

## OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR YOUR PILATES STUDIO

### 1 BUSINESS PLAN

Most banks provide booklets that outline specific details required for advice and assistance in writing an effective business plan. TAFE and community colleges offer short courses in writing business plans and professional business coaches and financial planners will also offer advice and support for clients writing a business plan. Specifically for the Pilates Industry: the Advanced Diploma in the Pilates Method (NSW 91490) requires participants to write a business plan.

### 2 FINANCIAL PLAN

This should outline the financial plan backing the business plan and should include detail on the start up capital and your personal net worth; the financial institution you deal with and how the finances for the business are to flow from client to business and to owner. Also, cash flow charts for initial and projected periods should be detailed, as well as profit and loss statements and other related tax details. Again, financial institutions, accountants and financial planners will be able to provide you with detail as to layout, inclusions and correct analysis.

### 3 KNOWLEDGE OF ATO REQUIREMENTS; SMALL BUSINESS REGISTRATION; COMPANY AND GST REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS; FINANCIAL PLANNING FOR CASH FLOW; AND LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS FOR OPERATING A BUSINESS IN YOUR STATE

Assistance in these areas may be sourced either through the ATO website: [www.ATO.com.au](http://www.ATO.com.au) or through advice from financial institutions, accountants and financial planners for inclusion in your financial plan. See the Department of Fair Trading website in your state for details on the registration of a business name, etc.

### 4 EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES: INCLUDING PAYG AND SUPERANNUATION REQUIREMENTS; FINANCIAL PLANNING FOR CASH FLOW; PAYROLL AND EMPLOYEE STATUTORY PROCEDURES; RECORD KEEPING; EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS; INDUSTRIAL AWARDS AND LEGISLATION; CHILD PROTECTION REQUIREMENTS; CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCEDURES; STAFF MEETING PROCEDURES, STAFF PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND PAY STRUCTURES.

For all financial requirements seek the advice of a professional. For all employee responsibilities, refer to the Fairwork Australia website: [www.fairworkaustralia.com.au](http://www.fairworkaustralia.com.au), or the PAA website [www.pilatesalliance.net](http://www.pilatesalliance.net). It may also be helpful to speak with other registered PAA Pilates professionals and studio owners.

### 5 EFFECTIVE AND COMPLETE INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

All registered Full members of the PAA require professional indemnity cover and public liability to instruct Pilates. Studios with employees can insure their staff in addition to the public liability insurance they carry and will also need to comply with the terms of their lease for such insurance.

### 6 APPOINTMENT SYSTEM

Dealing with client bookings and the tracking of clients throughout their association with you is a vital key to the long-term viability of your business. Whether you use a manual system where clients are written into a diary, or a specialised computer software program for your studio, an appointment system that is financially affordable, suits your requirements and where appointment records can be maintained for a required number of years, is a vital tool for your business.

### 7 APPOINTMENT AND ACCOUNTING SYSTEM RELATIONSHIP

If your appointment tool interacts independently to your accounting tool, then it is important that the transference of information is simple and time efficient. Ensuring a regular balance of accounts and appointments will ensure a business will run professionally and will be able to adjust for unforeseen circumstances.

## 8 ADVERTISING STRATEGIES LOGO, NAME OR BRAND; ADVERTISING LOGISTICS; BUSINESS AND MARKETING MATERIALS; NEWSLETTERS; SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE ACTIVITIES

You do not need to spend a lot of money designing and developing a logo design or brand unless you have the finance to do so. Before committing to a logo for your business, look at other Pilates websites to ensure your logo or name is not too similar to other studios or businesses within close proximity, the same city or state. Also check the availability of your choice of name with the Department of Fair Trading in your state. Ensure you do a survey of friends and family to gauge their response to your choice of logo or business name.

