

## Before You Get Started as a Food Entrepreneur

Starting a food business is no easy task. Before investing your time, money, and effort, you should investigate the world you will be entering as a small business owner. You will have to prepare for the challenges to come. Small businesses require careful planning, dedication, an understanding of financial issues, marketing knowledge, and management skills to be successful. As a **food** business owner, the food you produce can have a direct effect on your customer's health and safety. In fact, a food product that has been improperly processed could cause serious illness and even death. Therefore, a business that makes and sells food must be knowledgeable of and comply with a number of complex regulations on the local, state, and federal level. You will also need to learn about food processing, packaging, and safe food-handling practices.

This might be the right time to step back and evaluate your characteristics as a successful food entrepreneur. You may want to consider:

### **Does my personality type fit with the job demands?**

As a food entrepreneur, you will have to be self-motivated. You will have to develop projects, set up meetings, manage work issues, organize your time, etc. You will have to be able to work with others, give instruction, and make demands. Will you be able to make a tough decision concerning an employee? Will you be able to handle the long workdays with little reward during start-up?

### **Are you willing and able to develop a business and marketing plan?**

The business and marketing plan is often the most overlooked part of a start-up food business. It is also essential for securing financial help and promoting your business. A business and marketing plan serves as the road map to where you would like your business to go. If you do not like the idea of thinking through and constructing a business and marketing plan, you may want to reconsider your entry into the food business.

### **How will you deal with money issues?**

Are you going to use your own savings? Do you wish to get business loans or borrow from family?

Before you get started with your business, take the time to thoroughly investigate what it means to become a self-sufficient entrepreneur. The more unknowns you can take out of the equation, the more likely you will be to succeed. Take the time, do the planning, seek help when you need it, and you should be on the path to a successful business venture.