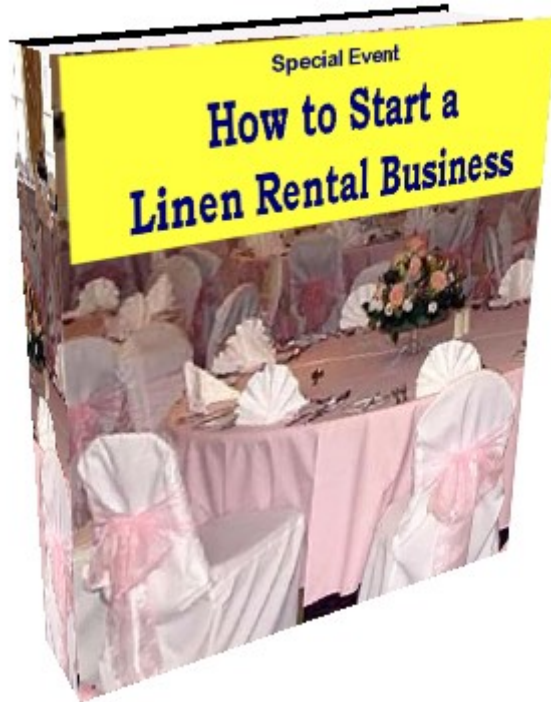


Special Event

How to Start a Linen Rental Business



By E.M.A.

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Introduction

As a woman I know how hard it is to start your own business. Most of the time men in general have a hard time dealing with us in the business world. That is why I think that it is important for women to know that we can succeed.

I have been in the party supply business since 1989. Not long after opening my own retail store I move into the rental business. My customers started to ask for table and chair, tents and table covers. Soon we were very busy. Yes, I did say we. With the rental of table and chairs, and the delivery of them I did have to seek help. So the whole family joined the business. The good thing about the rental business is that it's a weekend business. I was able to finish college and start teaching, while still keeping my business.

Now it's been about 20 years and we are still in the party rental business. The linen rental business is the easiest to run, because it doesn't require a warehouse to store inventory.

Yes, ladies you can make money and still stay at home with the kids!

Best wishes!

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Chapter 1: Creating a Business Plan



Before you start your business you need to sit down and write out your business plan. A business plan is your road map to success. Without a plan you will never achieve what you want. A business plan will help you stay on track towards your end goal. Think of your plan as the directions to arriving at your destination. You would never get in a car and simply drive without knowing where you want to go. Well, starting a business without a plan is exactly like driving around without a destination. It doesn't make sense to start a business without a plan.

It does not matter whether you are a mom, or a college student, or completely committed to make it big! You still need a plan. You probably think that you plan to start small, and that you only want to make a couple of dollars of extra money, so you don't need a plan, but you do. A business plan is a living document. You should read you plan every month to make sure you are on the right track. You can always go back and modify your plan as necessary.

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So let's get started. Think about these questions, and then write down your answers. I have provided some ideas for you already.

Business Plan

1. What business will you be in?

(I will open a Special Event/Linen Rental Business)

2. What will you do?

(I will provide table cloths, overlays, chair covers, and sashes for showers, birthday parties, and Home holiday parties.)

3. **Mission Statement:** Many companies have a brief mission statement, usually in 30 words or fewer.

Think about what problem you plan to solve?

(People in my neighborhood need someone who will deliver, and set up, clean and wrinkle free linen to make their special event elegant and formal.)

(My mission is to provide my clients will timely delivery of all their linen needs. My linens will be clean, wrinkle free, and ready to set up as soon as they arrive.)

4. **Your Goals and Objectives:**

4a. How many people do you plan to help?

(My plan is to start by servicing the people in my neighborhood. I will service those parties that are in a 10 mile radius from my home.)

4b. To whom will you market your products? Identify your targeted customers, their characteristics, and their geographic locations, otherwise known as their demographics. You may have more than one customer group. Identify the most important groups.

- Age
- Gender

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- Location
- Income level
- Social class and occupation
- Education

(I will market my linen rental business to women who will be getting married, having babies, or throwing birthday parties. These women will be between the ages of 18-55 years old. These women will very likely be found at church events, their children's school events, at the supermarket, at the wedding dress shops, at a table and chair rental businesses, and at the beauty salon on the weekends.)

