Chapter Outcomes

After studying this chapter, you will be able to:

- Understand the purpose and parts of a strategic business plan.
- Describe marketing and advertising for horticulture businesses.
- Recognize professionalism in employees.
- Explore career documents.
- Prepare for and take part in a job interview.
- Create a school-to-career plan.
- Explore careers related to horticultural business management or marketing.

Words to Know

- advertising
- brand
- core ideology
- direct sales
- entrepreneur
- envisioned future
- goal
- intensive market coverage
- job interview

- letter of application
- marketing
- mission statement
- overhead
- professionalism
- profit margins
- reseller sales
- résumé
- school-to-career plan

- selective market coverage
- small business
- standard
- strategic business plan
- value
- vendor
- vision

Before You Read

After reading each section (separated by main headings), stop and write a three- to four-sentence summary of what you just read. Be sure to paraphrase and use your own words.
While studying this chapter, look for the activity icon to:

- **Practice** vocabulary terms with e-flash cards and matching activities.
- **Expand** learning with the Corner Questions and interactive activities.
- **Reinforce** what you learn by completing the end-of-chapter questions.
As a child, when you pictured yourself as an adult you most likely imagined yourself as successful and happy. Maybe you thought of yourself as a doctor or lawyer or the owner of a thriving business. Often times, the image may have been you being the boss. Most people do not necessarily want to work for someone else but would rather be in charge and give direction or manage others. After all, that is usually where the financial benefits develop.

Opportunities to join the horticulture industry and own a business increase annually. This multibillion-dollar industry continues to grow along with the global population. There are mouths to feed and houses that need new or renewed landscapes. Opportunities abound for the horticultural entrepreneur looking to enter into the business. But owning a business is not easy. It takes time, hard work, and a great deal of planning.

**Small Businesses**

Every month in the United States 543,000 small businesses open, and during that same month more than that number closes. This statistic is not caused by a single factor. Instead, many factors contribute to the success or failure of any business. A business is a legal entity that produces or buys and sells products and/or services to make a profit. The US Small Business Administration (SBA) defines a *small business* as a company that is independently owned and operated, is organized for profit, and is not dominant in its field.

A small business may have employees or may be identified as a nonemployer. In the United States, there are 28 million small businesses with 500 or fewer employees; 22 million of those are nonemployers. Nonemployers are companies are run by someone who is considered self-employed. Other interesting facts about American businesses include:

- Nearly 70% of new firms survive at least 2 years.
- About 50% survive at least 5 years.
- About 30% survive at least 10 years.
- About 25% stay in business 15 years or more.

If you are thinking of going into business for yourself, you should be aware that only one out of four businesses that open their doors today will be around in the years to come. Do not be frightened by these statistics. After all, if all entrepreneurs decided to quit before they even tried, there would not be any farmers markets, garden centers, or landscape services open anywhere in the world, *Figure 5-1*. 

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**Did You Know?**

In July 1934, a dozen farmers joined what they called a *village* in Los Angeles on the corner of Fairfax and 3rd Street. This was the first American farmers market.

*Figure 5-1.* Every year many businesses open their doors for the first time, but not all survive. Farmers markets are thriving in the current business climate, but that trend may not continue. What types of horticulture businesses can survive and even thrive in today’s competitive business climate?
Millions of entrepreneurs have their own successful businesses, Figure 5-2. An entrepreneur is a person who organizes and operates a business. Running a business requires tireless effort that often has numerous challenges. A great deal of effort and time is needed to develop the concept and the framework for the business. Once the business opens its doors, the work has just begun. A business must constantly work to improve and compete with other companies.

**Strategic Business Plans**

Nearly 80% of businesses fail, and there are many reasons for these failures. Businesses should develop a strategic business plan to help them be successful. A strategic business plan is a document that states the mission of the business, examines its current condition, sets goals, and outlines strategies for achieving the goals. A goal is an objective to be achieved. A strategic business plan is a road map for the future, and it often helps a business to survive even in an economic downturn. It helps to organize the activities of the business through:

- Establishing company information.
- Creating a mission statement and vision.
- Determining products and services.
- Identifying customers and market.
- Assessing competition.
- Evaluating risks.

A strategic business plan directs a business toward achieving its goals. In addition, the plan also monitors performance and creates solutions for underperformance. For ways in which a traditional business plan differs from a strategic business plan, see Figure 5-3.

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<td>• Financial plan</td>
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Figure 5-2. A floral business has a great deal of competition locally and globally. What do you think are the biggest challenges for floral businesses?

“Well there are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure.”
—Colin Powell

“Plans are nothing, but planning is everything.”
—Dwight D. Eisenhower

Corner Question

How many horticultural farms are in business in the United States?
Strategic Environment

The strategic environment of a business includes the conditions, circumstances, and influences that affect the company. A business must determine what to sell and then gather information about potential customers. To sell a good or a service, there must be a want or a need for the item or service. There must also be a price that both the customer and the business can agree on. Company information, the industry environment, and competitors must also be considered.

Company Information

Company information includes an overview of the company history, structure, management, employees, and other resources. Company information can also include:

- The company’s brand (a name, label, logo, or image under which a product is sold).
- The company’s products or services.
- The company locations and facilities.
- How products will be made.
- How the products or services will be distributed.
- The financial status of the company.

Business Structures

According to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), several business structures thrive in today’s global economy. Those structures are outlined here.

A sole proprietorship is a common business structure in which one individual (or a married couple) is in a business alone. This form of business is simple to operate, flexible, and has fewer taxes and legal controls than other structures. The business owner is solely responsible for all debts incurred by the business. An example of a sole proprietorship is ownership of a lawn care service.

In a general partnership two or more people agree to contribute both money and labor to the business. An example is siblings operating a greenhouse business.
A limited partnership consists of one or more general partners and one or more limited partners who join together in the business. General partners manage the business while limited partners share only in the financial part of the business. An example is a floral design business owned and operated by one person with financial backing from investors.

A limited liability partnership (LLP) business structure is similar to a general partnership, except the business partner does not have financial liability for the negligence of another partner.

A corporation is a complex business structure that has liabilities, rights, and responsibilities beyond that of an individual. A corporation is eligible for many tax benefits but also has increased fees (such as licensing) and decreased personal control.

A nonprofit corporation is an entity established to further an ideal or goal. It is not solely established to create revenue. Nonprofit corporations are often associated with charitable causes like the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

A limited liability company (LLC) is formed by one or more people or entities through a written agreement detailing the organization of the LLC. The agreement also lays out the distribution of profits and losses.

