

Self-Employment

Many people have the “Entrepreneurial Spirit”; these are people with a desire or an idea to build a unique business of their own from the ground up. People experiencing disabilities can have the same spirit, and it should not be overlooked when the ground work is being done. If that road is to be explored, the same work needs to be done that was done prior to gaining any type of employment, including things like completing a ‘Discovery Package’ to ensure the right fit in Self-Employment will be found.

Another key element in supported Self-Employment is a family or personal support network. It has been noted by many successful entrepreneurs experiencing disabilities that professional support was not enough to ensure a viable venture. Families of the supported Self-Employer needed to take a vital role to ensure success. Often if a client shows interest in Self-Employment during the Discovery Process, the Employment Professional will task the individual, with the support of family, to undertake much of the market research. This will show the level of dedication to the plan.

There are two main approaches to business start-ups:

The first is the ‘**Lean Start-Up**’, which favours experimentation customer feedback and iterative design of a business plan (The Lean Manufacturing Approach was introduced in Japan in the 1990’s).

<https://hbr.org/2013/05/why-the-lean-start-up-changes-everything>

<http://theleanstartup.com/principles>

The second approach is the ‘**Business Model Canvas**’ which is a brain storming tool used by groups including supported Self-Employment candidates and their team to

map out areas on the canvas. In a nut shell, the tool is used instead of a business plan and the entire process can be done in a couple days! Harvard Business School has even wound down its renowned MBA Business Plan competition in favour of Business Model competitions.

<https://canvanizer.com/new/business-model-canvas>

Remember that "no" is a good answer to reach as early as possible; if the client is not dedicated, the market research is not feasible, or if it is too much work for the family then cut everyone's losses and move on....there are a million ways to make a living and Self-Employment is one way for some and then again, not for others.

If a Job Seeker is considering Self-Employment there are many resources that can help the Job Seeker to become self-employed:

- There is a resource on the *Employment for All* website that can help you. Click this link:
<http://www.employmentforall.ca/content/what/selfemployment/002.html>
and click on the "Microenterprise Guide".
- The *Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program* is available through Service Canada. This program helps entrepreneurs with disabilities build their business future by providing business information, training and development, mentoring and one-on-one counseling services. For more information visit <http://www.wd.gc.ca/eng/13643.asp>
- Square One: Saskatchewan's Business Resource Centre, offers a variety of services to help the province's entrepreneurs successfully establish their business. For more information visit <http://squareonesask.ca/>

- There have been many people with disabilities who had success in starting their own business. Below are links to stories about people who have taken something they love and turned into a business opportunity:
 - 'Just Watch ME' is a contest that is run in Western Canada every year for entrepreneurs with disabilities. Check out some of the entries and winners: <http://www.justwatchmecontest.ca/Entries/>
 - Taylor Layton Recycling: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nn5k0vSFa6c>
 - Emmy Barr: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jVX5BHmy6ys>