



EMMA DE SADELEER



# A Guide for Starting a Part-Time Business in Canada as a Student



Emma Dessa Co.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1

## INTRODUCTION

Introduction .....	3
My Entrepreneurial Journey .....	4
The Early Stages .....	5

## PREPARATION PHASE

2

Idea Generation .....	6
Research .....	7
Setting Goals .....	8
Adapting .....	9
Balancing Your Studies and Business .....	9
Crafting Your Business Persona .....	10

3

## CLIENT ACQUISITION

Getting Your First Client .....	11
“Discovery Sessions” .....	13
Your First Sale .....	14

4

## BUSINESS FOUNDATIONS

Legal Implications .....	15
Investing Your Time and Money .....	17
Advertising .....	18

5

## CONCLUSION AND REFLECTION

Advice From Fellow Student Entrepreneurs .....	19
Final Thoughts .....	20



# Entrepreneurship

## Hello there!

This guide presents a blueprint for students in Canada looking to begin or strengthen their entrepreneurial journey alongside their studies.

Drawing from personal experience, I will explain how you will be able to work fewer hours than a part-time job while earning significantly more than minimum wage, while studying full-time!

Starting your own business will also provide you with the flexibility to create your own schedule and monetize from a passion you may possess.

By following this guide, you can learn how to generate business ideas, market effectively, navigate challenges, manage time efficiently, and maintain a clear focus on your goals.

## ...Before we begin

If you are a student in Canada seeking to earn money while studying and be your own boss, this guide is for you. Whether you're in high school, college, university, or pursuing other studies, you can build your own business with the right approach. This guide will help you manage your time effectively, identify where to begin, and outline steps to achieve your goals.

Rather than aiming to get rich quick, this guide focuses on helping you work fewer hours than a minimum wage part-time job while earning more per hour. While not necessary, having 5–10 spare hours each week, a passion or skill you want to monetize, and a dedicated workspace can significantly enhance your chances of success.

With determination and the willingness to learn, you can turn your ideas into profitable ventures and gain valuable entrepreneurial experience along the way. Let's dive into the steps to kickstart your journey to entrepreneurship while balancing your studies effectively.

# My Entrepreneurial Journey

I've always had an entrepreneurial spirit, starting with selling vegetables from my garden at age 8 to my neighbours. I thought this would make me rich but it did not. I then attempted babysitting at 9, though my first gig came at 12. I then started working for other companies at age 14. However, I didn't find much fulfillment doing so.

My unexpected success came when I decided to offer piano lessons during my second year of University. Initially, I aimed for just one or two students to earn some grocery money. With an ad on Kijiji and Facebook, offering beginner piano lessons at flexible rates, I quickly gained my first client. Soon, I expanded to several clients, teaching seven students throughout the summer and my third year of University.

As I developed my teaching skills, I realized the potential of my business. By my fourth year, I took it seriously, investing in proper advertising and increasing my prices to reflect my experience and commitment. With just under 15 students, I was making significant earnings while still balancing full-time studies.

The fulfillment I found in teaching, along with the financial independence and skill development, surpassed any part-time job. **I believe the same opportunity exists for other full-time students.** My journey offers a template for success, covering everything from idea generation to marketing strategies, time management, and handling setbacks. Whether you're unsure where to begin or seeking to maximize your efforts, this guide will steer you toward entrepreneurial success and personal fulfillment.



"Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma — which is living with the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of other's opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary."

**Steve Jobs**



# The Early Stages

This guide outlines the initial steps to starting a part-time business in Canada as a student, drawing from my own experience and insights gained over the past few years. Covering the early stages of entrepreneurship, we'll explore effective strategies and expectations for the first year of operations, beginning with brainstorming and developing business ideas.



## First, Comes An Idea

First and foremost, the foundation of any successful business venture lies in the **establishment and execution** of a great idea. In today's competitive landscape, it is important that these ideas are not only innovative but also distinctly set apart from competitors.

In my own entrepreneurial journey, my initial concept revolved around offering casual piano lessons at competitive rates. Emphasizing professionalism in my instruction, I positioned myself uniquely within the market by providing quality services at a lower price point than my competitors, effectively gaining a competitive edge in the community.

