

• The START Series • Skills •



Business Basics
Educate • Experiment • Empower



BUSINESS BASICS - The START Series is a do-it-yourself, walk-through of questions and prompts to determine if you have something to start a home business. It is broken down, **Bitesized**, into 5 part segments. This could be done in 5 evenings or 5 weeks. The intention is to help you help yourself and figure out answers to ***What kind of business can I start? What business would I be thrilled starting? What could be the angle my business has that others don't? What resources do I have available to start a business? and Do I have the temperament to start a business?*** It's a sequence designed to bring out your individuality and inclinations for business. Completing **The START Series** will give a good assessment of where you stand in skills and abilities and where you might start in creating your business.

The **START Series** is a private business coach set at your own pace with the privacy to think long and deep. It's for people who are smart but just need a bit of a start in asking the right questions. It offers the right prompts to propose individualized business prospects. Self-search and self-serve. That fits right along with the home business industry - self-supporting. It's also very hands on. The efforts put in will determine the results you get out. **The START Series** helps set the foundation for a business direction based on your aptitudes and accomplishments.

When thinking about starting a business one of the first questions someone asks is, ***“What kind of business can I start?”*** While no one can give that answer but you, there are some things that will lead in the right direction. To answer that question and a few others is why the **START Series** was developed.



The **S** part of **The START Series** stands for **SKILLS**. There is no getting around the fact that there has to be some level of skills, smarts and strengths involved to start a business. And you have to know what they are. Sometimes we have a sense of what we've got going for us but it doesn't really become clear until it's out in the open. **The START Series** helps you do that.

If you want to bounce ideas off of someone do it. But get someone who will challenge you to dig deep, not someone to give you answers. (*If someone has to give you answers then starting a business isn't for you.*) Also don't get someone with a combative attitude, challenging and combative are two different things. **The START Series** exposes you, makes you vulnerable, so there needs to be a free flow of ideas for examination, contention will only stifle your business creativity.

So answer the questions completely. Really explore your experiences. Go back through your history. Get as much information down *on paper* as you can. What you put down will become your working papers so don't second guess or hold back. Write everything you can think of or remember. Don't rush this process. Be thorough. The more you record the better you enable yourself to explore options. Put in the effort. Pay the price.

So stop right here, print off **The START Series: Skills** questionnaire and begin the journey.



The START Series: Skills

- Q1 What have you gone to school for?
- Q2 What community classes have you taken?
- Q3 What hobbies have you done on your own? Would you do any of these again?
- Q4 What are some of your past jobs?
- Q5 What are some of the services that you have performed for free?
- Q6 What media outlets (radio, tv, cable, etc.) have you been on?
- Q7 What you tried out or auditioned for?
- Q8 What shows do you watch regularly?
- Q9 What speaking opportunities have you had? Where and what was the topic?
- Q10 What articles or books have you written or published? What are the topics?
- Q11 What magazines, books or blogs do you read and subscribe to?
- Q12 What clubs have you been a part of? Why?
- Q13 What organizations have you or do you support? Why?



Q14 What are your favorite places to visit? Why?

Q15 What groups have you been in charge of?

Q16 What types of areas (beach, desert, resort, poor, etc.) have lived in or are very familiar with?

Q17 What places have you lived or visited? What were your favorites? Why?

Q18 What are you happiest doing? Why?

Q19 What have you taught someone else to do?

Q20 What have you learned to do that you can re-teach?

Q21 What have you seen someone else do that you've thought that you could do better?

Q22 What items or ideas have you taken and tweaked to use? Why?

Q23 What have you wished someone would make?

Q24 What are some things that you've wanted to learn?

Q25 What are some of the awards or recognition that you have received?



Now that you've finished **The START Series: Skills** questionnaire you have information written down particular to you. Now is the time to *analyze* it. You'll pick out pieces here and there that show some life and work patterns. It gives a clearer sense of your personality and some specific directions will start to emerge.

First, categorize your skills and strengths from information in your answers into industries. For example, a semester of flat pattern design would be categorized under *clothing, design* and *construction*. A community computer class would fall under *computers* and *technology*. A certification course for a concealed weapons permit could be listed under *safety, operations* and *outdoors*. People tend to follow patterns. You are finding yours, even some you might not have articulated previously.

Here's a good **Categories List** (feel free to add to it) to work with:

administrative, advertising, agriculture, arts, automotive, beauty, business, clothing, communications, community, computers, consultant, construction, creative, design, distribution, electronics, education, entertainment, finance, fitness, food, garden, government, health, home, hospitality, investment, labor, legal, management, manufacturing, media, medical, military, non-profit, operations, outdoors, planner, real estate, recreation, repair, retail, sales, science, services, shopping, sports, teaching, technology, travel, transportation, writing.



