

Government of Alberta

# LABOUR MARKET NEWS

NORTHEAST REGION

ATHABASCA / LAC LA BICHE



## JOB SEEKER CONNECTIONS

# Success with Self-Employment!

If you're like most people, you have dreamed of being your own boss at one time or another. According to the Statistics Canada website, 2.6 million Canadians were self-employed in 2008. The thought of doing what you love to do, working where and when you want, meeting new people, and making more money for yourself are strong reasons to explore self-employment. The freedom and power of running your own business can be very appealing, especially if you experience lay offs or are unemployed. Being an entrepreneur can be a good way

of taking control of your employment needs.

The Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS) website says that self-employment can be a strong work option for you to consider, but also advises that some people are more inclined to become successful entrepreneurs than others. It all depends on your personal circumstances, your skills and knowledge, and your willingness to work hard and take risks. It involves major decisions that take time, money and energy.

The prospect of owning your own business and creating a new future for yourself is very exciting. Your ideas, optimism, and enthusiasm (traits of successful entrepreneurs) are flowing and you are tempted to plunge headfirst into your new business. But you would be making a mistake if you didn't do the proper analysis first, to see whether you really are suited to self-employment or not.

### Is Entrepreneurship for you? Matching your personality, skills, and lifestyle

As you begin to imagine yourself as an entrepreneur, look at yourself in terms of what you need, what you want, and what you are capable of doing. The following lists show some of the key characteristics that The Business Link, Alberta's Business Information Service (1-800-272-9675) website ([www.canadabusiness.ab.ca](http://www.canadabusiness.ab.ca)) says most successful entrepreneurs have.



According to The Business Link, self-employment is responsible for more than 75 percent of the job growth in Canada in the last 10 years. Source: The Business Link, Alberta's Business Information Service website [www.canadabusiness.ab.ca](http://www.canadabusiness.ab.ca)

### Personal Qualities

Patience; perseverance; works long hours; weathers the highs and lows; loves a challenge; tolerates the unexpected; desires change and improvement; monitors social trends and adopts new technologies; action-oriented; thinks positively; gets over failures quickly; learns quickly, enjoys feedback, and is able to learn from mistakes; good communicator;

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### Non-traditional Occupations

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independent and extroverted; self-confident, determined decision-maker; creative, innovative, and open-minded.

#### **Physical and Psychological Qualities**

Good health and energy; emotional stability; enough money for risky start-up period; lots of time; role models; intelligence.

#### **Business and Management Skills**

Able to set realistic, attainable goals; takes calculated not foolish risks; can influence and inspire others without imposing status or power; gets along with and adapts to all types of people; trusts others and gives out responsibility; good written and presentation skills; general financing, production, administration, human resources, sales, and marketing skills.

#### **Lifestyle Considerations**

Other commitments and obligations; family responsibilities (food, clothing, shelter, love, attention, and security); your own happiness and passion about the business (your natural talents, skills, and sources of enjoyment may lead you to the best business idea); no job security or retirement plan.

Once you have figured out what is motivating you to start your business - money, freedom and independence, or lifestyle for example - you will be in a better position to assess your personal qualities. No entrepreneur possesses every quality listed above; and there are successful business people who have very few of these qualities. The point is that your business venture will be a very personal journey and it will be up to you to assess your self-employment strengths regardless of what kind of self-employment you undertake.

#### **Types of Self-Employment**

There are many ways to be self-employed. Alberta Employment and Immigration's *Self-Employment: Is it for me?* workbook identifies these alternatives:

##### **Entrepreneurship**

- Business that sells a product or service and employs others.
- *Key advantage:* Offers most potential for growth and profit.

### **Did you know?**

According to the 2006 Canada Census, 1,993,710 Canadians identified themselves as "self-employed".

Source: Statistics Canada, Total Labour Force 2006 Census data.

- *Key disadvantage:* Highest risk; most money for start-up.

##### **One-person Business**

- Often home-based or incubator-style business that offers product or service with no employees.
- *Key advantage:* Low overhead
- *Key disadvantage:* Ability to increase growth and profit.

