

## You Are Not Alone



### Getting Help Navigating the Complexities of Business Ownership

From recent graduates dealing with a tough job market to seasoned professionals facing layoffs, women are increasingly interested in “creating their own jobs.”

In an article for Bizjournals, Startup Nation cofounder Rich Sloan cites findings from the Center for Women’s Business Research that women are launching new enterprises twice as often as men. York County, with nearly 1,200 women business owners, is no exception.

But the startup process can seem overwhelming, posing seemingly difficult questions:

- Is my idea viable?
- What regulations apply?
- Should I form a sole proprietorship, corporation, or LLC?
- How can I find customers?
- Can I obtain startup financing?

### Get Help from Those Who’ve Been There

There’s no need to struggle in isolation. As business author Seth Godin observes in *The Bootstrapper’s Bible*, “Nowhere does it say you’ve got to do this all alone. Find someone who’s come before you and ask for help. Odds are, you’ll get what you ask for.”

Locally, the Women’s Business Center at the J.D. Brown Center for Entrepreneurship (York College) can connect you with such services as:

- **The Starting a Business Program**, covering basics – generating concepts, writing business plans, funding sources, legal structures, etc.
- **The Women’s Business Center Organization** for information on topics from marketing to work-life balance
- **“Idea Validation”** through the J.D. Brown Center Pitch Program, which provides constructive feedback on business concepts
- **Networking and Referral Opportunities** connecting entrepreneurs with organizations, information, and resources related to financing, government programs, and more

For women with businesses established for at least one year, the Center also offers a mentor program.

“Having a mentor is crucial to the success of entrepreneurs,” said Lynda Randall, Program Director for the J.D. Brown Center. “Our network will match women business owners with experienced mentors to provide knowledge, coaching, best practices, and networking opportunities.”

## **Your Local Bank: A Resource for Financing ... and More**

One might initially think of a bank simply as a resource for basic services like credit lines, checking, and payroll accounts.

However, a community bank focused on local business can be a valuable strategic partner. For example, the Business Services team at York Traditions Bank often provides clients with information about financing options that fit specific types of businesses.

Relationship-driven banks may also offer insights on such issues as managing cashflow, receivables, and collections. And with deep knowledge of the community, your bank may also be a resource on potential clients, vendors, specialized financial services, and more.

## **It's All About Community and Relationships**

The themes of community and relationships run through these resources. Your connections -- whether with your mentor, an organization like the Women's Business Center, or your bank -- will ease the feeling of being alone in uncharted territory.