

Small Business Learning Pathway

If you're thinking about starting a small business start-up or side hustle, this learning pathway has everything you will need to know to get your fledgling enterprise up and running successfully.

You will learn:

- Entrepreneurial Mindset
- How to Create a Business Plan
- Bookkeeping and Finance
- How to start an online business
- Marketing – online and off
- Sales
- How to manage and grow your business

Entrepreneurial Mindset

[These 5 books will make you a better entrepreneur](#) Udemy.com

Running time: 83 min

Take a tour through five influential business books that will prepare you mentally and emotionally for what is ahead. Learn the skills you need to get through the inevitable roadblocks.

Please note: you will be required to create an account with Udemy to access this course.

[What Entrepreneurs Need to Know Before They Start](#) HSTalks

Running time: 30 min



This talk covers finding and filling a market void. Find opportunity in a niche market.

[Developing Your Product](#) Lynda.com

Running time: 1hr 12 min

Whether a service or a commodity, to move forward you must clearly define your business and research the market. Define the problem your business solves. Determine a product and revenue model. Build a go-to market strategy. Sample business plan included.

[Starting Your Business 101](#) Enterprise Toronto

These ten modules with supporting worksheets and checklists focus on the basics of starting a business. Your business NAICS code (North American Industry Classification System) is required when registering. You can search for a NAICS code on their [website](#).

Research, Planning and Writing a Business Plan

[Writing a Business Plan for a New Venture](#) HSTalks

Running time: 41 min

This is an overview for writing a business plan. It works through all its major components. Follow along and start drafting your business plan.

[Creating a Business Plan](#) Lynda.com

Running time: 1hr 12 min

Follow along and refine our business plan. Receive guidance on thinking through your sales strategy, day-to-day operations, staffing, and financial forecasting. Sample business plan provided. Cement your ideas and plans into a well written document.

[Business Fundamentals Online Training Program](#) Enterprise Toronto



Ten modules with supporting worksheets and checklists that focus on the basics of starting a small business such as Business Planning, Marketing, Financials/Accounting, Market Research and general information on Startups. Your business NAICS code is required when registering. You can search for a NAICS code on their [website](#).

[Start Your Own Small Business](#) Gale Courses

Running time: 24 hrs

Discover the secrets to successful entrepreneurship. You will learn how to pick the right opportunity for you, develop proven marketing techniques to easily build sales, explore traditional and nontraditional financing options, implement employee-management procedures, write business policies that help you build your business and finally, time-management techniques for entrepreneurs.

Financial Essentials

[Accounting Foundations: Bookkeeping](#) Lynda.com

Running time: 1 hr 39 min

Explore the four key steps in the bookkeeping process: analyzing transactions, recording the effects, summarizing the effects, and preparing financial reports. Effective bookkeeping is essential to keep track of your financial status.

[Basic Cash Transactions](#) HSTalks

Running time: 13 min

The cashbook is a simple way to record cash transactions reducing the risk of missing transactions and cash.

[Income Statement and Sales Ledger](#) HSTalks



16 min

Learn how to use these statements to monitor what money is owed and received through your business.

[Quickbooks 2019](#) O'Reilly for Public Libraries

Running time: 7 hrs 36 min

Use Quickbooks software for instantly creating accurate bookkeeping documents such as estimates, invoices, statements, deposits, etc. It will make sense of your financial reports and easily reconcile bank statements.

[Finance Essentials for Small Business](#) Lynda.com

Running time: 51 min

Learn about the five reasons so many small businesses fail. Learn strategies to manage your business well such as tracking your accounting, managing your operating cycle, and forecasting cash flow.

Start an Online Business

[Start Your Own Online Business](#) Gale Courses

Running time: 24 hrs

This course will give a solid foundation for creating and growing a successful digital business. Design a simple strategy to brand your business. You will learn how to create a build and launch your own website, as well as product development, how to engage prospective customers, and implement a process that will drive customers to your business.

[Ecommerce Fundamentals](#) Lynda.com



Running time: 1 hr 22 min

Choose the e-commerce model that's right for your business. Learn how to select a target industry or niche area, define the type of customer you're targeting, and select and validate your product idea. Get your product on the market, develop your brand, and sell your product either in your own online store or in marketplaces. Get tips for attracting customers, fulfilling orders, and managing your finances as the sales start rolling in.

