

Running a successful business requires many different skills and traits. Thinking about your business goals and skills will help you figure out if self-employment is a good fit at this time.

1. Why Self-Employment?

Why do you want to be self-employed?

There are many reasons why people want to be self-employed. Here are some examples:

- Needing flexible work hours
- Limited job opportunities in the area
- Demand or need for your product or skills
- Workplace attitudes that prevent you from working at your full potential

2. Your Business Idea

How did you come up with your business idea?

Business ideas are more likely to be more successful if they are based on:

Experience

- Having been in the same or a similar business for a number of years
- Having the skills to deliver your product or service

Interest

- Passion for the product or service
- Willingness to take time to learn about the product or service

Demand

- Customers wanting or needing your product or service

3. Your Experience

What previous experience or training has prepared you to run this business?

- In what ways does this experience apply to making your product or delivering your service?
- How might this experience contribute to other aspects of business success?
 - For example, do you have experience with things like:
 - Bookkeeping
 - Ordering supplies
 - Customer Service
 - Advertising or marketing
 - Other skills needed to run your business

4. Past Self-Employment

Have you ever owned a business? If yes:

- What did the business do?
 - How does the product or service of your previous business relate to your proposed business?
- How long was the business open?
- Why did you close the business?
- In what ways was the business successful?
- What will you do the same or different in your proposed business?

5. Disability Accommodations

Are there any accommodations you need? How will you set up your business to accommodate your disability?

Some people need accommodations to run their business. Examples are things like:

- Flexible work hours or part-time work
- Breaks throughout the day
- Limited pressure or stress
- Limited walking, standing, reaching, or lifting
- Need for specially-designed or assistive equipment
- Personal assistance with some parts of business operations

Think about things like business location, office equipment, office set-up, and ways of communicating with customers.

6. Skills and Knowledge

Do you need to gain more knowledge to run your business?

- Would improving your skills, or learning more about your product or service, help you?

6. Skills and Knowledge (continued)

Do you need any formal education or credentials, such as a professional license, certification, or degree, to operate your business?

- What educational degree or credentials do you need?
 - What are your plans to get them? When do you think you will have them?
- If you need an educational degree, how can business management knowledge be included in the degree?
- Does your proposed business require an apprenticeship? If so, what are your plans for finding one?

7. Training

Do you need any training to run your business? If yes, what kind of training will you need?

- What are your plans for getting that training?
- Is there a training program? If there is:
 - Where and when is the training program?
 - How much does it cost?
- Can the training be on-the-job?
- Are there other ways you can get needed training?

8. Bookkeeping

Every business needs a system to keep track of things like purchases, sales, and expenses. How will you do your bookkeeping?

- If needed, who will set up your system?
- If needed, who will help you maintain this system?
- How will you keep your personal and business expenses separate?

9. Business Activities

Keeping in mind that a typical full-time job is 40 hours per week, how many hours per week do you think you will have to spend on the following self-employment activities?

Activity	Hours per week doing this activity
Reaching out to potential customers through advertising and marketing services	
Serving current customers	
Making products	
Maintaining financial records	
Purchasing supplies	
Planning and managing the business	
Traveling	
Other business activities	
Total	

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Self-Employment
_____ Guide

Check with another small business owner to see if your estimates are realistic and similar to theirs.