

Organizing Your Workshop

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Networking: Oh, the idea of a workshop! Most of us think of studios as some lovely extra building that's just devoted for our business: light, airy and private. The reality is most of us don't have room for that kind of studio. Instead, we'll have to carve out space for our business somewhere in the house. Most people start crafting projects in their garage. That's great when you are working on a hobby, but it's not practical for a business. You have to have a space for your business that will not require you to pack it up each night and unpack the next morning. It doesn't have to be an entire room; it can be part of a room that is divided off from the rest of the house somehow (curtain, partition, screen or even bookcase).

There are two activities that you must consider – the actual creating of the furniture (production) and the business area (operations). Ideally, it would be great to have a designated area for each part of the business, but realistically few of us can accommodate that. Instead, you may need to plan your studio with the emphasis being on space for creating, and a small, more moveable area for the business functions.

In your area for creating wood furniture, you'll need:

- A work-surface or table: you'll need an area for laying out the stock, cutting, making plans, etc. Old tables are great, or even inexpensive used or new kitchen counter top can be purchased, cut to the desired length, and attached to freestanding legs.

- Bookcases or some kind of storage – you need a place to store supplies, stocks, plans, and books. You may also need some storage for storing remnants. You will have patterns, magazines and books that need to be stored as well. If you are using an extra bedroom as your studio space, think about converting the closet for storage of fabrics and other supplies.

Not only do you need a designated space for your business you also needs some additional equipment.

- Additional tools for your woodworking activity: utility knife, screwdrivers, nail sets, a block plane, chisels, a level, a claw hammer, retractable tape measure, glue, paint.

- Filing cabinet – at some point, you'll have to set up files with your business licenses, future shows, competitions and customer files.

- Computer – as mentioned earlier, your computer will help you. A good option to consider is a laptop that can be moved out of the way – this will really help with space conservation

- Office supplies – paper, pens, pencils, etc.

- Telephone – consider whether you want to invest in a private second line, separate from your home line. You'll also need some type of answering machine or voice mail.

It's easy to look through a list of equipment and get overwhelmed. The important thing to consider is what you need immediately, what you already have, what you can make do with, and what will you put off until a future date. Basically, you need to establish a budget of what can afford. The good news is that all of this information can be incorporated into your business plan later. We'll discuss establishing a budget in the next chapter: Money Matters.