Plan your advertising and marketing so that you are able to handle the requirements and the effects of your campaigns. Websites are very important, however choose a webpage design that reflects your business and business needs. Social media is also becoming increasingly important for business marketing, so do not forget that it requires consistent updating or it may become a source of negative advertising. General and Pilates search engines such as Pilates Source and the Natural Therapy Pages are useful sites for ongoing Pilates business advertising.

A direct market approach through speaking with interested groups, making contact with walk-ins and word of mouth testimonials from satisfied clients to friends and associates is still considered to be the most powerful form of advertising.

## 9 PRICING STRATEGIES

The suburb, city, regional location and State, all play a role in realistic pricing strategies for a Pilates business. Use the web and directly contact other Pilates and allied health businesses in your area to gauge comparable prices charged. Ensure you complete a cost analysis for your business to know the range that you may have to charge for your services. Do not be afraid to increase your prices annually or bi-annually to keep up with CPI, however always ensure you are able to justify the percentage increase.

## 10 STOCK REQUIREMENTS AND STOCK CONTROL

Think about the ongoing client usage of replaceable stock: tissues, toilet paper, paper cups, office stationary and OH&S consumables such as disinfectant or band aids.

Also, be aware that some apparatus have a limited lifespan: therabands, mats, magic circles, swiss balls or similar.

If your business plans to distribute small apparatus to clients for home use, include in the price GST, shipping and any other necessary charges.

## 11 OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES RELATING TO THE FRONT OF HOUSE MANAGEMENT OF DEALING WITH CLIENTS FROM THE INITIAL POINT OF CONTACT TO THEIR BECOMING COMMITTED CLIENTS

Ultimately, it is your Operating Procedure Manual that can make the difference between having a saleable business including good will, to being able to sell only the used equipment. Such procedures should evolve over time, be referred to regularly, reviewed and added to. It is an important training tool for new staff and a major reference point for staff reviews.

## 12 OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES RELATING TO THE BACK OF HOUSE MANAGEMENT OF FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS, LEASES, COMPUTERS ETC

As above, this is a requirement for all professionally run businesses as a central core for the business structure. Again, this should be an evolving manual that ensures the owner has a clear working knowledge of all aspects of the business.

## 13 OH&S REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

Like the Procedure Manuals, OH&S procedures should be contained in a centralised document or manual that outline all the requirements to maintain a healthy worksite and safe studio for all. It should contain clear and precise details of the necessary procedures to maintain these requirements.

A key component of the safe operation of a Pilates studio is that staff perform regular apparatus and OH&S checklists.

## 14 RECORD KEEPING REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES FOR BUSINESS AND CLIENT RECORDS

These include financial record keeping and client files where all information can be housed and accessed in the most efficient and effective way for you for the prescribed length of time required by legislation – generally between 7 and 15 years. Privacy requirements must also be maintained in accordance with privacy legislation applicable to States and the Commonwealth.

## 15 DOCUMENTED RISK ANALYSIS AND MONITORING OF RISK PROCEDURES

This is related to OH&S, and should be kept close to or included with the Apparatus and OH&S checklists that are performed on a regular basis. Risk analysis is one area that many businesses omit to implement. However in the case of an insurance claim, the existence of a visible and comprehensive risk analysis policy could make the difference between a small and a large payout.

## 16 STRUCTURED SUPPORT FOR SELF AND BUSINESS THROUGH PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND STRESS MANAGEMENT

One of the greatest risks for all small businesses is burnout or breakdowns. Pilates is a very 'giving-of-self' business, and when employment of staff is added to the mix, financial stress, lack of time for self and workouts, may lead to an inability to cope or a breakdown of general health in body, mind or both. Registration with the PAA requires evidence of ongoing professional development in Pilates every year to ensure that members continue to stimulate their brains and their bodies as Pilates is a very active and information evolving profession.

The majority of Pilates businesses are small and therefore it is easy to feel isolated from colleagues, particularly from those who have greater experience in the field. We recommend that you view professional development as a time to nurture your bodies and minds, as well as being able to connect with other like-minded professionals in Pilates, and establish regular times to work out, reduce stress and share experiences.