

Starting a Food Business: An Overview

Do you have a food product that you have developed yourself or an old family recipe that other people enjoy so much they encourage you to sell it and become rich? Are you ready to take the first step toward developing a successful food business but not sure how to start?

PHASES OF DEVELOPMENT

There are three critical phases that must follow the initial idea to start a food business.

Business Strategy Development: For detailed information on this important initial phase, request [HGIC 3868, *Starting a Food Business: Developing a Market Strategy and a Business Plan.*](#)

Product Analysis and Development: For detailed information on this important initial phase, request [HGIC 3869, *Starting a Food Business: Product, Process and Packaging Analysis and Development.*](#)

Package and Process Development: See Product Analysis and Development above.

If these three initial phases have been carefully planned and the market appears good for your product, you may be able to move beyond the pre-commercialization phase to the final two phases.

Pre-commercialization:

- Finalize marketing plan
- Determine costs/pricing/financial plan
- Develop promotion plan
- Establish production plan and schedule

Product Test Market:

- Conduct preliminary production run
- Analyze results
- Decide to continue, change or terminate plans

Production Introduction:

- Start full-scale production
- Distribute product
- Sell
- Maintain financial and production records

TEN TACTICS FOR SUCCESS

- Learn as much as you can about your proposed business. Ask questions. Join industry associations. Is there a need for the product or service you are going to offer?
- Accept the fact that starting a business always takes more money than you anticipate.
- Study successful competitors carefully.
- Don't go into business with the sole objective of making a lot of money. Chances are you won't, but if you put service, quality and customer satisfaction first, the money will follow.
- Be willing to work harder and longer than you have ever worked before. Forget about the eight-hour workday and the forty-hour week.
- Keep complete and accurate records for tax purposes, for your banking needs, and most important, for your own guidance.
- Hire good, experienced employees.
- Find a lawyer, accountant, banker and insurance agent, and confer with them as needed. Now is the time to develop these relationships.
- Run it yourself. Beware of absentee ownership. No one will look after your money, your property and your business like you will.
- Be prepared for disappointment and frustrations. Be persistent and bounce back even more determined to succeed.

RESOURCES

State of South Carolina:

Food Industry Association of South Carolina
P.O. Box 986, Clemson, SC 29633-0708
Phone: 864-656-3397

Clemson University
Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition
B224 Poole Agricultural Center
Clemson, SC 29634-0370
Phone: 864-656-3397 Fax: 864-656-0331
Contact: Dr. Johnny McGregor (Chair)

Clemson University
Packaging Science Department
B212 Poole Agricultural Center
Box 340370, Clemson, SC 29634-0370
Phone: 864-656-7637 Fax: 864-656-4395
Contacts: Dr. Ron Thomas (Chair), Dr. Scott Whiteside (Extension Specialist)

South Carolina Small Business Development Center
Clemson University
Jill K. Burroughs, Director
425 Sistine Hall, Clemson, SC 29634
Phone: 864-656-3227 Fax: 656-4869
Web address: <http://business.clemson.edu/sbdc/>

South Carolina Department of Agriculture
P.O. Box 11280, Columbia, SC 29211
Phone: 803-734-2210
Web address: www.scd.state.sc.us

South Carolina Department of Health and
Environmental Control
2600 Bull Street, Columbia, SC 29201
Phone: 803-898-3432
Web address: <http://www.scdhec.net/>

For more information request HGIC 3861, *Starting a Food Business*.

Government Agencies and National Trade Organizations:

Food and Drug Administration, HFI-40
Rockville, MD 20857
1-888-INFO-FDA (1-888-463-6332)
Web address: www.FDA.gov
e-mail: webmail@oc.fda.gov

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Food Safety and Inspection Service
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20250
Phone: 202-720-7943 Fax: 202-720-1843
Web address: www.fsis.usda.gov

U.S. Department of Labor
Occupational Safety & Health Administration
Office of Public Affairs - Room N3647
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20210
Phone: 202-693-1999
Web address: www.osha.gov

Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460
Phone: various hotline numbers available from
home web page at: www.EPA.gov

Uniform Code Council, Inc. (format for bar codes –
Universal Product Code)
7887 Washington Village Drive, Suite 300
Dayton, OH 45459
Phone: 937-435-3870 Email: info@uc-council.org
Web address: www.uc-council.org

National Food Processors Association
1350 I Street, NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: 202-639-5900
Web address: www.nfpa-food.org

Institute of Food Technologists
221 N. LaSalle St., Ste. 300
Chicago, IL 60601-1291
Phone: 312-782-8424 Fax: 312-782-8348
Web address: www.ift.org Email: info@ift.org

This information has been reviewed and adapted for use in South Carolina by W. Scott Whiteside, Extension Associate, Packaging Science; P.H. Schmutz, HGIC Information Specialist; and E.H. Hoyle, Extension Food Safety Specialist, Clemson University.

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