**My casual piano lessons idea developed and evolved over time.** My inspiration stemmed from my early experiences with piano lessons and the realization that traditional teaching methods often overlooked the enjoyment of playing the piano. I recognized the importance of fostering a love for music in my students, which led me to advertise towards offering lessons focused on learning songs of personal interest. Something that sets you apart from your competition is key to succeeding early on.

Looking beyond my personal journey, it's important to acknowledge the many opportunities available for turning a profit right in your own community. From tutoring and language classes to fitness coaching and home services, there's a variety of options to explore. Below provides a starting point for individuals looking to explore business opportunities aligned with their skills and interests.

<b>Education:</b> Tutoring services Language lessons Music lessons Editing essays	<b>Art and Creativity:</b> Makeup artist Nails/eyebrow services Painting Art lessons Photography Producing Personal styling	<b>Home Services:</b> Pet-sitting Baby-sitting Senior-care services Personal Chef Housekeeping Gardening/landscape Home repair/maintenance Car services Interior design	<b>Other Services:</b> Planning services (e.g., Travel, finances, events) Language translation or interpretation services Virtual assistant services Rental services Outdoor adventure
<b>Fitness and Health:</b> One-on-one coaching Swimming lessons Personal trainer Nutritional counselling	<b>Technology:</b> App design Website design		

# Research

If none of the ideas on the last page resonate with you, a helpful method for brainstorming based on your unique skills and interests is to utilize AI. Consult ChatGPT to discover potential entrepreneurial opportunities that align with your specific skill set.

Conduct research on your business idea and assess the offerings of competitors in your local area. Determine the unique services available and the pricing structure adopted by your competitors. My suggestion, particularly if you're aiming for quick profitability, is to initially **undercut the average rate in your area by 25%** and set your pricing accordingly to attract your first clients. As a student, you will be seen as someone with less experience. Charging a lower rate compensates for this lack of experience, at the beginning. Further elaboration on this strategy will be provided later in this guide.

## Research Checklist

Business Idea

Competition and pricing

Target audience

Marketing Strategy

Outline for selling

Discovery Meeting

Laws

Insurance



Identifying your target market is crucial as it influences your advertising strategy. For instance, in my case, I discovered early on that mothers in the community were the primary demographic interested in enrolling their children in piano lessons. Utilizing targeted advertising settings on platforms like Meta Advertising enabled me to effectively reach this audience. A more detailed exploration of this approach will be discussed later. **Join Facebook groups relevant to your target audience** to engage, share valuable content, and build authentic relationships within your niche community.

Familiarize yourself thoroughly with your own service and determine what sets you apart from competitors. Using this information, craft a structured outline for conducting business, particularly on undertaking your discovery session. Seek inspiration from videos and articles showcasing successful first sessions. Further insights into structuring initial sessions will be provided later in this guide.

As you embark on the journey of starting your business, it's crucial to **prioritize legality** every step of the way. Researching and understanding the legal requirements specific to your industry, location, and business structure is essential in the early stages. Ensure compliance with regulations regarding business registration, licenses, permits, taxes, contracts, and intellectual property. By researching legal information and seeking guidance when needed, you can establish a solid legal foundation for your business, mitigating risks and setting the stage for long-term success. Remember, legality is not just a box to check—it's a fundamental aspect of building a sustainable and reputable business.

As you navigate the early stages of your business, crafting a comprehensive business plan and setting specific goals will provide a roadmap for your endeavours. The initial research phase should not be prolonged, as once you have a basic understanding of your target audience, products/services, and marketing strategy, you can begin promoting your offerings. However, **ongoing research is essential** to remain informed about competitors, pricing trends, and emerging opportunities for business growth and development.

# Setting Goals

Planning is a fundamental aspect of my approach, and setting goals is second nature to me. On average, I dedicate one hour per week to planning, whether it's for my business, academic pursuits, or personal life. I maintain specific documents for each planning aspect, including a comprehensive five-year plan.

