Providing a complete Business Information Service Using Local Resources and BusinessGateway.ca

Guide for small and medium sized public libraries

LibraryNet, Industry Canada
Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library

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Section 1: Summary and Guiding Principles

The following Guide was produced as part of a larger project to investigate how a public library and community access network could act as the service interface between online government information and services and the local client. The project goals were to:

- identify what resources were needed to implement and maintain such a service
- investigate public satisfaction levels with such a service
- explore how partnerships with new government agencies could be developed
- to produce a guide for any small/medium library to use in implementing such a service.

This Guide is the product of that final goal and was used to actually implement this new service in three library service outlets in Pictou and Antigonish Counties, Nova Scotia. These three outlets, two being public library branches and Community Access Program sites and the third being a rural outreach library service that utilizes Community Access sites, represent an small urban, rural, and dispersed population.

The creation of the service reflects several of the guiding principles common to other projects of the Regional Library.

1. That the service include not only online resources but book and traditional materials.
2. That the service promote the use of local community resources where appropriate.
3. That web pages be developed that allow the staff to teach the client how to become independent in their use of the resources.
4. That web services cannot be developed and used properly without well-trained staff available for assistance.
5. That the service should build positive and "real" linkages to other community partners.
6. That the service be "integrated" into all other aspects of the library, information, and community access to technology service provided by the Regional Library. To the client, the service must appear "seamless".

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Section 2: Board and Management Issues

The area of government information delivery is not new to public libraries. Public libraries have offered various levels of access to government information depending upon their "depository status". With the advent of the Internet this has changed dramatically, in a sense, all public libraries are now "full depository libraries" having access to any information posted online. Public libraries must now cope with the public's need for assistance in locating information and, very often, handling the content online (viewing, printing, etc.). Speed of Internet connectivity, quality of equipment, privacy of viewing, are but a few issues to be resolved.

Service delivery is the next step and all levels of government are now setting plans to have all services delivered electronically within the next few years. Ensuring that all Canadians have access to these services and can use them effectively is something that needs to addressed. As many libraries are part of the Community Access Program, or offer community access to technology, the public will be using these sites to access these services.

Also, public libraries are one the few remaining government funded organizations left in small communities. Government offices, government service outlets, and in many instances - schools, are gone. But the public library remains.

Library Boards and managers, especially in small and/or rural communities will need to determine their position as this change occurs. Will they help the public access government information? Will they help the public make use of these services? How will they cope with the technical needs, the staff training and development needs? How will they take this vast amount of information and make it a service? How will they ensure that local information and services are included in their service?

The Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library Board has viewed their future role as becoming the central community resource for information. It also took the position that it was not enough to simply offer access to this information but to organize it and ensure that the entire population had access to training that would allow them to make use of it independently. The Board views the aspect of electronic service delivery as an extension of this, especially as the public library is one of the few government funded organizations left in these communities. Much of this view has come about because of the Board's involvement with CAP and the community development role it takes in the area.

From a management perspective, it makes sense to control the change as opposed to being a victim of it. The public will be entering public libraries, accessing the Internet and requesting help. This was an opportunity to form partnerships that could provide resources for staff training, equipment, and service development. It was a way for the public library, through its physical branches and its virtual one, to become more relevant to the community it is a part of.

Your Board and management will need to make this decision. Is it part of your mandate, your future plans? Can the necessary partnerships be formed to develop and offer the service? If the Board and management do not believe it is their role to take this initiative on, then the service staff will not take it on either.

Our experience with this project shows that the Board, management, and staff can not only take this change on but gain a larger satisfaction that they are contributing to the growth of their community. Staff have commented, after the training took place, that they feel much more confident in their work, the public were asking for help, now they can provide assistance. From the public view, through our surveying, the majority of public believe the public library is a place to find government information.

With Board and management consensus, a service can now be developed.

Section 3: Forming Partnerships

To carry out the delivery of government information and service you will need resources (ie: funding, expertise, equipment, etc.). Forming partnerships is a way to accomplish this. The Public Library has several assets, which have real value to your prospective partners:

- a physical and virtual presence in the community, including a high quality of personalized service.
- connectivity and equipment already in place
- expertise in organizing information
- expertise in locating information and instructing in the skill of retrieving information independently
- promotional service at the local level
- a large amount of print materials to compliment online information
- recognized in the community as a place to locate government information
- an established relationship with local partners (ie: Regional Development Agencies, Chambers of Commerce, etc.)

Federal Partner:

Government Online (GOL) is a branch of the Treasury Board mandated to establish a Federal online presence. BusinessGateway.ca is a section of GOL administered through Industry Canada.

Contact:

Provincial Business Service Centre:

Provincial Partner:

In Nova Scotia, Service NS and Municipal Affairs carries out the building online information and service.

Contact:

The *Office of Economic Development* has responsibilities for small business development as well as the administration of community access to technology and the CAP program.

