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YOUR BUSINESS.**

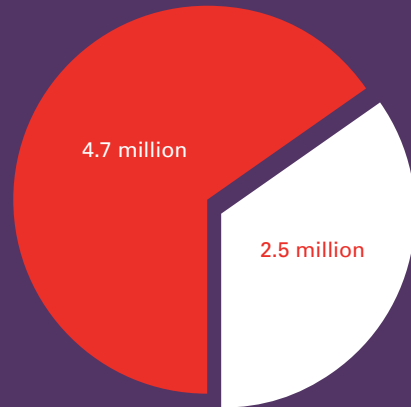


HOW TO SET UP YOUR BUSINESS AT HOME

www.scrgrowthhub.co.uk
Call: 03330 00 00 39



There are **4.7 million** small businesses in the UK and over **2.5 million** of these run their small business from home.



ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT WORKING FROM HOME IN YOUR NEW BUSINESS?

IF THE ANSWER IS YES, THEN YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

THIS MINI-GUIDE WILL:

- Help you to weigh up your personal advantages and disadvantages of running a business from home
- Help you to think more about whether you are suited to working from home
- Get you thinking about how you can develop the skills that will make running your business from home more effective
- Give you some hints and tips about getting the best out of running your business from home

WEIGHING UP THE PROS AND CONS...

ADVANTAGES OF RUNNING A BUSINESS FROM HOME:

- ✓ Quick and inexpensive way to start trading
- ✓ No premises costs and reduced travel costs and time
- ✓ A proportion of running costs can be claimed as tax deductible
- ✓ Your business hours can be organised to suit you
- ✓ Flexibility, e.g. fitting in with childcare or hobbies

DISADVANTAGES OF RUNNING A BUSINESS FROM HOME:

- ✗ It can be difficult to separate home life from work
- ✗ It can lead to overworking
- ✗ It can be difficult to create a professional image for clients/customers without having business premises

Think about the potential advantages and disadvantages for you to running your business from home. How important are each of the advantages and disadvantages for you? It might be helpful to set them out like this:

Advantages	Score	Disadvantages	Score
Quick and cheap to start up	3	I might end up working long hours	2

- 1 Write down all the advantages and disadvantages you can think of.
- 2 Go through each advantage and disadvantage and give it a score of how important it is to you. If something's really important, give it 3 points, quite important gets 2 points and not important at all, gets 1 point.
- 3 Go through your list and circle all the 3s. These are your key advantages and disadvantages and should make it easier for you to weigh up the option of running your business from home.



ARE YOU SUITED TO WORKING FROM HOME?

Running your business from your home can mean that you might need to think about your personality style at work and whether it's possible for you to develop your personal qualities further in order to give it your best shot. For example, if you like being sociable at work and usually enjoy chatting to colleagues every day you will need to think of different ways to socialise as you won't have colleagues around you at home. Ask yourself the questions below or get a friend or family member to ask you them. Be honest with yourself and listen carefully to your answers. You might come up with more questions about whether you've got what it takes to base your business from home. If after answering the questions, you've spotted an area that you're not sure about, write it down and discuss this with a friend or relative or perhaps someone who already runs their business from home. They might be able to pass on their tips to you about how they deal with these challenges. Your answers will give you some ideas about the areas of working from home that might be the most difficult for you.

- CAN I MOTIVATE MYSELF?**
- AM I ORGANISED AND DISCIPLINED ENOUGH?**
- CAN I WORK ON MY OWN EVERYDAY WITH NO-ONE ELSE TO HELP?**
- AM I PREPARED TO TAKE RISKS?**
- HOW EASILY CAN I SWITCH OFF FROM WORK?**

BUILDING YOUR SKILLS TO WORK MORE EFFECTIVELY FROM HOME

Running your business from home will mean that you might need to build up different skills so that you can get the best out of it for you. For example, if you're not sure whether you're self-motivated enough to work from home, think about this and talk to other people about some simple ideas that you could try to increase your self-motivation. Most skills can be developed, so don't be put off by the fact that you don't feel you have all the skills you need at the moment. You could also learn about setting goals (see later on in this guide for more on this life saver for homebased businesses!) which will keep you on track and motivated. There's lots of support out there to help you get the most out of working on your business from home.

HOW WE CAN HELP...

We have lots of different types of support ranging from information, online tools, workshops and events, to face-to-face advice that you could tap into to help you start up and run a business from home. Contact the Customer Information Centre on 03330 00 00 39 to find out what's available to help you work on motivational techniques or on developing other skills to help you start up your business from home. You could go on a short workshop to help you understand how to start up and run your business from home. In addition you could visit our website and see if anyone else has developed useful skills for working from home www.scrgrowthhub.co.uk

Skill/ability

Organisation

How can I improve/develop this?

