



HOW TO  
*Build a  
Handmade  
Business*

HOW TO TURN YOUR HOBBY INTO A BUSINESS  
AND QUIT YOUR DAY JOB FOR GOOD

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# Hi, I'm Carolyn!

*Encouraging, empowering & equipping  
entrepreneurs, authors, artists and influencers.*

I have been involved in the business industry for over 20 years in different capacities – as the co-owner of a Construction company, to an internationally recognized artisan with Living Skies Fibre Studio and a National award winning author.

With an education in Marketing, Advertising & Communications I can help you in various aspects of your business or organization.

I have had the opportunity to teach workshops through the Chamber of Commerce, Arts Centres, municipalities, and Community Futures.

Additional education includes: leadership, photography, branding, social media, business coach, destination marketing and downtown improvement.



What do  
you want  
your life to  
look & feel  
like?

What is your motivation for building your artisan business?

People with purpose, goals, and vision are able to invest their energy in creativity & focus on living a positive life.

Is it time to stop dreaming of what you want your life to look and feel like and start doing?

## *Let's create an action plan*

Throughout this workbook you will be putting pen to paper and start to see how your dream can become a reality by taking action steps in the right direction.

I would encourage you to take steps of action this year. Don't wait. Imagine what is waiting for YOU if you step out and figure it out as you go? I just want you to not regret not doing things that are a part of your heart because the timing isn't perfect. It never will be. Believe me...I know. We make it perfect by our actions and sacrifice.

# Ask yourself

Why do you do what you do?

What makes you unique?

Are you leveraging what makes you unique?

Does what you are currently doing support the life you are trying to create?

# Discovery



*Discover what you like to do, do it well & make it unique.*

This is a tricky step. You need to discover your unique niche. This step will either help you move forward or cause you to fall down.

Sometimes our excitement to create beautiful things to put out into the world gets in the way of discovering our uniqueness.

Just because something is trendy right now, does not guarantee that it will be popular in 6 months from now. Investing in creating trends will burn you out and then eventually fizzle out your business. Stop chasing shining objects.

In the previous page I asked you "What makes you unique?" There are many artists around the world creating in your medium - what makes you different than everyone else?

When I started my fibre business I had to find my unique place so I wasn't lost in the already overcrowded industry. I found that people were intrigued that I was located in Saskatchewan so I built on that. My business name was Living Skies Fibre Studio, I named my patterns after Saskatchewan forests and I hand-dyed my yarn with colours from Saskatchewan scenery photos that I took. This created my brand and I found my place. And people loved it and I love creating it.

# Who are your ideal customers?

01

## EVERYONE IS NOT YOUR CUSTOMER

Your family and friends are not your customers. Your customers are the ones that pay you money for your work.

02

## RETAINING RATHER THAN ACQURING

Your best customers are not the ones that purchase your artwork once, but the ones that continue to purchase your artwork for years to come.

Spend your time building into your repeat customers rather than trying to chase down new ones. Once you have created the connection then they will be your greatest form of advertising.

03

## VISUALIZE

When you are creating and promoting your art visualize your ideal customer in your mind and create and speak to that individual directly.

04

## LISTEN

Allow your customers to help grow your business. Listen to what they are asking for, or suggestions they may have. As artists, a part of our identity is attached to our art, but input can be a valuable tool to grow your business.

When I was trying to find my niche I listened to what my customers were getting excited about with my designs and yarn. They helped guide and encourage me to grow my business in ways that were exciting and profitable.

05

## CONNECT

You need to create the connection with your audience. Your art is an extension of you. Which means they are buying a piece of you. Invest in connecting with your customers and it will encourage growth and longevity in your artisan business.

# *Discover your ideal customer*

What are the demographics of your ideal customer?

What are their interests, hobbies, where do they shop?

What are their goals?

How can you serve & support them?



# Email lists are gold!

Email lists are the best way to connect directly with your customers. Your customers are 5 times more likely to see an email than a social media post from your business. With Canadian CASL requirements, you are required by law to ask permission to send emails to your customers. Which means that the email addresses you have are those that are interested in what you are doing. Therefore you have a captive audience of those that want to be reached by you.

By relying on social media you are essentially renting space. You are either paying to be seen or battling algorithms. Emails land right in your customers inbox.

What should your emails include?

- You need to write emails that will be read - so you need content that solves problems and/or serves your audience.
- Send content that includes promotions, announcements or launches.
- Educate your audience on your business, products or services.
- Consistency- be consistent in your emails, are they monthly, bi-weekly?
- Communication- keep the email conversational. Use the space to answer customer questions, you are the expert of your artisan business.
- Create action - Give the reader something to do: do they need to visit your website for a promotion? Do they need to visit your blog for more information? Should they tell a friends about an upcoming market? Do they need to register for something?
- Structure: using an email program like MailChimp can be an easy way to collect and send emails. You can personalize it and the automation feature is helpful as well.

As you are writing your emails, keep in mind why you sign up for email lists. What content are you hoping to receive, what information are you hoping to receive, what are you trying to learn? Don't be discouraged if someone unsubscribes because it means that you are narrowing down who your ideal market is and that is a good thing!