Local Partners:

In Nova Scotia, Regional Development authorities either provide Access NS locations, or small business counselling services. Chambers of Commerce can provide promotional opportunities to small and medium business.

Section 4: Resources Needed to Implement Service

Although sufficient funding will be needed to implement this service, there are other resources that your partners can provide (ie: technology development expertise, production of promotional materials, equipment, etc.)

The following are based upon our experience during this pilot and can be used to approximately calculate your costs.

Administration and management:

- 35 hours per year x 2 staff.

Training development:

- 70 hours per year x 2 staff.

Staff training time:

- 1 staff member requires 16 hours of formal training per year and 24 hours of practice and orientation per year.

Web development costs: (calculations based upon using existing Business Room site)

- 14 hours initial development.

Equipment costs:

- One dedicated workstation based upon a small library situation.
- Equipment refresh on other public and staff workstations.

Collection development costs:

- This cost will vary depending upon the condition of your small business collection.

Promotional costs:

- Brochure production for service.

Compensation:

- With increased skill level, staff will expect higher salary compensation. This should be part of your future budget plans.

Section 5: Design and Building of Web Portal

Included with this guide is the "Business Room" our Virtual Library portal that brings together the various business resources that the staff and clients will use. We have constructed the portal to be easily adapted to your own needs. For the most up to date version of the Business Room visit our Virtual Library www.parl.ns.ca.

The Business Room is organized into three areas that reflect how business information is organized: Starting, Operating, and Growing. Within each of these three areas are three types of information that clients will need: print, online, and referral.

The first goal of the Business Room is to bring together all sources of information and services. The second goal is to provide staff with a tool for training the public. The third goal is to provide the client with a familiar site that allows them to access the information or service independently.

Section 6: Collection Development

In preparation for implementing this new service, the current small business collection was evaluated and weeded. Order were placed for current materials from a variety of sources. What materials you choose will reflect community needs. Community need was determined by circulation records, discussion with small business counsellors, and a knowledge of business conditions in the local area. In this case, Self Counsel Press materials comprised a large number of those purchased.

Ready reference materials for staff use were purchased: business dictionaries and one volume comprehensive guides to starting and operating a small business.

This ensured that staff have current materials that reflect community needs. Through our discussions with small business counselling staff it was recognized that print materials have a critical role to play in providing information to their clients.

Section 7: Survey Development

A brief survey was provided to 275 persons visiting the project libraries (provided to anyone over 16 who would complete the survey) and also offered online. This was carried out at the beginning of the new service and will be carried out again within six months. The goal of the survey is to benchmark the public's awareness of specific government online portals (BusinessGateway.ca) and to measure the effectiveness of this project in raising that awareness.

A survey can benefit your own service, not only by allowing for evaluation, but in providing measurement for funding partners.

Section 8: Promotion

The service should be integrated into the overall promotional strategy of the library. At the same time, your partners, such as the Federal and Provincial governments, will require recognition. The public library's ability to provide a high degree of visibility to these partners in local communities is central to a successful partnership.

Promotional methods include:

- Brochure featuring the service and the partners involved
- Regular features in the local media (newspaper, radio)
- Business or Chamber of Commerce newsletters
- Community newsletters
- High profile launch of the service
- Prominent display of Service NS materials and signage
- Lunch and learn sessions in cooperation with local Chambers of Commerce
- Prominent feature of the Business Room on the virtual library
- Presentations to municipal councils
- Offering one-on-one training at their place of business (done in cooperation with CAP)

Section 9: Training Strategy

The training consisted of four formal sessions and independent sessions where staff were provided with exercises.

Section 9: Training Session 1

Session 1 was an orientation to the new service and to ensure that staff were comfortable with their roles as government information and service providers.

Agenda

Business @ Your Library
<u>Staff Training Session 1</u>
New Glasgow Library

Monday, November 25, 2002
9:30 to 12:30

9:30	Welcome and introductions
9:35 - 10:00	Overview of project: goals and objectives
10:00 - 10:40	Introduction to the "Business Room" and to book materials
10:40 - 11:00	Break
11:00 - 11:30	General discussion: questions, comments, upcoming training and communication
11:30 - 12:10	Hands-on: answering questions using Businessgateway.ca and Service NS
12:10 - 12:30	Observations from the hands-on session and general comments

Next Dates

I.   Monday December 16th, 9:30 to 1:00 -New Glasgow Library
II.   Independent training sessions will be arranged
III.   Surveying very soon.

"Go live" January 7th, 2003

The "Hands-on" portion was to create a benchmark for trainers and staff, identifying their skill level in searching for business information.

Question 1:
Please complete the following question:
I want to register my business. Can you help me find the web site for the Registry of Joint Stocks?

Question 2:
Please complete the following question:
I was speaking to someone from Revenue Canada and they said I could find form RC4022 online. Can you help me find it?