A municipality is a public corporation established as a subset of the government. An example is the water municipality in your city.

An association is an organized group of people sharing a common interest, bond, or effort in business. An example of an association is the National FFA Organization.

Industry Information

The industry information that should be considered includes the demographic, sociocultural, and economic factors that impact a business.

- Demographics—the age, income, and gender of your customers. Does your product or service cater to one generation over another?
- Sociocultural—the culture, race, or ethnicity of your customers. The US market is always changing. For example, salsa recently passed ketchup as the highest-selling condiment in the United States.
- Economics—the economic environment. Is there a recession? Is the economy growing?

Competitive Information

The competitive environment is the relationships among businesses in an industry. Other factors that affect how competitive a company can be include technological, political and legal, and environmental factors.

Technological factors include knowing what current technologies could impact your company and what changes in technology are on the horizon. Political and legal factors include knowing your government officials and the political climate and understanding their leadership style. What legal issues are happening that could affect the development of this business today or tomorrow? Environmental factors are concerned with the actual climate or weather for the area. This is a very important variable to consider in horticulture.
The US gross domestic product (GDP) can fluctuate yearly due to weather (floods, droughts, excessive heat or cold). Weather and environment can be a liability or an asset to a horticulture business, **Figure 5-4**.

Assessing the competitive environment creates a better business plan and is important for strategic planning.

**Internal Resources**

When developing a strategic business plan, the founders of the company assess the resources and abilities of the company. Several variables must be considered, including:

- **Location**—is this a rural or urban location? How will customers get the products or services that are produced? Where are the highways and airports in relation to this company and its products?

- **Resources**—what natural resources are available? Is there water? What about electrical or other power access for this facility? Is there an affluent population nearby? Where will employees come from? See **Figure 5-5**.

- **Production**—what are the general products and how are they produced? What services will be offered?

- **Value chain**—how will the company add value to the products or services? What research and development takes place? What new products or services are in the future? What about marketing and sales? How is their value associated with the processes or the products of the firm?

**Figure 5-4.** Environmental factors are extremely important for horticultural businesses to consider when developing a business plan. Can a business be insured for damages caused by flooding or drought?

**Figure 5-5.** A horticultural company should locate its business near major roads for easy transport of supplies and products and also be near major utilities such as water and power. How does a “convenient” location affect the price of real estate or rent?
Vision and Mission Statement

A company’s vision is a description of its goals for the long term. A company’s mission statement is a passage that identifies the purpose or the reason for existence of the company. The company’s vision and mission statements help managers and employees understand where the company is headed and what it is trying to achieve. Mission statements can also help employees feel they are valuable assets of the company when they are mentioned in the statement, Figure 5-6.

A company grows and improves with effective leadership. Company leaders determine the company’s basic ideas, standards, and principles, known as the core ideology, and what the company plans to achieve, known as the envisioned future.

Identifying differences between the company’s current position or condition and the goals or vision will help company leaders direct the business. Company leaders also follow a set of principles known as values. These values guide company managers as they create goals and make decisions for the company.

Sun Gro Horticulture Company

Vision
Sun Gro’s vision is to be the leading supplier of superior quality plant growing products in North America.

Mission Statement
We will achieve our vision by focusing on customer and employee satisfaction. We will passionately pursue continuous improvements in all aspects of our business through team design. Our responsibility to our shareholders is to deliver sustainable and improving cash flow.

Corner Question
How much of the world's water is consumed by agricultural use?

“An organization’s ability to learn, and translate that learning into action rapidly, is the ultimate competitive advantage.”
—Jack Welch

Figure 5-6. The Sungro Horticulture Company, located in Agawam, Massachusetts, has an exemplary vision and mission statement.
An example of an ambitious goal is from C. Raker and Sons, a horticultural grower: “Our achievements will be the benchmark for which other companies measure themselves.” This clear and compelling goal energizes employees and promotes unity in the company. This grand statement means that this company will be so successful that all other companies, not only those in horticulture, will strive to be as good as C. Raker and Sons. This is a huge goal and one that motivates company employees.

### Principal Strategy

A horticulture business must develop a strategy and implement a plan of action in business. Three basic business strategies for companies are:

- **Be a low cost, big volume distributor.** This opportunity is really only for large businesses. This strategy is difficult for the majority of horticulture businesses. It is generally not an option for a new business.

- **Differentiate.** The business will have specialized products or services. A business can be different from other companies based on quality, price, types of customers, or geographic area.

- **Increase value for the customer.** The business will acquire products or services that complement or supplement those already offered by the company. Collaborate with other businesses or form cooperatives to offer products or services that one company alone cannot offer.

After a business plan has been created and a strategy selected, the plan must be put into use. Getting the business started may include several steps:

1. Write the strategic business plan.
2. Develop financial security. Acquire loans using lenders and investors until the company is self-sustaining.
3. Secure a location. Lease or purchase property for the business. When determining where to locate a horticulture company, spend a great deal of time researching and analyzing the location. Is the area urban, rural, or suburban? What are the demographics of the population surrounding the business? Can the area support the business and provide workers, Figure 5-7?
4. Acquire permits, licenses, and an employer identification number (EIN), which is used for tax-related purposes. Acquire plant certifications, pesticide licenses, and building permits. Verify compliance with handicap laws and worker safety rules.
5. Open a business bank account. Obtain at least two major credit cards.
6. Apply for credit with vendors (companies that sell services, goods, or supplies) with whom you will do business.

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**Corner Question**

Who authored *Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens?*

“Setting goals is the first step in turning the invisible into the visible.”

—Tony Robbins

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**Figure 5-7.** This team of associates must live somewhat locally to the business. The pool of candidates for a horticultural business can be a limiting factor in a company’s success.
7. Advertise to the target market. Approximately 6500 residents can marginally support a greenhouse retail business. Use advertising funds wisely by targeting marketing materials to the people or other companies who are most likely to buy your products.

Performance Standards

The last step in the strategic business plan process is developing performance standards. Standards are benchmarks or levels for what is acceptable, in this case for company performance. Standards can be different for various types of business and for individual companies. Leaders of a horticulture business must ask, “Does the performance match the standards that were established?” If not, changes should be made.

The horticulture business must first identify key factors for success and growth. These factors include the right team, appropriate skill sets, clear communication methods, and a work and business culture that nurtures success. As time progresses, these factors will change, and it is important to reevaluate the factors periodically. Company leaders must determine which factors are working well and which factors need adjusting or replacing.

