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CITYVIEW'S

BUSINESS JOURNAL



Start with the **LEGAL BASICS** when building a business

From contracts to trademarks to payroll, learning the basics keeps a company running smoothly.

By Lindsey Giardino



FEATURE

Launching a small business is often fueled by passion and a vision, but nothing replaces the legal foundations that keep a business protected and positioned to grow.

Whether for a solo consultant, a tech startup founder or a brick-and-mortar shop owner, the legal to-do list is longer and more consequential than many expect. Choosing a business structure, securing trademarks, drafting contracts, setting up payroll, navigating sales tax, protecting confidential information and planning for eventual succession are all part of the list. It can be overwhelming, but they are all risk-management tools that shield business owners from financial loss and future headaches.

Many small business owners do not realize how early these needs show up or how quickly they evolve as the business grows.

The contracts a business starts with won't likely be the contracts it will need two years in. Employment laws shift. Tax obligations expand when they go from a sole proprietor to hiring their first contractor or employee. Intellectual property issues become real the moment a brand gains traction. And, without clear agreements — whether for clients, team members or partners — misunderstandings can turn into costly conflicts.

The truth is simple: legal structure and documentation form the backbone of a healthy business. Solid contracts set expectations. Trademarks protect identity. Payroll and sales tax compliance keep state and federal agencies out of the inbox. Confidentiality and employment agreements guard ideas and teams. And succession planning ensures the businesses that owners have poured themselves into can continue — or close — on their terms.

Small business owners don't need to become legal experts, but they do need to recognize that legal decisions aren't optional or "nice to have." They are foundational investments that save time, money and stress down the road.

Get it in writing

Nora Crosthwaite knows a thing or two about being a small business owner. She founded a company that allowed real estate agents or homeowners to take pictures of their homes prior to listing preparation and submit them to a stager, and she still leads a real estate team today: Home Sweet Des Moines, brokered by Realty ONE Group Impact.

It started with the basics. When she first launched a small business, Crosthwaite was surprised by the requirement to set up an EIN for her LLC and use it to open her business checking, savings and credit card accounts.

"My personal banker was a fountain of information here," she says. "However, when I

"I used an attorney who focused on intellectual property for my trademark, and a different attorney who focused on startups to change my corporate structure."

— Nora Crosthwaite

expanded into the Home Sweet Des Moines team, I was taken aback by the requirement to set up a DBA (Doing Business As) with the Iowa Real Estate Commission, not the Iowa Secretary of State."

And then when Crosthwaite hired her first assistant, she brought her on as a W-2 employee.

"Setting up payroll, with the reporting requirements to the state of Iowa, was a hassle," she says. "Since then, my team members are all set up as 1099 contractors, not employees."

Crosthwaite also has contracts with each of her team members that outline job responsibilities, confidentiality requirements, data and privacy practices and more. Each team member must sign this contract before proceeding.

"This also lays out what happens if we terminate our relationship," Crosthwaite says. "I see it as a way to ensure any splits are handled smoothly."

She has learned a lot since becoming a small business owner, but Crosthwaite still leans on others for support when it comes to changing employment laws and legal needs. She has found that networking groups like FemCity Des Moines and the Urbandale Chamber of Commerce do a great job sharing legal updates.

During the period when Crosthwaite also ran the tech startup, she had to set up trademarks, navigate ownership requirements and more. The biggest hassle was changing from an LLC to a C Corp to support her needs. Working with professionals in both areas proved extremely beneficial.

"I used an attorney who focused on intellectual property for my trademark, and a different attorney who focused on startups to change my corporate structure," she shares.

Crosthwaite advises other small business owners to find someone with a similar type of business and ask about things like required structures.

"Lean into your networks to find the right people (attorneys, CPAs) to assist along the way," she says. "The type of business you have will drive your needs."

She also encourages entrepreneurs to invest the time and money to get things right from the start.

"Fixing corporate structure later is a hassle,"



Crosthwaite says. "Ensure every partnership, employee or contractor is covered with a contract. If it's not in writing, it doesn't exist."

Legal clarity is good business

When Bethany Snyder was getting her small business, Snyder Strategies LLC — a consultancy that helps nonprofits and membership-based organizations strengthen their advocacy — off the ground, the legal side of things was not too overwhelming. Her spouse is an attorney, so she was able to launch with a solid, well-drafted contract.

