



Getting started

what are you going to do? why?

these things are really hard to nail down – almost everyone wants to do it all. make products! teach classes! see clients! save the world!

don't be roped in: it will burn you out! pick the thing you're BEST at, that you love most, and do that. if you decide to sell products, you're not going to have time to do the other stuff, and vice versa. which doesn't mean that you'll never teach a class or see a client – but those things aren't your business, they're things you do in the course of doing your business. (yes, you should have diversified revenue streams, and yes don't get bored, yes lots of those things. but you're not going to do it by being everything – you're going to do it by selling your products at farmer's market + wholesale + website + holiday fairs ...)

mission and vision statements

*mission: why are we here, vision: what does it look like?
be honest! ☺*

who do i serve?

it's ok to target more than one demographic, just know who they are and when you market, market to one group at a time. the better you know them, the better you can communicate with them!

make a plan

*write out your 1-3-5 year goals
from there, build actual task lists
(now cut half of your goals!)
from there, make a project plan – there are so many styles! you might like a big full year calendar, or a giant white board, or a journal such as the Bullet Journal or the Self Journal. however you do it, plan to be productive, because when you're self-employed, if you don't plan to be productive, you won't be!*



Where and When?

you'll need a workspace (could be anywhere!)

if you're making products, you'll need a commercial certified kitchen. there are community commercial kitchens where you just rent by the hour if you don't want to or can't get your home kitchen certified.

licenses/permits/LLC/etc if necessary

this varies by state. the rules for every state are here:

<https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/launch-your-business/register-your-business>

if you're selling products, start your GMP requirements now.

if you're seeing clients, remember: you're not a doctor!

have an informed disclosure form and be sure not to use doctor words like treat, cure, diagnose, etc. make sure that you are clear that you're an educator, coach, motivator, etc. herbalists cannot qualify to take insurance.

Getting to know you

you'll need a business name! (also be thinking about the URL) and branding!

logos, font choices, color schemes – make choices about this at the beginning and then be consistent all the time so that people recognize you easily.

you need a website!

we like SquareSpace.com, but there are lots of easy options. if you want someone to help you, consider FellswoodCreative.com

you need a newsletter!

MailChimp.com is the easiest, and it's free up to 2000 contacts!

you need a social media presence!

first just get set up. once you've posted daily for three months, THEN you can start paying for advertising. but until then you won't have enough of a following to build a target audience.



Marketing isn't actually awful!

“free” marketing

share information for free – it lets people know that you know what you're doing. share it on social media, offer herb walks or speak at your library or coop or... and ALWAYS take a mailing list sign up sheet with you!

paid marketing

you don't have to spend a lot! facebook and instagram marketing can be done even for \$5-\$20!

keep in mind, people go to college to learn how to market: so don't expect to get it right on the first try! emulate the marketing approaches that work on you, and most importantly, plan to experiment. run multiple different ads for a small amount of money, see which one does best, and then run that one “for real”.

stealth marketing (i'm doing it right now!)

speak everywhere! go ahead and teach people things – don't fall into the trap of “scarcity”. share information and let people know what you know: then they will be willing to pay for more. and by the way, it's reasonable for people to want to “try before they buy”! you can also do this via your blog, a YouTube channel, a podcast, etc.

seasonal and coordinated marketing

is it fall? share your favorite elderberry syrup recipe! is it spring? be talking about seasonal allergies. is it mother's day? talk about herbal skin care products... and do it all in all modalities – for example: offer a free class, talk about it on social media, write about it in your newsletter, etc.

annnnd, it's always changing.

so keep experimenting!



And pretty much every year, you need to start over at the beginning again! You really do have to go back to the planning stages every year and in fact, you also have to do it every day! It's a good practice to start each day with 1-3 goals that must happen for this day to be a win, and at the end of the day, spend some time thinking about how you made that happen or why it didn't happen. Do that at the beginning and the end of a week, too, and the beginning and the end of the month, season... This is really the single biggest predictor of success: if you do it, you will achieve things and grow. If you don't, your business is likely to stay a dream.

Starting a business is a stupid amount of work, but I think it's worth it!