A horticulture business must determine what data to measure. The type of data that is analyzed by the business leaders is important. This can include profit margins (the amount by which income exceeds costs), company growth, or employee retention rates. Once the data has been identified, standards must be associated with the data. An example standard would be a 5% growth in sales each year. The firm must decide what data to track and set at least one standard associated with the data.

Data and standards lead to performance measurements for a company. Looking at the data, managers can determine if the company’s performance matches, surpasses, or does not meet the standards. If the standards are not met, managers need to determine why this is so. Problems resulting in poor performance can be internal or in the market. A corrective action should be put into place. After corrective action, the goal is to meet or surpass standards in the future. Ongoing monitoring must take place along with effective strategies, solutions, and execution of plans for the performance measurements and standards.

Marketing and Advertising

Effective marketing and advertising is crucial to making a profit. Marketing is the total system of business activities designed to plan, price, promote, and distribute products. The company seeks to satisfy the wants and needs of its potential and present customers while achieving its objectives. Advertising is the act of calling public attention to a product or service offered by a company. Figure 5-8.

Did You Know?

Retail greenhouses must be accessible to all individuals and should have adequate aisle widths to accommodate wheelchairs, as well as ramps for easy entrances and exits.

Figure 5-8. A horticultural advertisement should describe what the company is selling and why someone would want to purchase the product. In this advertisement, the consumer can see that the company sells citrus grown on a farm and shipped directly to the customer.
Together, marketing and advertising make up the identity of a business as seen by its customers, the general public, and competitors.

**The Marketing and Advertising Process**

The marketing and advertising process is made up of several steps that companies follow in their efforts to promote products and services:

1. **Target the market selection.** Analyze and assess the market. This is the time to develop objectives. The business determines whether to aim at an entire market, several different segments, or one piece of the market. These decisions must be reevaluated periodically.

2. **Determine the marketing objectives.** Set goals for what the company wants to achieve with the marketing plan. This is steered by profit, sales, volume, pricing, and promotion.

3. **Devise an appropriate marketing plan.** The firm must decide whether to fill the needs of an existing market, develop or find a new market, develop a new product for a market, or attract new customers with new products and new markets through diversification.

4. **Create evaluation and control procedures.** Assess data and standards and take prompt corrective actions. Management must determine what is and is not working, update objectives, and change strategies and tactics, if needed. This step then takes the company full circle and back to step one, **Figure 5-9.**

**The Four Ps of Marketing**

The four Ps of marketing are *product, price, place,* and *promotion.* These key words indicate factors or activities the company must get right. If just one of these four Ps is not right, there may be limited or no sales of the goods or services. Without enough sales, a company cannot be successful.

![Figure 5-9](image-url)
Product

A product is a good (item) or service the business sells. Most businesses start from a simple idea created by an entrepreneur, Figure 5-10. The product is usually the result of an idea or an activity that the creator is passionate about. Regardless of the entrepreneur’s excitement or belief in the item or service, it must have an appeal to customers or the business will not succeed.

Price

Price is the amount for which a good or service sells. Companies select prices based upon various strategies. A high price is not always best because customers may not be willing or able to pay a high price. A low price is also not always best because it may suggest low quality to some consumers. Company managers consider several factors when setting prices:

- What customers are willing to pay.
- What competing companies charge.
- The profit that is needed from the sale.
- The price needed to cover the cost of buying or making a product and providing some profit.

Horticulture businesses will often determine the price of an item by adding the cost of materials plus overhead (ongoing expenses of operating a business, such as utilities and rent) and labor (wages, employee benefits, and related taxes) to determine the selling price. There are several established pricing strategies that a business can use, as shown in Figure 5-11.

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Figure 5-11. There are many pricing strategies currently used by businesses. Determining the optimum price for a good or service is critical to company success. Which of these pricing strategies would you adopt in your own business?
Japanese Maple Price

What is behind the price of a Japanese maple?
- The cost of plant material is $4.00.
- The cost of the pot, media, and fertilizer is $1.00.
- It takes one hour of labor to maintain the plant until sale, and labor is $10.00 an hour.
- Overhead (rent, taxes, insurance, utilities, and other expenses) is $4.00 per plant.

The cost of the plant is $19.00. The company uses the cost-plus pricing strategy, with the price set at 35% above cost. This makes the selling price $25.65.

Place

Place in marketing is the location at which customers can buy a product or service. The proper placement or distribution of goods or services contributes greatly to sales. Customers, regardless of demographic background, desire convenience. Do customers access your products only through the Internet? Is the product available through department stores? Do you have your own retail store? How can the customer find your product or services, Figure 5-12? How will this product get to the customer? Shipping, delivery, and pick-up are also important.

Selling can take place via direct sales or reseller sales. Direct sales is a distribution method in which a company sells its products to customers without another party involved. Direct sales can be done through retail stores, door-to-door sellers, mail order catalogs, e-commerce sites, or at other sites. Some companies have representatives that meet customers. This provides an easy and early way to detect market changes. A business can quickly adapt and control how items are sold and the range (geographic location) of sales. In this mode of sale, the business must have effective customer relationships that are considered positive overall.

Reseller sales is a distribution method in which other parties buy a company’s products and then sell them to customers. Reseller sales, also called channel sales, can include a wholesaler as well as a retailer. A wholesaler is a company that buys products from manufacturers or distributors and sells them to retail stores. The retail stores sell the products to consumers. The original company has little or no contact with the end customer. In some cases, this can result in a company losing its identity.
For example, a company might have its products resold under another name brand. However, resellers can provide companies with access to customers that they could not normally reach on their own.

The placement or distribution of products and services should be addressed in the strategic business plan. As businesses grow or change over time, however, the company may need to change its distribution plan. Two ways that products reach customers are intensive market coverage and selective market coverage. **Intensive market coverage** is a distribution strategy in which a company attempts to sell its products using all available outlets. This strategy is often used with basic or generic products. An example of this is potting soil that is sold all over the country. **Selective market coverage** is a distribution strategy in which a company sells its products using a limited number of locations. The company narrows its sales sites and establishes relationships with its customers. An example of this is a local landscaping company that offers services based on individual needs, **Figure 5-13**.

**Promotion**

Promotion primarily includes public relations efforts and advertising. Personal contacts and other communication from a business to its customers can also be related to promotion. Public relations involves activities that create a favorable image of a business in the community, such as donating products to a school or taking part in a community charity fundraising event. These efforts are often recognized via a social or news media outlet. Public relations is a key part of promotion.

As discussed earlier, advertising is calling attention to a company’s goods or services. Several methods can be used to advertise products:

- **Radio**—inexpensive and reaches many potential customers. It is best to advertise during mid- to late-week.
- **Television**—expensive. Advertisements can be broadcast locally or nationally.
- **Print**—includes direct mail, printed fliers, magazine advertisements, and coupons.

