

The Road to Success

SECTION 3

FEATURING:

- **First State Insurance**
- **Graves-Hume Public Library**
 - **Highsmith Haul Away**
 - **JC's Headquarters**
- **Leffelman and Associates**
- **Mendota Area Churches**
 - **Mendota Monument**
- **Services & Organizations**
- **Wasmer Funeral Home**





Effective business plans are made up of various essential components that all entrepreneurs can utilize as a framework when starting their businesses.

Components of successful business plans

The entrepreneurial spirit strikes millions of people every year. The latest data from the United States Small Business Administration indicates there are 32.5 million small businesses in the U.S., which underscores just how many in the U.S. are their own boss.

There's no formula that entrepreneurs can follow to ensure their start-up is successful. However, devising a strong business plan is a great place to start. Such plans can serve as a road map for entrepreneurs as they try to turn an idea into a business and are often a necessity for prospective business owners who will be seeking funding from lenders or investors. The career experts at Indeed note that effective business plans are made up of various essential components that all entrepreneurs can utilize as a framework when starting their businesses.

- **Executive summary:** As its name suggests, this provides an overview of the business plan. Executive summaries typically contain the mission statement and include information about the products and services the business will offer. Curiously, though the executive summary could be the first thing lenders and investors read, Indeed recommends writing it after all other components of the plan have been mapped out. Doing so ensures the summary will reflect a full and clear understanding of the business.

- **Business description:** This section should include a detailed description of products and services and information about target customers. It also can help to identify the industry the business will be in and include an analysis of industry trends. The descrip-

tion can include information about how the company is organized, noting information about key personnel, including their histories and roles in the start-up.

- **Market analysis:** The experts at Indeed note that the purpose of a market analysis is to identify the company's primary target audience, including its demographic, and where to find that audience. This portion of the plan should include how the business will meet the needs of its target audience and the best avenues to connect with that audience (i.e., social media, in-store, etc.).

- **Marketing and sales strategy:** The experts at Growththink, which has provided strategic advising and investment banking services to emerging and middle market companies since 1999, note that the marketing and sales plan should detail how a business will penetrate its target markets. Information regarding promotional strategies, pricing strategies and potential marketing partnerships are just some of the details to share in the marketing and sales strategy.

- **Financial plan:** This section will include significant information about the company's finances, including detailing how much capital the business will need to meet its objectives. The financial plan should include a detailed account of how revenue will be generated, and entrepreneurs should include financial statements and projections regarding cash flow.

These are not the only components to include in a business plan. However, they can serve as a useful foundation for entrepreneurs on the cusp of starting their own businesses.

Keys to successfully applying for jobs: And what to expect next

A job application presents a great opportunity to make a strong first impression with a prospective employer.

Job applications have changed as the utilization of technology has increased. Today the majority of employers advertise jobs online and conduct much of the initial search process through digital channels. According to Indeed, companies typically direct applicants to fill out a digital application through a specific website. Unlike a résumé, the job application is a legally defensible document. The information contained on it should be as thorough and accurate as possible. Some additional strategies can help applicants successfully apply for jobs.

- **Read over the application carefully.** Understand what is expected of you as an applicant. Carefully read the instructions on the application and any other supporting documents or information the employer may be requesting. Applicants should not miss out on a job opportunity due to a failure to follow directions.

- **Recognize the use of ATS.** Many employers utilize an applicant tracking system (ATS) to help whittle down the applicant pool to the best qualified. ATS may use keywords that coordinate with skills desired in applicants. Be sure to mirror keywords used in the job listing on your application to further your chances of the application being flagged for consideration.

- **Have your résumé at the ready.** An application likely will ask you to fill out fields regarding your work history. Refer to your résumé to fill out this portion. Some applications also have an optional tool that will auto-fill job



Various strategies can help applicants successfully apply for jobs.

information from an uploaded résumé. Therefore, it is handy to have an updated and proofread file available.

- **Use a professional email address.** Employers are judging everything about you. Present a professional front by using an email address that is clear and to the point, rather than something clever or controversial. Avoid email addresses like KissyFace123@email.com or ManCave456@email.com, opting instead for FirstName.LastName@email.com. Do not give employers any reason to reject you based on perceptions from something as silly as a lighthearted email address.

