you want to buy a business or a building, how will you finance the cost?
4. What is the most cost effective way to accomplish what you are doing? What are the costs and benefits of the various options?
5. Will you have a positive cash flow each month? If not, how will you meet your financial commitments?
6. Do you have a good system to manage and forecast cash flow?
7. Will there be a ramp-up period where you will need to finance cash flow?
8. Can you increase your cash flow, e.g. collect accounts payable sooner or extend payment timelines with suppliers?
9. Are you able to take on more debt?
10. Would you consider an equity investor?
11. What kind of debt will best meet your needs, e.g. line of credit or term loan?
12. Will you be able to collect enough on receivables to be able to pay your loans on schedule?

## K. Analysing the results: What your business needs to grow

Look at all the information and decisions you have made as you worked through this guide. Do more research and/or get advice on the areas you are looking at acting on to grow. Use the resource references in the back of this guide as a starting point.

Based on how you want to grow, think about what your business already has, what it will need to get and how. Review the notes you have taken while reading through this guide. You can summarize your ideas and analysis in the following chart.

REQUIREMENT	WHAT DOES YOUR BUSINESS NEED	HOW WILL YOU GET IT?
Product/service		
Pricing		
Customer & geographic market		
Marketing		
Sales & distribution channels		
Business structure		
Processes & systems		
Office/production space & equipment		
People resources		
Financial resources		

## Decision time...

Do you want to grow your business? Yes or No?

*Look at the reasons you have for wanting to grow your business. Will the decisions you have made so far help you get what you want? In assessing your business, relative to what it has and what it needs to grow, did you find that it is just too big a leap to grow at this time? Did you find that you do not want to undertake what is needed to do this? Are you happy with staying at the level you are at? Or do you really want to grow?*

Next steps

**YES I want to grow my business** – Work through the next section of this guide.

**NO I'm not ready to grow my business at this time** – Go to Step 5 (p. 35) to find the next steps you can take towards achieving your business and personal goals.

# STEP 4: WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO TO GROW?

In this section, we will focus on what you need to personally do to grow. This is not just about growing your business, but what you need to do for personal growth. You have assessed your business needs, now you need to ask if you personally want to or can do what it will take.

What does growth mean to you personally? What will your life be like when your company grows? How hard will you have to work? Are you ready and willing to do what it takes?

If you have decided that growing your business is not right for you at this time, you may want to still analyze what you would need to do for the usual business growth requirements and think about if you want to personally develop your business acumen, skills and resources either for personal satisfaction or for future business growth.

Either way, please think about your "Next Steps" before you put this guide down.

## Personal assessment: Personal needs vs. business growth requirements

The following provides you with some guidance to help you assess what you need to do personally, relative to growing the business. Each of the business requirements for growth discussed previously in this guide are listed below with some pointers to help you think about what you must do to make it happen.

Please assess where you are at and what you must do to grow. Think about if you are ready or want to take on the personal challenges and changes needed. Keep notes in your notebook or computer. Once you have done a thorough assessment, check the answer that best describes your readiness to grow:

- Yes, I am ready to do what it takes to get this requirement for my business
- No, I am not ready
- Maybe I am ready, but I need to do more research and soul-searching.

Are you ready to do what it takes?

A. Product/Service

YES  NO  MAYBE

Do you want to invest the time and money you will need to develop and produce a new product or service (see Financing)?

Do you want to personally learn how to produce/service this new or customized offering? If no, are you willing to hire the expertise needed (see People)?

What are your fears about new or modified products/services? Are these founded? Can you overcome them?

B. Pricing

YES  NO  MAYBE

Are you struggling with raising your price because you have trouble thinking that what you do or produce is worth that much?

Do you take it personally that lowering your price is the best thing to do for the business?

Do you keep an unprofitable product or service because you like it? Does it give you personal satisfaction to provide it? Is this part of your business really an unregistered charity and it makes you feel good?

Do you have trouble thinking about charging different prices in different markets? If yes, why?

C. Customers and geographic market

YES  NO  MAYBE

Do you have trouble saying no? Are you able to "fire" your worst customers?

If you need to travel to expand into other geographic markets, is this a problem for you personally? For your family? If yes, why?

Are you able to work with diversity and in different cultures? Would you like to?

D. Marketing

YES  NO  MAYBE

Do you have the expertise needed to do the marketing for growth? If no, are you willing to have someone else do this (See People)?

Do you want to invest in a new marketing strategy or program (See Financing)?

