

SUCCESSFULLY START YOUR OWN BUSINESS

by FRANK THAXTON

This book has been produced for people considering establishing their own-businesses. It has been carefully prepared but is not necessarily exhaustive and is intended as a general guide only. It is no substitute for specialist professional assistance and those seriously considering starting their own-business are strongly advised to seek their own legal, accounting and other relevant advice before committing themselves. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this manual, changes may have been made in the law or elsewhere following publication. The publisher and the author make no representations or warranties about the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this book and specifically disclaim any implied warranties. Neither the author nor the publisher can be held responsible for any losses incurred as a result of any omission or error whether for special, incidental, consequential, or other damages.

About the author

After completing an engineering degree at Imperial College London, Frank Thaxton started his career in the manufacturing industry, where he later qualified as an accountant. After holding various senior finance roles with UK and international responsibilities, Frank moved into venture capital for 10 years, investing in smaller, entrepreneurial and start-up companies in the engineering, electronics, software and communications industries. He formed his own consultancy business in 1985 and has advised and coached many individuals and companies across a wide variety of sectors. He has advised on starting and growing businesses, mergers and acquisitions, marketing and operations, financing, business sales, as well as on employment issues. He has contributed articles on finance for the smaller firm, on starting up in business, and has given talks and run seminars in the same area. He has more recently been involved in coaching people through the start of a new career, specialising in the area of setting up, or buying into, independent business. These have ranged from small shops and business service companies to large management buy-ins (up to £500m). He is passionate about helping people to start and run successful businesses.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Having spent many years advising and coaching people who wanted to start their own businesses (the majority of whom actually went ahead and did so), I see my job as helping people realise worthwhile dreams and turn them into reality. Some dreams should stay just that, dreams – to get us through the days, especially the tough days ‘on the job’. The dreams I’m talking about are those that need to be converted into success. Covering the complete agenda for starting a new business is a major piece of work – meriting a huge volume or series of volumes. This is a small book –

deliberately so. When printed off, it’s one to carry around and read on the train or bus, or in public places. You can write in it, make notes on it, or interleave your own pages of notes. This is the start of what I hope will be the best years of your life. In a survey a few years ago of many hundreds who had read this book, the vast majority were very happy to have started out on their own (the survey was carried out one year plus after their business start date) and included a few who had gone back to employed work! My aim is not to answer all of your questions or to teach you all you need to know to start out on your own-business. My aim is to set out most of the key issues, to widen your perspective, to give you a more reasoned and balanced look at your own ideas, to make you wiser, and to enable you to ask more pertinent questions of more people. I hope the advice you receive is realistic, the information relevant, and that it gives you more confidence to face the exciting challenge ahead.

Notes: Throughout the book I have used the masculine pronoun (‘he’, ‘him’, or ‘his’) not because most own-businesses are run by males, but because any other approach becomes either cumbersome or sounds affected. I have not sought to address issues that are different for men and women. I also use the word ‘family’ to describe the group of people closest to you, possibly including your partner, children, parents, friends. These are the people who will be interested in your progress, who can be affected by your decisions, and who can improve (or make more difficult) your daily life. I have also used the term ‘own-business’ as a generic to cover whatever business someone may be starting – whether retail, wholesale, manufacturing, franchising, or whatever. Again, this is for simplicity and straight-forwardness.

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