I highly recommend adopting a **structured planning approach** for your business endeavours. Instead of diving straight into a five-year plan, consider starting with a more immediate "semester plan." This approach acknowledges that you're likely launching your business while juggling full-time studies and potentially other employment commitments. **Your goals should align with your current lifestyle** and the level of dedication you can afford to your business. To initiate your semester plan, consider utilizing a template similar to the following:

## Semester Plan

### Overall

Where will your business be in 3 months?  
Will you be turning in a profit in 3 months? If so, what is your profit goal?  
Advertise 1 time a week on all free platforms

### Clients

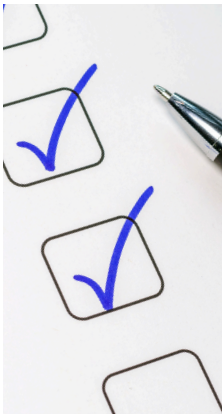
Have 2 introductory sessions  
Have 1 new returning client on a weekly basis

### Money and Savings

Make (insert amount) per week in 3 months from my business  
Invest (insert amount) into advertising/supplies/other

### Other

Connect with other entrepreneurs  
Create content to post on social media related to your business  
Email local businesses promoting your own services



By crafting a "semester plan" and further breaking it down into monthly plans, you can establish more attainable goals for each month. For instance, if your overall semester goal is to conduct two introductory sessions, you might set a monthly goal of generating interest from two potential clients in the first month. **Start with reasonable objectives**, then gradually escalate them as you progress. For the subsequent month, your goal could evolve to include three new potential clients expressing interest, along with securing one sign-up for an introductory session. This incremental approach enables you to carefully work towards broader objectives while maintaining a realistic perspective.

Regularly reviewing your progress against these goals is essential. At the end of each month, I personally find it beneficial to **reflect on both achievements and setbacks**, documenting them alongside other noteworthy occurrences. This practice serves as an effective tool for tracking your advancement and strengthening motivation by recognizing your achievements.

It's crucial to **establish realistic goals**. Avoid setting overly ambitious targets, such as aiming to make five sales in your first month of operation. In my own entrepreneurial journey, I made the mistake of setting unrealistic goals during the initial two years, which left me feeling discouraged by perceived lack of progress. Understand that in the early stages, your focus should be on generating interest and learning the ropes of running your business rather than achieving immediate sales. Embrace this period as a valuable learning experience, and don't allow a slow start to deter your enthusiasm.

I have included a real example of how I weighed my accomplishments and setbacks from the first month I started seriously advertising my piano lessons through Meta. So many of my plans ended up changing in the short and long run! You may use this as an outline for when you evaluate your monthly plans.

### September 2023

#### Accomplishments

- Got 2 new clients in Guelph (Now at 9 students total)
  - Piano income of █████ for the month
    - Up 30% compared to last month
      - Due to new clients
      - Due to price increase
- Finished rough copy of business plan (Was planning to register as a sole-proprietorship)
  - Transcribed around 5 songs (For lesson plans)

#### Setbacks

- Lost 1 client from price increase (now need 5 more clients to reach semester goal)
- Quit my other part-time job so will be making less income - must reevaluate income expectations now
  - Did not go to a Networking event

# Adapting

**Expect your plans to evolve over time.** While striving to achieve your goals remains essential, unforeseen circumstances may arise that prompt adjustments to your objectives. Developing the skill to adapt well to changing circumstances is crucial in entrepreneurship. This flexibility becomes important from the beginning of your business endeavours. Personally, I found that my annual goals would shift every few months, while four month goals may undergo revisions once per semester, and monthly objectives require lots of recalibration too. It's important to **stay open-minded to current priorities and remain true to your long-term aspirations**.

Remember, it's also **perfectly acceptable for long-term goals to evolve** based on personal beliefs, free from external pressures.

For instance, my long-term goal initially aimed to hire another piano teacher for expansion in my university town, but eventually redirected my focus towards more self-reliant endeavours. Embracing change becomes second nature as you navigate the entrepreneurial journey. Though significant shifts in direction may have seemed disheartening initially, I've come to **recognize them as opportunities for growth rather than obstacles to be feared**.





