

Know how To start your own business

It may be a dream come true after many years of saving. Or it may be something to do in your spare time to earn a few extra dollars. Perhaps it's because you just can't find work. Friends have tried it and they seem to be doing all right. All it takes is a lot of hard work and you're used to that—why not try it?

Why not? But where do you go to start your own business? Who do you talk to? What kind of planning do you need? Do you need a lawyer? An accountant? What about licences?

These are important questions with easy answers. But this doesn't mean that starting your own business is going to be that easy. Consumer and commercial relations minister Larry Grossman, whose ministry registers most small businesses in Ontario, warns that about 70 per cent of all new businesses fail within the first five years. This means that of the 40,000 new businesses registered or re-registered (small businesses must register again every five years) in the past year, only about 12,000 will still be operating in the early 1980s.

A failed business can often mean bankruptcy, a situation where the owner just can't keep up with his or her debts. This sometimes means losing everything you've worked hard for all your life.

Why do businesses fail? There are a hundred different reasons. And there are also a lot of reasons why a new business can be successful. First of all you should know the correct way to start one.

If you plan to start a business in Ontario and use any name other than your own, you have 60 days to register that name with the partnerships registration office of the Ministry of consumer and commercial relations located at 555 Yonge Street in Toronto. Anything added to your name means you are using a name other than your own.

For example, if John Doe wants to start a small construction business and call it John Doe Construction, he had added something to his name and must register. Even if you just add the word 'company' or the word 'The', it's different than your own name and must be registered.

And if for some reason you are registering after 60 days you must fill out and sign a form that explains that the late registration is not for any improper purpose. These forms may be obtained from the partnerships office.

The easiest way of operating a business in Ontario is by starting up a sole proprietorship. This means that the person registering is the only owner and has total responsibility for both the debts and operation of the business. If the business fails the owner could lose the family home and all personal possessions to pay off any debts.

This applies also to partnerships, which are slightly more complicated. A partnership means two or more people go into business together. The partners agree to share costs, profits and rights of management and all partners sign a declaration giving their names and the business name of the partnership. This declaration is also filed with the partnerships office of the consumer and commercial relations ministry. The registration fee for both sole proprietorships and partnerships is \$10.

Why is this registration necessary? There are two reasons. One is to keep track of how many businesses operate in Ontario. But the main reason, says Mr. Grossman, is to provide the public with information. Anyone, he says, has the right to come down to the registration office and find out the names and addresses of the people running any business in Ontario.

This is to help protect the public. Suppose someone's truck backs into your car or runs over your foot and drives away. All you saw was the name of the business on the side of the truck. It might be a brand new business and the name isn't in the telephone book. Who do you contact to get money to pay for the damage?

The partnerships registration office will tell you. All it costs is \$2 for a name search.

The registration forms to fill out when starting a new business are very simple to

use. For a sole proprietorship (single owner) all you have to print on the front of a card is the name of the business, the mailing address, the date the business was or will be established and a description of what kind of business it is. There's also a box to check if you are renewing the registration, which must be done every five years or if you are changing any information already filed like a change of address. The same card is used for partnerships and there is space on the back to list the names of the partners, their addresses and signatures.

Most partnerships are general partnerships where the partners equally share costs, profits and management. A more complicated partnership is a limited one. This means you have decided to add one or more partners who have contributed a certain sum of money into the business. These limited partners are more like investors and should the business fail, they are responsible only for the amount of money they invested. In other words, if a limited partner puts \$1,000 into the business, he or she is only responsible for \$1,000 of any debt. Limited partners must write in the amount of money invested on the back of the registration card.

One extremely important point to remember is that a failed business should be recorded with the registration office immediately. This is done by filling out a dissolution card. Unless this is done, the owners of the failed business are not eligible for unemployment insurance or welfare benefits. Until the business is dissolved, the government will think that you are still successfully carrying on that business.

Here are some important points to consider before starting up your own business:

—Know before you start what kind of customers you want to reach and have an idea what kind of goods or service they want.

—Know your competition. If you want to start a roofing business you should know how many others in your area are doing the same thing and whether the service you offer will be better, cheaper or more convenient.

—Are you planning to advertise? Notices in grocery stores, community centres or laundromats may be all you need in the beginning but as business grows you might consider other methods such as newspaper advertisements.

—Do you need special licences? Your municipal offices (city or town hall) will tell you what you need to operate certain businesses. Truck licences are available from the ministry of transportation and communications. Registration at the partnerships office is not the same thing as a licence.