Second, pull out the industries (from the Categories List) with your repeated entries. Pick out the industries that you have multiple skills, strengths or smarts listed. Compile a list of those. We're looking for common threads. If there are some with just one item it can move with the other groups *if there is a strong attachment to it*. For example these are industry categories that I would pull out:

Technologies	Design	Teaching	Art
Community Mac Class	City scarf, shirt	Leadership lessons	BFA degree
InDesign	City brochures	Craft classes	Art classes
Illustrator	Logos	Corporate Art Retreat	Mag illustrations
Maintain Social Media	Landscape	Children's programs	Paintings
Maintain Website/Blog	Parade Float		Writing art articles

Plus I might add this, even if there are not many skills, because I have a strong attachment to it:

Sports

College Intramural's Referee
City sport's teams

As a side note, although there is a weeding out process going on keep all of the working papers. It is valuable personal information that can be used in other applications. Also, don't just *think* about the processes going on here. Actually, write it down. Like paper and pencil. Okay, maybe keyboard and computer. But get it down visually.



Third, make a list of industries in their order of strength of skill. Meaning, the industry with your strongest skills goes first on the list and down the line. There won't be a specific number attribution to each skill but a one time workshop would not rank as high as a degree for instance. You should feel pretty confident in your top tier categories. Now you have a list of industries that you have abilities in, starting with your strongest. These are your *Strength Industries*.

Fourth, with the list of your Strength Industries look for associations that naturally or logically go together. Okay, maybe a few illogical connections as well. Take your Strength Industries, starting with the first on your list, and connect categories. If *food* is a strength industry then make combinations of *food* and other industries from your list. For example, *food* and *garden* are a natural fit. Or *food* and *home*. Or *food* and *science*. Or *food* and *sports*. Try *food* and *shopping*. Even *food* and *shopping* and the *military*. Don't worry about a specific business just make creative combinations. Make many sets. These are only paper partnerships, no commitments, so think differently.



Fifth, now this is where you take the Strength Industries combinations and create services or products that fit. Though we are looking long term at a home-based operation these are just paper possibilities. You can think and write whatever you can dream. The jobs don't really have to be jobs that are exclusively run from home nor do they even have to exist. We are thinking without restrictions. It's very inexpensive to do so and it just might open up avenues not previously seen. This may be a bit more complex or creative thinking than usual but it's a good exercise for the business minded. There are difficulties in running a business that require creative approaches or out of the ordinary avenues. It will be a valuable exertion.

Let's look at some of my strength industry combinations and build on those. It's much easier to be creative about something I know as opposed to something I am not familiar with like - *medical* and *investment* - definitely over my head. I'll work with *Art* and *Teaching*. Here we go...

- Teaching people art principles, painting or drawing classes (*easy thoughts, but okay*)
- Lectures on topics in art history, art collecting, art preservation, art curating (*still standard*)
- Teaching art in schools, businesses, community centers, hospitals, banks (*better*)
- Develop an art museum guide for specific museums or a gallery guide (*interesting*)
- Teaching Healing art, Stress reducing art, Collaborative art (*a little out of the ordinary*)
- Put on an art exhibition in a private home with mine and other's artwork (*different*)
- Consultation for the emerging art collector, escorting collector to galleries (*yes I like it*)
- Offer a corporate class on team building using art, give them the collaborative art (*bingo*)

I would go further but you get the idea. We're looking for the foundation of possibilities to consider. All of these ideas are workable but pushing beyond the obvious is the goal. Break out of your boundaries. Don't be limiting. Some of the brainstorming ideas would require strengthening skill sets if implemented. That's alright. Write it anyway. Remember these are just paper pursuits, very cheap. Really think deeply about what your Industry Strengths could offer.



Lastly, let's review what we've done with the answers to **The START Series: SKILLS** questions

Analyze Your Information

- 1) Categorize Skills and Strengths
- 2) Repeated Entry Industries
- 3) Order in Strength of Skill
- 4) Make Strength Industries Associations
- 5) Create Services and Products

At this point you have a great start at possibilities that match your **SKILLS**. There is no need to adapt each of these to a home business yet. Remember this is a 5 part series. We have other sections to complete to round out your options. I hope **Business Basics - The START Series: SKILLS** have given you a greater vision of what your Strength Industries are and how you might pursue them.



Shannon Christensen

Glad to be a part of your journey.

Let **Business Basics - The START Series: THRILLS** continue with you answering the next question,
What business would I be thrilled starting?