Dietitians in Private Practice

A GUIDE FOR THE CONSULTANT

FOURTH EDITION

Dietitians of Canada
Les diététistes du Canada

CONSULTING DIETITIANS NETWORK—DC RÉSEAU DIETETISTE CONSEIL
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If you are a registered dietitian (RD) requiring a comprehensive manual to assist in the planning, implementing and sustaining of your own thriving dietetic-based business, look no further than Dietitians in Private Practice: A Guide for the Consultant, Fourth Edition. Published by Dietitians of Canada’s Consulting Dietitians Network (CDN), this step-by-step guide is ideal for RDs considering a private practice yet also invaluable for those with an established business looking to promote growth and cultivate new challenges. Covering the complete cycle of a business—from start-up to its full potential—this newly expanded edition is subdivided into 9 sections brimming with helpful topics, including professional opportunities; legal, business and financial considerations; establishing and solidifying your reputation; ethical practices and responsibilities; and essential technology, social media, and online marketing tools. Complete with a myriad of insightful resources and tips to enhance your business’s efficiency, such as a self-evaluation quiz to assess your entrepreneurial potential and suggested readings, this indispensable handbook also offers an in-depth Toolkit providing relevant samples of business forms; business plan proposals; media releases; and spreadsheets for tracking revenues and expenses.

**Consider the fourth edition of Dietitians in Private Practice the only map you’ll need to help reach your destination—that of a successful dietetic-based entrepreneur.**

**What’s new?**

› Brand new layout and format!

› Profiles, hot topics, and testimonials of entrepreneurial dietitians from across Canada offering insights and personalized advice to help you succeed!

› Updated Legal & Accounting section

› New sections on Niche Business, Social Media, and Online Marketing

› Updated and simplified templates to get your business up and running

› Index allowing for easy navigation of all your favourite topics!
Acknowledgements

This is the fourth edition of the Consulting Dietitians Network’s private practice manual titled Dietitians in Private Practice: A Guide for the Consultant. The previous edition was published in 2009.

The Dietitians of Canada, Consulting Dietitians Network would like to acknowledge contributors of previous editions (2009, 2003) from which this manual is largely based. Thank you to former contributors including:

Alexandra Anca  Sandra Edwards  Jennifer Maret  Cara Rosenbloom
Beth Armour  Krista Fraser  Vesanto Melina  Francis Scovil
Kim Arrey  Ilena Goodman  Anet Mor  Howard Selig
Leslie Beck  Beth Gould  Iyabo Musa  Lorraine Stanford
Peter Brock  Nancy Guppy  Joy Norgaard  Lizanne Steunenberg
Helene Charlebois  Holly Heartz  Naomi Orzech  Mary Sue Waisman
Patricia Chuey  Steve Kinsley  Barbara Parisotto  Janine Woodrow
Lynda Corby  Jean LaMantia  Kristen Imfeld Quinn
Karen Davison  Barb Ledermann  Cathy Richards
Linda Dietrich  Janice Macdonald  Phyllis Reid-Jarvis

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The Editors would like to thank the following section reviewers and contributors:

Leslie Beck  Karen Davison  Abby Langer  Phyllis Reid-Jarvis
blueCaribou  Carol Donovan  Karine Levy  Cara Rosenbloom
Chartered Accountants  Ross Dyck  Cyndi McLean  April Saunders
Wendy Busse  Corinne Eisenbraun  Andrea Miller  Loreen Wales
Kathy Colaiacovo  Roberta Irvine  Cristel Moubarak  Susan Watson
Kate Comeau  Matthew Kadey  Mateen Pourgol

Thank you to our Provincial Representatives for your contributions:

Brooke Bulloch  Roxanne Laughlin  Amanda O’Brien  Susan Watson
Lisa Cianfrini  Andrea Miller  Huguette Samson-Bouchard
Samara Felesky-Hunt  Beverley Noseworthy  Annie Tsang

Special thank you to those who submitted template forms, recommended resources, pictures, and feature quotes throughout the manual:

Michelle Archer  Carol Donovan  Shauna Lindzon  Joyce Schnetzler
Casey Berglund  Andrea Falcone  Angel Luk  Jennifer Sygo
Jennifer Bewza  Sarah Hamdan  Cindy MacNeil  Kim Wagner-Jones
Brooke Bulloch  Andrea Hardy  Andrea Miller  Susan Watson
Helene Charlebois  Andrea Holwegner  Cristel Moubarak  Sandra Venneri
Patricia Chuey  Jennifer Jones  Jodi Robinson  Shaistha Zaheeruddin
Andrea D’Ambrosio  Charlene Kennedy  Nancy Saunders

Thank you to the following individuals:

Ken Dyment  Jennifer D. Foster  Cara Rosenbloom
Copy Editing/Design  Consulting Writer/Editor  Content Editor
When referencing this manual, please use the following citation:

Notations and Disclaimers
Throughout this manual, the terms private practice, consultant, self-employed, and business are used interchangeably to reflect various aspects of entrepreneurial dietetics. During the preparation of this manual, every attempt was made to take into consideration all possible aspects of starting a private practice. It was difficult to take into account all of the possible differences in provincial regulations. When starting a business, it is imperative to conform to the regulations of the province in which you practice.

Private Practice Networking Socials
The Consulting Dietitians Network can assist you in developing a successful business. In addition to this manual, the Consulting Dietitians Network supports networking among members. We encourage you to connect with your colleagues and spark new ways to strengthen your business. If you would like to host a networking social in your area, contact the Consulting Dietitians Network by email to learn how to attend or host a social: consulting@dietitians-network.ca

It’s all about networking!

Toronto, Ontario
Network Social, 2014
The purpose of this manual is to assist the registered dietitian in planning, developing, implementing, and sustaining his or her business.

**To be a successful entrepreneur, you must:**

- Be confident in your skills as a nutrition professional
- Possess business savvy
- Have the determination to work the hours required to make your venture a profitable one

Starting a private practice will change your professional and personal life. Each day offers a new challenge. As an independent practitioner, you are the decision maker. As a successful business person, you must contend with responsibilities such as:

- Paying expenses
- Satisfying clients and creditors
- Conforming to a variety of controls and regulations established by various levels of government

## Purpose of the Manual

Knowledge of marketing, accounting, education, counselling, management, culinary practices, research, and law are some examples of other fields that can contribute to the successful operation of a dietetic-based business. Many private practitioners agree that the positive aspects of being an entrepreneur far outweigh the negative ones. The negative aspects of starting your own business are real, but not insurmountable. These shortcomings include:

- No regular paycheque
- No fringe benefits such as allowances for sick days, health and life insurance, parental leave, vacation pay, and employer-provided retirement plans

However, with careful research and the development of a plan that defines business goals and objectives, the end result can be determined and projected.

Building your own business provides many benefits, such as career independence, freedom, and flexibility in applying professional goals, values, and methods. It gives you an opportunity for advancement that will challenge and excite you. These rewards are directly related to the effort exerted. With good business management skills, your private practice can be:

- Financially rewarding
- Professionally satisfying
- Personally gratifying
We bring you this fourth edition with the intent to help guide you through developing, implementing, and sustaining a successful business. It will also help the dietitian with an established business to foster new challenges and promote growth. The services of a registered dietitian are an invaluable and needed resource for all facets of the healthcare and food-service industry.

Introduction

In this time of healthcare reform, attention is directed on preventative medicine as a means to help control healthcare costs. In this current context, the entrepreneurial dietitian has many opportunities for consulting work, whether it is doing individual counselling, consulting for healthcare, business or industry, or leading preventive programs targeted at a healthy lifestyle.

Consulting dietitians offer a variety of unique skills.

