

Community  
Futures



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# FIRST STEPS IN BUSINESS

Questions and Resources

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## Planning

A business plan is a document used to turn a business idea into a working business model. It is used by an entrepreneur to project how the business will operate and is usually required by lenders as part of their lending process to businesses.

### Common Questions:

- What is a business plan?
- Why do I need one?
- What things do I need to bring to the planning table?
- Are there templates?

### Resources:

[Business Link's Interactive Business Plan Builder](#)

[BPlans.com Lean Plan Template](#)

[Strategyzer Business Model Canvas](#)

[Futurpreneur Business Plan Writer](#)

Reach out to the [Community Futures](#) office in your area for support with business planning.

## Human Resources

Any questions about hiring, dismissing, training, organizing teams and generally managing people belong to this category.

### Common Questions:

- How do I hire staff?
- How do I apply for WCB?
- What types of training should I consider a priority?
- Where do I find government support?

### Resources:

[Government of Alberta Resources for Employers](#)

[Government of Alberta Employment Laws and Standards](#)

[Service Alberta Training for Work programs](#)

[WCB Alberta](#)

The [Chartered Professionals in Human Resources Alberta](#) website lists certified HR professionals who can help you with your HR needs, for a fee.

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## Operations

Operations includes all the necessary systems needed to move your product or service from production to delivery, such as the physical space you need, the equipment required, and building permits. Inventory management, labelling & packaging, and shipping issues belong here as well. If your product or service involves food preparation and handling, these are also part of your operations.

### Common Questions:

- How do I know when to incorporate?
- How do I negotiate the terms of a lease?
- How do I attain supplier contracts, and how do I choose the right ones?
- Do I need a patent?

### Resources:

The [Law Society of Alberta](#) has a directory to help you find a lawyer who can help you with any legal questions, for a fee.

Resources like [Law Depot](#) and [Business in a Box](#) provide sample legal, HR, marketing, etc. templates.

The [Canadian Intellectual Property Office](#) has information on patents and other forms of IP.

[BizPal](#) is a search tool to find permits and licenses you may need to start or grow your business.

## Finance

This deals with tracking the flow of money in and out of your company. Accessing funding from lenders, paying yourself, and compliance with CRA tax filing requirements are also covered.

### Common Questions:

- What tax advantages will I have if I incorporate?
- What accounting software should I use?
- What is a tax write off and for what does my industry qualify?
- How should I pay myself?
- How do I find a good bookkeeper or accountant?

### Resources:

Community Futures Alberta has a [Small Business Financials Guide](#) and [Financial Management](#) basics video.

The [Chartered Professional Accountants Alberta](#) website allows you to find a CPA firm that can help you with your tax and accounting questions, for a fee.

The Canada Revenue Agency has information on [Business Numbers](#) and other tax requirements.



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## Marketing

Marketing includes all the processes needed to attract customers to your business. This includes website development, social media, e-commerce, branding your business, and protecting your brand with trademarks.

### Common Questions:

- What are the best methods of marketing for my product?
- Do I need a copyright or trademark, and how?
- How do I create a website?
- What social media platforms work best for my business marketing?

### Resources:

Community Futures Alberta has a [Small Business Marketing Guide](#) and [Marketing basics video](#).

The [Canadian Intellectual Property Office](#) has information on copyrights and trademarks.

[ATB](#) and [BDC](#) have marketing plan templates.

## Sales

The process of turning a marketing lead into a happy customer is called sales.

### Common Questions:

- Why aren't interested customers buying from me?
- Do I need a training program?

### Resources:

[Dale Carnegie Training](#)

[Reeves College Sales Training](#)

[SAIT Sales for Technical Professionals Training](#)