



BUSINESS START-UP JOURNAL

FOR EQUINE ASSISTED LEARNING

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE



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INTRODUCTION

Congratulations! You want to start your own business. Most likely you are feeling optimistic, excited and no doubt a little nervous and overwhelmed. This Business Workbook is here to help you. It is broken down into steps and strategies to help you get started right away.

There are many factors that are going to affect your success in business. You may have strength and experience in one area, and feeling like a fish out of water in another.

Take a deep breath. Remember that this is so doable! Careful planning and strategy are going to help you succeed as an entrepreneur. There is evidence of this everywhere. It's all about framing your mind to look at challenges as opportunities. You were made for this.

The successful running of your business is going to require hard work, persistence, commitment, research and careful planning, and a whole lot of action. If you keep in line with these core objectives, you will give yourself time to build and grow your business in the right way.

When starting a business we often don't know where to even begin. This Business Workbook will help guide you with actionable steps, but also ask you the right questions to ensure your business's core offerings are in line with your prospective clients' needs.

STEP ONE

IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU

Instead of beginning with the direction for your EAL business, let's start with you.

What do you want?

Why do you want to start an equine based business?
What benefits are you seeking and why do you want them?

By knowing your personal priorities, goals and ambitions, you will be better equipped to plan your business more effectively. Think about your future in terms of five, ten and twenty years.

Describe:

Your ideal work day.

Travel or leisure plans.

Your vision of life after retirement.

How much money you will need to realize your dreams.

Consider these objectives carefully, and be realistic. As long as you are true to your priorities and goals, you will build an EAL business that truly fits YOU.

WHAT DO I WANT?

Who are you?

To be successful in your business for the long run, you need to think not just about what you want, but also who you are. To be successful, business owners tend to have certain personality traits and qualities that help them realize their goals.

Are you?

Ambitious

Motivated to achieve your life goals

Passionate about what you can do for your customers

A visionary, seeing future opportunities

Disciplined to work long hours and multi-task

A good planner, organizer and manager

Prepare to persevere to overcome all challenges

I AM...

TIP: Take the time to list ten reasons why you want to run your own business. This will show you what will be at the heart of your business, and help you better plan your business to fit your dreams and lifestyle.

WHY I WANT TO RUN MY OWN BUSINESS

STEP TWO YOUR 'IDEAL' EAL BUSINESS

Your ‘perfect’ business is defined by your preferences, abilities and desires. Your success is dependent on your passions, talents, personal goals and skills. Connect all the dots and you’ll create the right EAL business for you. Use this section to generate ideas for the ‘ideal’ direction for your EAL business.

Consider:

What are your interests?

What are your knowledge areas?

What are your skills?

Who would you most like to help in the world (niche)?

Handwriting practice lines consisting of five sets of horizontal lines. Each set includes a solid top line, a dashed midline, and a solid bottom line.

STEP THREE

MARKET RESEARCH

From Steps 1 and 2 you now have an idea for the right direction and niche for your EAL business. Do your homework to determine what the need is in your area. Speak to other business owners, relevant associations, potential clients, corporations, educational institutions and development groups.

Tip: Ask people what they think the needs are for your niche area. People will want to help. Do not be shy to ask.

Here are the basic objectives for your client market research:

1. Identify your clients. Your research needs to determine who will be willing to pay for your services, and who will not.
2. Determine your price potential. Pricing is a combination of your costs and what the current market can bear. Find out how much your potential clients are willing to pay for your services.
3. Uncover the best delivery style. Find out what your clients schedules, budget and commitment level are. Do you need to offer a customized EAL program? What is the end result that your client is looking for? Adjust your services around that.

CLIENT MARKET RESEARCH

Competition

Direct competitors are businesses going after the exact same client that you will. Keep in mind this doesn't necessarily mean your competitor is an equine based business. Think about who in your area is offering skills development programs, leadership training, team building, experiential learning, women's and youth programs, PTSD programs, etc. Ensure you know the answers to these questions:

Who are they?

What do they charge for their services?

What are they doing successfully? What are their weaknesses?

How and where are they marketing their services?

Why do people choose them?

How can you set your EAL business apart from competition?

MY COMPETITION

STEP FOUR

DEVELOP YOUR VISION

Having done your market research now you can create the biggest vision you have for your EAL business. This is an important one! Defining your vision will not only help you move forward, but also your team, partners, clients and suppliers etc. Having a clear vision will also help you position your business in the marketplace, drive your marketing strategy and help you know when you've met your objectives.

Answer the following:

What do you want your EAL business to become?

How will you benefit your clients?

What are the underlying values of your business?

Creating your business vision.

Be specific, describe:

1. Your EAL business and its future:

1. What is a succinct business name?
2. Is EAL your primary service offering or will you be adding in other program avenues?
3. What is your specific target market?
4. Where will you operate your business from?
5. What is the ideal size of your team?
6. What is your projected revenue and how will you reach it?

THE FUTURE OF MY EAL BUSINESS

2. Benefits to clients:

1. What are the specific outcomes my client's will receive?
2. How is my business different from other skills development programs in my area?

BENEFITS FOR MY CLIENTS

Tip: Your business vision is huge! It will energize you! Make sure it is clear and to the point. This will help motivate you and your support team.

STEP FIVE

BUILD A PLAN

Alright, let's get down to it. It's time to plan. Now that you've gathered your research, developed your business vision, it's time to put it into a strategic business plan.

YOUR BUSINESS PLAN

Your Business Description

(In 2 to 3 sentences describe your business, who it's for, and what you will accomplish.)

Your Business Operations

(What are your goals for your EAL programs ie/ how often will you run them, will they be seasonal? Who will help you carry out and deliver all of the areas of your business that need to be looked after.)