4c. Describe your most important strengths and core competencies. What factors will make your business succeed? What background experience, skills, and strengths do you personally bring to this new venture?

(I will make sure that my clients are all happy with my service. I will make sure to arrive early with the linens for the party. If they want to pick up the night before, I will make sure that everything is ready for pick up. All my linen will be personally inspected when I pick them up and before I deliver them. I will wash, use spot removal, on all my linen and iron everything as needed. I believe that my friendly demeanor will allow me to be approachable to prospective customers. I believe in punctuality and prefer to be early than late.)

4d. How much money do you plan to make?

Weekly?

Monthly?

Yearly?

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The answers to these questions will give you a better idea as to how many linens you need to rent weekly to meet your goal. (Go to Chapter 5 for more information)

5. What are the pricing, fee, or leasing structures of your products or services?

(Look at Chapter 5 for some comparable prices)

6. What is the current demand for linen rentals in your area? How many parties are you and or your family members invited to monthly?

7. What problems do you face in entering this market with your new business? Some things to consider are:

- o Start up costs
- o Production costs
- o Marketing costs
- o Consumer acceptance
- o Training and skills required to start
- o Technology
- o Shipping costs
- o Tariff barriers

8. How will you overcome these problems? **(READ CHAPTER 2 for more details on how to address this question)**

9. Promotion: (READ CHAPTER 4 for more details)

How will you get the word out to customers?

(I will print out some business cards and tell everyone I know that I will be starting my own business.)

Have you identified low-cost methods to get the most out of your promotional budget? (Make my own business cards)

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Will you use methods other than paid advertising, such as trade shows, word of mouth, and networking with friends or professionals?
What image do you want to project?

How do you want customers to see you?

Here is a sample of a business card.



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Chapter 2: Start up costs



Start your business small, with about 50 seat covers and 5 table cloths. This will be good for a 50 guest party. If you want to invest a little more then start with 100 seat covers and 10 table cloths. This will be for a 100 guest list. Remember to start with the same number of sashes for your chairs and overlays for your table covers. You should start with two different colors in sashes and overlays. I would recommend blue and pink.

There are many ways to get your chair covers and table cloths. You can buy them online. E-bay sometimes has good deals, but you never really know what you are getting. Other e-stores also have them for sale, but you may need to put in a big order before you get a good deal. I have included some sites in the Resource Chapter.

Purchasing your linen products can be more costly than making your own, but making your own linen is more time consuming. You need to decide what you are willing to invest, time or money?

If you go online and place your orders, you will probably pay around:

- 5 table covers for \$ 130.00
- 50 folding chair covers for \$ 400.00
- 100 sashes for (2 different colors) \$ 170.00
- 10 overlays (2 different colors) for \$ 150.00
- Avery Business Cards for \$ 20.00 (to print at home)

Your total investment will be about \$ 900.00

I prefer to make my own table and chair covers. They are not that difficult to make and I can make as many as I need or want. I can also control the materials that I use. If you want to make your own to start out with, you will need fabric, a good pair of scissors, a sewing machine, thread, pins, and a pattern.

Again, there are a lot of places you can get the fabric, but the best place to get it is in your fabric district in your downtown metropolitan area. If you are in a rural area you can still order your material online. E-bay has one e-store that sells good quality of fabric. There are other e-store out with good prices and good quality materials. I have included some of those addresses in the Resource Chapter. Avoid well known retail stores like Joann's, only because their prices are very expensive.

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Polyester fabric is okay, but be careful not to get fabric that is too shiny. It will last a long time, but it looks cheap. A Polyester blend fabric is better. WHITE POLY POPLIN is great. And a poly spun fabric is the best fabric. If you want the best, then buy a poly spun fabric. If you want a good image but not the best go for ploy blends, like poly poplin. I don't use shiny polyester because I want to make a good impression with my clients.

You will need to get a pattern for you type of chairs that you will be covering. Go to your local chair and rental business and ask them what type of chairs they rent in your area. Make sure you give them your business card and let them know that you are in the Linen Rental Business. That way if they come across someone who may need your services they can recommend you.

