

Title:

Starting A Home Based Cookery Business - Catering For All Tastes

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895

Summary:

Wanting to work from home will almost inevitably end up starting people thinking about having their own home based business and being their own boss. Often the idea is dismissed as just a dream but there are some simple skills that make the ideal starting point for a home based business.

Keywords:

home based business, start your own business, catering service, niche business, running a lunch delivery service, catering business, cookery business

Article Body:

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If you are a good cook and like cooking, why not build on your skills and knowledge and start your own business doing something you already know you enjoy. The first thing to do is decide what sort of cookery you want to undertake on a business basis.

Can you envisage yourself having a career running a full catering business? If so, you could choose to offer a general catering service or one specialising in organising buffet meals or wedding breakfasts only. You might want to create a niche business offering multi-course gourmet meals, vegetarian extravaganzas or ethnic feasts.

Perhaps your interest is in baking. If you can reliably produce delicious cakes and pastries, a bakery business might be more to your liking. You can make a career out of baking and decorating cakes to your own designs, you could even specialise in one type of cake eg cheesecakes or wedding cakes.

Maybe your passion is jam-making or pickling or bottling fruit. These types of homemade goods produced with fresh natural ingredients are far superior to the preservative packed factory manufactured varieties and are enjoyed by everyone who appreciates food that actually tastes like food.

Don't overlook the possibility of running a lunch delivery service. If you live

reasonably near to offices or factories, you could start a sandwich/snack delivery round. Fresh homemade sandwiches are in a different league to the bland offerings available in many commercial outlets. Workers usually only get an hour or less for lunch so they will appreciate the chance to save time and effort by having lunch delivered. As well as sandwiches, you could offer home baked pies and cakes. The sandwich round could easily be run part-time in addition to other catering jobs.

If you are already involved in cooking for your family and friends, you probably have most, if not all, the basic equipment needed to start up a catering related home business. If you intend to specialise in baking and decorating cakes or selling homemade sandwiches, your initial outlay will be comparatively small. You will obviously need to budget for ingredients. Also, you will need to buy suitable packaging materials and have funds to pay for any fuel you will use to make deliveries.

It is worth the extra expense to have items such as sandwich bags and cake boxes printed with your details so that customers will be reminded of your name (or your company name) and can recommend you to friends or phone you to place repeat orders. If your ambition is to offer a full catering service, you might find that you need an additional freezer, fridge or microwave oven. You might even find that you need a dedicated vehicle to use for your business. A business loan might be the best way to cover any large expenses.

After brainstorming the possibilities, it is time to sit down and draw up a formal business plan. This will be necessary if you intend to apply for a business development loan or seek a grant for start-up capital. Putting your plans down on paper will also help you to clarify all the details and turn a bunch of ideas into a real project.

Before you cook anything in a professional capacity, it is essential to find out what is required in your area in the way of insurances, and certification to enable you to prepare food on a commercial basis. You need to make enquiries of your local Health Authority who will provide you with the regulations and inform you what inspections are required. You don't want your business to get closed down on a technicality, so make sure you do your homework on rules and regulations in advance.

Whatever size or type of catering business you are planning, you will need to set aside a budget for advertising. As in most lines of business, the best way to grow a catering business is through personal recommendation but this takes time and you have to have some customers to start spreading the word in the first place. You must advertise to get started and to keep your business

growing. Advertising can consist of many different things, eg having fliers delivered, press releases and classified advertisements in local newspapers, classified advertisements in targeted magazines. Have stationery and business cards printed with your business details, post advertisements free on notice boards in shops.

Make sure you tell everyone about your new business. This includes friends and acquaintances who can spread the word but you should also make contact with people in related businesses to see if you can make a mutual recommendation agreement. For example, if your speciality is baking wedding cakes, it would be useful to form an alliance with the local florist, local dressmaker and (obviously) any local wedding planner.

Take a short business course on the Internet or at your local college. Even if you intend to employ an accountant or have a qualified advisor, you should know at least the basics of business management and your tax liabilities.

Finally, make sure you give yourself a continuing education on all food-related subjects. Subscribe to professional magazines and take evening classes to learn new techniques and recipes. Trends in food change and you need to keep up to date with those trends as well as learning about new discoveries relating to nutrition.