"What DID surprise me was how much those documents evolve over time," she says. "As I worked with more clients and saw how other consultants structured their agreements, I kept refining my own."

For Snyder, the trickiest moments usually come when a client wants to use their contract instead of hers.

"That's when having an attorney on standby is essential — someone who can walk through the language, point out any areas of risk and help negotiate terms that protect me," she says.

A particularly memorable instance was when a client tried to include a strict intellectual property clause that would have given them ownership of part of Snyder's work product.

"That required careful back-and-forth," she says. "We ultimately reached agreement, but I wasn't about to give away my business product just because it was convenient for them."

Administratively, the biggest curveball has been deciding when to move from an LLC to an S-Corp.

"There's no handbook that tells you the exact moment to make that shift, so figuring out the tax



"This isn't something to piece together from the internet. A well-crafted contract protects you, sets expectations, strengthens client relationships and signals that you take your business seriously. Once you invest in it, you can reuse it for years with small adjustments as needed. Mine has been my backbone for nearly a decade."

— Bethany Snyder

and structural implications took more digging than I expected," Snyder says. "And, of course, I relied on my attorney and accountant."

As she has grown Snyder Strategies, her contracts — and equally important, her detailed scope of work — have become the foundation of how she protects her

business. They set crystal-clear expectations, safeguard her time and IP, and ensure everyone understands the parameters before work begins.

"Those documents don't just protect me legally ... they communicate professionalism," Snyder says. "Clients see them and instantly understand that I run a serious, well-structured consultancy. It sets the tone for the relationship from day one and shows that I know my stuff. A strong contract is a business asset — it's legal protection and a professional asset."

Looking ahead, Snyder plans to add more formal data and privacy language, especially as AI becomes a bigger part of her work.

Given her own experiences, Snyder's biggest piece of advice is to work with an attorney to build a solid contract and scope of work.

"This isn't something to piece together from the internet," she notes. "A well-crafted contract protects you, sets expectations, strengthens client relationships and signals that you take your business seriously. Once you invest in it, you can reuse it for years with small adjustments as needed. Mine has been my backbone for nearly a decade."

Ultimately, she says, legal preparedness is less about being defensive than about setting boundaries and starting every client relationship on strong footing. ■

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Diamond Star Academy, LLC	WATERLOO	BLACK HAWK	02	\$500,000	10	8	NEW	Elementary and Secondary Schools
Etten Properties, LLC	INDEPENDENCE	BUCHANAN	02	\$166,000	0	4	EXISTING	N/A
NO-BS Holdings, LLC	GREENE	BUTLER	02	\$616,000	4	3	EXISTING	Other Fabricated Wire Product Manufacturing
BRAD BOWER DRYWALL LLC	WEST BRANCH	CEDAR	01	\$22,000	0	0	EXISTING	Drywall and Insulation Contractors
V&M Farms, Inc	Mason City	CERRO GORDO	02	\$240,000	0	14	EXISTING	General Freight Trucking, Long Distance, Truckload
YZ Consulting Inc	OSCEOLA	CLARKE	03	\$100,000	30	30	EXISTING	Administrative Management and General Management Consulting Services
EXO SKIN SPA & HAIR STUDIO	CLINTON	CLINTON	01	\$14,000	0	1	EXISTING	Beauty Salons
1 ELITE ELECTRIC, LLC	BURLINGTON	DES MOINES	01	\$45,000	0	2	NEW	Electrical Contractors
Precision Electric and Services, LLC	SPIRIT LAKE	DICKINSON	04	\$200,000	2	4	NEW	Electrical Contractors
LUCKEY LITTLE GYMS LLC	TIFFIN	JOHNSON	01	\$478,000	8	2	NEW	Fitness and Recreational Sports Centers
LUCKEY LITTLE GYMS LLC	TIFFIN	JOHNSON	01	\$50,000	8	2	NEW	Fitness and Recreational Sports Centers
CANINE SOCIAL CLUB LLC	CEDAR RAPIDS	LINN	02	\$30,000	4	3	NEW	Pet Care (except Veterinary) Services
RAPID OWL TOWING LLC	FAIRFAX	LINN	02	\$10,000	1	1	EXISTING	Motor Vehicle Towing
360 Builders INC	Larchwood	LYON	04	\$177,000	4	0	EXISTING	Residential Remodelers
Coleman Automotive Le Mars, LLC	Le Mars	PLYMOUTH	04	\$5,386,000	1	12	NEW	New Car Dealers
H&P Corp LLC	CLIVE	POLK	03	\$3,865,000	50	0	NEW	All Other Amusement and Recreation Industries
FOREVER SUNRISE, INC	DES MOINES	POLK	03	\$1,785,000	1	1	EXISTING	N/A
Apollo Design Build LLC	Des Moines	POLK	03	\$1,146,000	6	0	EXISTING	Brick, Stone, and Related Construction Material Merchant Wholesalers
3330 University Ave LLC	DES MOINES	POLK	03	\$813,000	1	2	NEW	Homes for the Elderly
Ambica 215, LLC	GRIMES	POLK	03	\$2,100,000	7	10	EXISTING	Hotels (except Casino Hotels) and Motels
The Grape Life Wine Lounge and Cellar	DAVENPORT	SCOTT	01	\$137,500	0	2	EXISTING	N/A
Midwest Dental Lab	INDIANOLA	WARREN	01	\$70,000	3	1	EXISTING	Dental Laboratories