Question 3:
Please complete the following question:
Can you help me find the Arts and Culture Info Guide available from the Canada Nova Scotia Business Service Center?

Question 4:
Please complete the following question:
I want to see the Tenders for the Federal Government. Where can I find a web page of information?

Question 5:
Please complete the following question:
Can you help me find some online information about writing a business plan?

Question 6:
Please complete the following question:
I need to order some Records of Employment (ROE) how do I do this online?

Section 9: Training Session 2

Session 2 focused on using BusinessGateway.ca though browsing.

Agenda

Business @ Your Library
<u>Staff Training Session 2</u>
New Glasgow Library

Monday, December 16, 2002
9:30 to 1:00

9:30 – 9:35	Welcome and goals for today
9:35 - 10:00	Questions and comments from orientation
10:00 – 10:45	Questioning techniques and role playing questions
10:45 - 11:00	Break
11:00 - 11:15	Review and discussion
11:15 - 12:30	The Business Room, browsing, and test questions
12:30 - 12:55	Overview of Federal/Provincial Departments and Agencies
12:55 – 1:00	Wrap-up and what to do for next session

Next Dates

Independent training sessions over next three weeks
Monday January 6th, 9:30 to 1:00 – New Glasgow Library
"Go live" January 7th, 2003

Business @ Your Library
Training Session 2

At the completion of this training session you will understand how to:

- accurately identify the user's need through questioning techniques
- use the Business Room to assist a user find resources
- use the online catalogue and other library resources for business information
- use Businessgateway.ca and Business Start-Up Assistant by browsing through categories
- refer users to local counselling and assistance
- identify the major contributors to government information and their areas of expertise.

    The focus for this session will be Starting Your Business.

Accurately identifying the user's need
through reference questioning techniques

As with any type of reference/information transaction there is need to assist the user in properly phrasing their question/need in such a way that it can be properly searched. This way, significant time and misunderstanding can be avoided and the user will receive correct and pertinent information. Success requires you to listen carefully, show interest, ask open-general questions, and help phrase the question into useful search areas.

The process is best illustrated with an example.

A user enters the library and asks: "*I need something on gift baskets*"
What do you do?

1. Start with an open question:
"*What do you need to know about gift baskets?*"

This will make the user explain their question in more detail:
"*I want to start a business making and selling gift baskets.*"

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Term: Open question - a question that does not result in a yes or no answer

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2. Show interest to encourage the user to continue explaining:
"Really, that's interesting, tell me more."

This makes the user the "expert" and comfortable:
"A friend thought I should find out who else in the area is selling gift baskets."

3. Follow-up with more open questions:
"What information have you found so far?"

"Actually I'm just starting and I haven't found anything."

4. Now re-phrase the question back to the user as a closed question:
"So, you are looking for general information on starting a business, specifically making and selling gift baskets, and you have some questions about the local market".

This helps the user form their question in one sentence and helps you clarify what your search will be.
"Yes, exactly."

> **Term**: **Closed question -** a question that will result in a yes or no answer

5. You now have three areas to search:

1. General information on starting a business
2. Information on gift basket businesses
3. Information on the local market

Key points to remember

➢ Very rarely can the user tell you what they are really looking for. They know but they have difficulty stating it as a question.
➢ Play "dumb" and show interest, do not assume!
➢ Always start with open questions that encourage a user to explain without using yes or no answers.
➢ Determine what other information they have found.
➢ When you have enough information from the user, re-phrase the question back to the user and ask them to confirm what they really are looking for.
➢ Then choose the key concept(s) or area(s) that you will use to help them search.

Using the Business Room

The Business Room is your guide when assisting the user to find information. You should explain to the user what is happening throughout the search, so they can navigate the site independently in the future.

The Business Room is separated into three main areas that reflect how business information is organized:

- Starting
- Operating
- Growing

When Starting a Business users need information of a more general nature (ie: what do I need to know to start a business, how do I write a business plan). These types of questions lend themselves to a browsing type of search.

Operating and Growing information is usually more specific (ie: where do I get a record of employment form, how do I write a job ad for a computer technician). These questions lend themselves to a keyword type of search.

Today we will be focusing on <u>browsing</u> within Starting Your Business.

Starting Your Business

Starting Your Business is separated into three areas of information:

1. Books and other materials: library resources
2. Online Information through BusinessGateway.ca
3. Referral to in-person help and business counselling

<u>Users should be introduced to all three resources.</u>

To illustrate how these areas can be used we will follow our previous example. From this example, we know this user is looking for three areas of information:

1. General information on starting a business
2. Information on gift basket businesses
3. Information on the local market

1. Locating General Information on Starting a Business

Books and other materials: library resources:

Library of Congress Subject Headings use *New Business Enterprises* and *Small Business* to group like titles together. Explain this to the user, how to browse through the titles listed under those headings on the online catalogue, and how to locate/request a book.