# Balancing Your Studies and Business

**Key Scheduling Tools:** HW App, Google Calendar, Microsoft Outlook Calendar, Zoho Calendar

As emphasized in the last couple of sections, effective planning is key to successfully managing your business alongside your studies and potentially other commitments. While not everyone may naturally excel in this area, learning to plan properly is essential for smooth business operations. Personally, I rely on tools like the HW App to organize my academic deadlines, piano lessons, and other events at the beginning of each semester. Some other useful tools are Google Calendar, Microsoft Outlook Calendar and Zoho Calendar. Regular updates ensure accuracy and alignment with my evolving schedule. Additionally, I create weekly schedules that integrate my school and business commitments, allowing me to allocate dedicated time slots for client interactions. Embracing this structured approach with **weekly, monthly, semester, and yearly plans** helps maintain order, consistency, and focus on priorities.

When arranging your class schedule for school, consider **prioritizing morning classes** whenever possible. Most individuals are available for business interactions after their 9–5 workday or school hours, making **evenings optimal for client engagements**. While weekends offer additional availability, I personally prefer keeping weekends free for planning and personal time, maximizing productivity during weekdays. This flexibility is one of the perks of being your own boss, allowing you to tailor your work hours to suit your preferences and optimize efficiency.

As you navigate the dual demands of academics and entrepreneurship, expect occasional challenges and disruptions to your routine. It's important to recognize that maintaining an easy balance may not always be feasible, and that's okay. If you find yourself overwhelmed with schoolwork but have scheduled client commitments, don't hesitate to communicate and reschedule as needed. Remember, in the first stage, part of your business identity is being a student seeking to earn income casually. **Your clients understand and can expect that you have other obligations in your life.** Prioritizing your academic responsibilities when necessary ensures you maintain a healthy balance and manage your commitments effectively.

# Crafting Your Business Persona



Building rapport with your customers is essential to fostering repeat business. As the face of a service-oriented business, **you essentially become the product**. Establishing a strong social media presence is also crucial, especially if you plan to leverage these platforms for direct advertising. Personally, I found **sharing authentic content** on platforms like Instagram and Facebook immensely beneficial. Posting videos showcasing my piano skills, student performances, and music that resonated with my brand helped create a relatable and engaging online persona. Building a social media following not only boosts visibility but also cultivates a sense of personal connection with potential customers, accelerating sign-ups for lessons.

Managing customer interactions, particularly handling negative feedback, is another crucial aspect of your business persona. While the customer isn't always right, **maintaining professionalism and composure**, even in challenging situations, is key to preserving customer relationships. Upholding your business's rules and policies, such as cancellation procedures outlined in your legal and rules section, is vital. Despite potential difficulties, **standing firm on these guidelines** demonstrates your commitment to providing a quality service.

## Key traits to processes:

Trustworthy, expertise, authenticity, value creation, professionalism, firmness and consistency, relatable

**Invest time in getting to know your customers personally.** Building bonds based on shared interests fosters a sense of care and connection, enhancing the overall customer experience. As I've experienced firsthand, establishing these genuine connections significantly contributes to customer satisfaction and loyalty.

**Building trust with your customers** hinges on being perceived as knowledgeable and proficient in your offerings. Utilizing social media platforms to showcase your skills is a powerful way to instill confidence in your audience. Sharing demonstrations of your expertise not only builds trust but also enhances your credibility as a reliable authority in your field.

Furthermore, **consider investing in continuous learning** by taking relevant courses to expand your knowledge and skills. Acquiring certifications and qualifications not only bolsters your expertise but also provides tangible evidence of your commitment to excellence. Promoting these credentials on your social media channels and to your clients reinforces your credibility and solidifies your reputation as a trustworthy professional. Ultimately, demonstrating your knowledge and expertise through consistent actions and continuous learning endeavors is key to earning the trust and confidence of your customers.

# Getting Your First Client!

Securing your first client marks a significant milestone in your business journey.

**They serve as valuable teachers**, guiding you in navigating interactions, providing service, payment handling, and communication. As emphasized during the research phase, **pricing your services at 25% below the local average** can be a compelling proposition, capturing potential clients' attention. Further, **authenticity is key**; openly expressing your entrepreneurial aspirations and desire to gain experience at an introductory rate can foster willingness and support from your audience. Even if you possess expertise in your field, offering services at a reduced rate sets you apart from competitors and encourages trial engagements.