TRANSACTIONS FROM OCTOBER 2025

We can stop HIV, Iowa— by taking a **whole-person** **approach** to our sexual health.

Get screened for HIV at least once in your lifetime, *and* request HIV screening anytime you are getting tested for sexually-transmitted infections (STIs).

Talk openly with your provider about your sex life, so they can help you figure out which tests are best for you. There’s not a single test for all STIs — each STI has its own test.

STIs can cause long-term health issues when left untreated. They can also increase your chances of acquiring HIV. Getting tested for all sexually-transmitted infections is the best step you can take to protect your own health and help to stop HIV in Iowa!



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COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE TRANSACTIONS IN POLK COUNTY FROM JULY 25, 2025, TO AUG. 18, 2025



1325 N. ANKENY BLVD., ANKENY
SALE DATE: 2025-07-25
SALE PRICE: \$700,000
SELLER: SPLASH EXPRESS LLC
BUYER: SPLASH AUTO WASH LLC
ACRES: 1.907
SQUARE FEET: 5,848

207 NINTH ST., DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2025-07-25
SALE PRICE: \$10,000,000
SELLER: DMCRE1 LLC
BUYER: DMCRE2 LLC
ACRES: 0.858
SQUARE FEET: 242,637

NO ADDRESS LISTED
SALE DATE: 2025-07-25
SALE PRICE: \$405
SELLER: JADEE HOLDINGS LLC
BUYER: CITY OF ANKENY
ACRES: 0.001
SQUARE FEET: 0

NO ADDRESS LISTED
SALE DATE: 2025-07-25
SALE PRICE: \$16,900
SELLER: SLEISTER PROPERTIES LLC
BUYER: CITY OF ANKENY
ACRES: 0.026
SQUARE FEET: 0

1701 22ND ST., UNIT 200, WEST DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2025-07-28
SALE PRICE: \$850,000
SELLER: BARAZANJI LLC
BUYER: RE REAL ESTATE LLC
ACRES: 0.805
SQUARE FEET: 7,615

106 E. ARMY POST ROAD, DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2025-07-28
SALE PRICE: \$135,000
SELLER: JR N KALE PROPERTY LLC
BUYER: 106 E ARMY POST RD LLC
ACRES: 0.732

801 WALNUT ST., DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2025-07-28
SALE PRICE: \$32,000,000
SELLER: WELLS FARGO PROPERTIES INC
BUYER: DMCRE1 LLC
ACRES: 9.670
SQUARE FEET: 1,413,252

NO ADDRESS LISTED
SALE DATE: 2025-07-28
SALE PRICE: \$5,100
SELLER: BROWN, BRADLEY ALLEN
BUYER: CITY OF ANKENY
ACRES: 0.008
SQUARE FEET: 0

1419 CAPITOL AVE., DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2025-07-29
SALE PRICE: \$2,399,000
SELLER: DSM37 LLC
BUYER: STANBROUGH RESIDENTIAL LLC
ACRES: 0.785
SQUARE FEET: 22,806

1607 CENTER ST., DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2025-07-30
SALE PRICE: \$500,000
SELLER: CENTER STREET INVESTMENTS LLC
BUYER: THE GAEL LLC
ACRES: 0.250
SQUARE FEET: 4,090

3019 KINGMAN BLVD., DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2025-07-31
SALE PRICE: \$257,100
SELLER: METASTONE PROPERTY SOLUTIONS LLC
BUYER: BEAR DOWN LLC
ACRES: 0.172
SQUARE FEET: 2,773