Ideally, the user should have a book in their hand on Starting A Business. You will also notice that the Business Room features selected titles.

Online Information through BusinessGateway.ca:

Businessgateway.ca is a "**portal**" that features and organizes business information and services from dozens of federal and provincial departments and agencies.

> **Term: Portal** - A web site that organizes other websites and acts as a single access point. Also called a Gateway

Businessgateway.ca features the **Business Start-Up Assistant**, a step by step guide to starting your own business. It was developed by the **Canada Business Service Centre**, locally known as the Canada/Nova Scotia Business Service Centre (located in Halifax).

The purpose of the Canada Business Service Centre is to assist small and medium sized businesses access government programs and services (especially during start-up) and to guide users to required licences and regulations.

Explain to the user what Businessgateway.ca is, guide them to the Business Start-Up Assistant. Note that the user should always choose their province first.

Then select a topic (ie: Choosing a business type) and demonstrate the categories, explaining that various pamphlets and guides are here for them to read.

By doing so the user should be familiar with what BusinessGateway.ca is, they should be able to navigate the Business Start-Up Assistant and they should have promotional flyers to take with them.

2. Information on Gift Basket Businesses

Books and other materials: library resources:

     It is sometimes difficult to identify the proper Subject Heading for topics, in this case Gift Basket Businesses. Use one or two key words from the question and search by title (ie: gift basket*, note the use of truncation). Then choose an appropriate title and check the subject heading, using this to find all other relevant titles (ie: ***Gift Basket Industry – Management***).

Online Information through Businessgateway.ca:

     Beware of information overload!
     Suggest to the user that they get started with the information you have provided so far. However, indicate that BusinessGateway.ca can help find specific information about their business. When they are ready they can return to get help with detailed searching.

    Knowing how much information to provide <u>is as important</u> as what information is provided!

3. Information on the Local Market

     It is unlikely that either the public library or BusinessGateway.ca will have information on local business markets in such a narrow subject area.

     Referral to experts in local market conditions is the best approach. These include regional development authorities, Chambers of Commerce, Human Resources Development Canada, etc. and will differ from location to location.
The Business Room features these local sources including contact information. The user should have a name and contact information for these experts when they leave.

Key points to remember

- ➢ Your goal is have the user leave with an understanding of the Business Room, how to browse and find materials in the library collection, an awareness of BusinessGateway.ca, how to navigate the Business Start-Up Assistant, and local contact information for help and counselling.
- ➢ Illustrate the above resources utilizing the user's area of interest identified through the questioning techniques.
- ➢ Beware of information overload but ensure that the user is welcome to return for further instruction.
- ➢ Your goal at this point is to teach the user how to access these resources independently. <u>They should be able to browse these resources with confidence</u>.

Instructions for Staff:

You will work in a team to complete this exercise. Your partner will act as the patron.

You are dealing with a first time patron. The patron has the information you need to help you answer their questions correctly.

Remember to ask the proper type of questions and do not hesitate to "play dumb". Do not assume the patron has given you all of the information you require to answer their questions always try to encourage them to give you as much information as they can without being too personal.

At the end of the exercise you should be able to produce a list of items and information for the patron to leave the library with. Be certain to indicate whether or not a book has been ordered or given to the patron, a local contact has been given, a form has been ordered, etc.

Take time with this exercise to browse all potential answers and send the patron away with as many answers as you are able to provide. Remember you are not expected to know everything you may have to rely on outside sources to answer some questions.

Have fun!

Instructions for Patron:

  You will work in a team to complete this exercise. Do not give your partner (Staff Member) information until you are asked for the details. Begin by telling the staff member you are looking for information about a Consulting Business.

Profile: Male
      Age 20
      Starting a Consulting Business
      Familiar with a computer and have used the Library Homepage before.

  You are coming to the Library for the first time to get information about a Consulting Business. The following are the things you already know or you need to know:

- So far you know you need a business number but you are not sure where you go to get one and what information you will need to provide.
- You do not know if there are other Consulting Businesses in your area
- You are looking for potential funding sources.
- You are not sure what licenses you may require to run the business.
- You would also like to know where to advertise your business.
- You need tips on successful proposal writing.
- You need to know how and where to advertise for an employee.
- You would also like to be able to do your own accounting. Are there any books available that may help you.

Instructions for Patron:

       You will work in a team to complete this exercise. Do not give your partner (Staff Member) information until you are asked for the details. Begin by telling the staff member you are looking for information about a Craft Business.

Profile: Female
                  Age 41
                  Starting a Home Based Craft Business
                  Familiar with a computer but have not used the Library Homepage

     You are coming to the Library for the first time to get information about a Home Based Craft Business. The following are the things you already know or you need to know:

- So far you know you need a business number but you are not sure where you go to get one and what information you will need to provide.
- You do not know how many other craft businesses are being run in Pictou County or if there is a market for your products.
- You are looking for potential funding sources.
- You are not sure what licenses you may require to run the business.
- You have heard that when running a home based business you need extra insurance. Is this true? How do you find out?
- You would also like to know where to advertise.
- You need to know how many stores in the Pictou County area would be potential retail outlets for your wares.