> “Many a small thing has been made large by the right kind of advertising.”
> —Mark Twain

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*Figure 5-13.* Landscaping companies must determine what their customers need. From debris removal to mulch and evergreen choices, successful landscaping companies provide materials and services that are appropriate for the local climate.
- Goods—items that are given free to potential customers. Examples include foam fingers, pens, and t-shirts, Figure 5-14. This method can be costly depending on the items used.
- Electronic—websites, social media, and advertisements associated with other products.
- Word of mouth—this method is free. Satisfied customers tell others about the company’s goods or services.
- Window displays—can be inexpensive. People passing by a window may notice a seasonal display and come in to shop.
- Generic advertisements—promote goodwill for an entire industry rather than a specific brand. An example is a video, tent, or booth that reaches the public on behalf of citrus growers.

Most companies must advertise and market their products or services. If they choose not to do so, they will most likely be one of the eight out of ten businesses that fail.

**Professionalism**

What makes someone a professional? Is it getting a job? Is professionalism exhibited only in the workplace? **Professionalism** is the exercise of judgment, skill, and polite behavior that is exhibited by someone who is trained to do a job well, Figure 5-15. Characteristics of a professional can include a number of the same characteristics of a leader that were discussed in Chapter 1, Agricultural Leadership.

Professionalism demonstrated at the workplace can be rewarded with promotions and future opportunities. Employers seek individuals who are problem solvers, courteous, trustworthy, tactful, and committed to their jobs.
Professional Certifications in Horticulture

Industry certifications in horticulture demonstrate and verify an excellence and professionalism within the trade that is not exhibited by all professionals. Employers and customers look for these industry credentials and can be satisfied knowing that the individuals with these certifications are some of the best that the horticulture industry has to offer.

Two national horticultural organizations offer various professional certifications. State agencies may also offer additional certifications, so check with your state’s extension agency or a member of the horticulture industry to find out more.

- American Society of Horticultural Science. Certified horticulturists are knowledgeable and skilled in all areas of horticulture. Those who are certified have passed a rigorous four-hour exam and must have three years of professional and/or educational experience in horticulture.
- Master Gardener. Each state’s cooperative extension agency can offer a master gardener program. Master gardeners are home gardeners who have received a great deal of horticultural training and have volunteered in horticultural efforts in their communities. A master gardener may be more qualified as an employee than someone without any training in horticulture.
- National Association of Landscape Professionals. Some certifications provided by the association include landscape industry certified manager, exterior technician, interior technician, horticultural technician, lawn care manager, and lawn care technician.

Each of these certifications ensures that the person certified has undergone rigorous training and evaluation to demonstrate excellence within their specialty in the green industry.

Professional Traits and Behaviors

Professionals are judged or critiqued every day at their workplace. Whether it is a colleague, a customer, or an employer, there are people always watching and taking note of one’s work and contributions to the business. A true professional should employ all of the following actions or traits:

- Adhere to commitments—be timely, dependable, punctual, and dedicated.
- Show respect—be courteous to all people (colleagues, customers, and employers), exhibit kindness, and be polite in speech and body language, Figure 5-16.
- Maintain ethical conduct—exhibit honesty and fairness.
- Demonstrate workplace etiquette—dress appropriately, practice good hygiene, turn off or silence phone or headphones, and smile.
- Show leadership skills—take on leadership roles, be organized, express dedication, be competent, admit to mistakes, and be open to giving and receiving apologies.

All of these traits or actions are important and promote excellent performance at a job.

“I think professionalism is important, and professionalism means that you get paid.”
—Erica Jong

Figure 5-16. This pleasant store representative is working with a customer and answering questions about products.
Unprofessional Traits and Behaviors

Avoiding unprofessional traits and behaviors can help you be a successful employee. Those workers who do not demonstrate professionalism can undermine efforts of others in the workplace. There are several traits and behaviors to avoid that can mark a worker as unprofessional.

Workplace gossip involves talking about others in a less than positive way, which can cause hurt feelings and resentment. Avoid getting involved in workplace problems by refraining from talking about colleagues.

Tardiness means being late to work. Follow employees may think you are not a team player or are not committed to your work. Employees who are on time may feel resentment toward those who are late to work.

Unprofessional language includes inappropriate body language or verbal language and is offensive to coworkers, customers, and employers. Yawning, gum chewing, and using slang are usually not appropriate on the job. When at work, try to use proper grammar, speak clearly, and avoid showing disrespect toward others.

Avoid unprofessional appearance and poor hygiene. Society is fairly tolerant of long hair, nails, piercings, tattoos, and makeup. At some types of professional jobs, however, it is still important to cover body piercings and tattoos and keep nails trimmed and neat. You want individuals to focus on your job performance rather than your appearance. Strong colognes and perfumes, unkempt hair, body odor, and a generally disorderly appearance may offend coworkers or customers.

Career Documents

Career documents, such as a letter of application and a résumé, are often required to secure a job. A letter of application is a document that requests that the sender be considered for a job opening and introduces the writer’s résumé. It is sometimes called a cover letter. A résumé is a document that contains a concise summary of a person’s education, skills, work experience, and other qualifications for a job. An employer may review résumés from many applicants before selecting candidates to interview. You only have one chance to make a good first impression on the employer. In many cases, the letter of application and the résumé present the first impression the employer will have of you. Both documents should be well written and contain information that will present you in a favorable light.

Letter of Application

A letter of application is a written, formal business document. It should be properly formatted, free of errors, and well organized. The letter should state that the writer wants to be considered as an applicant for a particular job. It may also state how the applicant learned about the job, such as through a newspaper ad or a job posting on the company’s website. The letter should highlight key qualifications or experience that qualifies the applicant for the job, mention that a résumé is enclosed, and ask for an interview, Figure 5-17.
Judy Gardener  
123 Green Thumb Lane  
Plant City, Florida 33564  
555-867-5309  
jgardener@mail.com

James Smith  
Human Resources Manager  
ABC Horticulture  
5037 N. Elm Street  
Springfield, IL 62711

Dear Mr. Smith:

I am writing concerning the senior researcher position with your organization. I have a particular interest in working for your company and would appreciate being considered as a candidate for employment.

I have three years experience as a lab assistant in an introductory horticulture class at University of Florida. I am familiar with general lab procedures and protocols. My skill set includes maintaining and cultivating greenhouse plants and cultivating unique plant materials. I have also conducted research involving gibberellic acids on plant reproduction of orchids.