Are you willing to try new ways of marketing that you may not know much about? Do you want to learn about them?

Are you ready to do what it takes?

E. Sales and distribution channel

YES  NO  MAYBE

Are you willing to invest more resources, both human and financial, into developing sales and distribution (See Resources)?

Are you willing to look at a different business structure to expand your sales and distribution (See Business Structure)?

F. Business structure

YES  NO  MAYBE

**Incorporation**

Incorporation will cost you both time and money. Your paperwork will increase. You must bear the cost of registering your corporation, filing annual reports and paying legal and financial professionals you may need to involve. Do you want to expend the time and resources?

If you incorporate, you cannot use your business losses to reduce your personal income nor use personal tax credits to reduce your business income. Is this something you want to do?

**Partnership**

What are your fears about sharing your business with someone else?

What are your personal concerns about the person or people you are thinking of partnering with?

What would you like about the partnership?

**Alliance**

Can you think of any downside to the alliance?

Are you worried that you will do more for them than they do for you and so will feel used?

**Buy a Business**

Do you want to invest the time and the money needed to buy a business (see Resources)?

What personal satisfaction would you get from owning another business?

What are your worries about this business?

G. Processes and systems

YES  NO  MAYBE

Do you distrust systems? Are you worried that you will lose all your data? What can you put in place to help alleviate this fear (e.g. back-up systems)?

Do you feel uncomfortable learning new computer applications?

Do you hate documenting processes and procedures? How can you get this "necessary evil" done?

Are you ready to do what it takes?

H. Office/Production space and equipment

YES  NO  MAYBE

Are you afraid to take on more space or buy more equipment because you worry that your sales will go down?

Are you worried about the financial commitment it will take (See Financing)?

Would you really like to own your own building? Why?

I. Human resources

YES  NO  MAYBE

Are you able to let go of some of your work and let others do it, even if they do not do it exactly like you?

Do you have the patience to teach people and let them sometimes make a mistake in learning?

Do you have the management skills to hire and manage staff?

When you assessed the cost-benefit of you doing the work vs. another person, did you find that you really like doing some of the work that you could save money having someone else do?

Do you know employment law?

J. Financial resources

YES  NO  MAYBE

Are you willing to take on more debt? Will this worry you too much? Are you already worried about how you will pay your bills?

Do you have too much at risk?

Decision time...

Are you willing to do what it takes to grow?

*Look at your answers. Think about what you will personally need to do to successfully grow your business. Will this take away the things you value most in your personal life, e.g. time with your family? What will your life look like if you are successful with your growth plans? Is this what you want? This is all about you—are you willing to do what it takes to grow your business either now or later? Make the decision that is right for you, making use of the excellent resources at the back of this guide.*

## Kristine's story...



Kristine Theurer  
JAVA MUSIC CLUB  
White Rock  
[javamusicclub.com](http://javamusicclub.com)

“

*Good things take time.  
If you fail, pick yourself  
up, dust yourself off  
and start all over again.*

”

*Kristine Theurer is the founder of Java Music Club, the first standardized, research-based, mutual support group program that targets loneliness and depression in senior living.*

*Theurer was working in a long-term care home when she witnessed first-hand the loneliness that was a serious issue among the elderly.*

*After developing a successful pilot mutual support group, Theurer went back to school and completed master's research in gerontology at Simon Fraser University to learn more.*

*Theurer was very clear that she wanted to become an entrepreneur and use her ground-breaking research to help seniors.*

*“Research often takes up to 20 years to become applied. I didn't want to wait that long.”*

*The Java Music Club program is now being implemented in many senior organizations across Canada and in the US.*

*Funds from Women's Enterprise Centre helped her grow and market the program in Canada and the US, while ongoing encouragement from WEC's business advisors kept her going forward on the growth course.*

*When deciding to grow your business, Theurer feels it is important to ask yourself: Are you in it for the long haul? Are you courageous enough to take up business growth challenges?*

*“I had no idea how long things would take, or if I had what it took, but I discovered that I do. I'm often scared, but I don't let that stop me. I have learned that I am strong and courageous. I just keep doing the next thing in front of me.”*

# STEP 5: NEXT STEPS

Whether you have decided to grow your business or not, you should think about the next steps for both your business and for you. As you worked through the information in this guide, you were asked to think about next steps along the way. You are assessing where your business and you are at and what you need to grow.

Look at the notes you have made.