- **Proofread everything.** Be sure to look over your application and make sure that everything is spelled correctly and that your grammar is perfect.

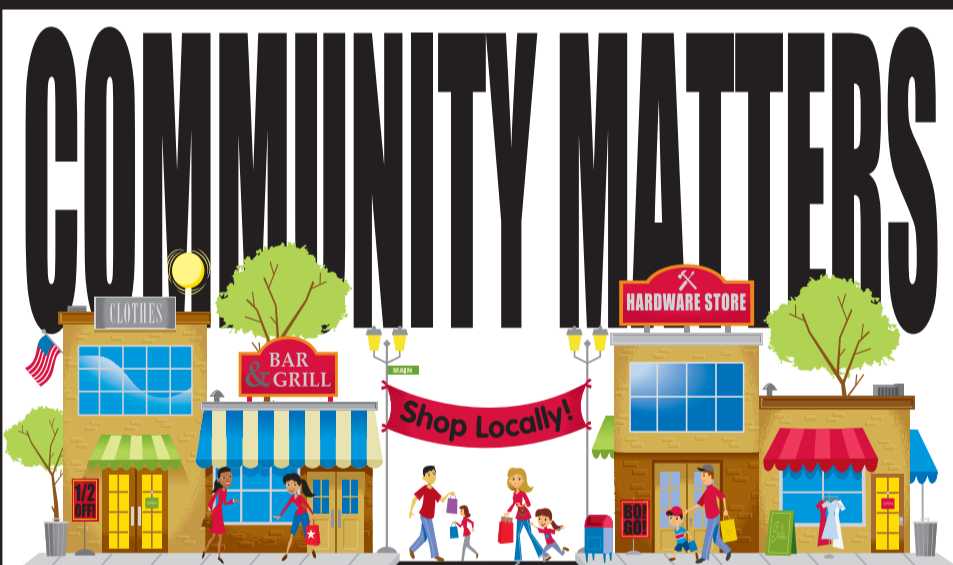
If the application makes it through, the employer may ask you to participate

in either an in-person interview or an online interview. Some companies rely on a third-party application for you to upload a statement or answer pre-determined questions. Make sure all technology is working for these next steps, and consult the hiring manager with any issues. Always dress and speak professionally when doing interviews of any type.

If you are offered the job, the hiring manager may send further digital correspondence that will link to their onboarding system. This system will collect more information — possibly conducting a criminal background check — and ask that you fill out tax and payroll forms.

The job application process has changed in recent years due to an increased reliance on technology. Applicants should know what to expect to land their dream jobs.

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Mendota Monument has offered high quality memorials for 110 years

When Frank J. Schmitt opened Mendota Monument in 1913, he began a business known for providing high quality memorials.

The same top-granite and service came from Schmitt until his death in 1944.

Keeping the family business alive, Mendota Monument has been owned and operated by four more generations of the Schmitt family and entered its 110th year of business in 2023.

The second generation was Frank's sons Donald, Ralph, and Robert. All three could do everything within Mendota Monument, but Donald's specialty was cutting stencils and sandblasting. Ralph perfected the sales side and he was the only one who performed hand-tooled lettering, while Robert laid out all the lettering and took

care of the cemetery side of things such as the foundations for the memorials and the setting of the memorials.

The third generation in 1972 generation Robert's son Ron came aboard. In 1980, Ron was joined by his brother Steve, who still lays foundation and sets the memorials in cemeteries to this day.

In 1996, Ron's son Erik became the fourth generation when he joined his father and uncle Steve. Erik works with Steve in the cemeteries, but also lays out the lettering for memorials and provides families with full-size layouts of actual memorials on computer software.

The fifth generation of Tyler and Trevor are now involved as they help their father Erik, their grandfather Ron and uncle Steve.

Throughout the decades

and generations, Mendota Monument, which does its own sandblasting, carving, and drawings, has fulfilled its promise to make the customers the No. 1 priority.

The color, shape, style, and size of granite the customer selects is ordered. As soon as it arrives, Mendota Monument gives its customers the option of being as involved as much or as little as they want.

Families can bring their own artwork and be a part of every process or place the order and let the Schmitt family take care of the rest.

