

Free Information for New Business Owners

By Maria Marsala

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OK. So you're ready to start your own business...be your own boss...or are you? Below is a list of places offering free information that will assist you on your path to starting a business. Consult phone books and web sites for local information. Remember to ask about any mailing lists, classes they offer or for additional contacts that would be helpful for you to add to this list. Enjoy this list as a guide as you "plant the seeds" for your new venture and enjoy the networking opportunities.

1. Federal Agencies

U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)

Web site <http://www.sba.gov/>

Toll Free: (800)U-ASK-SBA.

Request any free information and an order form for other publications.

Web site also has templates and sample Business Plans.

Internal Revenue Service (IRS)

Web site http://www.irs.treas.gov/prod/bus_info/sm_bus/

Toll Free: (800) 829 - 3676.

Business Kit Publication # 454 includes an Employee Tax ID Form.

STEP (Small Business Tax Education Program) Publication # 1057, contains information on Business Tax Classes given in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and Guam.

Tell them what type of corporation you are thinking of becoming, how many employees, etc., so that they can send you other free, helpful publications.

Census Department Consumer

Web site <http://www.census.gov/>

Call Customer Service at (301) 457 - 4100.

Your source for social, demographic and economic information.

Consumer Information Center

Web site: www.pueblo.gsa.gov

Toll free (888) 878 - 3256.

Order a Consumer's Resource Handbook.

View their Small Business brochures on line.

Government Sponsored

Electronic Commerce Resource Centers,

www.ecrc.ctc.com/index.htm

2. State Agencies

Attorney General's Office US, National Organization

site:<http://www.naag.org/about/ag1.cfm>

Secretary of State and State Department of Revenue

Small Business Technology Development Center:

<http://www.businessfinance.com/business-information.asp>

Rural Business Development Center.

Service Corps of Retired Executives SCORE

<http://www.score.org/> ,

800/634-0245

Cooperative Extension Service Offices.

3. County

Business Development Offices

Small Business Incubators National site: <http://www.nbia.org>

Colleges for Small Business Centers, Continuing Education
Classes, Business Seminars, Meetings.

4. City/Town

Chamber of Commerce (search using your city and county name).

Professional Groups - check phone books, too.

Develop a relationship with a Banker.

Interview CPA's Top Ten Tips for Hiring a CPA

Locate a Lawyer and start to develop a relationship.

Check local newspapers for organizations to join or volunteer
to be a speaker.

5. The Internet

Search the WEB using a variety of search engines or directories
such as:

<http://www.yahoo.com/> ~~ <http://www.excite.com/>

<http://www.google.com/> ~~ <http://www.altavista.com/>
<http://www.lycos.com/> ~~

Use the WEB to search for former colleagues and others to let them know about your business. www.switchboard.com , www.infospace.com , www.four11.com are a few sites with phone and e-mail directories.

Join an e-mail list, newsgroup or business newsletters
<http://www.topica.com/>

6. Bookstores

Bookstores give you a variety of great ideas.
Search the web for bookstores. <http://www.amazon.com/> and <http://www.bn.com/> are just two of many online bookstores.

7. Libraries

Many libraries have at least one free computer for patrons to use.

Ask the Librarians for information or advice.

Tell them about your business. Remember, people ask them for advice too!

Check bulletin boards for information. They're a great place to put your business card or brochure, too.

8. Friends

If you do not tell the people you know you're looking for information or referrals, then they'll never know.... ya know!!!

9. Family Members

Let everyone in your family know you're starting a business... and watch all the free advice come in!

10. Other Business Owners

Contact other business owners that you know. Do I hear lunch anyone?

Ask for advice, referrals, and their business cards.
Start a referral book of local business owners.

Don't forget to contact owners who do the same work as you, but who work in a different state/region/county. After all, they might be more apt to share their secrets of success with you!!

For encouragement, to keep focused, to bounce ideas off of, etc., hire a coach!

© Copyright 2002 All Rights Reserved. Maria Marsala is an internationally known coach, author, and speaker. A former Wall Street trader and manager, she is the author of the ebook Thinking of Starting a Business... Let's Talk About What's Next. Subscribe to her free ezine "Helping You and Your Business Grow" at <http://www.coachmaria.com/ebook/download.html>

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