I have enclosed my résumé. I hope it will be helpful in evaluating my qualifications for a position. Please feel free to contact me at your earliest convenience to arrange for an interview. I look forward to meeting with you to discuss this employment opportunity.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Judy Gardener

Judy Gardener

Figure 5-17. A letter of application introduces you to the potential employer and expresses your interest. Why do you think it is a good idea to make sure this document is professional and well written?

Résumé

A résumé should be sent with the letter of application. A résumé must be clear, concise, and accurate. It should be written to address a particular job advertisement and show how the candidate is a good choice for the job.
Career Connection

Résumé Tips and Myths

Tips for effective résumés:
- Do not use a premade template. These are often busy and crowded. Creating your own résumé document gives you 100% control over the résumé writing process.
- Ensure that all elements parallel one another and there is uniformity. Be consistent with bold, italics, capitalization, spacing, and margins.
- Avoid noun versions of verbs (words that end in -tion.) Example: “Proficiency in creation of floral design.” It is better to say, “Created floral designs.”
- Remember, creating a résumé is writing, and this is a process. Plan, draft, and get feedback. Revise as needed until you have an effective and error-free document.

Myths about résumés:
- “Since a picture paints a thousand words, I should include one with my résumé.” No. Do not include a photograph of yourself.
- “They will never check what I write.” Wrong. Some businesses check every detail.
- “Include references on the résumé.” No. References use valuable space. Provide them if the employer asks for them.
- “One-page résumés are always best.” No. Résumés can be up to three pages. The more experience that a professional acquires the longer the résumé.
- “To make my résumé stand out, I will make it creative or unusual.” No. The applicant’s qualifications and accomplishments should be the focus of attention. Employers may overlook a great candidate because they think that if the résumé is odd, the applicant is also.
- “Include hobbies and interests.” No. While you do want to appear well rounded, the employer only wants to know how you can benefit the company. Mention a hobby or interest only if it relates to the job. For example, if you are currently learning to speak a second language, that interest might make you a more valuable employee.

Did You Know?

There are professional résumé writers that you can hire to help you with your résumé.

“Boxing is the only career where I wouldn’t have to start out at the bottom. I had a good résumé.”
—Sugar Ray Leonard

An applicant wants a potential employer to read the résumé and think “I want this person. What a perfect fit.” Some guidelines for an effective résumé include:
- Place your contact information at the top.
- Include a work history with names of employers and dates of employment. Mention roles, experiences, and achievements. Include volunteer work if you have no paid work history.
- Include professional qualifications, certifications, education, and memberships to organizations.
- Be consistent in verb tense and use action verbs.
- Make the information concise; it should not be wordy.
- Use simple, standard fonts with 1” margins.
- Left justify the body text.
- Use an appropriate length. Résumés can vary in length (up to three pages), but they are usually just one page for those with little work experience.
- Carefully review the document for mistakes (grammar, spelling, punctuation, format, or style). The document must be error free, Figure 5-18.
Job Interviews

If an employer has reviewed your letter of application and résumé and
invited you for a job interview, you are ready to move to the next step in
the job search process. A job interview is a meeting where an employer and
a job applicant discuss a job and the applicant’s qualifications for the job.
During this important meeting you will talk with the employer about your suitability for the job. You can also use this meeting to learn more about the employer and the job. Preparing for the job interview and following up after the interview are important parts of the interview process.

Preparing for a Job Interview

Preparing for a job interview requires research and thought by the job applicant. You need to identify information you want to learn about the company and the job. You also need to think about information you may be asked to provide at the interview. To prepare for an interview, job candidates should:

- Determine the employer’s needs related to the job.
- Do research to learn about the company and the industry the company is part of.
- Compose answers to possible interview questions.
- Make a list of questions you want to ask the interviewer. Wait for an appropriate time to ask them.
- Rehearse and conduct mock interviews or videotape a practice interview.
- Identify any transferrable skills you have (those that could be used in another position within the company) and may want to point out.

Employers look for a number of skills in job candidates. Some skills are related to a specific job, such as knowing the proper way to prune plants. Other skills, such as the ability to communicate and think critically, are needed in many jobs. Job candidates should be able to respond to interview questions about both job-specific and general skills. It is important for candidates to demonstrate through their answers that they are confident, flexible, self-motivated, leaders, team players, excellent communicators, and proficient in their field.

Dress for Success

The way you look at an interview helps create the employer’s first impression of you. Employers may judge a candidate, at least in part, based upon appearance. Dressing appropriately and being clean and well groomed are important for making a good impression. For some jobs, especially those that are almost entirely manual labor, there is no need for men to wear a suit and tie or for women to wear a business suit to an interview. A pressed, button-up shirt or polo shirt with a pair of khaki pants and nice shoes would be appropriate, Figure 5-19.

For an office job, however, a suit and tie are preferred for men. Women should dress in a conservative style and wear skirts that are a modest length. For both men and women, hair should be pulled back or away from the face. Employers may consider unusual or overdone makeup, strong colognes or perfumes, piercings, tattoos, facial hair, and very long nails inappropriate for many jobs. Unusual or inappropriate appearance can distract from the candidate’s qualifications and skills.
Consider your appearance carefully and strive to make a good first impression, Figure 5-20.

**Arrive on Time**

Candidates should not only dress to impress but must also arrive early and be prepared for their interviews. If the candidate is late, he or she almost surely will not be selected for the position. Tardiness is not acceptable for an interview. Arrive no more than 15 minutes early to show that you are prepared and enthusiastic for the interview. Try driving to the location of the interview beforehand to ensure you know where the interview will take place and that there are no surprises on the route. Bring a copy or two of your résumé, a list of references with contact information, and a portfolio of applicable work. Greet the receptionist or others you meet in the office in a friendly and professional manner.

**Taking Part in the Job Interview**

You have prepared, you arrived a little early, and you are dressed for success. Now it is time to meet with the employer. When the interviewer comes to greet you, stand up and extend your hand for a medium to firm handshake. Smile warmly and make eye contact. Give a brief greeting, such as, “Good morning. I am glad to meet you. Thank you for taking time to discuss the job opening,” Figure 5-21. Within the first couple of minutes, try to find something in common with the interviewer that you could make small talk about. Scan the office or surrounding environment for ideas. For example, the company may have a display of its products in the reception area. If you have used some of the products, you could mention how effective or useful a product is.

During the interview, answer the questions honestly and to the best of your ability. Give clear and complete answers without talking too much. Try to give answers that will show how you are qualified for the job, but do not misrepresent your skills or experience. Do not fidget, twiddle your thumbs, twist your hair, or yawn during the interview. Do not address the interviewer by first name unless you are asked to do so.
Career Connection

Did You Know?