This is the best form of communication for your artisan business.

# Are you engaging?

— “ —

Strive not to be a success, but rather to be of value. ~ Albert Einstein

— „ —

How are you connecting with your social media followers and those on your email list?

- Are you starting up conversations with those on your social media platform? What social media platform do you enjoy using the most? Connect there - don't spread yourself so thin on many platforms that you feel overwhelmed. Then start to build on your connections there.
- How can you collaborate with others? Collaboration instead of competition.
- Your clients will connect with you because of who you are. Every personality connects to people differently, there are people out there will need someone just like you to connect with.
- Start sharing what you do, what you offer and how you can help. Whether that is on your social media platform or as a guest on a podcast or webinar. Look for opportunities - don't be afraid to ask for the opportunity.
- Stay connected with your email list. Your customers are 5 times more likely to read your email than your social media posts. Create content that solves problems and is empowering.

The more you choose to spend your time building into your connections, the faster your business will grow. Focus on why you started this artisan business.

By creating connections with your customers they become repeat customers. Word of mouth is your best form of advertising. Interesting stats: People trust the opinions of their friends and family 92% of the time, other consumers 70% and ads and self-promotion 20%.

Stop the cycle of busy and get out there and just start doing what you are passionate about! Your customers will see your heart behind what you are doing and you will see your business grow like never before!

“

Competition only exists if you are doing the same thing as everyone else.



# Content Calendar

I always hear "I don't know what to post" - here are a few suggestions to get you started.

Educational post	Something you are passionate about	Customer review	Share a "in case you missed it" post	Share your current top selling item
A recent blog post	Promote a local non-profit fundraiser	Favourite local shop -not yours	Do a "live" tour of your studio	Recommend a local restaurant
Share an inspiring local story	Share your favourite recipe	Poll This or That	Before & After photo	Share an end of week success story
Thank customers for their support in 2020	Fun Fact about your or your shop	Inspiring quote	Share a client photo	Show behind the scenes/ unboxing of new supplies
Share a client success story	Tutorial How to directions that benefit your customers	Answer a common question	Throw back of your business	Share your why? Why did you start your business
Ask followers about content that they want to see	Favourite influencer	Ask followers to follow you on your other platforms	Stories: a day in the life	Share a thankful post

# Know your numbers

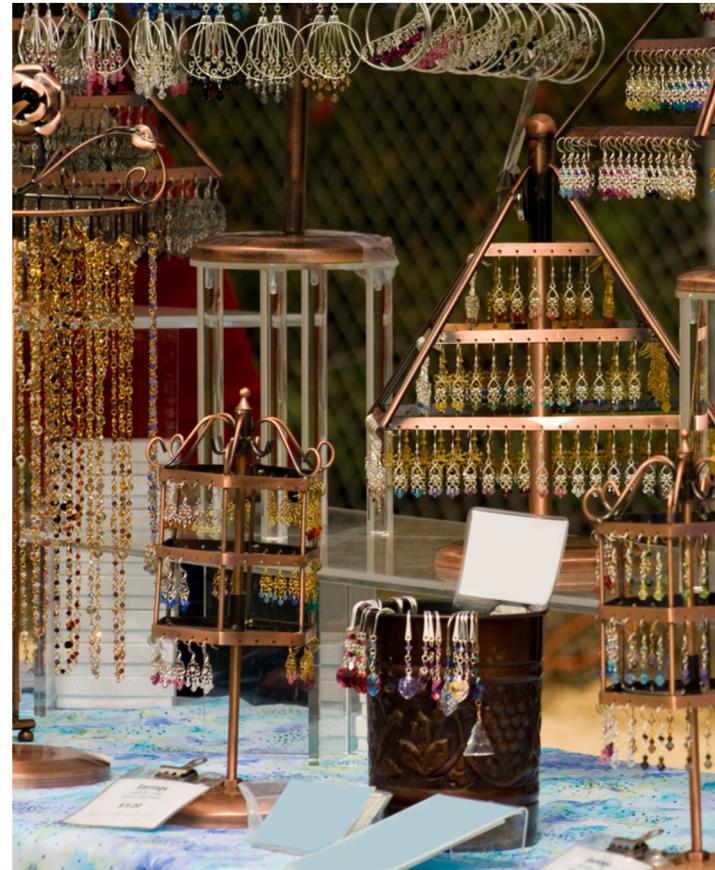
Numbers are important. You need to make money. Sure you are creating and doing something that you love but the goal is to be paid for it. Isn't that everyone's life goal?

Your time is valuable - stop giving it away. I don't care if you are just sitting and binge watching a series on Netflix while you create. You need to be paid for your time and skills.

Research the market and price accordingly. Don't undercut your competition it only makes your product look cheap.

Before you quit your day job you need to figure out what your expenses are each month. What are your material cost to profit ratio? How much do you need to make in a month? What time commitment is required to reach that goal?

The following page will help you answer those questions.



## Balancing the books

Give options when taking payments, many customers like etransfers, PayPal and Square.