The Marketplace

(How will you position your business to be unique and different from other businesses in your area that offer similar skills development training?)

Sales and Marketing

(What is your main strategy to reach your desired client groups or customers and how will you accomplish this?)

Financials

(What are your business revenue goals? And how will you achieve them?)

STEP SIX

WHO CAN HELP YOU?

There are so many facets to starting and running a successful business. As an entrepreneur you can't possibly know and do everything. So let's look at who can help you.

Legal

Do you need legal advice to set up and structure your business?

Will you operate as a Sole Proprietorship, a Partnership or an Incorporation?

Who will review contracts, etc. that you enter into?

Accounting

Keeping track of your books, filing your taxes and helping you take advantage of business write off's are essential to the success of your business. Who can help you?

Coaching

Staying on track with your business goals and objectives is an invaluable practice. Would it be beneficial to utilize the skills of a coach for support?

Handwriting practice lines consisting of five sets of horizontal lines. Each set includes a solid top line, a dashed midline, and a solid bottom line.

Marketing/Communications Specialists

Building a strong business brand and presence along with having cost effective marketing strategies/tactics, as well as current social media tools is at the heart of successful marketing campaigns. Who can help you?

STEP SEVEN START-UP COSTS

In as much detail as you can determine right now, what do you need to start up your business, and how much will it cost? (Licensing, insurance, facility cost, arena supplies, printing, marketing collateral etc.)

STEP EIGHT

MARKETING AND SOCIAL MEDIA

What will you name your business? This is critical to helping potential clients understand and remember what it is you do. Remember - your business name and slogan should NOT include Equine Assisted Learning.

Your hard copy marketing materials can be as basic as a logo, business card and brochures/rack cards. Your digital marketing needs to include a website and numerous social media platforms.

Creating a great brand begins by investing in a good logo, website and marketing materials. Marketing is a daily activity and it is important to allocate daily time to engage in marketing and social media activities. Social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Periscope will be pivotal to getting the word out about how fantastic your EAL business is!

Let's get started...

Your Logo

In designing your logo consider whether your business will always be strictly based on EAL/horse programs.

Consider...

What is the style you wish to portray - modern, vintage, country, clean/crisp, wordmark, spiritual etc?

Would your logo look good on a business car, hat, t-shirt, signage, decal etc?

What colours convey your business feel or energy?

Your Slogan/Tagline

Your slogan/tagline is a one-sentence saying that encapsulates what your business does.

Consider...

What is your main sales message?

What experience do you want your client's to come away with?

What four words best describe your business offerings?

Marketing Materials

This includes your business cards, brochures, posters etc. and should be congruent with your brand.

Consider...

Are your materials simple, professional and memorable?

Do you need to hire a graphic designer to uphold a professional look?

Is your marketing collateral printed on quality paper stock?

Your Digital Presence

It is an absolute essential in today's world for any business to have a website. You need to be searchable, and online will be the first place potential client's search for you.

Consider...

Choose a URL carefully - not too long, no fancy spelling or play on words.

Are you active on at least two social media platforms - you need to, to be relevant, credible, and engaging.

To be successful with social media you need to develop a plan and a schedule. Do your research and create a plan that will work within your time constraints.

Sales

Develop a strong sales strategy that you can manage everyday.

1. Your sales strategy needs to make sense for your business. Calls, presentations, email, direct mail, tradeshows, referrals, and networking/public events are all part of an effective sales strategy.
2. Begin a customer and prospect database immediately and maintain it consistently as you make new contacts and gather new business cards.

3. Get testimonials from happy customers! Display these on your website wherever you can. Make sure you get permission. Create a photo/testimonial release form.
4. Spend a majority of your time on sales and marketing efforts. Without customers, you won't have a business.

Administration

1. Establish your bookkeeping system.
2. Stay current with your invoicing and payables to maintain good cash flow.
3. Create a system to manage paper flow (weekly or bi-weekly may work). If you have an apple product, purchase **Receipt-Bank.com**. This saves you with boxes/envelopes of papers. You take a picture of a receipt, it separates it into dates/taxes/amounts etc., and puts it into a spreadsheet for your bookkeeper or accountant. Voila!

STEP NINE

STAYING MOTIVATED

You are the most valuable asset in your business. Acquiring new skills and staying sharp, both physically and mentally, as well as managing your time - are so important.

Starting a new business is an exciting time in your life. But there are also times when you will feel stressed, frustrated, overworked and uninspired.

Ways to Stay Motivated

1. Review and update your business goals weekly.
2. Connect and share challenges and ideas with other EAL facilitators.
3. Attend workshops and listen to self-development speakers.
4. Read websites and articles to spark new ideas.
5. Spend time with family and friends.
6. Be confident, you will find creative solutions to any challenges.
7. Remember to have FUN!

Pitfalls to Avoid

1. Don't overestimate revenues and underestimate expenses.
2. Don't lose your sales and marketing focus - stay sharp.
3. Don't become too stressed or burnt out.

4. Don't try to be all things to all potential customers, serve a targeted niche.

Managing your Time

When you start a business you are leaving the world of Mon - Fri, 9-5 behind. Your responsibilities and challenges will require you to juggle your time. Here are some suggestions:

1. Develop detailed weekly and daily to-do lists.
2. Plan your top priorities and let smaller tasks fit around them.
3. Avoid procrastinating.
4. Delegate non essential business functions to someone who can help you, or do it better.

I CAN & I WILL

Feel the fear and do it anyways. If your dream isn't hard then it isn't your dream.

Often the obstacles and challenges in our paths are the opportunities. Find what your opportunities are through all of the road blocks that are put in your path.

NOTES



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Social Media

Facebook

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Instagram

https://www.instagram.com/equineconnection_intl

Pinterest

<https://www.pinterest.com/ealacademy>