

Many people imagine that working from home is the ideal existence: no hassles with commuting, no boss breathing down your neck and the freedom to spend your time in whatever way you want. The reality, however, is very different. Being your own boss is demanding, you must be prepared to establish and work to realistic goals, you must be self-disciplined and persistent and determined to succeed.

Working from home can involve strains, there may be social isolation or problems combining work and family life in the one place. The main challenge of a home-based business is to overcome distractions and to be productive in an environment where it is all too easy to “put it off until tomorrow”.

### Typical Home-Based Businesses

A wide variety of businesses are successfully operated from the home. Some possibilities include: -

- Manufacturing: crafts, food preparation, food preservation, toys, printing and dressmaking;
- Retailing: mail order services, personal network selling etc.; and
- Services: professional (doctors and vets), tradespeople (carpenters, plumbers, electricians), information services (consulting), personal services (music teacher, hairdressing, beauty care).

### Is Your Business Suitable?

Consider the following questions when trying to decide if you can run your business from home or if you need to find a commercial rental property: -

- Would you need to employ people?
- Is the business noisy, dirty, smelly or otherwise likely to disrupt your neighbours?
- Do you have a need to store bulk materials?
- Is your home easy to locate (by clients/customers)?
- Will parking be a problem?
- Do you need local and Northern Territory Government permission to undertake the business from home? (See licences and approvals below)
- Do you have a mortgage with a restriction prohibiting a business being transacted on the premises?

If you answered yes to one or more of the above questions, then you should, in any case, think seriously of commercial rental.

## Licenses and Approvals

Under the NT Planning Scheme, persons intending to conduct a business at or from home (referred to as a “Home Occupation”) may need to obtain development approval from the Development Consent Authority (DCA). You will need to check the town plan that applies to your locality. In Darwin and Litchfield shire you are permitted to develop a home occupation. In other centres development approval is required for a home occupation. However in all areas there are rules controlling the scale of the development, among others, that must be satisfied.

You should contact the Development Assessment Services on telephone (08) 89996046 when intending to conduct a Home Based Business (HBB) to ensure compliance with the relevant town plan. You can contact the Development Consent Authority on the below details:

Development Consent Authority	Ph: (08) 8999 6044
Ground Floor	Fax: (08) 8999 9055
38 Cavenagh Street	Website: <a href="http://www.dpi.nt.gov.au/whatwedo/dca/index.html">www.dpi.nt.gov.au/whatwedo/dca/index.html</a>
Darwin NT 0800	Email: <a href="mailto:DevelopmentConsentAuthority.DIPE@nt.gov.au">DevelopmentConsentAuthority.DIPE@nt.gov.au</a>

## The Business and Lifestyle

Almost anyone who owns a business will tell you that it puts extra pressure on a family relationship. Running your business from home means that there is little separation between work and family, and therefore little distinction between family activities and business activities. You need to be conscious of how your business will affect your family and your lifestyle in general.

Before starting a home-based business you should consider how you can avoid being overworked or conversely, under motivated, which are common with businesses operated from home. To ensure you avoid these situations, plan for the following:

- Set hours for client contact
- Set hours for business operation
- Set breaks
- Set time for administration
- Plan activities outside the home
- Plan time for family
- Ensure you evaluate how you are managing with your home-based business, and if it continues to suit your needs.

## Conclusion

Working from home initially offers the most economic way for many people to join the ranks of the self-employed. For some people, with home commitments, it is the only way. Although running a business from home can reduce the financial risk of starting a business, it introduces other risks, such as a disrupted family life and strained relationships with the neighbors.

Plan carefully if you are thinking of starting a home-based business. Use all the free advice available to you. Pay for professional advice where necessary. Talk it over with the family and neighbours. Get official permission. Then, work at it!

The Business Enterprise Centre (BEC) is currently establishing a Home Based Business Network , to assist Home Based Businesses stay ahead of the latest business trends and discuss issues relating to running a business from home. To find out more or join the network contact the Business Enterprise Centre on the below details:

Jack Hughes	Ph: (08) 8922 9529
Business Enterprise Centre	Fax: (08) 8922 9555
(Darwin Region)	Toll Free: 1800 229 500
PO Box 37192	Website: <a href="http://www.becnt.com.au">www.becnt.com.au</a>
Winnellie NT 0821	Email: <a href="mailto:info@bec.com.au">info@bec.com.au</a>

---

For more information refer to other Fast Facts in this series or contact the Territory Business Centre on the numbers below or visit the TBC website

Department of Business, Economic and Regional Development

Development House Tel: +61 8 89821700

76 The Esplanade, Darwin Fax: +61 8 89821725

NT 0800 AUSTRALIA Toll Free: 1800 193 111 (within Australia)

GPO Box 3200, DARWIN NT 0801 Email: [info.dberd@nt.gov.au](mailto:info.dberd@nt.gov.au)

**The material contained in this publication is intended for use as a guide and for general information only. It is not intended to be a substitute for independent professional advice. The Department of Business, Economic and Regional Development of the Northern Territory Government accepts no responsibility or liability for the correctness, accuracy and completeness of any of the material contained in this publication and recommends that users of this publication exercise their own skill, care and judgement in the application of the information contained in the publication.**