4941 DOUGLAS AVE., DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2025-08-01
SALE PRICE: \$275,000
SELLER: CHARLES E KRIGLSTEIN REVOCABLE TRUST
BUYER: SHRADDHA AUR SABURI LLC
ACRES: 0.344
SQUARE FEET: 2,340

709 34TH ST., DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2025-08-01
SALE PRICE: \$245,000
SELLER: JJ REAL ESTATE HOLDINGS CORP
BUYER: COSONERO LLC
ACRES: 0.160
SQUARE FEET: 1,583



2929 EIGHTH ST. S.W., ALTOONA
SALE DATE: 2025-08-01
SALE PRICE: \$3,504,000
SELLER: WAYSIDE ACRES LLC
BUYER: AGREE CENTRAL LLC
ACRES: 1.310
SQUARE FEET: 3,033

3019 KINGMAN BLVD., DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2025-08-04
SALE PRICE: \$235,000
SELLER: SCHWEITZER, GERALD R
BUYER: METASTONE PROPERTY SOLUTIONS LLC
ACRES: 0.172
SQUARE FEET: 2,773



2505 WEDGEWOOD ROAD, DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2025-08-04
SALE PRICE: \$490,000
SELLER: FLATTERY PROPERTIES LLC
BUYER: FOLEY BUILDING LLC
ACRES: 0.715
SQUARE FEET: 2,640

2625 VINE ST., WEST DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2025-08-05
SALE PRICE: \$10,200,000
SELLER: FAIRMEADOWS COMMUNITY LLC
BUYER: FAIRMEADOWS VILLAGE GROUP LLC
ACRES: 7.025
SQUARE FEET: 93,921

3323 INGERSOLL AVE., DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2025-08-05
SALE PRICE: \$1,725,000
SELLER: AHC WOODLAND LLC
BUYER: 3323 INGERSOLL LLC
ACRES: 0.273
SQUARE FEET: 14,640

1210 S.W. 28TH ST., ANKENY
SALE DATE: 2025-08-05
SALE PRICE: \$11,962,500
SELLER: CAMPUS TOWN LLC
BUYER: CT IOWA OWNER LLC
ACRES: 4.491
SQUARE FEET: 139,954



317 S. ANKENY BLVD., ANKENY
SALE DATE: 2025-08-07
SALE PRICE: \$360,000
SELLER: 317 LLC
BUYER: RAMSEY, PHILLIP
ACRES: 0.220
SQUARE FEET: 768

NO ADDRESS LISTED
SALE DATE: 2025-08-08
SALE PRICE: \$5,100
SELLER: TIERNAN PROPERTIES LLC
BUYER: CITY OF ANKENY
ACRES: 0.008
SQUARE FEET: 0

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Paul Bouwers, Jason Uhlenhake, Ben Buenzow, Tyler Fromm, Chad Lyons, Taylor Carey. Not pictured: Faith Dorn-Spiece, Steve Plym



3621 BEAVER AVE., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-08-12
SALE PRICE: \$1,660,000
SELLER: KNAPP INTERESTS LLC
BUYER: MURRAY GROUP LLC
ACRES: 0.697
SQUARE FEET: 15,782

4704 UNIVERSITY AVE., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-08-12
SALE PRICE: \$252,000
SELLER: ARRY D STRICKLER TRUST
BUYER: DOUBLE WAVE LLC
ACRES: 0.157
SQUARE FEET: 2,850

4954 86TH ST., URBANDALE

SALE DATE: 2025-08-12
SALE PRICE: \$3,900,000
SELLER: PARK AVENUE PARTNERS LC
BUYER: R&J WEIS HOLDING COMPANY 14 LLC
ACRES: 1.428
SQUARE FEET: 6,246

23 12TH ST., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-08-12
SALE PRICE: \$1,312,000
SELLER: WELLS FARGO PROPERTIES INC
BUYER: 1100 CHERRY STREET LLC
ACRES: 1.504
SQUARE FEET: 16,723

2203 GRAND AVE., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-08-12
SALE PRICE: \$1,250,000
SELLER: REC HOLDING LLC
BUYER: 2203 GRAND LLC
ACRES: 0.389
SQUARE FEET: 7,558