- What have you learned about yourself and your business through this process?
- What is not working for you?
- What are some themes you see relative to your business needs and also your own needs?
- What are priorities that you should address both for your business and for you?

The purpose of this guide is to help you feel you made informed and good decisions. Decisions, however, must also be supported by action. These may be big changes or small incremental ones that help you and your business get to where you have decided it is best to grow. It is now time to act.

- What will be the next steps you take in your business to make it what you want it to be?
- What do you want to do for your own personal growth?

## CONCLUSION

As the management guru, Peter Drucker, once said, whenever you see a successful business, someone once made a courageous decision. In fact, it has been a series of many courageous decisions. As a business owner, remember to give yourself credit for the courage, tenacity and optimism which led you into business and brought you this far.

Congratulations on continuing with that courageous attitude in going through the process of deciding whether and how to take your business to the next level. We hope this resource guide has helped you gain some clarity in your thinking and planning.

Please use the resources available at the end of this guide, and contact Women's Enterprise Centre for help. We want you to feel that you're in business for yourself, but not by yourself.

# RESOURCES

Start by visiting Women's Enterprise Centre at [womensenterprise.ca](http://womensenterprise.ca) or calling us at 1.800.643.7014. You can download a pdf of this guide at [wec.ca/ResourceGuides](http://wec.ca/ResourceGuides).

## Multiple business growth topics

- Online Resource Library, Women's Enterprise Centre. [wec.ca/ResourceLibrary](http://wec.ca/ResourceLibrary)
- Planning for Upsizing, Women's Enterprise Centre Resource Library. [wec.ca/PlanningUpsizing](http://wec.ca/PlanningUpsizing)
- Growing a Business Resources, Small Business BC. [smallbusinessbc.ca/?s=Business+Growth](http://smallbusinessbc.ca/?s=Business+Growth)
- Resources for Growing a Business, Canada Business Network. [canadabusiness.ca/eng/page/4169](http://canadabusiness.ca/eng/page/4169)
- Business Resources, BDC. [bdc.ca](http://bdc.ca)
- Resources for tax, payroll deductions, record-keeping requirements, etc., Canada Revenue Agency. [cra-arc.gc.ca/bsnsss/](http://cra-arc.gc.ca/bsnsss/)
- Business Resources, Business Gateway. [bgateway.com](http://bgateway.com)
- Entrepreneurial Resources, Kaufmann Foundation. [entrepreneurship.org](http://entrepreneurship.org)
- The 7 Irrefutable Rules of Small Business Growth. Steven S. Little. John Wiley & Sons, 2005.

## Why do you want to grow your business?

- Why Am I So Short of Cash Even Though I Am Selling More Than Ever Before?, Women's Enterprise Centre Resource Library. [wec.ca/CashShortage](http://wec.ca/CashShortage)
- The E Myth Revisited. Michael E. Gerber. Collins Business, 1995.
- Big Vision, Small Business: Four Keys to Success Without Growing Big. James S. Walters. Koehler Publishers, 2002.
- The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. Stephen Covey. Fireside, 1989.
- Embracing Uncertainty: Breakthrough Methods for Achieving Peace of Mind While Facing the Unknown. Susan Jeffers, PhD. St. Martin's Press, 2003.
- The Success Principles: How to Get From Where You Are to Where You Want to Be. Jack Canfield. Harper Collins, 2005.

## How to grow your business

- How to Improve the Profitability of Your Business, Women's Enterprise Centre Resource Library. [wec.ca/ImproveProfitability](http://wec.ca/ImproveProfitability)
- Keep Pointed Toward Profit, Women's Enterprise Centre Resource Library. [wec.ca/PointTowardProfit](http://wec.ca/PointTowardProfit)
- Import / Export Advisory and Training Services, Women's Enterprise Centre. [wec.ca/ImportExport](http://wec.ca/ImportExport)
- Planning for e-Business, Canada Business. [canadabusiness.ca/eng/page/2768/](http://canadabusiness.ca/eng/page/2768/)
- Increasing Sales in Existing Markets: A Growth Strategy Any Small Business Can Use, Susan Ward. [abt.cm/1e8LoDu](http://abt.cm/1e8LoDu)
- How to Reduce the Unit Cost in a Business, Devra Gartenstein. [ehow.com/how\\_5700680\\_reduce-unit-cost-business.html](http://ehow.com/how_5700680_reduce-unit-cost-business.html)