The average length of an interview is 40 minutes.

Job Interview Practice Questions

Consider how you will answer questions such as these as you prepare for a job interview:

- “What are your strengths?” Give a story that illustrates one of your strengths in action.
- “What is one weakness you have?” Either use something insignificant (“I’m color blind.” or “I’m a bad dancer.”) or tell about a real weakness that you had and how you overcame it. This should not be anything deep into your personal life; it should be related to work. For example, “I used to be disorganized, but then I got a planner and started using apps on my phone to help me get organized. Now I am very organized.”
- “Why should our company hire you?” Identify what makes you unique or how you will benefit the company.
- “What is your ideal job?” This should be the job for which you are applying or a job that this job helps you prepare for.
- “How has your education prepared you for this job?” Use concrete examples regarding classes you have taken in agricultural education, math, science, or other areas.

- “What was your last boss like?” Do not say negative things about any previous employers. Keep your comments brief and find something neutral or positive to say. If you did tell them how difficult your previous boss was, they might think that you do not work well with others.
- “Is money important? How much do you expect your salary or pay to be?” You might say that while money is important, so is job satisfaction and learning opportunities. Indicate that you are willing to consider any reasonable wage. Do research to learn what a reasonable wage is for the job before the interview.
- “Do you have any job experience in this field?” Highlight key skills gained from other jobs or other educational experiences that are transferrable.
- “What is your marital status? Do you have a significant other?” These questions are illegal. An interviewer cannot legally ask you questions about your personal life. You could answer by asking, “How does this information apply to this position?” Remember to be concise, but never respond with just yes or no. Elaborate and let the interviewer understand who you are and why you are the best candidate.

Near the end of the job interview, the interviewer may ask if you have any questions. This is a very important point in the interview. You need to ask questions to show your interest in the company and the job. This is your last chance to make a good impression that will stick with the interviewer. Ask the interviewer questions that are positive and cast you as an ideal candidate. Examples questions include:

- How would you describe the management style of this company?
- Will any type of training be provided for this job?
- What process is used to evaluate employees?
- When I can expect to hear from you regarding the position?
- Why should someone want to work for your business?
- What are the company’s goals and mission?

Do not ask questions similar to these:

- Will I have to work overtime often?
- Do I have every weekend free?
- What else does your company do?
- What are the employee benefits that go with this job?
The final moments of an interviewer are those that will be the most recent memory in an interviewer’s mind. Make these moments count and sway the employer to hire you.

**Interview Follow Up**

After the interview, write thank-you messages to all individuals who interviewed you. Thank them for the interview and express your continued interest in the job (if you are still interested). Briefly mention skills or experience that qualifies you for the job. You could also mention something beneficial that you will take away from the interview process with that particular company. In your thank-you letter, use a style and format similar to that used for your letter of application. An e-mail thank-you note, rather than a formal letter, is appropriate for some companies. If you do not hear from the company within a reasonable time, it is acceptable to call the interviewer and ask if the job has been filled or when you can expect to hear from the company.

Do not be discouraged if you do not get a job you want. You may have to apply to several companies before you are hired. Think about reasons why you were not the candidate selected for the position. Do you need to acquire more skills, education, or experience? Try to learn from each interview and consider how you can do better in the next interview.

“Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.”

—Winston Churchill

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### Career Connection: Writing Professional E-mails

1. The subject line should indicate why you are writing the e-mail.
2. In the body of the e-mail, get to the point quickly and clearly.
3. Number or make bullet points in e-mails.
4. Use bold as little as possible.
5. Use proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Do not use any slang.
6. Delete every word that is not absolutely necessary.
7. Do not use emoticons or images in the e-mail unless an image is requested by the person you are e-mailing.
8. Avoid using attachments, except when necessary. These often get lost or overlooked by readers.
9. Include your contact information and signature at the bottom of the e-mail.
School-to-Career Plan

If you are in high school it may seem like a professional career is years and years away. However, you can begin now to prepare yourself for the career and the lifestyle that you want. You may not know what you would like to do as a professional, but usually you have a good idea of the lifestyle you would like to lead. Maybe you see yourself driving a nice car or taking expensive vacations. Whatever you want to do, you will need to have a job that provides income for that lifestyle.

You must consider several factors regarding a career in addition to money it can provide. For example, will the job give you enough free time for family or leisure activities? Will it provide a sense of accomplishment? Do you want to be indoors or outdoors all day for your work? Will there be opportunities for advancement? Answering questions such as these will help you choose a career with which you will be happy. Think about the number of hours you might work over you entire career. A career can span more than 35 years. Working five days a week for 40 hours a week for about 50 weeks a year means that you may work about 70,000 hours in your lifetime. This fact emphasizes the importance of choosing a job that you will enjoy, Figure 5-22.

There are a number of factors to consider when choosing a career. It is important to conduct a thorough self-assessment. As you age, your assessment of who you are and what you like will change. In today’s work environment, it is uncommon for individuals to work for one company for their entire professional career. People typically change career paths as they evolve.

School-to-Career Plan

Choosing a career path is not always be easy. Some people know when they are quite young what career they want to pursue when they are adults. Others still have not found a career they think is right for them after working for many years. Begin carefully exploring career possibilities while you are still in school. If you have no idea where to start, begin with self-study and analysis. Think about who you are, what you like to do, what your interests are. This will help you to begin finding careers that may match your interests.

Corner Question

What famous African-American scientist had a plan for a career despite being a slave?
Then research various careers, job shadow, get an internship and determine if this is a career that would capture your interests and keep you mentally and physically healthy.

Once you have selected a broad career area, you can begin creating a school-to-career plan. A school-to-career plan is a document that consists of one or more career goals and the steps or activities needed to achieve those goals. Resources needed to achieve the goals may also be included. For example, your goal may be a career as a high school agriculture teacher. Steps you must complete to achieve the goal might include graduating from high school, getting a college degree in agriculture education, and completing a teaching internship. Resources needed would be funds to pay for college. You can begin your plan with broad goals and steps and then make the plan more specific as you learn more about what is needed.

Your plan will help you map out how to get from where you are now to where you want to be in a career. When beginning a school-to-career plan, follow these simple steps:

1. Consider your interests, abilities, and personal characteristics. It is a good idea to take a personality test (such as the Myers-Briggs personality assessment) to see what kind of personality you have.
2. Narrow the field of jobs to what is suited to your personality.
3. Study the requirements of the job.
4. Prepare a plan for this career.
5. Plan for an alternate career in case the first career does not become a reality.
6. Begin preparing for success in this career by completing educational requirements and developing needed skills.
7. Get work experience (supervised agricultural experiences, job shadowing, internships, and volunteering).