These are some standard sizes:

Rectangular Table Cloth for buffet table	60" x 102"
Round table cloth for a 60-72" diameter table	90" circle
Sash	8" x 108"
Overlays	59" x 59" Or 84" x 84"

If you would like a DVD on How to Make Your Own Chair Cover, Table clothes, and Sashes: For Renting or Selling, you can order one at www.specialeventbiz.com/. The DVD will walk you through how to cut and sew your linen step by step.

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Chapter 3: How to Raise Capital



There are many ways to come up with your start up cost. If you don't have \$1,000 to start your business, then you will need to be creative and patient. You can always start by purchasing only what you can afford, a little every month. Start by purchasing the table cloths, then the chair covers, then one color of sashes, and then the same color overlays, finally buy the second color of sashes and overlays. If you do not want to wait so long to get all your products, you will probably want to borrow. You may want to use your credit cards to pay for your investment. It is very important to remember that you will have to pay your credit card back on a monthly basis for no more than one year. So you will need to keep this in mind when setting your monthly income goal.

Chapter 4: Promoting Your Business



How will you get the word out to customers?

The first thing you will want to do is to tell everyone you know that you are starting your own Linen Rental Business. Find a reason to throw a party at your home and make sure you use your own linen. This party will allow others to see the quality of your product.

You will have to print some business card on your home computer, or order some online. Or you can visit your near by office supply store, and order them there. Then, find out who rents tables, chairs, tents, and bouncers in your area and visit their place of business. Give your business card to the owners and managers. Offer them an opportunity to work together. Take some of their cards and agree to hand their cards out to people who do business with you. This way you will both benefit.

Also, visit your local hair stylist and try to make the same business card exchange. Women who get their hair done are usually getting ready to throw a party and will eventually need your service.

If your church is having a special event, offer your service for free. This will be good publicity. Just ask that they allow you to leave some of your business cards on the tables.

Business will start out slow. But if you provide good service, it will quickly grow. People will recommend you to their own friends and your customer list will grow. Make sure that your linens are clean and wrinkle free.

One way to keep your customers is by making sure you stay in touch with them. A week after the day of the party, you might want to mail them a Thank you note. Let them know that you appreciate their business and send a business card along with the note. Thank them in advance for any referrals they may make in the future.

Right before the Holiday Season begins, mail all your customers a Season Greeting Card wishing them well. This Card will remind them that they will probably need your services during the coming season, and will give them your contact information, just in case they have misplaced your phone number.

Always make sure that you deliver your linens early. Never, ever be late! There is no excuse for being late! You have committed to deliver on a certain day and time. Make sure you get there before the scheduled time. If you start out early from your home you will be able to avoid getting stuck in traffic, or a road block, or an accident. **No excuses! Arrive on time!**

Chapter 5: Rental Pricing



How much you can rent your linens depends on your neighborhood. You don't want to be the most expensive when you start out because you want to be able to compete with the competitors. You also don't want to be the lowest in price. Remember that you will have business expenses to pay. You will need to pay for washing your linen, ironing and car gas.

In Los Angeles the price is about 75¢ for each chair cover, 75¢ for sash, \$ 5.00 for each table cloth, and \$ 2.00 for an overlay. Other places charge more.

These are some prices I found on the internet from different Service providers around the nation:

Organza Table Overlays Rental-\$ 10.00

90 x 156in. Polyester Rectangle Tablecloth Rental-\$ 12.99

CHAIR COVER INCLUDING SASH RENTAL- \$ 2.00

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**Item Price for White .Cream .Ivory .Dark red .Dark brown. (Special color may extra cost)
Rental Costs:**

Any style Chair Cover	\$ 1.75 Per Rental (over 300 covers \$1.50)
(Any Color) Sash 7" x 90"	\$ 0.75
Napkins solid 15" x 15"	\$ 0.50
Skirts/foot/	\$ 1.75
(Square Table Linen) 54" x 54"	\$ 8.00
(Square Table Linen) 90" x 90"	\$ 8.00
Banquet 60" x 120"	\$ 8.00
Oblong 90" x 132"	\$ 8 - \$ 14
Oblong 90" x 156"	\$ 10 - \$ 16
Round 90"	\$ 8.00
Round 108"	\$ 8 - \$ 14
Round 120"	\$ 8 - \$ 14
Round 132"	\$ 10 - \$ 16



Chapter 6: The Contract

You will find a sample contract in the Resource Chapter. You will need a contract to keep track of your orders. As your business grows you will need to keep track of when and where you need to be. Plus contracts serve as a good source of paper trail that will help you keep good records for tax purposes, and a good contact list.