Staff Role Playing Question #3
Monday, December 16, 2002

Instructions for Patron:

You will work in a team to complete this exercise. Do not give your partner (Staff Member) information until you are asked for the details. Begin by telling the staff member you are looking for information about a Home Daycare.

Profile: Female
                Age 29
                Starting a Home Daycare Business
                Familiar with a computer but have not used the Library Homepage

You are coming to the Library for the first time to get information about a Home Daycare Business. The following are the things you already know or you need to know:

- So far you know you need a business number but you are not sure where you go to get one and what information you will need to provide.
- You do not know how many other home daycares are being run in Pictou County.
- You want to know the population of children under 5 in the County.
- You are looking for potential funding sources.
- You are not sure what licenses you may require to run the daycare and you do not know what training employees may need to have.
- You have heard that when running a home based business you need extra insurance. Is this true? How do you find out?
- You would also like to know where to advertise this business if you follow through and open the daycare.

Role Playing Question #4
Monday, December 16, 2002

Instructions for Patron:

You will work in a team to complete this exercise. Do not give your partner (Staff Member) information until you are asked for the details. Begin by telling the staff member you are looking for information about a Bed and Breakfast.

Profile: Male
               Age 29
               Starting a Bed and Breakfast
               Familiar with a computer but have not used the Library Homepage

You are coming to the Library for the first time to get information about a Bed and Breakfast to be operated from your home. The following are the things you already know or you need to know:

- So far you know you need a business number but you are not sure where you go to get one and what information you will need to provide.
- You do not know how many other Bed and Breakfasts are operating in your area.
- You want to know the average number of tourists visiting Nova Scotia in the peak tourist season.
- You are looking for potential funding sources.
- You are not sure what licenses you may require to run a Bed and Breakfast.
- You have heard that when running a home based business you need extra insurance. Is this true? How do you find out?
- You would also like to know where to advertise this business if you follow through and open the Bed and Breakfast.
- You want to know if there is a minimum number of bathrooms you are required to have in your home.

Role Playing Question #5
Monday, December 16, 2002

Instructions for Patron:

You will work in a team to complete this exercise. Do not give your partner (Staff Member) information until you are asked for the details. Begin by telling the staff member you are looking for information about Catering

Profile: Female
           Age 50
           Starting a Catering Business
           Familiar with a computer and have used the Library Homepage in the past.

You are coming to the Library for the first time to get information about a Catering Business. The following are the things you already know or you need to know:

- So far you know you need a business number but you are not sure where you go to get one and what information you will need to provide.
- You would like to know if there are other catering businesses in your area.
- You are looking for potential funding sources.
- You are not sure what licenses you may require to run a Catering Business and if you are required to have special food handling courses or permits.
- You have heard that when running a home based business you need extra insurance. Is this true? How do you find out?
- You would also like to know where to advertise this business.
- You want to know where to advertise for future employees.
- You would like to be able to do your own accounting. Are there books available to help you to learn about this?

Test questions for Session 2

Question 1:
Please complete the following question:
I would like to know what kind of financing ACOA offers. Can you help me find out?

Question 2:
Please complete the following question:
Please find the property assessment values for the buildings on Dalhousie Street in New Glasgow.

Question 3:
Please complete the following question:
Can you find me the commuting patterns for Antigonish from the Target Nova Scotia web site?

Question 4:
Please complete the following question:
Can you find some information about doing E-business in Nova Scotia?

Practice Questions
Friday December 20, 2002

Please spend an hour to answer these questions and browse and search the Business Websites and The Complete Canadian Small Business Guide (Ref 658.002 Gra). Take time to answer the questions. The answers may be found in the Business Room or in the book. **Please indicate the path you have taken to find the information on the website and the page number in the book where you have found the answer.**

1. There are here types of Businesses; Proprietorship, Partnership, and Incorporation. Find a definition for each from the Business Startup Assistant and The Complete Canadian Small Business Guide.

2. Find the Revenue Canada Website. What path did you take to get there? What things did you like about the site? What things did you dislike about the site?

3. List the interactive services (things you can do online) available for business on the Service Nova Scotia Website. Choose two of these services and tell what they do.

4. On what date did the Goods and Services Tax come into being? How much is the tax and what did it replace? What department is responsible for this tax?

Section 9: Training Session 3

Session 3 focused on using BusinessGateway.ca though Searching.