[Get started with Google Analytics](#) Google

Learn how to collect data from your website and use it to improve your products, website design, marketing plan, and more.

[Data-Driven Marketing and Social Media](#) O'Reilly for Public Libraries

Running time: 53 min

Social media provides vast amounts of real-time information that organizations can put to use—if they know how to make sense of it. Several business experts demonstrate how social media can unveil insights into your users and your company.

Marketing and Sales

[Small Business Marketing](#) Lynda.com

Running time: 1 hr

Every small business is unique and so should its marketing be. Learn how to identify your target market, where to find them and get their attention. You will plan an initial social media campaign and measure its effectiveness. There will be guidance on whether you need professional assistance or can do it alone.

[Small Business Marketing on a Shoestring](#) Gale Courses

Running time: 24 hrs

Master cost-effective strategies including strategic partnerships, local marketing, search engine optimization, social networking, e-mail marketing, lead generation, and niche marketing.

[Sales Secrets for Small Business](#) Lynda.com

Running time: 49 min

To boost sales incorporate this three-step sales system (explore-present-act) into your own small business strategy. Introduction to small business sales: common-sense techniques such as asking questions, listening, and following up. And get tips to build your sales system.

Managing and Growing your Small Business

[Managing Your Small Business](#) Lynda.com

Running time: 1 hr

Once you have your business up and running, a new set of challenges presents itself. Learn strategies and techniques for managing a small business. This course will help you re-define your purpose and values, establish a framework for success and promote your business in a smart, efficient way.

[Competitive Strategy](#) HSTalks

Running time: 36 min

This talk will introduce learners to: competitive strategy and its framework; industry analysis for competition and profit; and sources and types of competitive advantage.

[Innovation Workshop: Brand Strategy + Design Thinking = Transformation](#) O'Reilly for Public Libraries

Running time: 47 min

This presents a “journey from traditional business thinking to ‘designful’ thinking.” You’ll come back to these ideas again and again as you transform your company into a powerhouse of nonstop innovation.”



Check out the other related TPL Learning Pathways:

General Technical Skills for the Workforce - Refresh/upgrade or learn the skills needed for entry/re-entry to the workforce after a period of absence or if you are considering a change in careers. You'll learn a variety of essential technology skills for the workplace, including: Microsoft Office, computer troubleshooting, Microsoft Outlook and videoconferencing tools.

Essential Soft Skills for the Workplace - Learn the essential soft skills required for the workplace. Topics include: interpersonal skills, teamwork, problem solving, oral and written communication.

Appendix: Additional Resources

[Toronto Public Library – Additional Resources for small businesses](#)

Learn about the Toronto Public Library's free programs and seminars on how to start or grow your small business.

Law Depot

<https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/detail.jsp?Entt=RDMEDB0194&R=EDB0194>

This online database available on the tpl.ca website contains templates for legal documents including for small businesses.



Small Business Supports

[Black Innovation Launchpad](#)

Black Innovation Launchpad is a free skills development platform geared at building the next generation of successful Black entrepreneurs.

[Toronto Indigenous Business Association](#)

A community for Indigenous entrepreneurs and business owners in Toronto.

[Government and Private Funding for Small Businesses Information Sheet](#)

This covers all levels of government (applicable to Toronto residents) and private sources.

[Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business](#)

CCAB provides an array of business development offerings

[Canadian Small Business Women](#)

Support, education, talks and conferences - supports diversity among women.

[LGBTQ+](#)

Forum and support for entrepreneurs, professionals and business leaders in Toronto.

[Ontario Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce](#)

A non-profit organization with the goal to create an environment in which LGBTQ businesses and professionals can thrive through the sharing of knowledge and resources.

New to Canada

[TRIEC Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council](#)



Government Support and Regulations

[FedDev Ontario Small Business Services](#)

This one-stop site, operated by the federal and Ontario governments, has several sections—Planning, Starting, Managing, Growing, Financing, Tools and Wizards. There is also a free secondary market research service.

[Ontario Government - Small Business Access](#)

Get support, information and advice to run your small business.

[Digital Mainstreet](#)

Free website hosting for small businesses that includes: online store templates to customize with your information, branding, logo, etc; hands-on assistance setting up and launching your online store; training to support your online store, covering topics such as digital marketing, shipping and inventory management; and more free tools to help support the launch of your online business.