Talk to Sam who works from home – how does she organise herself? What tools does she use? Find out if any training is available.

TRY
WRITING
THINGS
DOWN

7 TOP TIPS FOR RUNNING YOUR BUSINESS FROM HOME

TOP TIP ONE

PLAN AHEAD

You won't have a car journey or bus ride to and from work now, which is good news. But sometimes working at home can mean that you miss out on using the travelling time to think about what you want to get done tomorrow. Try and take five minutes at the end of the day to plan your next working day. This can also help to stop you putting things off that need doing. We can help you get more out of your business by helping you to develop the skills you need through our workshop programme.

TOP TIP TWO

TALK IT OVER

They might not be experts in your business area, but sometimes just sharing your daily problems with your partner or a good friend can make life working on your business from home just that little bit less stressful. Other people might not have all the answers, but it's always good to get another view on something that's a challenge or a worry for you, and sometimes that's all that's needed to solve a problem or at least make you feel better about it.

TOP TIP THREE

TAKE A BREAK

The average time that most people can really concentrate for is 20 minutes. Try and take regular breaks from whatever you're doing, especially if you're working on a computer. You'll find you work better having had a break to keep your creative thinking fresh.

TOP TIP FOUR

GET CREATIVE WITH YOUR EXTRA TIME

Working from home should mean you have more time to spare because you're not spending time travelling to work. Think about how you can use this extra time creatively. Maybe you could do some exercise first thing before you start working on the business.

TOP TIP FIVE

NETWORK

You'll always hear about the importance of networking when you're starting up or running a business, and working on your business from home is no different. It's important that you get out of your home 'office' and meet people. Even when you go to the supermarket, take some business cards - you never know who you might meet! By going to networking events, you're likely to meet others who are going through the same things as you, and you might even meet some new customers or potential suppliers. We can put you in touch with different networking groups in your area to help get you started. If you're not feeling confident about the idea of networking yet, we may be able to help you build your confidence through our workshops and other support too.

TOP TIP SIX

DON'T OVER-WORK

It's easy when you work from home to spend every waking hour working on the business and sometimes feel a bit overwhelmed. Try and keep yourself and your business fresh by working little and often, making the most of your flexibility. Go for a drink with friends, or take a walk in the fresh air—anything to get you out of the house. If you're struggling with balancing the time involved in starting up a business with caring for family members, get in touch with us to find out what training is currently available on this subject.

TOP TIP SEVEN

UNDERSTAND WHAT MOTIVATES YOU

If you find yourself delaying some tasks or are finding it hard to get motivated to work on your business from home, don't worry - it's a common problem for many people. At times like these, it's important to understand what motivates you. It might be rewarding yourself with a drink with a friend or an evening out if you've finished some of your tasks. It doesn't matter what it is, as long as it gets you motivated to start work or try and finish a task. We may be able to help you find support so that you can better understand what motivates you.

COPING WITH CHANGE

Working on a business from home can be a major change to get used to. Using boundaries can help you to make the shift more easily from work to home life and vice versa. For example, when your child comes in from school and sees that you are on the office mobile phone, they know that this means they need to wait until you've finished your call before asking you to help them with something. People talk a lot about 'boundaries' when you work from home. This is because you often need to think about what home is and what work is, now that they're both in the same place. Boundaries can be things you can see (known as 'physical') or things you can't

see (known as psychological/emotional). Can you think of any other boundaries you could put in place to make it easier for you to run your business from home? You might find it helpful to write down your ideas using the above columns. Think about how easy it would be for you to put these barriers in place? For example, it might be easier to discuss 'rules' with friends and family than to have a separate room for your office in your house if space is limited. Another idea, could be to have a separate 'to do' list for work and family responsibilities, rather than mixing it up too much and getting stressed with a big long list of jobs.

Can See (physical)	Can't See (psychological/emotional)
Closing the door at the end of the day if you have an 'office' room in the house	Discussing 'rules' with family and friends about interruptions when you're working at home
Using a separate mobile for work calls	Agreeing working hours with family and friends

SETTING GOALS



People who set themselves goals in business (and in life) are more likely to be successful than those who don't. Remember, if you write down your goals you have more chance of achieving them as it makes them more real. Imagining or visualising yourself achieving your goals also helps to make them come alive and can be a great way to get motivated about your business. Before you start to write your business goals ask yourself a few questions to make sure you're clear about what you want:

- **What time do I have for this? Try to be realistic.**
- **What's my energy and enthusiasm for this goal?**
- **What do I need to know to achieve it?**
- **Do I need to learn anything new to help me?**
- **Is it a very large goal that I need to split into smaller goals?**
- **By when do I want to achieve this?**
- **Who can support me to achieve my goals?**
- **Has someone I know achieved a goal like this – what can I learn from them?**

MAKING YOUR GOALS SMART CAN HELP YOU FOCUS ON EACH OF YOUR GOALS MORE CLEARLY AND MAKE THEM MORE POWERFUL.

