

## ENTREPRENEUR RESOURCES

[Word Count: 555 | SEO Key Phrases: 7]

An abundance of free entrepreneur resources abound both online and offline. If you have more time than money to devote to growing your business, look into some of these great places to acquire the additional knowledge, insights and skills you need.

**U.S. Small Business Administration:** The U.S. government has a strong commitment to helping small businesses succeed. Take advantage of the great information offered by the SBA. From free classes online and white papers, from accounting courses to tax information, the SBA provides free entrepreneur resources such as these to help start-ups everywhere thrive.

**Mentors:** If you'd like a mentor but aren't sure where to easily connect with a good one, give Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) a try. Online, SCORE.org provides a plethora of free information, workshops, and even online mentoring. However, this non-profit also sponsors local seminars to mentor those in any phase of starting or running a business. These long-experienced counselors have helped many avoid pitfalls and also will work with the SBA on your behalf.

**Online Business Communities:** These sites really are still in their infancy, but already they've proved muscular as entrepreneur resources. Business opportunities aside, social network communities such as Twitter, LinkedIn, FastPitchNetworking, StartUpNation and IdeaCafe are great places to conduct quick business research or ask for how-to advice. You can also connect with joint venture partners and contract professionals for help. (Note: The search function on Twitter is has a stellar reputation of its own.)

**Free Tax Help:** Starting a business can be confusing and overwhelming for newbies, particularly when it comes to business tax matters. To help you – and also to manage the plethora of people seeking solid tax law advice – the IRS offers a free CD ROM addressing all manner of tax inquiries posed by new small business owners. What's more, the IRS provides a comprehensive small business tax resource guide online.

**Local Libraries:** See a couple of hot books online or at a neighborhood book store, but don't want to pay to own them all? Give your local library a try! Most local libraries offer a book borrowing service and often can even find obscure titles for you to take home a while.

**National and Local Business Organizations:** Few entrepreneur resources rival the value of getting out of your home office and connecting with likeminded business people, particularly in non-competitive environments where there's potential business opportunity. Look online for a list of business groups that welcome new members and attend some of those meetings. You'll be surprised that in networking, you can get some of the best business tips and sales leads by networking with people attending these meet-ups and mixers.

**Tutorials:** Here are two entrepreneur resources that most folk don't think about, but find great value in once they do: YouTube and PodCasts. On both websites, you can find excellent video tutorials on business topics. There's also a wealth of how-to information specifically for entrepreneurs at About.com and eHow.com. It's like accessing an expert in minutes, any time you need.

So, the next time you're feeling stumped, need a sounding board or to better learn a key business function, try some of these "grade A" entrepreneur resources and tools. Once you do, you'll quickly realize what's meant by that old saying: *The best things in life are FREE.*

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