A contract also helps your look like a professional. If you want to personalize your contract just add a Letter Head at the top of the contract.

Remember to give your renter a receipt for their deposit. You can buy receipts at your local office supply store. Write down how much they paid and how much is due. This way they can keep track of what they have given you. Also, right down the time you are to deliver the linen. That way your client will know when to expect you.

Chapter 7: How to take care of your Linen



When you get your linen home from a party, make sure you check every single piece. You will be looking for stains that need to be treated before you throw your linen in the washer. Treat your linen with stain remover before you throw them in the washer. If you use polyester blend fabric, you can wash you linen with regular detergent and warm water. If you have 100% cotton linen, be careful not to wash it in hot water. It will shrink.

If you have a lot of linen, you might want to take it to your nearby Laundromat. They usually have big machines that will allow you to wash them all.

When drying your linen, you should keep an eye on them. You don't want to let the dryer finish its cycle without you there. You want to remove the linen as soon as it is dry, that way it will not get permanent wrinkles. It's easier to iron linen if it is semi-

wrinkle free, straight out of the dryer. Steam ironing makes the job go after.

Keep in mind that if you use 100% cotton, you will need to dry your linen outside, or on cold cycle. **Do not use heat, or your linen will shrink!**

You will need to have a work closet in your home. This will be the place where you keep all your linen. At first you may only need a small wardrobe, but as your business grows and your inventory grows you will need to look for a bigger closet.

The day before you are to deliver your linen, give them a touch up ironing job. You don't want to set down table cloths that have big crease on the table. It's not professional looking. It makes you look careless. Remember, you want to keep your customers, and hopefully make new ones.

Chapter 8: Licenses and Tax Laws



This is important, **seek professional advice when it comes to taxes and licensing.** Every town and county has their own laws and regulations. Contact your City Hall and ask them what kind of licenses you will need to run your business. You will also want to contact the Board of Equalization Offices and ask them what you may need. You always want to know what the tax laws and city laws require of you. This will help you stay out of trouble.

Chapter 9: How to make your business grow



To grow your business you will need to continue to invest in your business. This means that you will need to save 20% of all your rental money to reinvest into your business. With this 20% you will buy more linen, or make more and grow your inventory. The more inventory you have the better service you can provide, and the bigger the party you can service.

You will have expenses, but try to keep your expenses to a minimum. You will need detergent, stain remover, a phone to make and receive calls, business cards, an iron (preferably one with steam), a car to deliver your linen with (or you could give a discount if the customer picks up from your place), contracts and receipts.

Keep a positive attitude. Be patient. This is a word of mouth business. That means that it will take time for people to find out about your business and your customer service.

You might consider setting up your own web page, and advertising your business online. If you decide to set up you own web site, 1&1 hosting is very inexpensive.



http://www.1and1.com/?k_id=11087797

Once your business has taken off, you might want to grow your business to the next level. The next logical step would be to rent table and chairs to go with your linen products. If you decide to expand your business into the table and chair rental you will need keep in mind that this will be a business that will require you to have help. Send a blank email with your Name and email address to tablerental@sepecialeventbiz.com for more information how to start a table and chair rental business.

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Chapter 10: Profit



Your profit will depend on many variables. The first being the price you set for your product. If your goal is to make some extra money, it will take you a little longer to make up your initial investment. You will probably take the money and use it instead of investing it back into your business. Most business owner want to grow their business before they are willing to make a profit.

However, let just look at my own business, as an example. When I started with my linen I paid about \$ 900 for start up. Now I already told you that in Los Angeles the price is about 75¢ for each chair cover, 75¢ for sash, \$ 5.00 for each table cloth, and \$ 2.00 for an overlay.