For 110 years, Mendota Monument has been in the same building, offering the same service, provided by the same family.

Mendota Monument can be contacted at 815-539-7276 or through its website, www.mendotamonument.com.



You can trust the professionals at First State Insurance in Mendota to handle all of your insurance needs. Members of the team, left to right, are Jenny Hendren, Tony Ayala, Jennie Smith, Gary Safranek, Erica Escatel, Mike Wasmer, Mary Ann Baughan, Tyler Full, Jackie Near and Jerrick Kapraun.

First State Insurance provides special attention for customers

First State Insurance, a wholly owned subsidiary of First State Bank, is located in downtown Mendota. First State Insurance includes two locations – Mendota and Earlville.

The agency, celebrating its 24th year of operations, offers a comprehensive choice of services and companies. Because FSI is an independent insurance outlet, there are many choices available to the agency's customer base.

"Our main purpose is to provide the highest level of personalized service and insurance expertise possible," said Mike Wasmer, the agency's manager for the past 23 years. "In order to provide a high level of service, we must be both knowledgeable and caring. Our agency's goal is to provide our customers with special attention for their needs." A total of five licensed agents currently service the Mendota First State Insurance policies: Mike Wasmer, Jackie Near, Tyler Full, Mary Ann Baughan and Jerrick Kapraun.

As an independent insurance agency, First State Insurance represents many excellent companies. Various coverage options as well as premium requirements are considered for each customer. Several of the property companies represented by First State are Auto-Owners, Foremost, LaPrairie Mutual, Travelers, Mendota Mutual, Safeco, Met Life and Kemper.

Automobile insurance companies represented are Auto-Owners, Foremost, IMT, Progressive, Travelers, Grinnell Mutual, Kemper, Met Life, Safeco and Rockford Mutual. First State Insurance has several outstanding outlets for farm insurance needs, including Auto Owners, Bradford Mutual, LaPrairie Mutual and Mendota Mutual. First State Insurance also offers life and health insurance through several sources.

Wasmer stated, "Although not all of the companies with whom we contract are well known companies, they deliver excellent service to our customers, or we would not represent them. As independent agents with a choice of different companies, we do our best to identify the best coverages with the best company for each customer."

"It's important to have a lot of choices," Wasmer added. "Our experienced staff can take the guess work out of our customer's insurance needs. Farmers, business owners, commercial customers and individuals can depend on us to find the right policies at the right price when they turn to First State Insurance."

First State Insurance Agency is located at 715 Washington St. in Mendota and 114 W. Railroad St. in Earlville. They can be contacted at (815) 539-5651 and (815) 246-8261. Visit them at firststateinsurance.biz or on Facebook.

Wasmer Funeral Home



Wasmer Funeral Home is located at 2112 W. Main St., Mendota. Catherine Wasmer, director, said the celebration of life center celebrates life and healing grieving hearts. Your every need is handled by a licensed professional. When you have experienced the loss of a loved one, you can trust Wasmer Funeral Home to guide you through the process of honoring life. Wasmer Funeral Home respects itself on serving families in Mendota and the surrounding areas with dignity, respect, and compassion. The staff is experienced in a variety of funeral services and can help you celebrate your loved one no matter your religion, culture, or budget. Wasmer Funeral Home can be contacted by calling 815-539-8500 or emailing wasmerfh@gmail.com.

Celebrating over 100 years, the Mendota Monument Company has continually provided the highest quality memorials using the best granites available, the same technique passed from generation to generation, and the personal care that has built the reputation they have today.

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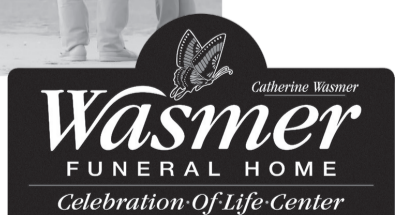
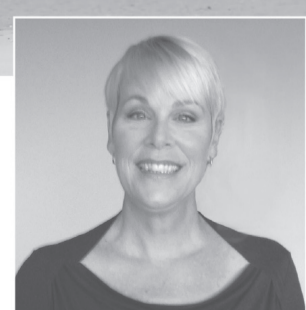
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CELEBRATING LIFE
and healing grieving hearts

When you have experienced the loss of a loved one, you can trust Wasmer Funeral Home to guide you through the process of honoring life. At Wasmer Funeral Home, we pride ourselves on serving families in Mendota and the surrounding areas with dignity, respect and compassion. Our staff is experienced in a variety of funeral services and can help you celebrate your loved one no matter your religion, culture or budget.