—Do you need a lawyer or an accountant? Probably not, because registration of small businesses is so simple. However, as the business starts to grow you might find that you need professional advice. If it gets too complicated to work out yourself, then you should consider a lawyer or an accountant.

Could you attend night school? Many community colleges and high schools in Ontario offer courses in accounting, small business law or how to start a small business.

Information is also available through the Consumer Information Centre of the ministry of consumer and commercial relations. The centre is located at 555 Young Street, Toronto, in the same building where the partnerships registration office is located. Booklets on starting your own business as well as other information sheets and booklets which might prove helpful are available at the centre. The number to call is 963-1111.

A more comprehensive book on starting a small business is available free from the ministry of industry and tourism, small business operations division, 900 Bay Street, Hearst Block, Toronto, Ontario.



Say aaaah!

The Nile hippopotamus clocks in at about three tons. Despite its almost ridiculous shape, the hippo is remarkably agile and can outrun a man when pressed. Metro Toronto Zoo has several hippos in its family -- this is 17-year-old Perkey, blind in one eye, an excellent mother over the years to many offspring.

Metro Toronto Zoo is open year round (except Dec. 24 & 25), and is a treat in any season. The Zoo is located on Meadowvale Road just north of the 401 on Exit 61A (10 miles east of the Don Valley Parkway). If coming from the east, take the Sheppard exit (#63). Closing times are seasonal. Summer hours: 9:30 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. (last admissions at 6:30 p.m.).

More stoves, fireplaces means

Renaissance of chimney sweeps

Chimney sweeps, you say? Something out of Charles Dickens, no doubt?

No! Here in Halton. Started in Oakville by 22 year old Brian Nero who saw the trend towards Franklin stoves and wood burning fireplaces as a demand for the ancient craft that eliminates fire hazards.

Having just gone into business for himself, Nero is convinced that there once again will be a demand for the services of a chimney sweep in that area.

He calls his company Sweep-Eazy Chimney Sweeps and has recently graduated from a two-week, \$600 course in Vermont.

Nero hopes to serve the southern Halton market but suggests it might be a business opportunity for an enterprising youth in North Halton as well.

He says the build-up of creosote is a real safety hazard and the cause of many chimney fires.

Smoke from burning wood contains flue gases which will condense on a relatively cool surface such as a stovepipe or chimney liner. Over time, this burning process creates a flammable, black, crusty build-up on the inner surface.

The build-up of creosote not only creates a hazard, but reduces the heating efficiency of the fire.

Nero says the experts recommend cleaning your chimney anytime there is more than a quarter of an inch of the black gunk built up on the chimney walls.

Creosote is much more common in wood or coal burning fires than oil or gas. According to Nero, "wet wood is especially bad. It collects fast. Many people have turned to burning wood to save on fuel bills, but many don't really realize that chimneys have to be cared for."

In Europe, chimney sweeps are an everyday thing. I never thought of it here until about three months ago when a friend of the family's gave me the idea," Nero explains.

He has worked as a bulldozer operator until recently and made the switch partly because he wanted to work for himself instead of some-

one else.

The chimney pipes should be cleaned at least once a year and it is something the homeowner can do himself—that is, if he doesn't mind taking the chance of creating an awful mess.

Nero says he has both the equipment and the expertise to get the job done, without tracking soot and creosote through the house. "I guarantee no mess—or I don't charge anything for the job."

He claims there is a move underfoot in the United States to make regular cleaning mandatory. "I think it will be compulsory here sooner or later too."

Nero charges \$7 for an inspection fee and if he cleans the chimney the charge is \$35 (including the \$7 inspection fee). For particularly dirty chimneys the cost is higher. The build-up of creosote is more likely to be found in

older homes that haven't had chimneys cleaned or in homes where high efficiency wood burning stoves have been installed.

Creosote build-up has several effects. You may notice backdrafting and shoking as you are loading your stove or fireplace. You may also be losing heat, as creosote has an insulating quality. This is important if much of your stovepipe is exposed, since a good deal of heat is radiated from the pipe.

Should a fire break out in your chimney, the best thing to do is to close all draft controls on the stove, or cover the fireplace opening with plywood or a heavy rug (but beware of strong suction caused by the blaze.)

Rock salt may be helpful, experts advise, but never pour water on the fire or down the chimney.



Ho hum...

Another day, another face. This is Willy, a young male mandrill or forest baboon, leader of Metro Toronto Zoo's troop in the African pavilion. The zoo is new and most of the animals are young. The mandrills are just beginning to develop their vividly coloured snouts -- blue and purplish red.