I made \$ 75 on the 50 chairs and \$ 35.00 for the five tables. That would be a total of \$ 110 for one rental. If you multiply \$ 110 x 4 weeks = \$ 440 a month. I did not touch this money. And the next month I rented my linen again for another \$ 440. In two months I made \$ 880. Again, I did not touch the money. On the

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third month, I made another \$440. My total after three months I had made \$1320. I had now recovered my initial investment and had made a profit. It took 12 rental periods to make
 $\$ 1320 - (\$ 900 \text{ initial investment}) = \text{\$ 420 profit.}$

Of course, your profit will vary. Depending on how soon you decide to touch the money, and how much you charge for your product.

Chapter 11: Resources

Denver Fabrics.com

http://www.denverfabrics.com/Cart/Catalog_items.aspx?Query=tablecloth

White Double Knit

DF#DP01

Ponte De Roma Double Knit

100% Polyester

60" Wide

10 1/2 ounce weight

Perfect for Uniforms, Cheerleading Outfits, Choir Gowns, and Tablecloths, etc.

Compare to \$ 8.00/yd.

\$ 5.25 Per yard (Good price)

Cirbafs-Sewing-and-Craft

<http://stores.ebay.com/Cirbafs-Sewing-and-Crafts>

Suraline Polyester Gabardine

Content: 100% Polyester

Width: 60" / 62"

Care Method: Machine wash warm, tumble dry and remove promptly.

Interested in purchasing a wholesale bolt (12 yards) of this fabric?

[Email us today \(bestfabricebay@yahoo.com\)!](mailto:bestfabricebay@yahoo.com)

Fabric in White 12 YARDS for **\$ 47.88**

Shipping US \$ 8.95

(Its only \$ 4.73 a yard an excellent deal)

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Linen table cloth.com

<http://linetablecloth.com/60-by-126-inch-rectangle-white-p-1217.html>

60 by 126 inch Rectangle White Tablecloth [LTC-TBL-RCT-LWP-60X126-1001]

1+	\$11.97
10+	\$10.05
20+	\$7.99
50+	\$7.35

60 inch wide by 126 inch long, polyester (dacron) tablecloth. Fits an 8 foot banquet table with 15 inch uniform drop - meaning this cloth will drop 15 inches off the edges of an 8 foot table on all sides of the table. 15 inches of tablecloth drop is the industry standard, and the cloth will drop to just above the knees of your seated guests. (The dimensions of an 8 foot standard banquet table are = 96 inches long x 30 inch wide x 30 inch tall.) *Polyester is a durable material that is stain and wrinkle resistant. This is the table linen material preferred by most hotels, caterers, and party rental companies. Each tablecloth weighs 2.15 lbs*

Quality Chair Covers .com

<http://www.qualitychaircovers.com/Wholesale-Table-Overlays.aspx>

Wholesale Organza Overlays \$ 14.99

All prices are for wholesale and not rental. For rental rates please check the rental section.

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Sample Draft

Linen Rental Contract

Name of Renting Party or Organization:

Contact Phone #: _____ Contact Phone #: _____

Rental Date: _____ Delivery Date & Time: _____

Address: _____

Chair Covers _____ X \$ 0.75 = _____

Chair Sashes _____ X \$ 0.75 = _____

Table Clothes _____ X \$ 5.00 = _____

Table Overlays _____ X \$ 2.00 = _____

Total _____

Deposit paid: _____

Amount Due upon delivery: _____

I, _____,
assume no responsibility for any accidents when any tables cloths
and chairs covers are being used for non-related events and
activities.

The renting party is responsible for all damages to linen products
while said products are being rented.

The renting party agrees not to hold _____ liable
for any claims which may be made as a result of such rental usage.

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Sample Draft

There is a twenty-five dollar deposit required at the time of this contract being signed and submitted. The twenty-five dollar deposit will be returned after all property is returned.

Rental fees are to be paid by the pick up date and any cancellations less than 24 hours will result in loss of the deposit.

There will be no standing, sitting or writing on the table cloths and chair covers.

Pick up date and return date is limited to one day before and one day after the rental date.

I fully understand and agree to all the above statements.

x _____
Signature of Renting party Date

x _____
Signature Date

Check list

- Create a Business Plan / Set your Goals
- Calculate your Start up costs
- Decide how you will raise the money for start up
- Start Promoting Your Business
- Set your Rental Pricing
- Create your Contract
- Find out about Licenses and Tax Laws in your area

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