##### **Consulting**

- Offers expertise to various clients and projects at same time in own premises.
- *Key advantage:* Variety of clients and profit potential.
- *Key disadvantage:* Requires high organization and marketing.

##### **Contracting**

- Works within organization on project, time-limited basis.

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### **Did you know?**

In 2008, self-employed people in Alberta represented 17.2 percent (345,900 people) of all employed people in the province.

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey Review, 2008



## **Thinking of becoming your own boss?**

This primer outlines the benefits and challenges of self-employment and examines the motivation, skills, traits and background of successful entrepreneurs. It explores the various forms of self-employment and how to get started in business. There are hints to get you thinking about innovative products and services, information on writing business plans and more.

Pick up a free copy of *Self-Employment: Is it for me?* at your local Labour Market Information Centre (LMIC) or download a copy from the Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS) website at [alis.alberta.ca](http://alis.alberta.ca).



## Entrepreneur Profile:

**Debbie Bowzaylo, Owner  
Cascade Flowers  
Lac La Biche, Alberta**

**Q:** Can you tell us a bit about your company and what your primary area of service is?

**A:** *Debbie Bowzaylo:* We're a flower shop that services the Lac La Biche and surrounding area, as well as orders that come from all around the world. I've had orders from Australia and England, who have tapped onto our website. I found that to be very beneficial. We also have rental stuff for weddings, like arches, glasses, table clothes.

**Q:** What is your personal background in your line of work?

**A:** *Debbie Bowzaylo:* Actually this [the floral business] was my very first job out of high school. Then I went on to take nursing and then social work when I turned 40, and [now] I'm back to my very first job out of high school.

**Q:** Can you tell us what chain of events led to your decision to become an entrepreneur?

**A:** *Debbie Bowzaylo:* I was having challenges with my employment because I was working a few jobs, raising kids. I'm a single mom, and my friends have always said that I've had the entrepreneur's spirit. I love challenges, and the flower shop came up for sale in the paper and I put it on my fridge. I don't know how it became, but all of a sudden, I owned it.

**Q:** What are some of the challenges of being self-employed?

**A:** *Debbie Bowzaylo:* I guess the challenges would be you have to be a jack-of-all-trades. You have to be a

financial manager, you have to be an HR [human resources] person, taking care of your employees, knowing your Revenue Canada policies and rules, being able to serve the public – satisfy the public - for your business to be successful.

**Q:** What are some of the rewards?

**A:** *Debbie Bowzaylo:* When I started the business that's what I was doing, along with my kids; I was doing all those jobs. And then, through time, I had people come into my shop, come into my life, and eventually I hired them. And the rewards are that myself, as well as my employees, have a job that we like doing and it's helping us all through life; it's fulfilling us.

**Q:** What advice would you give to other potential entrepreneurs, regardless of the type of business they are looking to start?

**A:** *Debbie Bowzaylo:* I would give the advice that, your employees – treat them like gold, and use them because that's what you hired them for. Everyone has a gift, everyone has knowledge, and we all have knowledge and gifts that the other person may not have. And if you use that knowledge and gifts to their full potential, it makes your life much easier. It just makes the business run smoothly. Trust your employees and allow them to do the things that they can do.

## Cutting through the red tape with BizPaL

One of the biggest frustrations you may experience starting your new business is making sure you have the necessary registration, licensing, and permit requirements in order.

Early last year, Service Alberta launched an excellent new resource called BizPaL, a one-stop-shop website that guides you to all the local, provincial, or federal licenses and permits you may need to start your business.

Service Alberta's Assistant Director of Communications, Mike Berezowsky, says that what used to take a person hours or even days to search now takes about five minutes through an anonymous three-step process on the BizPaL website.

"Industry Canada partnered with the Province and its municipalities to reduce red tape by consolidating each level of government's various business license requirements into one place", he said. "So far, the information from twenty-six communities is covered, which represents about 63 percent of Alberta's population."

Service Alberta expects to expand the BizPaL site in the coming months.

