

# MOTIVATIONAL ARTICLES FOR CRAFTS BUSINESS OWNERS

A collection of articles by Barbara Brabec, republished from her  
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[Barbara Brabec's World](#)

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## Success Comes One Step at a Time

Have you ever noticed how life leads us in new directions when we least expect it? We get involved in one thing, sometimes accidentally, and before we know it, we're off and running in a new direction. We find ourselves zigzagging here and there until one day—*Viola!*—we find exactly what we've been searching for.



A step in any new direction will automatically set in motion a chain of events that could change and enrich not only your life, but the lives of your family and friends as well. Without question, a serious involvement in any art or craft will lead you in surprising new directions. Many couples who began with just one of them producing art or crafts for sale are now working together full time. In some cases, whole families have gotten involved in a business activity based around mom or dad's former hobby.

In observing so many home business owners through the years, both in and outside the crafts community, I've noticed that few of them end up in the same business they started. *The reason for this is that we often don't know what we can do until we actually get involved in something, and only then will we know what to do about the new ideas and opportunities that present themselves.*

- Through experience in your moneymaking endeavor—whatever it happens to be—you will begin to learn your special strengths and weaknesses. You will suddenly discover talents and skills you've taken for granted, or didn't even know you had.
- You will add excitement to your life because you'll start meeting new people.
- The longer you work at producing and selling your products and services, the more you will understand the marketplace and your special place in it. This understanding will naturally spark ideas about new products or services you might sell, or new sideline businesses you might start.

If you haven't already begun a new art or crafts venture, the important thing now is to just get started. Then you will gradually gravitate to this or that, learn some new lessons, expand your horizons, and someday land in a place you can't even imagine now.

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# How to Set and Achieve Your Goals

## Dream it . . . Wish for it . . . and Put those Goals in Writing!

We can't get ahead in life or business if we don't regularly set new goals for ourselves. And these goals need to be in written form and put somewhere where you can regularly review them, modify them, and add to them. You may want to record your goals in your business journal (see below) or make a special designer "goals wish box" for yourself (see end of this article). Either way, putting goals in writing will help you stay focused.

- **A "SMART" Rule.** If "business planning" sounds too hard, just write down your goals every year and let those written goals serve as a plan. Keep your goals large enough to motivate you to go forward, yet small enough to be easily achieved. Here's a SMART rule to remember in setting goals. They should be:

**S**pecific  
**M**easurable  
**A**ttainable  
**R**elevant  
**T**rackable

- **Review your Goals Regularly.** Once you've written a list of short- and long-term goals, they must be reviewed from time to time. Crafts designer [Kathy Wirth](#) reviews her goals from the previous year and writes new ones. "I focus on income expectations, name-recognition goals, and accomplishments I hope to add to my resume," she says. "Then I jot down ideas on how to achieve these goals. I try to evaluate which business activities in the previous year yielded the best results and plan to pursue more of them."

Don't be afraid to set some goals you're not sure you can reach. You may have to leave your comfort zone and stretch yourself to achieve a particular goal, but what you'll learn in the process will be worth gold to you.

- **Consider the Benefits.** As many hobby crafters have learned, the benefits of starting a small crafts business at home can be tremendous, even if the venture itself turns out to be a financial flop. That's because failure is a wonderful teacher that helps us learn what not to do the next time around. Many crafters who failed to make a good profit from their first crafts venture learned enough to succeed in their second. As we try new things, we are often surprised to discover that we can actually do it! Each little success boosts our confidence level and enables us to keep moving forward in exciting new directions. Every time you discover

something new about yourself or achieve a new goal, jot it in your crafts business journal. As time goes on, you'll find this written record of your crafts journey a constant source of encouragement.

## Design a “Goals Wish Box”

I love the way artist and author [Annie Lang](#) records and reviews her goals. She designed a beautiful “Wish Box” for her desk into which she drops written notes about all her goals—large, small, business, or personal.

Design your wish box so that it reflects the art or craft work you do and makes you happy just to look at it. Put it somewhere where you can see it every day so it serves as a constant reminder to you to jot down a new goal or dream you hope to achieve.

At the beginning of each year, Annie adds a bunch of new goals for that year. Then, every couple of months or so, she goes through the box and reads through her wish list, pulling those she has achieved while adding new ones. “Everything I want to do, wish I had, or hope to achieve goes into this box,” she says.

**NOTE:** Kathy Wirth and Annie Lang are just two successful craft designers who are featured in Barbara’s book, [Make it Profitable](#).

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## How to Chronicle Your Crafts Business Journey

It’s important to keep a written record of what you’re doing when you start a new business or move into a new area of learning and business growth. Susan, a successful crafter in my network, explains just how beneficial this can be:

“I have kept handwritten notebooks, sketchbooks with designs, and logs of activities and correspondence for the past eight years. “Recently I retrieved one of my earliest notebooks and, though I had other things vying for my time, I became lost in reliving what I was doing/designing/marketing seven years earlier. When I put the book back on the shelf, I was smiling because that notebook was proof I was becoming successful even then—when I didn’t think I was getting anywhere. It showed me how I’ve grown in spite of

some day-to-day disappointments, and how I'm still growing. And isn't that what it's all about."

One business owner told me about the daily calendar she had kept for five years. It included both personal and business notes. "Some days it holds a wealth of discoveries and other times it is boring," she says. "It is especially good for noting what worked or didn't regarding shows, traveling and product development. Sometimes when I reread my notes, my eyes are opened to repetitious things that should be changed."

**Getting Started.** I suggest you buy a three-ring notebook that will accommodate both handwritten entries and printed notes or plans written on computer. Design a fabulous cover for it that will inspire you every time you open it. For your handwritten entries, get one of those spiral-bound notebooks that have holes punched in them. Use this to jot down spur-of-the-moment ideas or observations, little journal notes, motivational and inspirational thoughts, etc. Then set up tabbed divider pages to hold notes printed from your computer. Here are some suggested categories:

- Family Issues
- Goals
- Time Management
- Workspace
- Production Plans
- Legal/Financial
- Product Line & New Ideas
- Marketing Plans & Outlets to Explore
- Suppliers
- Special Resources

When I decided to become a professional writer, I started a handwritten diary to document my journey. I wrote about my hopes and dreams and outlined what I needed to do to accomplish particular goals. Once I got a computer, I began to put all my notes and ideas in file folders on the computer, but I still needed hard copy because my brain reacts differently to words on a computer screen versus words on paper. With a three-ring notebook, you can easily mix handwritten notes with pages printed from your journal notes on the computer.

I still work the same way today, putting all my thoughts and ideas into various computer documents that can be revised and printed for study at any time. Often, in rereading my notes, I see things that weren't obvious to me at the time I originally wrote them. That's why I always encourage business owners to keep a journal of their daily business activities, ideas, plans, and accomplishments. Rereading them from time to time is not only personally satisfying but often the best way to spark profitable new ideas.



*Barbara Brabec*

Visit [Barbara Brabec's World](#) for a wealth of articles and resources on many topics related to home-business startup, management and marketing. Check the Table of Contents for each of Barbara's [home-business books](#) to see which ones might be most helpful to you. All of them include advice from Barbara as well as from many successful business owners and industry pros in her network.

Excerpts from Barbara's crafts books will also be found on [The Author's Den](#) website in the [Crafts/Hobbies department](#).

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