Catherine Wasmer, Director
Cell: 815-228-6260

Your every need handled by a licensed professional.

2112 W. Main St., Mendota, IL 61342



Left to right, Tyler Full, Jackie Near, Mike Wasmer, Mary Ann Baughan and Jerrick Kapraun



FIRST STATE INSURANCE

First State Insurance, Mendota is located right across the street from First State Bank. It offers the following insurance products:

- Home
- Auto
- Health
- Medicare Supplements
- Commercial
- Farm
- Crop Hail
- Multi Peril
- Life
- Annuities



Mendota 539-5651
Earlville 246-8261

"The More Than One Company Agency"

Graves-Hume Public Library strengthens its connection to the community

In the last five years, the Graves-Hume Public Library in Mendota has shifted in a different direction than before.

Graves-Hume Director, Emily Kofoid, and Graves-Hume Youth Service Manager,Carolynn Ohlendorf, have put an emphasis on strengthening the library's connection to the community, added more programs for patrons of all ages, revamped the youth department to encourage more free and play time, partnered with local organizations, and have made it a priority to show the public the library is a community center.

"We don't just offer books; we offer so much more. Our programs bring people together that can make connections, a welcoming space for all," Kofoid said. "I love to see moms, dads, and grandparents bringing their kids to programs. Not only is this a great learning environment for the kids, these parents can also connect."

"I remember being a new mom and not knowing anyone. I needed a place to let my kids play but also, I — as a person — needed adult connections. And libraries did this for me! A free, safe place, for my kids to learn and for me to have an outlet other than staying home."

Graves-Hume Public Library strives to serve the community as an informational, recreational, and cultural agency, providing educational resources, recreational needs through print and non-print materials, and distinctive programming.

The library offers an environment that enhances individual and community life by providing the resources and services needed by our diverse community.

Partnerships have been



formed with the library and the Mendota Area Senior Center, Mendota YMCA, University Extension Office, Friends of the Library, Nightengales, Mendota Lions Club, Meridian Grain, City of Mendota, Mendota Rotary Club, and Starved Rock Wood Products.

These partnerships, and more, help fund special programming, especially summer reading.

For more advanced reading, Kofoid started an adult monthly book club in 2018.

The success has been a success as many members come to the discussions on Kofoid's book selection held at 1 p.m. and 6 p.m. on the third Tuesday of every month. The club reads a wide range of books as it dives into challenging pieces that make readers think outside of the box. The discussions allow the members to meet new people and to learn new perspectives on each new, diverse topic.

Youth Services offers monthly programs for all ages from birth to tweens. The LEGO club has been a huge hit. For kids in first through eighth grade, Graves-Hume supplies LEGOs to let the kids let their creativity run wild.

All of the library's programs are free, but pre-registration is requested.

Except for Summer Reading, the programs do not require a library card and are open to anyone. To get a library card, you must live within the Library District. If you live outside of the



Graves-Hume Public Library not only has a wide variety of books for patrons to choose from, but it also offers programs throughout the year that help bring people together.

district, it is a yearly cost per family.

Summer Reading is Graves-Hume Library's biggest event. The summer book spectacular runs for three weeks in July.

This year's theme is 'Find Your Voice,' which has the library's biggest lineup of programs to date!

The kick-off event will include Ballet Folklorico De Colores. Each week, there will be programs for different age groups that also include crafts, stories, songs, and more. And of course, reading challenges for all ages.

Fraturdays in July are Family Fun Nights where everyone is welcomed. Weather permitting, they will be outside in the back lawn area.

Sneak peek for the library's lineup this year:

- The first week will feature a focus on music, DJs and theatre. Chicago's World Class Elvis Tribute Artist, Hugo, will perform. This talented young man pays tribute to "The King of Rock and Roll" for the en-

joyment of life-long admirers as well as to introduce the new generation of fans.