All these methods can connect to a bookeeping program and save you time with inputting all your sales and expenses for you.

Use a program that makes it easy such as Quickbooks online. It even comes with an app so if you are on the go a lot you will always have access to your accounts.

To help keep business and personal income and expenses separate I opened a separate bank account with Simplii because it has no fees. I connected my account to Quickbooks and every time I use my bank card the expenses are automatically uploaded and I only need to choose the expense account to attach it to.

I would rather spend my time creating, not doing bookeeping.

If this all this financial talk is overwhelming for you or causing great stress - hire it out.

# Let's get real

When you are figuring out the average price of items sold you have to take into consideration if you are going to be selling wholesale. Wholesale helps to sell quantities but you will have to adjust your pricing accordingly.

If your item sells for \$50, most stores want at least 30%, That equals \$15, which leaves you \$35. Now you have to figure out what your materials costs and labour are. Are you making a profit?

Here is a helpful formula:

$$\text{Materials} + \text{Labour} + \text{Profit} = \text{Wholesale price}$$

$$\text{Wholesale price} \times 2 = \text{Cost}$$

## Is it possible?

\$	Monthly living expenses
\$	Monthly business expenses
\$	Monthly expense total

Average price of item sold \$ \_\_\_\_\_

- cost to produce item \$ \_\_\_\_\_

= Profit \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Monthly expense total / Profit \$ \_\_\_\_\_

How many sales do you have to make in a month to cover your expenses?

What is your goal profit for a month?

How many sales do you have to make in a month to cover your expenses and make a profit?

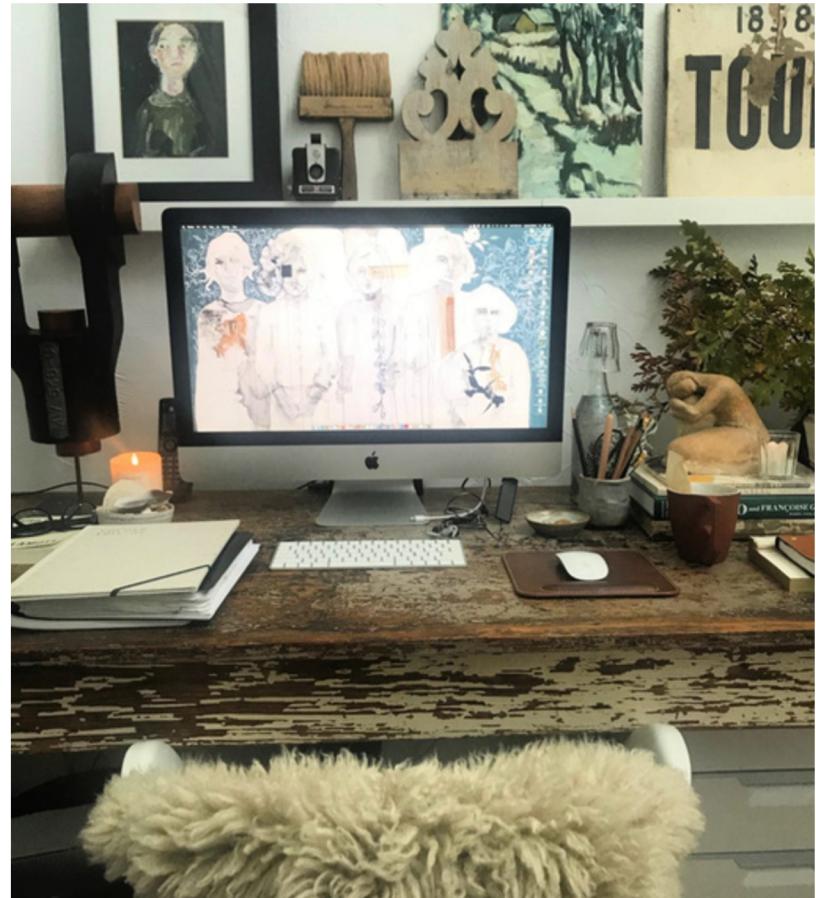
# Your Home Office

Creating intentional spaces

Working from home has become very common over the past year. What many are now learning is that it is important to create an intentional space.

If you have already been creating and selling your items I would imagine that you have that space organized and operational.

Turning your creative outlet into a business takes a little extra. Once you are selling your items how are you fulfilling orders? How are you keeping track of your paperwork? All of this requires space.



When working from home you need to treat it like you would a 9-5. Set work hours, lunch and coffee breaks, book off holiday time.

In order to make your home-based artisan business a success you have to give it respect and give it all you got!

Run your own race – Be uniquely – YOU!



# Thank You!

Thank you so much for downloading *How to Build a Handmade Business: Turn Your Hobby into a Business and Quit Your Day Job for Good!* I'm so excited to be part of your journey as you take your passion to the next level. I created this resource to empower makers like you to build something meaningful and sustainable. Be sure to check your inbox—I'll be sending more tips, encouragement, and behind-the-scenes insights to help you stay focused and fired up. And I'd love to connect with you on social media—don't be shy, come say hi and share your progress! You've got this, and I'm cheering you on every step of the way.

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