Agenda

Business @ Your Library
Staff Training Session 3
New Glasgow Library

Monday, January 6, 2003
9:30 to 1:00

9:30 – 9:35   Welcome and goals for today

9:35 – 10:00   Questions and comments from Session 1 and training questions

10:00 – 10:30   Search techniques

10:30 – 10:45   Break

10:45 – 11:30   Search techniques continued

11:30 – 12:30   Browse selected websites and questions

12:30 – 1:00   Wrap-up, survey and launch

Next Date

- Practice questions
- Review session - Monday, February 10th, 10:00 to 12:30 –River John Library and Innovation Centre

Training Session 3

At the completion of this training session you will understand how to:

- correctly identify the user's specific information need
- direct the user to the most valuable resource: books, online information, and/or referral
- identify the correct terms to use in your search, LCSH or BusinessGateway
- navigate the subject organization of BusinessGateway
- refer users to department experts when needed

The focus of this session will be and Operating and Growing Your Business.

Identifying the correct source of information

As in the previous training session, the key to a successful transaction with the user is to clearly identify what they are seeking, then re-phrase that question in terms that can be searched.

Users seeking information on operating a business tend to have specific needs (ie: I need this form or how do I review a person's job performance). For those growing a business the need might be both general knowledge and specific (ie: I am interested in e-commerce and building a web page).

As the information becomes more specific the user's knowledge of the subject matter becomes very important. Asking open questions and listening carefully will make your complete search more efficient and relevant.

Once you have assisted the user identify their need, you will need to determine a search strategy. This will involve selecting the most appropriate source, whether that be:

- a general or specific book on a subject
- a certain government department or agency, federal, provincial, or municipal
- referral to experts or those who have a better knowledge of the sources of information

Over the next several pages we will illustrate the various search methods using examples. Each will draw key points and upon completion we will provide some key principles to remember as you work with the public.

Example #1.

User is applying for a grant to hire a person and has been told to include a job description. **The user needs information on how to write a job description, with examples.**

Books and other materials: library materials:

A search using the term *job description** yields no relevant results. You must now "back up" to a more general subject level.

A search using the term *hiring* locates a few general books outlining the hiring process. A check of the subject headings associated with the book(s) identifies *Employee Selection* as the most appropriate. Searching using this subject heading yields several results. Using the table of contents and index locates a chapter on creating job descriptions with a few examples.

Online information through BusinessGateway.ca:

A search using the BusinessGateway.ca search feature (using the term *job descriptions*) yields no relevant results. However, you will notice the subject of most of the results is *Human Resources Management*.

Return to the BusinessGateway.ca main web page (always choose Nova Scotia first!) and choose Human Resources Management. You will then leave BusinessGateway.ca and move to the Human Resource Management (HRM) web site HRM is a Federal agency that brings together information and services for business and other employers.

The most relevant subjects are listed on the sidebar. *Hiring* is listed as a general subject. After choosing this option you will see various other sub-topics, including *Job Descriptions*.

Choosing this topic provides general information and industry specific examples. The user can now browse through the information independently.

Referral:

Referring the user to local business counselling would not be necessary in this case. A check with the user as to whether they have enough information would be appropriate.

Key points to remember!

- When searching for specific information it will be necessary to "back up" to a higher subject level to locate appropriate information (moving from the specific to the general), ie: job description to hiring or human resource management.
- Knowing the key departments and agencies, and their responsibilities, is important to understanding BusinessGateway.ca

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Example #2.

User needs to know what permits they require for operating a scrap yard.

Books and other materials: library materials:

This need is too specific for most library resources. "Backing up" to a broader subject level will not help. A search using the term *permit** yields no relevant results.

Online information through BusinessGateway.ca:

A search using the BusinessGateway.ca search feature (using the term *scrap yards*) yields no relevant results. A search using *permits* (remember to always choose Nova Scotia first) yields some promising results but you will notice the subject is *Regulations*.

Return to the BusinessGateway.ca main web page and choose *Regulations*. You will leave BusinessGateway.ca and move to the Canada Nova Scotia Business Service Centre (CNSBSC) web page that explains how regulations and permits are governed and applied in this province. CNSBSC is a Federal/Provincial cooperative agency that specializes in simplifying government legislation and regulations for business.

Notice there is a Nova Scotia Permits Directory link listed. Choosing this transfers you from the CNSBSC site to the Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations (Service NS) web site. Service NS is a provincial department with the responsibility of bringing a variety of government services online.

A search here using *scrap yards* yields no results. Choose *Search By Subject*. A quick scan of the subjects yields *salvage yards*. The user indicates this is another name for Scrap Yards. Choosing Salvage Yards provides an overview of the permits needed, the agency responsible, and contact information.

You can now leave the user with this information.

Referral:

Referral, in this case, is to the appropriate department which has detailed information about the subject.

Key points to remember!

- Know your collection! This will assist you in knowing when a question is too specific to be answered by immediate library resources.
- Understand what is occurring as you move through BusinessGateway.ca. Scan the screens carefully and notice when you leave one department and go to another. Explain what is occurring to the user.
- Rely on the user's knowledge of the subject.
- Understand the various jurisdictions of government and which level is responsible for what area.