The dietetics professional:

› Abides by evidence-based practice and client-centred care

› Assesses clinical, biochemical, and anthropometric measurements

› Addresses dietary concerns

› Evaluates feeding skills (i.e. as they relate to mealtime and dysphagia management)

› Assesses a client’s readiness to change and applies appropriate behaviour modification strategies

› Understands the determinants of health affecting his or her clients

› Applies his or her unique body of knowledge and expertise to support people in understanding and applying the principles of healthy eating throughout the entire life cycle
These professionals are educated in the science and management of nutrition and dietetics, and exemplify evidence-based decision-making to their practice. They also adhere to nationally established standards of practice that are monitored by provincial regulatory bodies. Over the years, the functions of entrepreneurial dietitians have evolved. Today, they engage in a wide range of activities that may include, but are not limited to:

- Adult education
- Community needs assessments and development
- Cookbook development, cooking classes, and food demonstrations
- Corporate health and wellness programs
- Distance/web-based education
- Food-service systems design
- Grant, proposal, and/or medical writing and/or authoring books
- Advocacy or issue management
- Mentoring or coaching
- Resource development for consumers and/or professionals
- Spokespersons for media, business, and/or industry
- Management activities
- Consultation to the health and business industry
- Training of peer support workers and caregivers
- Development of web-based programs (for example: apps)
- Private counselling
- Long-term care
- Marketing
- Media/public relations/communications
- Program planning
- Invention of products
- Healthcare team participation
- Supermarket or nutrition tours
- Teaching in a variety of settings
- Practice-based research and program evaluation

Dietitians are choosing self-employment for a variety of reasons. These can include the potential to increase their income, have more flexible hours, try new ideas, and work with motivated clients. According to an Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics membership survey (2016), successful self-employment has the potential to generate as much income as top jobs in education and food-service management. Your financial independence will be directly related to your business savvy and hard work.
This manual has evolved from the first edition to meet the changing needs of a consulting dietitian. This manual considers the full cycle of any business—from start-up to its full potential—and this edition is subdivided into 9 sections.

The Toolkit has been provided in addition to these sections and include various tools and resources that can be adapted to individual needs. These include samples of general forms for business and forms for the business focused on individual or group counselling, as well as forms for the business that targets healthcare, business, or industry sectors. Tools and resources include a sample proposal, business plan, media releases, and spread sheets for tracking revenue and expenses.

For your convenience, we have also created an Index, available at the end of the Manual, in hopes to encourage efficient retrieval of topics.

We wish you success in your business and hope this guide is helpful to you!

The Consulting Dietitians Network Executive, 2016

1 | The Concept
This section outlines the current entrepreneurial climate in Canada and the advantages and disadvantages to operating a business, as well as the professional opportunities that are available.

2 | The Foundation
Details of this section include how to start up your business, assess your entrepreneurial potential, and promote your business. It also highlights factors to consider for financing and record keeping.

3 | Legal and Business Considerations
This section of the manual highlights important matters such as business regulations, income taxes, HST/GST, third-party insurance, and relevant legislation and regulations.

4 | Building Your Business
Now that you have mastered the maze of starting up a business, you will need to use a variety of strategies to build your reputation and credibility. This section outlines these strategies.
5 | Consulting Opportunities in Healthcare, Business, and Industry
This section will explore a few areas in healthcare, business and industry in which dietitians can create working relationships, contracts and partnerships.

6 | Ethical Considerations as a Consulting Dietitian
Background on ethical practice, issues of ethics, considerations in business behaviour, and ethical dilemmas the dietitian in private practice may encounter are discussed in this section.

7 | Technology Tools
Technology evolves rapidly, and we must adapt quickly. Learn which tools you can use to help enhance your practice.

8 | Online Marketing & Social Media
More and more dietitians are looking toward online marketing and social media as ways to promote and leverage their businesses. Learn how to stay abreast of trends in these areas, so that you can be better equipped to help your clients navigate the ever-changing nutrition information emerging in our world today.

9 | Branching Out Your Business
This section highlights a variety of areas to redirect or expand a nutrition-based business. For example, the potential to expand your business online and into global markets provides a whole new arena of possibilities for the ambitious nutrition entrepreneur.

To be successful, live the dream and practice what you preach. You are your most-valued asset.