- Week 2 is all about animal voices. Dave DiNaso's Traveling World Reptiles will be at the Mendota library for all to enjoy.

- Week 3's focus is on codes, spies and hidden messages. Connie Martin will deliver a powerful program titled 'Hidden Messages in Negro Spirituals on the Underground Railroad.'

- The Summer Reading Club Finale will include Hula Dancers from Hula Chicago, who will bring Aloha Spirit to life.

Kofoid and Ohlendorf have fun creating programs around the summer reading themes. This year's theme is important as it shows all voices have power. Throughout the month, it is intended to show and give examples to every patron of how our voices are used to share stories, express ourselves, and spark change.

Voices transform to not

only the sounds we make, but the written words, created art, performed movements, and the actions used to impact our world.

For updated scheduled programs at Graves-Hume Public Library, check out the library's Facebook page and The Mendota Reporter.



Staff members at Graves-Hume Public Library in Mendota include Emily Kofoid, left, director, and Carolynn Ohlendorf, youth services manager.



Emily Kofoid - Director and Carolynn Ohlendorf
Youth Services Manager

Working for our community.

"Success isn't about how much money you make; it's about the difference you make in people's lives."

~ Michelle Obama

The Graves Hume Public Library Progressing since 1895

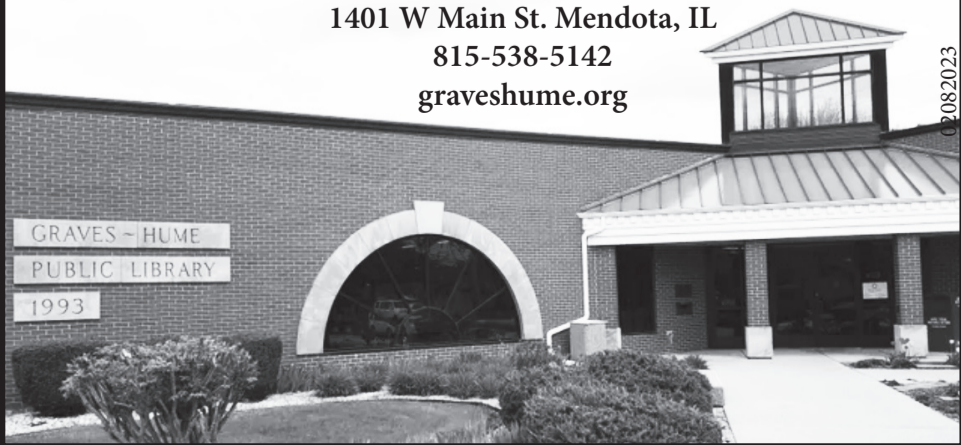
Like and follow us on FB for events, programs and updates.

Hours

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Friday 10:00-4:00 Saturday 10:00-2:00 Closed Sundays

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J.C. Headquarters is a top spot for your beauty needs

Since 1987, J.C. Headquarters has been a top spot in Mendota for beauty.

Whether it's a haircut, a hair styling, a pedicure, a manicure, a facial or tanning, J.C. Headquarters can help you look amazing.

Christy Motter-Liesse and Jeanne Rapp opened the headquarters, now located at 810 Main St. in Mendota, but when Rapp and Jennifer Jackson became the sole owner.

She is joined by Stacey Miller (receptionist, tanning consultant), Kayla Haines and Maria Guzman (stylists and nail technicians), Martha DeLao (stylist), and Jeff and Jennifer Jackson (massage therapists) to form the ultimate team.

Open Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday from 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., Thursday 8:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m., and Saturday 8 a.m.-1 p.m., walk-ins are welcome, but appointments are encouraged.

When it comes to hair, J.C. Headquarters can perform haircuts, razor cuts, styling via a curling iron, flat iron, roller sets, braids, and coloring.

K18 Pro Services is new with the Mendota beauty salon as the product offers

molecular repair designed to work at the inner most layers of hair to restore strength and elasticity to damage strands. It reverses damage in just four minutes.

The color services vary from toners, multi-dimensional colors, hi-lites, low lites, and balayage.

J.C. Headquarters has its own manicure/pedicure room where clients can enjoy dip manicures and pedicures.