## Advertise

Utilize free advertising avenues actively during the initial phase; platforms like Facebook Groups proved particularly useful for me initially, with consistent weekly postings accompanied by a personal touch enhancing visibility and credibility. There are other platforms, like Kijiji, that may provide varied success rates. Leveraging all available free channels maximizes your reach without undertaking unnecessary advertising costs.

We'll dive into additional free advertising strategies later in this guide to optimize your marketing efforts.



**See the next page for an example of the first advertisement I would post through Facebook Groups. You may use this as an outline:**

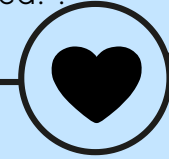
**Key advertising tools:** Facebook Groups, Kijiji, Nextdoor





Emma Dessa Music 

"Hello everyone! My name is Emma and I'm a student at the University of Guelph. I am offering casual piano lessons to all ages in the Guelph area. I charge between \$20-30/hour depending on level and ages. I teach using the Piano Adventure Lesson Books and songs of your choice too! I have flexible timings available and I am offering free introductory lessons. Send me a message if you are interested!"



## Easy Sign-Up Form

Once potential customers show interest in your business, it's crucial to smoothen the sign-up process by **providing an easy-to-use form that collects all necessary information for effective sales**. In my own business, I utilized Google Forms to gather essential details such as the student's age, availability, preferred learning times, songs they were interested in learning, and existing piano knowledge. Obtaining comprehensive information ensures you understand your clientele better and tailor your services accordingly.

## Collecting Payment

Payment methods also require consideration at this phase. Personally, I found e-transfers and cash transactions to be the most convenient options, requiring no third-party integration. While online payment systems are available for purchase, I would not suggest integrating them during the initial stages of your business. Also, other payment systems typically require a business bank account to be opened.



# Introducing Your Discovery Session

# 1

Your introductory session serves as a prime opportunity for discovery and connection. Consider offering a "Free Discovery Session" to entice potential leads interested in getting to know your services. During this session, **the focus is on mutual exploration and establishing rapport**. You may also use this time to outline "Next Steps" to guide potential clients towards further engagement.

# 2

It's crucial to provide a glimpse of your service during this discovery session, allowing clients to experience firsthand what you offer. In my own practice, I set a goal of teaching beginners to play "Mary Had A Little Lamb" during the first session. This simple yet satisfying accomplishment left participants feeling fulfilled and eager to continue their musical journey. Ultimately, the goal of the discovery session is to ensure that clients leave feeling satisfied and enthusiastic about returning for more.

# 3

Keep in mind that the structure and content of your discovery session will vary depending on your business and individual offerings. **Understanding your business and yourself, and what you can uniquely provide** during this critical period, is essential for maximizing its effectiveness.

## Example of my "Discovery Session" Outline



### AT THE BEGINNING OF THE FIRST LESSON

- Have them sign the "Liability waiver" and "Code of Conduct", give them a "Welcome to Your First Lesson", "Practice Log", and "Piano Intro Concept" sheets
  - Start with primary book for all students
  - Begin teaching in order of steps from "Lesson 1-3 plans"
- **LEARNING GOAL:** Ages 4-8 learn how to find and play Middle C
- **LEARNING GOAL:** Ages 8+ play 'Mary Had A Little Lamb'

### AT THE END OF THE FIRST LESSON

- Get a few ideas of songs they may want to learn! Give them suggestions, show them my piano playlist for options
- Inform them they can purchase whichever lesson book they will be using on Amazon, and we will send them the link
- Suggest a time and day for the next lesson and let them know we will send them a link to book it, as well

*Always follow up with them the next day.*

# The First Sale Experience

Anticipate that your introductory service session may not be flawless; **embrace this phase as a learning opportunity**. Maintain an attitude showcasing confidence, even if internally you're still refining your approach. Remember, your client is unaware of your level of experience and projecting competence instills confidence in them. Reflecting on my very first introductory piano teaching session—I prepared an in-depth lesson plan, yet adjustments were necessary within the first few minutes. Embrace any setbacks as part of the learning process; **document areas for improvement and celebrate achievements** to fuel ongoing growth.

## Coping With Potential Setbacks

Facing the possibility of clients not returning after the initial session is a reality of entrepreneurship. **Treat every instance as a learning experience** (communicating with potential clients, introductory lessons, etc.)