Example #3.

      User who operates a used snowmobile business from their home would like to know what grants are available to help their business expand.

Books and other materials: library materials:

      Through questioning you learn that the user does not need any information about home based business or general information about selling recreational vehicles. They are just interested in grants. The need is too specific, then, for the book collection as grants tend to change frequently.

Online information through BusinessGateway.ca:

      A search using the BusinessGateway.ca search feature (using the term *snowmobiles*) yields no relevant results or hints to the appropriate subject.

      Scanning the list of subject on the BusinessGateway.ca site choose *Financing* (remember, choose Nova Scotia first). This provides a lengthy list of agencies. You can suggest they browse this list for appropriate grants, as each has specific conditions.

Referral:

      In the area of grants and financing, the user is best to consult with local business counselling and the nearest Business Service Centre. Provide information on both.

Key points to remember!

- Questioning the user to correctly know their need is very important.
- When a need is so specific, and requires specialized knowledge of a subject area, referral is a good choice.
- Referral to the correct source of information is an answer to a question!
- Make sure they have the correct contact information when they leave.

Example #4.

User was told by a friend they might be able to get a tax break for their home consulting business. **Further questioning narrows their need to information about tax breaks for their home office where they operate a consulting business.**

Books and other materials: library materials:

When searching for library materials there are three possibilities. Books about home based businesses, books on operating a consulting business, and books on understanding taxes for small business. Using the following title key words (individually), *home based*, *consulting*, and *tax**, you will discover the following subject headings: *small business*, *home-based*, *consulting*, and *small business - taxation*.

Each of these yields several books. When the table of contents and indexes are checked many of these discuss possible tax deductions that can be claimed for operating your business from home.

Online information through BusinessGateway.ca:

A search using the BusinessGateway.ca search feature (using the term *tax home office*) yields no relevant results or hints to the appropriate subject.

Scanning the list of subjects on the BusinessGateway.ca site choose *Taxation*. You will then leave BusinessGateway.ca and move to the Canada Customs and Revenue web site. Canada Customs and Revenue is responsible for taxation in Canada, and in some cases, provincial tax collection as well.

Searching the site using *home office* yields no useful results. Browsing the site also provides no results. Taxation is a very specialized subject area and changes regularly. Referral to an expert is needed to help locate the information on the Customs and Revenue web site.

Choose *Contact Us*, look for contact numbers under *Tax Services Offices*. Carefully checking this page offers a Business Enquiries Toll free number. It is best to ask the user to contact this number as there may be specific questions that you cannot answer.

Referral:

You have now referred the person to an expert. The person has contacted that number and the information officer has recommended the user obtain the Business and Professional Income Guide, document number T4002, available on the Canada Customs and Revenue web site.

The user has returned asking for your help in locating the guide. You help the user find the web site again and search using the document number T4002. This results in several guides, be careful to check the year for the most current. <u>The Business and Professional Income guide</u> is there in Portable Document Format (PDF) which can be downloaded and printed (the user may wish to browse the guide and only print the pertinent information).

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:1em;">

<u>Key points to remember!</u>

- Always "back-up" from the specific to the general before beginning your search, information may be found under more than one subject.
- Referral is always useful when the subject becomes very specific.
- Searching a government web site is most effective from the appropriate department or agency's own site.
- Your goal is to teach the user to be independent, always explain what is occurring as you search.

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Example #5.

The user has been asked by the bank to complete a business plan for expanding their second hand clothing store. **Through questioning you identify that they already have books on making a business plan and what they now need is information on market research and what the market in Nova Scotia for clothes retailers is currently like.**

Books and other materials: library materials:

The user has identified that they do not need information about business plans. Also, materials on operating a second hand clothing store will be of little value as the person has an established business.

They may wish materials on growing a business. A title search using key words *grow* business** reveals that there is no comprehensive subject heading for growing a business. Browsing general business subject headings is the best method of locating materials.

They may also wish materials about market research. A search using *market* research** reveals several general books on conducting market research for small business.

Online information through BusinessGateway.ca:

BusinessGateway.ca has the subject area *Business Statistics and Analysis*. Choosing this option leads to various web sites that provide statistical data, such as Statistics Canada, Human Resources Development Canada, Strategis, etc. However, the information is currently poorly presented and is cumbersome to search and/or browse for.

At this point you could leave the user to browse for information pertaining to their need. However, you are familiar with the various department web sites and know that Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) has the responsibility of collecting information about the condition of various industries and businesses. The Business Room has a links to the main departments, including HRDC – www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca, choose *Our Offices* to find the regional web site for your area, and choose *Labour Market Information* (this is terminology specific to HRDC). Here you will find industry forecasts, workforce trends, etc. for Nova Scotia and local communities. The user can then browse for information. Remember to check with the user later to ask if they require further assistance.