## What does your business need to grow?

### Product/Service/Pricing

- Addressing and Creating a Product Need, Women's Enterprise Centre Resource Library. [wec.ca/ProductNeed](http://wec.ca/ProductNeed)
- How Much is Your Time Worth?, Women's Enterprise Centre Resource Library. [wec.ca/TimeWorth](http://wec.ca/TimeWorth)
- Pricing Your Products and Services, Women's Enterprise Centre Resource Library. [wec.ca/PricingProductsServices](http://wec.ca/PricingProductsServices)

## Marketing, sales, and distribution channels

- Focused Marketing: Targeted Effort, Tangible Results, Women's Enterprise Centre Learning Guide. [wec.ca/FocusedMarketing](http://wec.ca/FocusedMarketing)
- Marketing Resources, Women's Enterprise Centre Resource Library. [wec.ca/MarketingResources](http://wec.ca/MarketingResources)
- Twitter Power: How to Dominate Your Market One Tweet at a Time. Joel Comm. John Wiley & Sons, 2009.
- Exporting Resources, Canada Business Services for Entrepreneurs. [canadabusiness.ca/eng/page/2839/](http://canadabusiness.ca/eng/page/2839/)
- Supplier Diversity Canada. [supplierdiversitycanada.ca](http://supplierdiversitycanada.ca)
- WBE Canada. [wbecanada.org/](http://wbecanada.org/)

## Business structure

- Partnerships Resources, Women's Enterprise Centre Resource Library. [wec.ca/BusinessPartnerships](http://wec.ca/BusinessPartnerships)
- Buying a Business, Women's Enterprise Centre Resource Library. [wec.ca/BuyingABusiness](http://wec.ca/BuyingABusiness)
- Valuing a Business, Women's Enterprise Centre Resource Library. [wec.ca/ValuingABusiness](http://wec.ca/ValuingABusiness)
- Know Your Strategic Alliance Options, BDC. [bdc.ca/EN/articles-tools/business-strategy-planning/define-strategy/Pages/setting-up-strategic-business-alliances.aspx](http://bdc.ca/EN/articles-tools/business-strategy-planning/define-strategy/Pages/setting-up-strategic-business-alliances.aspx)
- Buying the Right Business, BDC. [bdc.ca/EN/articles-tools/start-buy-business/buy-business/Pages/making-right-choice.aspx](http://bdc.ca/EN/articles-tools/start-buy-business/buy-business/Pages/making-right-choice.aspx)
- Franchising Information, Canadian Franchise Association. [cfa.ca/tools\\_resources/franchise-learning-centre/](http://cfa.ca/tools_resources/franchise-learning-centre/)

## Processes and systems

- Choosing the Right Accounting Software Program, Women's Enterprise Centre Resource Library. [wec.ca/AccountingTools](http://wec.ca/AccountingTools)
- How Your Company Can Work Smarter, BDC. [bdc.ca/en/articles-tools/business-strategy-planning/manage-business/Pages/3-strategies-improving-business-productivity.aspx](http://bdc.ca/en/articles-tools/business-strategy-planning/manage-business/Pages/3-strategies-improving-business-productivity.aspx)

## Office/Production space and equipment

- Choosing a Retail Location, Women's Enterprise Centre Resource Library. [wec.ca/ChooseRetailLocation](http://wec.ca/ChooseRetailLocation)
- Factors in Considering a Shopping Centre Location, Women's Enterprise Centre Resource Library. [wec.ca/ShoppingCentreLocation](http://wec.ca/ShoppingCentreLocation)
- Ten Things You Must Know Before You Sign a Lease, Women's Enterprise Centre Resource Library. [wec.ca/KnowYourLease](http://wec.ca/KnowYourLease)
- How to Use a Traffic Study to Select a Retail Site, Women's Enterprise Centre Resource Library. [wec.ca/RetailTrafficStudy](http://wec.ca/RetailTrafficStudy)

## People

- Problems in Managing a Family Owned Business, Women's Enterprise Centre Resource Library. [wec.ca/FamilyOwnedProblems](http://wec.ca/FamilyOwnedProblems)
- Employee or Independent Contractor, Women's Enterprise Centre Resource Library. [wec.ca/DecideEmployeeOrContractor](http://wec.ca/DecideEmployeeOrContractor)
- Building a Winning Employee Team, Women's Enterprise Centre Resource Library. [wec.ca/BuildWinningTeam](http://wec.ca/BuildWinningTeam)
- Choosing the Right Accountant, Women's Enterprise Centre Resource Library. [wec.ca/ChooseAccountant](http://wec.ca/ChooseAccountant)
- Looking for the Right Employee, BDC. [bdc.ca/EN/articles-tools/employees/recruit/Pages/recruiting-plans-small-businesses.aspx](http://bdc.ca/EN/articles-tools/employees/recruit/Pages/recruiting-plans-small-businesses.aspx)