Analyze your performance objectively, noting strengths and areas for development. Sometimes, client decisions are influenced by factors beyond your control; maintain professionalism and resilience in such instances. Remember, **setbacks are inherent in business ownership**; view them as opportunities for growth rather than discouragement. While the early stages may present challenges, **perseverance and consistent marketing efforts** will eventually yield positive results.

However, it's important to stay grounded—**keep working your current job until your business is bringing in enough money to support you comfortably**. Slowly increase the time you spend on your business, and only allocate your full working hours when you're making enough profit and there's demand for your services.



# Legal Implications

As a responsible business owner, it's imperative to prioritize legal adherence and safety protocols. Firstly, when working with clients in your own premises, it's essential to have them sign a liability form to safeguard yourself and your business. Attached is a sample liability waiver that outlines the key rules and regulations of my business for your reference. **It is advisable to consult with a lawyer to ensure that your liability form is legally sound and adequately protects your interests.**

## Sample Liability Form

Student Information	Emergency Contacts
Student's Full Name: _____	Name: _____ Phone: _____
Date of Birth: _____	Name: _____ Phone: _____
Parent/Guardian Full Name: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Photography/Video Release:</b> I grant (business name) permission to take or post photographs, videos or testimonials, in whole or in part, to social media platforms and websites. This includes but is not limited to: publicity, copyright purposes, advertising, and web content. Furthermore, I understand that no royalty, fee or other compensation shall become payable to me by reason of such use.
Parent/Guardian Contact Number: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Cancellation Policy:</b> To maintain fairness and uphold the integrity of our scheduling system, please be advised that appointments canceled with less than 24 hours notice may incur a full fee charge. This policy ensures that our business can effectively manage its resources and accommodate all clients in a timely manner. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in respecting our cancellation policy.
Address: _____	<b>Parent/Guardian Signature:</b>  I have read, understand, and agree to the terms and conditions outlined in this liability waiver and release form. I am the parent or legal guardian of the above-named student.
I, _____ [Parent/Guardian's Full Name], the undersigned, hereby acknowledge and agree to the following terms and conditions on behalf of my child, _____ [Student's Full Name], who will be participating in music sessions provided by (business name) at ((business location)).	<b>Parent/Guardian Signature:</b> _____ <b>Date:</b> _____
<b>Check the boxes below and sign at the bottom.</b>	(business name) Representative: I, an authorized representative of (business name), acknowledge receipt of this signed liability waiver and release form.
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Assumption of Risk:</b> I understand that participation in music sessions may involve inherent risks that may result in personal injury or property damage. I understand and acknowledge that (business name) is not responsible for any injuries that may occur during these music sessions. Furthermore, I accept that as the parent/guardian, I am liable for any property damage that may occur.	<b>Signature:</b> _____ <b>Date:</b> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Release of Liability:</b> In consideration of my child's participation in piano lessons, I, on behalf of myself and my child, release and discharge (business name) its owners, employees, and affiliates, from any and all claims, liabilities, actions, causes of action, costs, and expenses, including attorney's fees, arising out of or related to any injury, loss, or damage suffered by my child while participating in music sessions.	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Emergency Medical Treatment:</b> I grant permission to (business name) and its staff to seek emergency medical treatment for my child in the event of an injury or illness if I cannot be reached. I understand that (business name) will make reasonable efforts to contact me or the emergency contacts listed below before seeking medical treatment.	

## Taxes

Additionally, it's crucial to be mindful of the tax implications relevant to your province or country. Ensure proper documentation and reporting of all income earned, as well as tracking the expenses incurred for your business operations. By accurately accounting for expenses such as rent for business premises, advertising costs, and supplies, you may be eligible for tax deductions or returns. This proactive approach not only ensures compliance with tax regulations but also maximizes financial efficiency for your business. Furthermore, it's essential to be aware of Ontario's tax regulations, particularly regarding income thresholds. **In Ontario, income tax obligations typically commence once your annual income exceeds \$15,705.** It's crucial to keep this threshold in mind when reporting income and initiating revenue-generating activities to ensure compliance with provincial tax laws. Finally, **you do not have to register with GST/HST in Ontario until you are exceeding \$30K.** You would be considered a small supplier until this point. This has the same implications for registering your own business as a sole-proprietorship.