"The Growth Alberta Economic Alliance ([www.growthalberta.com](http://www.growthalberta.com)), a Regional Economic Development Authority made up of several municipalities north of Edmonton, is working with us to expand and reduce the amount of work it takes for people to start a business," says Berezowsky.

**For more information on the BizPaL program in your region, please visit [www.bizpal.alberta.ca](http://www.bizpal.alberta.ca)**

## Spotlight on...



### Community Futures Tawatinaw Region (Athabasca)

**Q:** Before coming to see you, how important is it for prospective entrepreneurs to have done some market research on their prospective business?

**A:** *Norm Bates, General Manager:* We don't often see a great deal of research already having been done by prospective entrepreneurs who come to see us. We're quite used to and quite prepared to work with the client through that market research process. We have a resource library here that's accessible during normal hours by prospective entrepreneurs. It's becoming less of an issue now with high speed Internet access in the rural area, but we have a stand alone computer here that has high speed internet that can be used free of charge by prospective entrepreneurs to do business related research.

**Q:** What has the correlation been between the economic downturn and the number of new business start ups you are seeing this year?

**A:** *Norm Bates:* Every quarter I get a phone call from the School of Business at the University of Alberta and they're doing a survey and they're looking at trends, what's happening out there. I responded to one in late June, and they asked is your business slower, about the same or are you busier than you were this

time last year. And I think I'm the only respondent who's got positives all the way through. This recession's good for our business and yes, we're seeing a lot more activity.

A lot of people that have maybe been forced into it through job loss or people who are being proactive and saying, 'you know, I don't think my company's going to be able to keep me on for much longer; maybe I should be looking at fulfilling my dream, living my dream and starting up the business that I've always wanted to do.'"

**Q:** What are some of the common pitfalls new businesses fall into that halt their success that could be avoided?

**A:** *Norm Bates:* Many of them are management error. What I would like to see is the statistic on business failures amongst businesses that have a solid business plan. Now businesses can still fail whether their business plan is sound, but it would be interesting to see what the percentages are, and I suspect that the vast majority of businesses that fail didn't have adequate business plans in place or maybe they reacted too slow.

The concept that Michael Gerber points out very well in the *E-myth Revisited* and it's something that quite often gets a surprised response from potential entrepreneurs is that too much business can sink you just as fast as not enough. We hear common statements from people that you're not supposed to make money for the first three years. It may turn out that way, but, boy, you should be planning on making money from day one.

Another one we sometimes hear is that, well, I won't draw a salary for the

first two years. Why would you work that hard for two years before you paid yourself? If the business can't stand on its own; I mean you have to make sacrifices when building a business, but if it can't stand on its own from the get go, then, again, is it something that you should be doing?

**Q:** What advice would you give to someone thinking about starting his / her own business?

**A:** *Norm Bates:* Have a great idea, believe in it, make it different from your competition. You want to fill a niche. You want customers to have a reason to do business with you. You have to be prepared to work very hard, and often times for little return.

The next thing would be to plan. Go through the business plan process. The worst thing a person can do with a business plan is stick it in a desk drawer and not look at it again. It should be reviewed at least on a quarterly basis with an idea of what's changed in my business in the last three months. Maybe there's an opportunity that you can take advantage of. Maybe there's a product line that isn't working out as you thought it might. Do you need to carry that? Maybe you should change your focus.

The best thing you can do is seek advice. Everyone knows a successful business man or business woman. Find a mentor; someone who doesn't have a financial interest in your business but is willing to provide guidance and suggestions and be a sounding board.

That can also include staff at your local Community futures office.

**For information on Community Futures programs for the Athabasca region, please contact:**

*Community Futures, Tawatinaw Region*

10611 100 Avenue, Westlock, AB T7P 2J4 P. 1.888.349.2903

[www.cftr.ab.ca](http://www.cftr.ab.ca)

**For information on Community Futures programs for the Lac La Biche region, please contact:**

*Community Futures, Lac La Biche*

10106 102 Avenue, Box 2188, Lac La Biche, AB TOA 2C0 P. 780.623.2662

[www.cflb.com](http://www.cflb.com)

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- *Key advantage:* Variety and control over time between projects.
- *Key disadvantage:* Fee-for-service with no benefits; Canada Revenue Agency could view as employee for tax.