A special the salon started on Feb. 18 but is running until Feb. 28 is for every manicure or pedicure, a free Paraffin Dip (\$13 value) will added to your service.

If you're preparing for a Spring Break trip or getting ready for the summer, J.C. Headquarters has stand-up and lay-down tanning beds and offers Pro Tan and Australian Gold tanning lotions.

For any tanning package purchase, customers will receive 10 percent off any tanning lotion.

Other products available include Matrix Hempz Lipou, Amerikan Biofreeze, Malibu, Biosilk, and Biofreeze.

Appointments can be made at J.C. Headquarters by calling 815-538-5171.

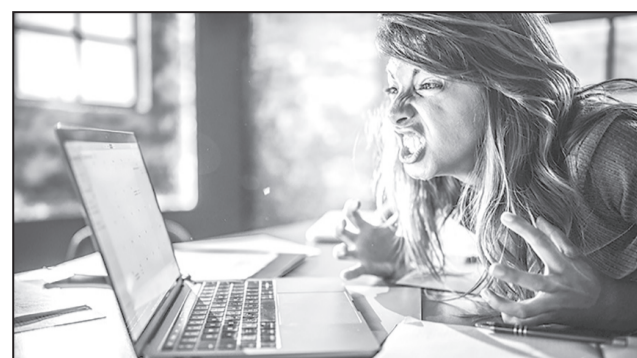
The basics of cloud storage

A spinning color wheel is an unwelcome sight for millions of computer users. A host of issues can compromise the ability of a computer to work efficiently and without delay, and a computer with a maxed out storage capacity is one such problem.

Storage issues on a computer can be addressed in a number of ways, but savvy users recognize how much cloud storage can help the performance of their machines. Novices may not understand how cloud storage works, so a basic introduction can help to explain this useful service.

What is cloud storage?

According to Amazon Web Services, cloud storage is a computing model that allows users to store data and files on the internet through a cloud computing provider. Such providers maintain the servers where data and files are stored, as well as the infrastructure and network to ensure constant accessibility. Users can access data and files stored on the cloud whenever they need it, making cloud storage akin to physical storage units people may rent when they want to keep valuables and other items they no longer have a place for in their homes.



Cloud storage can help to eliminate the frustration that can mount when devices are not working quickly.

Why should individuals use cloud storage?

Individuals can benefit from using cloud storage in various ways. Cloud storage packages differ, but most will provide access from any device at any time and from any location. This can help professionals who need to access documents or files while away from their desk. It also makes it easy to share photos and other items with colleagues, friends and family members even when you're away from the office or home.

Another benefit to cloud storage is the backup it provides. Computer users of a certain age undoubtedly recall the days when a computer would die and files would be lost for good. By storing items on cloud

storage, important and meaningful files, such as family photos, will never be lost, even when computers are no longer functional.

Improved computer performance is another thing to consider when discussing cloud storage. The more files a user saves directly to his/her computer, the slower that computer is likely to work. That can be frustrating for busy professionals or anyone who simply wants their devices to work as quickly as possible at all times. When data is stored on the cloud, computers can run more efficiently, reducing the likelihood that users will encounter the spinning color wheel.

Cloud storage can improve the performance of devices and, ultimately, the people who use them.

Highsmith Haul Away does the jobs you don't want to do

Highsmith Haul Away & Junk Removal does the jobs you don't want to do.

A full-service clean-up crew, Highsmith Haul Away will remove the junk from estates, business and residential, throughout the Illinois Valley and surrounding communities.

Single item pick-ups start at just \$75.

The haul away business offers clean-outs such as hoarder, eviction, moving, garage, barn, attic, and shed.

Removal of appliances,

furniture, sheds, hot tubs is also a Highsmith service, as well as TV and tire disposal.

Highsmith Haul Away & Junk Removal is family owned and operated by Will Highsmith, a Mendota native.

The business, located at 1031 W. Dakota St. in Spring Valley, is family insured and environmentally friendly as it donates and recycles as much as possible. The company also takes the proper steps

to make sure things are disposed of properly.

Highsmith Haul Away takes pleasure in doing what we don't want to do such as disposing of old junk, decluttering the house, removing items from houses to put them up for sale, and removing items left behind by former tenants.