You may find it helpful to look up job listings on career websites of professions that interest you. Determine what you will need to get a particular job by looking at the job requirements posted for the applicants. Create an inventory of the skills and education you have and what you will need to secure a job like this in the future. You can then map out your school-to-career plan from this point, Figure 5-23.

Figure 5-23. Take an inventory of the skills that you have to see if you would be a successful candidate for a particular job. If you enjoy talking to others, customer service may be a good job possibility for you.
**Career Exploration**

Valuable resources exist at your school to help you investigate and find a career that is suited for your personality and interests. Contact school counselors and meet with one of them for career guidance. Schools often have a career development coordinator or counselor who specializes in career counseling. This valuable resource should be used during your high school years.

The National FFA Organization has career resources on its website. There you can find resources that will help you explore careers in agriculture. More than 300 are indexed on this site. Valuable information about each of the careers, including descriptions, educational requirements, skills, qualifications, and salaries, are available, Figure 5-24.

No matter what your school-to-career plan may be, it is only effective if you follow it. If your goal is to become a plant pathologist, you cannot simply wish yourself into that occupation. This job requires years of education and job training. Creating a school-to-career map is your first step to acquiring your ideal career.

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**Horticulture Business Careers**

Horticulture businesses provide a variety of products and services for consumers and other businesses. Horticulture companies employ various workers and consultants, each with a unique skill set. Workers in some horticulture careers deal with managing the business or marketing. Two such careers are horticulture business consultant and horticulture sales representative.

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**FFA Connection**

Marketing Plan Career Development Event

The marketing plan career development event (CDE) helps students develop skills needed for the marketing industry. Teams of three students present a marketing plan for a real business venture to a team of judges. The marketing plan is designed to promote a product, supply, or service. The business venture may be an existing agribusiness or a start-up enterprise.
Horticulture Business Consultant

A horticulture business consultant evaluates horticultural companies with the goal of increasing productivity, efficiency, and profits, Figure 5-25. This position requires an understanding of the financial issues associated with a business and a great breadth of horticultural knowledge. The consultant assesses what the company is doing well and what needs to be improved. The consultant will often work with company managers to develop strategies that improve the company and move it toward the company’s goals and mission. Horticulture business consultants may assist companies with financial planning, Figure 5-25. A business consultant for a horticulture company helps to analyze the business and ensure that it is successful.

Career Connection

Leslie Halleck
Horticultural Marketing

When Leslie Halleck began her professional journey, she created a partnership between her love for gardening and her love for teaching others about horticulture. She began her horticultural career in Texas at Northern Texas University and furthered her horticultural studies at Michigan State University. She returned to Texas to work in arboreums and garden centers. There she found her niche for cultivating relationships with people and plants.

Throughout her career Leslie has always focused on helping people nurture their green thumbs. Today, she has her own horticultural marketing business in Texas called Halleck Horticultural. Leslie and her team help people in the green industry (which Leslie believes includes ornamental and edible plant cultivation) to communicate with their customers using creative and innovative mediums.

Leslie has a wide breadth of horticultural knowledge and an incredible depth of marketing savvy. Her fresh advertising campaigns connect with younger generations of gardeners and help the public to understand why gardening is for everyone. Leslie wants to expose people of all generations, cultures, and backgrounds to gardening.

Halleck assures future horticultural employees that the green industry is one in which anyone can make a comfortable living. "People are deceived into thinking that you can't make money in horticulture," says Halleck. Leslie states that the green industry can provide profits just like other business ventures. Horticulture has the potential of being financially rewarding while allowing workers to provide something the world wants—plants for food or beauty.
tax planning, or quality control. Consultants are often self-employed or employed by a consulting firm. This type of position requires a four-year degree in horticulture or a closely related field.

Horticultural Sales Representative

A horticultural sales representative interacts with customers to provide information about a company’s products or services. The sales representative must be knowledgeable about the products or services offered by the company. Sales representatives answer questions for and respond to customer demands. A sales representative should have excellent written and verbal communication skills. Sales representatives are asked to advise customers and make decisions, so they should be good critical thinkers and problem solvers. They often work in retail situations, such as garden centers, florist shops, or landscaping companies; but they may also act as a sales associate for larger companies who are selling to the public, Figure 5-26. Experience in sales is always beneficial when applying for these positions. Educational requirements can vary depending on the company’s objectives and the customers they target.

Figure 5-26. A sales associate working at a garden center should be friendly, knowledgeable, and enjoy working both indoors and outdoors. Have you ever encountered a sales associate who was rude? Did your encounter change the way you viewed the business itself?
Chapter 5 Review and Assessment

Chapter Summary

• A small business is a company that is independently owned and operated, organized for profit, and not dominant in its field. In the United States, there are about 28 million small businesses.

• An entrepreneur is a person who organizes and operates a business. Millions of entrepreneurs in the United States run successful businesses.

• A strategic business plan is a document that states the mission of the business, examines its current condition, sets goals, and outlines strategies for achieving the goals.

• In evaluating the strategic environment, managers should consider information about the company, the industry, and competitors. Other areas covered in a business plan include internal resources, the company’s vision and mission statement, and performance standards.

• Marketing is the total system of business activities designed to plan, price, promote, and distribute products. A marketing and advertising plan will include the four Ps: product, price, place, and promotion.

• Professionalism is the exercise of judgment, skill, and polite behavior that is exhibited by someone who is trained to do a job well. Characteristics of a professional can include being respectful, ethical, competent, honest, and polite.

• Career documents, such as a letter of application and a résumé, are often required to secure a job. These documents act as an introduction for an applicant and must be free of errors. The purpose of these documents is to secure a job interview.

• A job interview is a meeting where an employer and a job applicant discuss a job and the applicant’s qualifications for the job. Job interviews require preparation and planning.

• Job candidates must arrive on time for an interview, dress professionally, and answer questions clearly. They should ask the interviewer appropriate questions as well. After an interview, the applicant should write a thank-you letter to the interviewer.

• A school-to-career plan consists of one or more career goals and the steps or activities that must be completed to achieve those goals. The plan may also include the resources needed to achieve the goals.