# Business Registration

When establishing a small business in Canada, it's important to understand the legal requirements specific to the province. **Registering your business as a sole proprietorship with the government is not mandatory**, unless you have employees, facilities, offices or you are operating under a business name. Further, it is not required until you are making over \$30K per year from business operations. If you decide to register as sole-proprietorship, keep in mind you will need to have a comprehensive business plan written out. **Consult business registration specific to provincial requirements for more information, online.**

## Insurance

When starting a business, it's essential to consider the insurance coverage needed to protect yourself, your employees, and your assets. The **type of insurance required varies depending on the nature of your business**, but common types include general liability insurance, property insurance, and professional liability insurance. General liability insurance provides coverage for third-party bodily injury, property damage, and advertising injury claims. Property insurance protects your business property, including buildings, equipment, and inventory, against damage or loss due to fire, theft, or other covered perils. Professional liability insurance, also known as errors and omissions insurance, is crucial for service-based businesses to cover claims of negligence or mistakes in professional services rendered. The need for insurance arises from the potential risks and liabilities associated with running a business, and having adequate coverage can safeguard your financial stability and reputation in the event of unforeseen incidents or lawsuits. **I personally never bought insurance for my business, however it is something to consider if there is inherent risk involved.**

By staying informed about these legal considerations and consulting with relevant authorities or legal professionals, you can navigate the regulatory landscape effectively and establish a solid legal framework for your small business.

## Legal Checklist

### Business structure

- Are you using your own name or a business name? (has business registration implications)
- Necessary licenses, permits, and registrations.
- Understand tax obligations and filing requirements.
- Comply with employment laws and regulations.
- Draft contracts and agreements to protect business interests.
- Protect intellectual property through trademarks and copyrights.
- Implement data privacy measures and comply with regulations.
- Evaluate insurance coverage for risk mitigation.
- Stay informed about industry-specific regulations and ensure ongoing compliance.

**I advise you to consult with provincial government resources for comprehensive information on legal implications and requirements.**



# Investing Your Time and Money

Balancing school with other commitments varies greatly from person to person, and the decision to invest time and money into your business hinges largely on your individual circumstances. For instance, you might be a broke college student, making you hesitant to make financial investments. Alternatively, you may struggle with time management due to juggling school, a part-time job, and nurturing your business idea into reality. **Your investment strategy should align with your situation.**

As a student entrepreneur, I found that **time was more valuable than money** in the early stages.

Personally, I didn't spend any money on my business until I began serious advertising efforts through Meta after a year of operation. However, it's crucial to weigh the risks and rewards. Once I did allocate funds to advertising, I noticed a significant rise in recognition from potential clients, resulting in faster growth. Proper budgeting is essential in this regard, a topic I'll address later in this guide.



If you choose to follow my approach and initially invest only time and energy, you can expect returns as soon as you make your first sale. On the other hand, if you opt to invest in advertising right away, which I advise against until your business is more established, there's a higher risk involved. I've personally faced disappointment in advertising, with instances where I spent \$100 on ads but saw no increase in customers. It can be disheartening to keep investing without seeing returns. Therefore, investing in advertising should only commence once you've exhausted free platforms.

Investing in supplies is another consideration, depending on the nature of your business. While I was fortunate to already have the necessary supplies, you may need to allocate some funds for this purpose in the early stages.

In terms of time investment, it's crucial to **consider the risk-reward balance**. Personally, I was willing to dedicate up to 15 hours per week to tasks like creating ads, reaching out to potential customers, creating social media content and developing lesson plans. Efficient time management is important, and leveraging tools like Chat GPT and other AI platforms can speed up the process. These tools can assist with tasks such as drafting emails, crafting advertisements, and generating ideas, enabling you to work at your own pace. **Remember, it's not a race—especially in the early stages, it's all about learning and refining your approach.**

# Advertising

In the beginning, take advantage of free advertising platforms to promote your business! Personally, I found success by posting ads in **targeted Facebook Groups**, particularly those geared towards mothers. This approach yielded over 10 students without spending anything. Other online platforms worth exploring include Kijiji, NextDoor, Fiverr, and LinkedIn. Additionally, consider distributing flyers on community bulletin boards or reaching out to local businesses and professors via email to spread the word about your services. While this method demands time and effort, it's a prudent alternative to investing money in the initial stages.

