



TRENDS & HOT TOPICS FOR MWBEs

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M. H. West & Co., Inc. brings you "Trends & Hot Topics." This publication provides information, tips, and guidance that MWBEs may find useful as they grow and diversify their companies. This month's issue provides guidance on "**Developing An Office in Your Home.**" **LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK OF OUR PUBLICATION AND ABOUT ANY ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE THAT YOU MAY NEED TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS OR LAUNCH A NEW ONE!!!**

FACTS & FIGURES

❖ **Starting a new or expanding an existing business requires generally that you have space to house your operations. Among the options are:**

- ✓ Building/leasing space
- ✓ Sharing space with another business
- ✓ Developing space at home

HOWEVER...selecting an option that is consistent with your business's life cycle is critical. For example, purchasing an office building to house yourself and one other employee demonstrates vision for growth in your company but it may not be practical if you are short on resources as a new company or mature company.

❖ **Most business owners want office space that is well-designed and adequately sized in order to effectively transact their business. However, office space can be expensive to maintain. For this reason and the significant strides made in information technology and communication systems, developing office space in the home has become more popular. Also, many employees are seeking approval from their companies to work at home on a full time basis or for a portion of the workweek. Included among the other reasons business owners are establishing offices in their homes are the following:**

- ✓ More quality time is available to spend with their families
- ✓ Additional time is available to transact the company business because travel time to and from the office is eliminated
- ✓ The home provides a less formal and stressful work environment
- ✓ Office buildings have become targets for terrorists
- ✓ There is greater flexibility in work hours
- ✓ Cost savings may result because day care fees for children and/or older parents are eliminated or reduced

LOOKING AHEAD...Working at home represents a viable option for some business owners and the following tips may be useful in developing your plans:

- ✓ **Confirm with the zoning board or agency that your residence can serve as a place of business for your products and services.**

- ✓ **Choose space in the home that is of adequate size, can be reconfigured and is not a focus for activities in the home such as the kitchen or the den.**
- ✓ **Check your home for capability such as electrical wiring to support office equipment, computers and other systems needed to operate your business.**
- ✓ **Purchase furnishings that are right sized for the space available and obtain office accessories to organize your work.**
- ✓ **Protect important documents such as client and financial records by securing your office and files.**
- ✓ **Minimize distractions that may interfere with your work by removing furniture and accessories that make you feel too relaxed such as a television and day bed unless your business requires that you have these items.**
- ✓ **Monitor your work habits, expenses and space needs periodically to determine if a change may be warranted to expand the home office or move to another location.**
- ✓ **Keep current on tax laws and their applicability to offices located in your personal residence (s).**

Adapted from the following sources: M. H. West & Co., Inc. project work and training resources; *"60-Second Guide to Setting Up a Home Office"*, www.SCORE.com

---FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT TOM WILKINSON OR MARILYN WEST---