**Brokering**

- Markets other people's talents or products for a fee.
- *Key advantage:* profit potential.
- *Key disadvantage:* reputation of others.

**Talent-pooling**

- Consortium of different talents to bid on contracts
- *Key advantage:* team approach that shares strength, expertise, and risk to complete large contracts then disbands
- *Key disadvantage:* abilities of team members affects all

When you know for sure what form of self-employment is your best match there are three ways to get into that business that you must consider. You can buy a franchise, buy an existing business, or you can start your own business from scratch. Each has its bonuses and challenges. *The Self-Employment: Is it for me?* workbook referred to above explains the advantages and disadvantages of each.

Working for yourself rather than someone else can be a dream-come-true for you as long as you invest the time and energy up front to ensure success with self-employment.

From market research to business plan writing to financing and marketing, there are many tools and resources available to you to help you get started on your journey. Chances are good that you will succeed if you have the right vision, if you work hard, and if you persevere until you do succeed.

## Quick Links: Starting your own business



**Aboriginal Business Canada**  
[www.ainc-inac.gc.ca](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca)

**Alberta Entrepreneurs Association**  
[www.aea.ab.ca](http://www.aea.ab.ca)

**Alberta Women Entrepreneurs**  
[www.awebusiness.com](http://www.awebusiness.com)

**BizPal**  
[www.bizpal.alberta.ca](http://www.bizpal.alberta.ca)

**Business Development Bank of Canada**  
[www.bdc.ca](http://www.bdc.ca)

**Business Development Centre**  
[www.bdc-canada.com](http://www.bdc-canada.com)

**The Business Link**  
[www.canadabusiness.ab.ca](http://www.canadabusiness.ab.ca)

**Canada Business: Services for Entrepreneurs**  
[www.canadabusiness.ca](http://www.canadabusiness.ca)

**Community Futures of Alberta Network**  
[www.cfna.ca](http://www.cfna.ca)

**Community Futures business loans**  
[www.roadahead.biz](http://www.roadahead.biz)

**Entrepreneur**  
[www.entrepreneur.com](http://www.entrepreneur.com)

**The Entrepreneurship Institute of Canada**  
[www.entinst.ca](http://www.entinst.ca)

**Entrepreneurship Learning Centre**  
[www.elcnetwork.ca](http://www.elcnetwork.ca)

**Government of Alberta Programs and Services**  
[www.programs.alberta.ca](http://www.programs.alberta.ca)

**Industry Canada**  
[www.ic.gc.ca](http://www.ic.gc.ca)

**Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities**  
[www.hrsdc.gc.ca](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca)

**Western Economic Diversification Canada**  
[www.wd.gc.ca](http://www.wd.gc.ca)

These links are being provided as a convenience and for informational purposes only; they do not constitute an endorsement or an approval by Alberta Employment and Immigration of any of the products, services or opinions of the corporation or organization or individual. AE&I bears no responsibility for the accuracy, legality or content of the external site or for that of subsequent links. Contact the external site for answers to questions regarding its content.



## Community Job Seeker Events

*“Opportunities for Women in Construction”* Information Session / Career Decision Making Workshop is coming to your community. Ladies, come see if this is a potential career option for you!

**Athabasca  
Information Session / Career Decision  
Making Workshop  
December 8 & 9**

*\*Location and times will be  
provided upon registration.*

**Call today or register online to reserve  
your spot.**

For more information,  
please contact  
**Women Building Futures**  
Toll Free at 1.866.452.1201  
or local 780.452.1200  
or visit  
[www.womenbuildingfutures.com](http://www.womenbuildingfutures.com)

## The Business Link

*Alberta's Business Information Service*

### Business Link Guest Advisor Program

You can speak one-on-one with “Guest Advisors” about the challenges you face in business. Call 1-800-272-9675 between the hours of 12:00 noon and 4:00 p.m. for the following areas of expertise:

**Mondays:** Business Management and Operations/Business Coaching

**Tuesdays:** Legal Guest Advisors

**Wednesdays:** Accounting Guest Advisors

**Thursdays:** Financial Guest Advisors



## Business start-up quick tips

Once you have decided that self-employment is for you and you are beginning to form your business ideas the Alberta Learning Information Service website ([www.alis.alberta.ca](http://www.alis.alberta.ca)) can provide you with resources and tips to help you get started:

- **Tip 1:** Talk to people who are self-employed.
- **Tip 2:** Identify the knowledge, experience and skills you will need to succeed (e.g. organizational skills, time management skills, public speaking skills, bookkeeping knowledge).
- **Tip 3:** Research how to set up a business; your marketplace; and trends that influence current and future product and service demand.
- **Tip 4:** Scan the business section of your local newspaper daily to find out what is already happening and what future products and services will be needed.
- **Tip 5:** Visit your local public library, Chamber of Commerce, or Regional Development Branch to find business-related information and entrepreneur training programs.

When you are ready to make your business happen your local Community Futures office (see Spotlight On feature on Page 4) can guide you through these critical business start-up steps:

- **Step 1:** Assessment (developing and evaluating your ideas and business potential)
- **Step 2:** Business Plan (planning, financing, marketing etc.)
- **Step 3:** Start-Up (business name, registration, licenses, accounting etc.) See article on Page 3 about Biz-PaL, Service Alberta's new one-stop-shop business licensing website
- **Step 4:** Financing (finding the money to operate)
- **Step 5:** First Year (managing day-to-day operations and planning for growth).

**Let's say you want to sell pickles. These are some of the questions you may need to ask:**

**Who will buy my pickles?** What do my customers need? What price will they pay for my pickles? What size of jar do they prefer? What are their requirements for shipping that would affect jar size and/or shape?

**What are the characteristics of my customers?** Who buys and eats pickles - what is their age, gender, income? Where do they live? Is the combination of dill and carrot an appealing one?

**Who else is producing the same or similar product - at what cost?** Can I compete with their price, quality, etc? If nobody else is producing such specialty pickles, why aren't they?

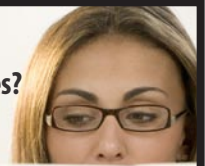
**What advantages can I offer that your competition can't or doesn't?** It may be that your carrots are organically grown or that your pickles are an Alberta made product.

**What about marketing?** Are there expensive start-up costs involved with going into pickle production? Are there major legal requirements needed to get the name or label information I want? Will I be one of many companies selling pickles to people in my market area?

**Is this an area with an expanding market or one that is declining?** Can I make a profit? Does trend data indicate an increasing consumption of pickled products? Is there a growing or shrinking body of scientific evidence about possible health risks associated with eating too many pickled foods?

**What is the future for my business?** Do I visualize my pickles on the shelves of all Canada Safeway stores in Alberta?...in Western Canada?

Looking for work?  
Looking for employees?  
We can help.



### Alberta Employment and Immigration Service Centres

**Athabasca Alberta Service Centre**  
3rd Floor, Duniece Centre  
4810 50 Street  
Athabasca, AB T9S 1C9  
p. 780.675.2243 f. 780.675.2655  
e-mail: Athabasca.LMIC@gov.ab.ca  
<http://employment.alberta.ca>

**Lac La Biche Alberta Service Centre**  
Provincial Building  
9503 Beaverhill Road  
Lac La Biche, AB T0A 2C0  
p. 780.623.5215 f. 780.623.5489  
e-mail: LacLaBiche.LMIC@gov.ab.ca  
<http://employment.alberta.ca>

**For more information on Alberta Employment & Immigration centres and services, call the Alberta Career Information Hotline at 1.800.661.3753 or visit <http://employment.alberta.ca>**

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Visit Alberta-Canada's website at [www.alberta-canada.com](http://www.alberta-canada.com). The *Small Business Start-Up* page is a gateway to a great deal of information about starting a small business. It includes information about:

- Regional Development Branch offices in Alberta
- Small business guides
- Small business profiles
- Links to other key resources such as the Business Link website at [www.cbcs.org/alberta](http://www.cbcs.org/alberta) in Edmonton.