If you're looking for one or all of these services, call 815-993-8673. Text estimates are available, or visit their website <https://highsmithhaulaway.com>.



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5 tips to consider before starting a start-up

Building a small business from scratch can be an exciting endeavor that poses some significant challenges. With the right resources and support, entrepreneurs can turn their dreams into successful businesses.

According to Innovation Science and Economic Development Canada, there were 1.2 million small businesses in Canada in 2019. Add that to the roughly 33 million small businesses in the United States, and it's clear to see how small businesses dominate the economic landscape.

The Small Business Administration identifies small businesses as those having fewer than 500 employees, while the Government of Canada lists SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises) as small (having 1 to 99 paid employees) or medium (100 to 499 paid employees).

The process of starting a small business varies depending on the industry, location and other factors, but here's a generalized look at the steps to be expected early on.

1. Figure out your idea and research it

Coming up with a successful idea is one of the first steps to take when starting a business. It's possible to take an existing type of business and customize it for a given community, or to create something new and innovative.

After the idea is put on paper, it's important to research the potential competition and decide if the business will have a competitive advantage to survive. Market research is crucial.

2. Write a business plan

A business plan helps



Starting a business can be a worthwhile undertaking, especially when entrepreneurs consider a variety of factors before getting started.

formalize the ideas of the business and lists the necessary steps to take. By thinking through the process methodically, a potential business owner can figure out where problems may turn up and where to help the most attention to help make the business profitable. It also helps if one thinks through how he or she will secure the capital for starting the company.

3. Choose the right time

Prospective business owners need to assess whether the time is right for starting a business. While there may never be a perfect time, it's best to engage when there are fewer obstacles in the way. You want to devote full attention to the business. If that's not possible, then it's likely best to delay. Times when starting a business may not be ideal include when battling an illness, during a family move or right after the death of a loved one. Economic factors beyond your control, such as a downturn or recession, also may affect the potential success of a

business venture.

4. Pick a business structure

Involving a business attorney in this process would be in a person's best interests. A business can be legally structured in certain ways, and how it is structured will affect registration requirements as well as how much a business owner pays in taxes. The structure also can affect personal liability. Speaking with a lawyer will highlight the pros and cons of structuring and help a person make the best decision possible.

5. Speak to other business owners

A potential entrepreneur can pick the brains of small business owners to figure out what worked and what didn't when they were first starting out. This can help entrepreneurs avoid certain pitfalls and uncover proven paths to success.

Starting a business can be a worthwhile undertaking, especially when entrepreneurs consider a variety of factors before getting started.

Did you know? – Commute

In the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, restaurant, school and work closures were integral components of mitigation plans designed to prevent the virus from spreading. That resulted in much fewer cars on the road. Many things have changed since then, and life has gradually returned to pre-pandemic conditions. That return to normalcy has been marked by the return to workplace. The United States Census Bureau says the average person commutes just over 27 minutes each way when traveling solo by car. Those times were slashed when only essential personnel were commuting during the height of the pandemic. Census data paints a picture of

shorter commute times now. Data indicates that, in 2019, there were nearly nine million workers who were doing their jobs outside of a centralized workplace. In 2021, that part of the workforce increased to about 27.6 million workers, resulting in roughly 18.6 million fewer commuters across the U.S. Census surveys indicate round-trip commute times dropped by around 7 minutes in 2021 from 2019, equaling about 4 minutes saved on a round-trip commute each day. Only time will tell if commutes will continue to decrease or if a return to the office from remote working will once again increase commute times.



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Mendota Booster Club

Supporting the Students and Athletes of M.H.S. for more than 70 years!

Meetings on the second Wednesday of the month, 7:00 p.m. at Mendota High School

This club is comprised of parents and community working together to support and raise funds for the extra curricular activities at Mendota High School.
Membership Open.





Leffelman & Associates members include, left to right, Julie Burkardt, Lisa Quest, Chris Klein, Riley Klein, Mary Reglin and Lexi Klein.

Leffelman & Associates: Independent like you

Leffelman & Associates has grown from a small, one-man independent agency to a three-office, three-generation, eight-employee agency that writes multiple lines of insurance throughout Northern Illinois including personal, commercial, farm, crop, life and health.