**Key Platforms:** Meta (Instagram, Facebook, Whatsapp), Kijiji, NextDoor, Fiverr, LinkedIn, Etsy, SEO, word of mouth, flyers, email other businesses

I didn't venture into paid advertising on Meta until I had been teaching for over a year. Once I felt I had exhausted the opportunities on free platforms and noticed diminishing returns, I began running ads on Instagram. Admittedly, there was a learning curve—I initially struggled with budgeting, targeting the right audience, posting at optimal times, and creating compelling ad content. However, with time and practice, I honed my skills and improved the quality of my ads.

## Evolution Of Ads

Here is an example illustrating the evolution from one of my first ads to my latest. It is clear I needed to learn how to design properly!

### Piano Lessons

*Guelph, Ontario*



Available to all ages!



Learn how to play your favorite song!



Set your own schedule!



Learn with an experienced piano teacher!



\$30/hour or \$20/30 minutes!



Learn in a casual and flexible environment!

Emma Dessa Music 

**Message Me!**



@emmadessamusic



emmadessamusic@gmail.com

**Register Below!**



Message for more information!

## Piano Lessons

GUELPH, ONTARIO



Winter Session:  
January-April 2024

50% off your 30 minutes introductory lesson!



**Budgeting for marketing expenses is crucial in the early stages** of your business. Unfortunately, I didn't track my marketing spending initially, which was a mistake as it hindered my ability to accurately assess my revenue. During the first six months, I invested heavily in advertising, but the results were disappointing. I made errors in targeting the wrong audience, posting at inappropriate times, and creating unattractive ads. This led to a significant waste of resources. To avoid such pitfalls, it's essential to budget effectively, design visually appealing ads, offer promotions, and ensure easy sign-up options. Moreover, when including a link to a sign-up form, provide all necessary information upfront to facilitate quick decision-making for potential customers. Quick and convenient access to sign-up options in ads can significantly boost engagement and conversion rates.

## Some Advice For You...

### From Fellow Student Entrepreneurs

Make sure you plan but you need to be able to shift your business plan to something different, don't be stuck on doing something if it's not working, look for opportunities.

**Harrison Roy**  
**Bachelor of Commerce Student at McGill University**  
**Business: Swimming Lessons**

Start slow, don't go all in from the start! Test ideas before investing lots, especially if it's a competitive market.

**Erik Morrison**  
**Marketing & Entrepreneurship Student at Bishop's University**  
**Business: Erikord Gems**





# Some Final Thoughts

As we wrap up this guide, it's important to acknowledge that the journey of entrepreneurship is filled with ups and downs. While the rewards can be substantial, there will inevitably be challenges and setbacks along the way. However, it's crucial to view these obstacles as opportunities for growth and learning. Remember to focus on the positives, even when faced with setbacks, and document your accomplishments and setbacks regularly to track your progress.

Building trust with customers takes time, so don't be discouraged if you encounter slow progress initially. I've personally experienced the highs and lows of entrepreneurship, from failed advertisements to periods of stagnant growth. These experiences are all part of the process, and they ultimately contribute to your development as an entrepreneur.

It's also worth noting that **embarking on this journey sets you apart from the crowd**. Not everyone has the courage and determination to pursue their entrepreneurial dreams independently. Embrace the uniqueness of your path and recognize the valuable lessons you'll learn along the way. Now is the perfect time to start your entrepreneurial journey, especially as you navigate these developmental years of adulthood. Seize this opportunity to pursue your passions and build the life you envision for yourself.

## Work With Me!

As a fellow student entrepreneur, I'm here to offer support and guidance to anyone embarking on this journey. **I'm offering a complementary 30-minute coaching session to help you kickstart your business or overcome any challenges you may encounter along the way.** Whether you're just starting out or already underway, I'm here to assist you in realizing your entrepreneurial aspirations. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or simply want to share your journey with me. Thank you for joining me on this adventure, and I have every confidence that you will succeed.