Referral:

Local counselling and the Canada Business Service Centre would be appropriate referrals in this case as the local expert may know of recent trends particular to the economy of the area.

<u>Key points to remember!</u>

- There is no substitute for knowing your collection, whether it be books or government departments and agencies. Ongoing practice will provide you with that knowledge.
- Share your knowledge with co-workers!

Example #6.

The user has a new invention and would like information on how to patent it.

Books and other materials: library materials:

Searching using *patents* as a subject heading yield no relevant results. Searching using *patent** as a title key word locates several titles, checking the subject heading reveals that it is *Intellectual Property*. When searched this provides a few guides.

Online information through BusinessGateway.ca:

BusinessGateway.ca has a subject heading for *Innovation/Research Development/Technology* which includes *Intellectual Property*. Choosing this you will leave the BusinessGateway site and move to a web site for Innovation in Canada. This is a "sub-portal" that gathers together information about Innovation and R&D from many departments and agencies.

Looking closely, you can choose *Intellectual Property* from the sidebar, then you can choose patents. There is a general guide to patents in Canada as well as information on how to apply.

Referral:

Normally you might wish to refer the person to a toll free number for the Office of Intellectual Property (which you have found administers patents in Canada). However, there is no toll free number, but there is an email. You may wish to suggest the person use a public access computer to send any questions.

Key points to remember!

- Subject headings are not always clear.
- Some government subject areas are now being organized, such as Innovation in Canada and Human Resource Management. This is ongoing work and will require you to review them often!

Example #7.

The user would like information on starting an online art gallery. Through questioning you know the user is looking for any information about selling online but would like some specific information about this area.

Books and other materials: library materials:

You will find that there currently is no broad subject heading for e-business or e-commerce. There are specific headings such as *Internet Marketing*, therefore you must use a combination of possible title key words and subject headings to find materials.

There are no specific book titles in the collection relating to selling art online. As this is a relatively new area, magazines might feature articles on this subject.

Using InfoTrac - General Reference Centre you can complete an advanced search using *SH=art marketing* and *KE=Internet*. This produces several articles.

Online information through BusinessGateway.ca:

A search using the BusinessGateway.ca search feature (using art galleries) yields no relevant results.

There is a subject area identified for *E-business*. This currently contains only general guides to online business but is quite useful. The user may wish to browse this site.

Referral:

As part of our local Community Access Program, we have a CAP Assistant who can guide the user in learning more about online business. You could suggest they book an appointment with this person.

Key points to remember!

- Subject areas that are specific and timely may be found in magazine articles. Books are only one of the many resources the public library has.
- Always point out all the options open to the user in the community, our goal is to provide a complete service!

Summary

Through the above examples we have now toured many of the major parts of BusinessGateway.ca, identified strategies in searching for library resources and learned the responsibilities of some of the main departments and agencies. Some of the key points to remember are:

- the user's subject knowledge will assist in the search.
- consistent practice will help you identify relevant subject headings (catalogue) and subject areas (BusinessGateway).
- referral is a key component of reference work but only when the user is referred to the right source!
- you can become familiar with the various department and agency web sites just like a library book collection, but it requires practice and working as a team.

As you have learned there is a general pattern when searching for information:

1. users have a broad understanding of what they require, you must assist them state that need in specific terms.
2. you must then take the specific need and state it in terms that relate to the collection, whether it be subject headings or subject groupings.
3. it will be necessary to then move from the specific subject area "back" to the broader subject area so as to ensure that you have found all the relevant information a user needs.

<u>Your goal is to provide a complete, efficient, accurate, professional, and friendly service!</u>

Business @ Your Library
Scavenger Hunt
January 6, 2003

1. Find 3 different ways to get to the Nova Scotia Permits Directory page.

2. How many times can you find this link in the Business Room (link image goes here)?

3. Find the online survey on the Business Room Site. Fill out the survey and submit it.

4. What is the phone number for the Antigonish Regional Development Authority?

5. Which Government agency deals with patents and trade marks?

6. From the Company Directories pages list the six related sites.

Survey

The Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library is working to improve your access to online government information and services.
Your assistance in answering this short survey is appreciated.

Please deposit the completed survey in the marked box at the circulation desk.
All responses are confidential.

1. Have you ever used the Internet?
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

2. Have you visited our Virtual Library web site, www.parl.ns.ca?
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

3. Have you ever visited a government website?
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No
- ❑ Not sure

4. If yes, how would you rate your use of the government web site?
- ❑ Easy to navigate
- ❑ Average
- ❑ Difficult to navigate

5. Did you find what you were looking for?
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

6. Have you ever heard of BusinessGateway.ca?
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

7. If yes, how did you hear about BusinessGateway.ca?

_____

8. Have you ever used BusinessGateway.ca to find information?
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

9. Do you think of the Public Library as a place to find government information?
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

10. To help us identify which communities use our services, please provide your postal code.

_____

Thank you!