• High school counselors are a good source of information for career guidance and exploration. The National FFA Organization has career resources on its website that will help you explore careers in agriculture.
Words to Know

Match the key terms from the chapter to the correct definition.

| A. advertising | I. job interview | R. school-to-career plan |
| B. brand | J. letter of application | S. selective market coverage |
| C. core ideology | K. marketing | T. small business |
| D. direct sales | L. mission statement | U. standard |
| E. entrepreneur | M. overhead | V. strategic business plan |
| F. envisioned future | N. professionalism | W. value |
| G. goal | O. profit margin | X. vendor |
| H. intensive market coverage | P. reseller sales | Y. vision |

1. A distribution method in which a company sells its products to customers without another party involved.
2. A document that requests that the sender be considered for a job opening and introduces the writer’s résumé.
3. An objective to be achieved.
4. The exercise of judgment, skill, and polite behavior that is exhibited by someone who is trained to do a job well.
5. A document that lists one or more career goals and the steps or activities and resources needed to achieve those goals.
6. The amount by which income exceeds costs of doing business.
7. A company that sells services, goods, or supplies.
8. The act of calling the attention of the public to a product or service offered by a company.
9. A meeting where an employer and a job applicant discuss a job and the applicant’s qualifications for the job.
10. A benchmark or level for what is acceptable.
11. A document that contains a concise summary of a person’s education, skills, work experience, and other qualifications for a job.
12. The total system of business activities designed to plan, price, promote, and distribute products.
13. A name, label, logo, or image under which a product is sold.
14. A distribution strategy in which a company attempts to sell its products using all available outlets.
15. A description of an organization’s goals for the long term.
16. A distribution strategy in which a company sells its products using a limited number of locations.
17. A distribution method in which other parties buy a company’s products and then sell them to customers.
18. A document that states the mission of the business, examines its current condition, sets goals, and outlines strategies for achieving the goals.
20. A person who organizes and operates a business.
21. A passage that identifies the purpose or the reason for existence of a company or organization.
22. A company that is independently owned and operated, is organized for profit, and is not dominant in its field.
23. A principle or standard.
24. What a company or other organization plans to achieve.
25. The ongoing expenses of operating a business, such as utilities and rent.

Know and Understand

Answer the following questions using the information provided in this chapter.

1. How does a strategic business plan help to organize the activities of the business?
2. What does the strategic environment for a business include?
3. What are four examples of company information that might be addressed in a strategic business plan?
4. What are three basic business strategies that companies may use?
5. What are some types of data that a company might measure to gauge performance?
6. What are four steps in the marketing and advertising process?
7. List the four Ps of marketing and state briefly what each involves.
8. List five examples of ways to advertise a good or service.
9. What are some traits or skills employers seek in employees that mark the employee as a professional?
10. What are some traits or behaviors to avoid that mark a worker as unprofessional?
11. Why is it important that a letter of application and résumé be well written and free of errors?
12. What are two examples of information you should place on a résumé? What are two examples of information you should not place on a résumé?
13. List six activities you should do to prepare for a job interview.
14. Give an example of what would be considered appropriate interview dress for a job that is almost entirely manual labor.
15. What are three examples of questions that would be appropriate to ask the interviewer during an interview?
16. What information should be included in a thank-you letter for an interview?
17. What steps are involved in creating a school-to-career plan?
18. What are two resources you can use for career exploration?
19. What is involved in being a horticulture business consultant and what preparation is needed for the career?
20. Explain briefly what students do in the FFA marketing plan career development event.
Thinking Critically

1. Imagine that you need to advertise for a new horticulture business in your community. The company has a very limited budget but wants to reach as many people as possible to inform them of this new business venture. What method would you use to promote this business? Where would you get the most value for your advertising dollars and why?

2. You have recently started working at a small organic farm as a seasonal worker. You show up on time and act professionally, but your colleague is not doing the same. Your colleague arrives late, claiming he has a hard time getting a ride to work. Today, your colleague texts you. He asks you to clock him in using his time card and says that he will be there in shortly. What should you do?

STEM and Academic Activities

1. Technology. Develop an online tool to help students create a school-to-career plan.

2. Math. Determine how many people live in your town. Knowing that a community of approximately 6500 people can support a retail garden center, how many garden centers could your community support? Now, determine how many retail garden centers are in your community. Do not forget to include big retailers, grocery stores, or hardware stores that sell plants and garden supplies. Do you have more or less stores than could typically be supported?

3. Math. Contact a local horticultural company. Ask them how many employees they have. How many are full time and how many are part time? Determine how many hours of labor that business supports annually. Now, determine how much revenue must be generated each year to cover the expenses of labor alone. Use minimum wage as a starting point.

4. Social Science. Access a personality test online or through your school’s guidance or career counselor. Determine what your personality type is according to the results of your test. Write a one-page paper agreeing or disagreeing with the results. Be sure to include several pieces of evidence that justify your response. Include life experiences to better support your case.

5. Social Science Contact a local retail garden shop or florist in your area. Arrange an interview with the owner or manager. Focus your questions on their market. Explore how they determine their market. Ask about the four Ps of their marketing plan.

6. Language Arts. Using the knowledge you acquired from this chapter, create an abbreviated strategic business plan for an existing horticulture business of your choice. Evaluate a horticultural product or service that you use. The company most likely already has a vision and mission statement. Access those and include those in your strategic business plan. Contact the company and ask questions about their marketing and advertising. Report your findings to your class.
Communicating about Agriculture

1. **Writing.** Create a poster identifying the various types of businesses that are part of global free enterprise.

2. **Speaking.** Present a mock interview session for your class. Ask your teacher to be the interviewer or ask someone from the local agricultural business to conduct the interviews. Students should dress appropriately for an interview with the company.

3. **Reading and Speaking.** Some organizations or associations provide mentoring services for small businesses as a membership benefit. Form a small group with two or three of your peers and collect informational materials from associations that provide these services. Analyze the data in these materials based on the knowledge gained from this chapter. Make inferences about the services available and recommend the best ones to the class.

4. **Reading and Writing.** Written communication plans are essential for business success. Using the National FFA Marketing Plan CDE as a guide, choose an agricultural business in your area and write a business plan outlining how you would help them market their business to their target market.

SAE Opportunities

1. **Exploratory.** Job shadow a sales representative at a horticulture business.

2. **Placement.** Secure a sales job at a horticulture business.

3. **Experimental.** Investigate various advertising techniques. Create several horticultural advertisements using various media formats. Examples include social media, pamphlets, audio files, or videos. Poll a target audience to determine which advertising method they prefer.

4. **Exploratory.** Create an educational website for students about professionalism in horticulture. Include pages devoted to career documents, professionalism, and job interview skills.

5. **Entrepreneurship.** Develop a strategic horticulture business plan and create a new company.