Customer satisfaction and being independent is key to their business. They focus on integrity, professionalism, and stability while striving to provide the finest quality coverage and service for the best price.

Being independent means, they can offer several companies to fit their customers' needs. They offer friendly, personable service. You never have to call a "corporate" office or enter a number to get to the right department. Every phone call is answered and serviced by a person from your own community.

Larry Leffelman bought the Wilson Roemmich Agency in Sublette in 1969. He bought the Burkhardt Agency in Sublette in 1972, the Duffy Agency

in Amboy in 1980 and the Ortgiesen Agency in Amboy in 1990.

From the beginning, it was a family business. Larry's wife, Rose, started working at the agency in 1977. Larry hired his cousin, Gary Zinke, in 1980. His daughter, Chris Klein, started working for the agency as a file clerk when she was 12, before working full time in 1985. Chris' daughter, Lexi, came to the agency full time in 2013 after getting her degree in business management from Sauk Valley Community College. Chris' son, Riley, started full time in 2014 after graduating from U of I with a degree in agricultural and consumer economics.

Since Larry's retirement, Chris has been handling most of the commercial insurance and health insurance, and Larry is still available for consultation. Riley focuses on farm and crop insurance, and Lexi handles the bookkeeping and accounting, along with working and servicing all lines of insurance (personal and farm) and managing the LaMoille office.

Today, Leffelman & Associates employs eight employees. All the members of the family business include Chris Klein, Riley Klein, Julie Burkardt and Mary Reglin in Sublette, Lisa Quest (office manager) in Amboy, Lexi Willey in LaMoille. They also have Michelle Sneek and Karli Keith as part-time employees. Being a smaller crew means Leffelman & Associates has become more efficient than ever.

Grounded in three generations, you can count on Leffelman & Associates to serve the area for many years to come.

Their slogan, "Our family protecting your family," embodies the core of their business beliefs.

Leffelman & Associates' offices are located in Sublette, Amboy, and LaMoille. The Sublette office is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturday from 8 a.m. until noon. Amboy and LaMoille offices are open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and on Thursday from 8:30 a.m. until noon.

Time management tips for professionals

Time management involves figuring out how much time to spend on specific tasks and controlling one's schedule to be as productive as possible. Managing time more effectively can improve professionals' quality of work, and a boost in productivity can make them more valuable to an organization.

This is not the only benefit of managing time better. Establishing and following a schedule of tasks can reduce stress. Gallup's 2021 State of the Global Workplace report found workers in the United States and Canada ranked highest for daily stress levels of all groups surveyed. Some 57 percent reported feeling stress on a daily basis. Learning time management skills can help alleviate that anxiety.

These tips for time management can get professionals on the road to being more efficient.

- **Make lists.** Rather than keeping ideas or tasks in your head, jot down notes that you can organize into a schedule later. You can write them down on paper or in a digital notes application.

- **Prepare a task plan.** Each evening before you leave work or first thing in the morning the next day, map out all the tasks you have and when they will be done. High priority tasks should be done first, followed by medium- and low-priority jobs.

- **Avoid multi-tasking.** Studies have shown that doing two or more things simultaneously tends to lead to none being done at full capacity. The more you multi-task, the more the end results will suffer. Clifford Nass, a cognitive scientist at Stanford University, found that when putting his students through a series of tests, high



multi-taskers were bad at filtering irrelevant information from the relevant, something that multi-taskers should seemingly be especially good at. Nass also found that high multi-taskers had diminished powers of mental organization and extra difficulty switching between tasks.

- **Manage distractions.** Distractions can put you on the path to procrastination. That is why you have to try hard to minimize distractions, whether it's coworkers who interrupt or digital devices. Set "notification-free" times during the day when phone or computer notifications are turned off. You also may want to block incoming emails. This way you will have a window of distraction-free time to devote to a particular task.

- **Time your focus.** According to a study from researchers at the Department of Informatics, University of California, Irvine, it takes an average of 23 minutes to refocus when you've been distracted. Remaining in a focused state is essential. Set a timer so that you stay focused on a task for a particular period of time, such as 25 minutes. You'll get more done before you take a break. Similarly, Parkinson's law states that work will expand to fill the time that's available for completion. Set time constraints for certain tasks so you will work more efficiently.

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