



QUICK START GUIDE

FOR UPCYCLING & CRAFT
BUSINESS

START HERE!

When you are starting a new business there are multiple pulls on your time.

As an upcycler you are probably excited about producing the items you want to sell and not so much the business start-up admin!

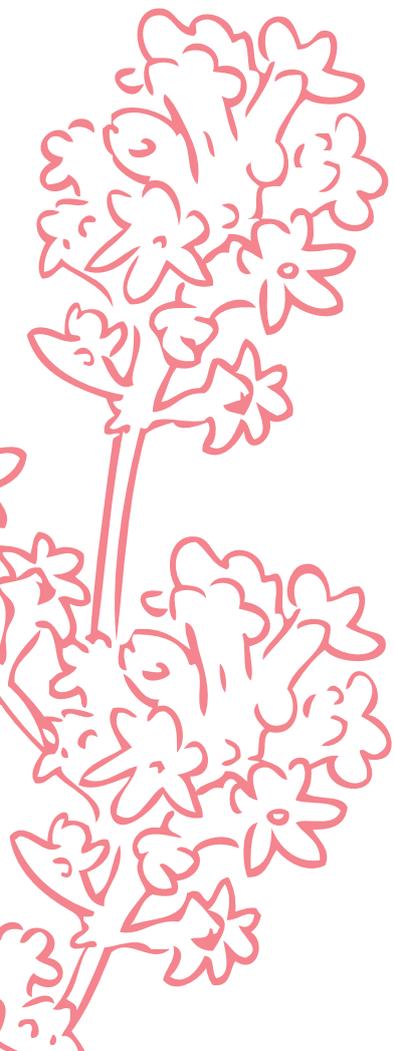
This is my quick start guide to help you focus on what is important and what isn't so you can get started quickly, start growing quickly, and free up more time for making!

You will find a prioritised checklist at the end of this guide to help you focus on the right business admin tasks at the right time.

BUT FIRST, there are 3 concepts I have learned in running my successful e-commerce business that I want you to grasp FIRST before you tackle those admin tasks.

These 3 concepts are the ones I wish I had understood better when I ran my first upcycling business!

They will help you to prioritise your actions and hopefully save you some time and stress down the line!



"Your why will keep you going on the days when you don't want to."

KEY CONCEPT #1 - FINDING YOUR NICHE

Upcyclers are creatives and crafters at heart. Which means we tend to enjoy making more than one thing, often many many things!

This is fine for a hobby, it doesn't work for a business.

If you confuse your customers with too many types of products they won't understand what you sell, they won't understand what your expertise is, and they won't remember you in the future when they need something specific.

You don't have to stop all your hobbies and you don't have to do the same thing forever, but to get started you really do need to focus and define who you are and what you sell.

This is true even if you have narrowed down to a niche like furniture painting or jewellery. Can you narrow down within that, to a certain style, purpose or material used?

The more specific you can be the more discoverable you make yourself - I know it's counter-intuitive isn't it?!

ASK YOURSELF

Answer these questions to start narrowing down your 'niche':

- What are you good at?
- What are you already making for customers or people in my life (paid or free)?
- What do customers or other people in my life ask for my help and advice on (paid or free)?
- What do you LOVE doing? Is it the same as any of the above?
- Can you find other businesses selling something similar? (hint: this is a good thing)

Finding your niche will help you PRIORITISE where to sell, how much to charge, and where to advertise.

It also makes you MORE discoverable, MORE memorable and MORE trustworthy.

KEY CONCEPT #2 - SELLING IN MULTIPLE MARKETPLACES

Broadly speaking upcycling business owners tend to focus on one or two selling channels – the most well known of which is usually Etsy.

Etsy is great. I LOVE Etsy. I sell on Etsy.

But it isn't the only show in town.

To really have a successful small business you need to be selling your products in more than one place.

And I am not talking about on social media. Social media is a tool to drive traffic to other places, it isn't where the bulk of your efforts should be focused. Facebook likes DO NOT EQUAL sales!

My advice is to start with the selling channels where SOMEONE ELSE is already driving the traffic/customers – for example Amazon, Etsy, someone else's shop, craft fairs.

Once you have determined your niche, you will have a better idea who your ideal customer is. Use that information to decide where to sell your products, for example:

- Etsy
- Amazon Handmade
- Folksy
- NuMonday
- Other online marketplaces specialising in your niche
- Wholesale
- Physical Shop (or in someone else's physical shop)
- Your own online shop
- Craft Fairs
- Word of Mouth

You don't want to spread yourself too thin though, so focus on learning how to sell on one channel first and then add another and another. 2-5 selling channels is usually best.

You will need to advertise to get the attention of your customer wherever you sell, but if you pick somewhere where there is already someone doing the work of driving customers half that work is done for you and you only have to focus on getting attention within that one selling environment.

Much EASIER than trying to drive cold traffic to your own website.

Save that for further down the line when you have some money coming in!

Upcycling businesses can have even more trouble with pricing products than other handmade small businesses do.

Why?

Because part your base materials are by definition either something free that no one else wanted or something low cost and of little value to anyone else.

But just like other handmade businesses you are still spending on supplies for your upcycling as well as your time. All of which needs to be part of your pricing strategy.

I've gone into this in far more [detail in this blog](#) where you can also find a free product pricing cheat sheet to help.

WHAT IS IN YOUR PRICE?

For now I want you to understand that your price should cover:

- your production costs
- your time
- your advertising (i.e. how much it will cost you to get a sale)
- PLUS a profit margin.

You also need to compare the price you come up with against your competitors to determine if it is a realistic price to achieve in your niche.

If it is LOWER than other people's and your quality is the same – increase your profit margin.

If it is HIGHER than other people's and your quality is the same – find a way to make it more quickly or spend less on supplies so you can lower your price. If this is not possible find another product that you can produce at a cost where you can make the profit you need to stay in business.

BUSINESS ADMIN TASKS - PRIORITY LIST

Once you have digested those 3 concepts you can move on to the business set up tasks below.

BUT, you don't have to have those 3 concepts nailed to get started - just understand them first and then tackle these.

DO THESE FIRST

- Pick a business name
- Get a logo designed
- Sign up for business accounts on the social media channels where your customer hangs out
- Start a spreadsheet or use an accounting system to separate and track your business finances.
- Get attractive images of your products.
- Open accounts on any online marketplaces you will use & list your products.
- Set up any offline selling opportunities.

DO THESE SECOND

- Post on social media using a schedule that works for you - don't let this suck your time!
- Learn about how to advertise your products or services within the marketplaces you've chosen.
- When you start to make sales - register your business or declare as a sole trader.
- If you haven't already - open a business bank account.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT THESE UNTIL YOU ARE MORE ESTABLISHED

- Business cards, leaflets or flyers
- Website (though it is helpful to check if the domain you want is available before you pick your business name!)
- The size of your social following - in some niches social media is important but in general people do not go there to shop. Growing your businesses presence on social is about brand building not getting your first sales.

I would love to hear about your business journey and any issues you are struggling with.

You can reach me at info@upcyclemystuff.com

I'm excited for you and your new venture and wishing you the best for it!

X Kristen