## Financing

- Business Loans Program, Women's Enterprise Centre. [wec.ca/BusinessLoans](http://wec.ca/BusinessLoans)
- Financing Your Business, Women's Enterprise Centre Resource Library. [wec.ca/FinancingYourBusiness](http://wec.ca/FinancingYourBusiness)
- Financial Understanding for Small Business, Women's Enterprise Centre Learning Guide. [wec.ca/FinancialUnderstanding](http://wec.ca/FinancialUnderstanding)
- Financial Management for Small Business, Women's Enterprise Centre. [wec.ca/FinancialManagement](http://wec.ca/FinancialManagement)
- Cash Flow Forecasting and Break Even Analysis, Women's Enterprise Centre Resource Library. [wec.ca/BreakEvenAnalysis](http://wec.ca/BreakEvenAnalysis)
- Accessing Equity Financing, Canada Business Network. [canadabusiness.ca/eng/page/2743](http://canadabusiness.ca/eng/page/2743)
- 4 Ways of Custom Financing an Acquisition, BDC. [bdc.ca/en/advice\\_centre/articles/Pages/acquisition\\_business\\_financing.aspx](http://bdc.ca/en/advice_centre/articles/Pages/acquisition_business_financing.aspx)
- Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities, Service Canada. [servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/of/index.shtml](http://servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/of/index.shtml)

# OTHER GUIDES IN THIS SERIES

## Taking the Leap to Entrepreneurship

*A Guide to Help BC Women Make the Transition*

Explore the inner process of becoming an entrepreneur, and get inspiration and support from women who have made the transition to self-employment.

FREE

## Starting Your Business

*A Guide to Resources for BC Women*

From drafting a business plan to finding start-up money, this guide will help explain what you need to know in order to start a business and where you can find resources and information to support you along the way.

FREE

## Creating Your Business Plan Workbook

*A Step by Step Guide to Your Business Success*

A comprehensive guide that takes you through each step of the business planning process—from thinking about starting a business to ticking off your business plan checklist.

## Financial Understanding for Small Business

*Gain Financial Skills and Knowledge*

This introductory-level guide takes you through practical exercises to help you understand the type of information financial statements provide so you can plan for the future.

## Financial Management for Small Business

*Effectively Manage Cash and Finances*

This guide will help you understand basic financial principles that must be applied to your business to improve your bottom line.

## Focused Marketing

*Targeted Effort, Tangible Results*

Develop a clear understanding of your customers and how to effectively reach them. If you complete all of the exercises in this guide, you will have a complete marketing plan for your business!

# Finance your growth with a business loan from Women's Enterprise Centre!

The Women's Enterprise Centre Business Loans Program offers small business loans to women-owned businesses in BC to help you start, enhance or grow your BC business. You may qualify with us, even if you don't with other lenders.

Our Business Lending Program offers:

- Flexible repayment options
- Lower security and equity requirements than many other lenders
- Lower fees than many other lenders
- Competitive interest rates

Our loans are uniquely bundled with free, ongoing, professional business advice from your personal business advisor. Whether you're just starting out, purchasing a business or growing your BC business, Women's Enterprise Centre is here to help!

Learn more at [wec.ca/BusinessLoans](http://wec.ca/BusinessLoans)

# OUR MISSION AND MANDATE

Women's Enterprise Centre works on behalf of people who care about women in BC who aspire to create, acquire, sustain or expand a successful business. We help remove barriers for potential and existing women business owners in BC, and help society view business ownership as a valuable career option for women of all ages, ethnicity and life stages.

Women's Enterprise Centre features BC women business owners in our publications and on our website to ensure that successful women business owners and the importance of women's entrepreneurship are recognized by society.

Through our loans, business advisory services, mentoring and training programs, publications, and resources, Women's Enterprise Centre provides women with confidence, support and access to role models and mentors so they can realize their business potential. We ensure that women throughout BC have access to capital and the resources which are key to the development and success of their business.





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*womensenterprise.ca*

For a free online version of this guide visit:  
*wec.ca/ResourceGuides*