Specifics	Describe exactly what you want to achieve. Other people should be able to clearly understand it
Measurable	How will you know when you've achieved it? What will be your signs of goal success?
Achievable	Is the goal achievable - even if there's a bit of stretch or challenge in it?
Realistic	Are you making sure that you're setting yourself realistic goals - thinking of the time, energy and resources you have?
Timed/Time Specific	Make sure you're clear about when you want to have achieved the goal by and remember to make it a realistic deadline!



REFLECTIONS

Writing down the new things you have experienced – keeping a 'learning log' - will help you think about your day to day activities during this time of change. This can help you to understand what you are finding out as you go along, as well as showing you just how far you've come, when you look back. Keeping a learning log can help you to see areas where you are

doing well and areas where you need help and support from others e.g. a business network. Most people prefer to use a small notebook as their learning log – keeping everything together in one place. Some people also like to use pictures or drawings to help to describe what happened and what they learned from it.

DID IT WORK OUT AS I THOUGHT IT WOULD?

WHAT WAS THE MOST SUCCESSFUL PART OF THE MEETING / ACTIVITY?

WHAT AM I LEARNING ABOUT STARTING UP A BUSINESS?

WOULD I DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY NEXT TIME AND WHY?

WHAT AM I PROUD OF AT THE MOMENT?

WHAT AM I LEARNING ABOUT MYSELF?

STARTING YOUR LEARNING LOG

Keeping learning logs and writing your thoughts and ideas down can sometimes seem difficult at first, but as with any new challenge, it gets easier with practice. You could try writing about meetings or activities you get involved with while setting up your business and think about what you learned from them. Some starter questions to ask yourself are above.

CHECKLIST

You might find it helpful to make a list of the things you need to think about when starting up your business from home. Here's one to get you started. Work your way through the list and tick things off as you do them. You could add other things you can think of at the bottom of the list to keep it all in one place.

- Do you have the space at home? (Think creatively about how you could use space differently to make space for your home 'office' - even if it's just a desk in the corner of your bedroom at first)
- Have you checked with your mortgage lender or landlord on your tenancy agreement that it's OK to run your business from home?
- Have you checked your home insurance policy to see if there is anything which would affect running your business from home?
- Have you contacted your local authority about whether you will need to pay business rates?
- Have you called The Growth Hub to get support and help to start up from home?
- Have you planned out what equipment you need? Do you have someone who can help you set up your home IT network e.g. Internet?
- Have you joined any networks to get support and help from?
- Have you identified what skills you want to develop in order to get the best out of working from home and where you can get help from to improve them?



USEFUL RESOURCES

STARTING A BUSINESS FROM HOME

To find out more about legal, financial or general information about starting a business from home contact us:

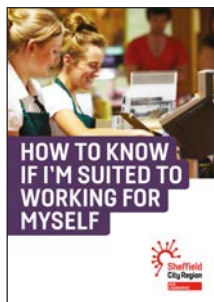
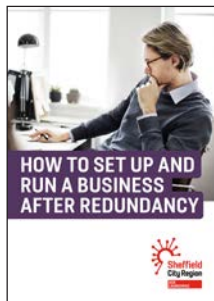
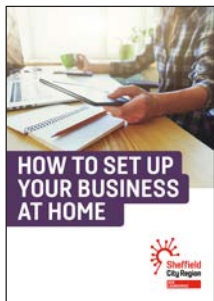
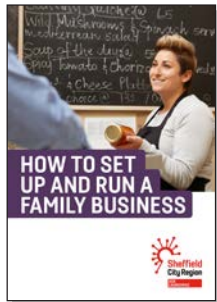
SCR Growth Hub **03330 00 00 39** or **growthhub@sheffieldcityregion.org.uk**
Visit our website for useful information on starting up or running a business and to watch video case studies of how other businesses have overcome different barriers to make their business a success.

USEFUL NETWORKS

Contact us for a list of business-related networks in the region.

OTHER TITLES IN THIS SERIES...

- How to... understand if I'm suited to working for myself
- How to... balance a busy home life with running a business
- How to... manage the move from employment to self employment
- How to... set up and run a retail business
- How to... increase self-confidence and self-belief for starting up in business
- How to... set up and run a business after redundancy
- How to... set up and run a family business
- How to... set up and run a business if you are new to doing business in the UK
- How to... set up and run a business when you have been out of the job market



DISCLAIMER

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