2120 INGERSOLL AVE., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-08-13
SALE PRICE: \$2,300,000
SELLER: COMMUNITY 1ST CREDIT UNION
BUYER: GRAND CAPITAL LC
ACRES: 0.435
SQUARE FEET: 5,496

NO ADDRESS LISTED

SALE DATE: 2025-08-13
SALE PRICE: \$40,000
SELLER: ALLEMAN, STARLA
BUYER: DHK ENTERPRISES INC
ACRES: 0.200
SQUARE FEET: 560

2011 HULL AVE., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-08-13
SALE PRICE: \$200,000
SELLER: DELAWARE PROPERTIES LLC
BUYER: BBWB HOLDINGS LLC
ACRES: 1.526
SQUARE FEET: 7,550

1425 METRO EAST DRIVE, UNIT 115, PLEASANT HILL

SALE DATE: 2025-08-14
SALE PRICE: \$125,000
SELLER: CENTRAL IOWA SAFE & LOCK SPECIALISTS LLC
BUYER: RAILWAY 317 LLC
ACRES: 0.120
SQUARE FEET: 1,250



6136 S.E. 14TH ST., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-08-14
SALE PRICE: \$1,100,000
SELLER: PARADISE CAC LLC
BUYER: ROGUE EQUITIES LLC
ACRES: 0.631
SQUARE FEET: 3,384

4989 N.W. JOHNSTON DRIVE, JOHNSTON

SALE DATE: 2025-08-14
SALE PRICE: \$2,550,000
SELLER: RAPTOR PROPERTIES LLC
BUYER: STONE MONROE PROPERTIES LLC
ACRES: 2.397
SQUARE FEET: 13,700

3301 111TH ST., URBANDALE

SALE DATE: 2025-08-14
SALE PRICE: \$243,000
SELLER: NEXT TEN LLC
BUYER: JAEGER, JOHN J
ACRES: 0.107
SQUARE FEET: 1,500

1910 S.W. WHITE BIRCH CIRCLE, ANKENY

SALE DATE: 2025-08-18
SALE PRICE: \$1,900,000
SELLER: KIRKWOOD PLAZA CORP
BUYER: WHITLOCK, TERRY
ACRES: 1.543
SQUARE FEET: 3,431

9051 SWANSON BLVD., CLIVE

SALE DATE: 2025-08-18
SALE PRICE: \$625,000
SELLER: BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF CENTRAL IOWA INC
BUYER: CALVARY CHAPEL LIVING HOPE
ACRES: 0.672
SQUARE FEET: 4,144

9100 NORTHPARK DRIVE, URBANDALE

SALE DATE: 2025-08-18
SALE PRICE: \$10,500,000
SELLER: MID-AMERICA INVESTMENT COMPANY
BUYER: ATERRA 202 9100 NORTHPARK DR URBANDALE LLC
ACRES: 13.107
SQUARE FEET: 91,985 ■

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The Partnership celebrates 2025 Scale DSM graduates

The Greater Des Moines Partnership announced the graduation of the fourth cohort of the Scale DSM Business Accelerator program. This group of entrepreneurs has completed the six-month program, gaining advanced business education, hands-on tools for strategic growth and valuable peer-to-peer learning. Graduates from the 2025 cohort include:

- Magdalena Aravena Gutierrez, Studio Siembra
- Kyle Doyle, Iowa Distilling Company
- Lori Gelhaar, Leverage4
- Justin Gora, Gora's Gym
- Andrew Johnson, 21st Century Trading Company LLC
- Riana LeJeune, Repinned Luxury Upholstery Workroom
- Ana Maceda, Crown Cleaning LLC
- Shayla McCormally, McCormally & Cosgrove, PLLC
- Tim Morris, Maple Creek Construction, Inc
- Jennifer Oredson, Dinner Dispatch
- Matthew Palan, Creative Concepts
- Marilyn Perez Garcia, Modas Marilyn
- Thla Sui, Thla Sui Agency
- LeAnn Thongvanh, Dinner Dispatch
- Brandy Werner, Werner's Elite Auto
- Aniekanabasi White, Sensiil Studios
- RaeLynn Whitfield, Whitfield's Lawn and Garden Specialist, LLC
- Ventica Woods, Mama Africa LLC

Loch chosen to help shape the future of nuclear medicine

Robert J. Loch, Ph.D., MBA, CNMT, associate dean of clinical and student affairs in the College of Health Sciences at Des Moines University Medicine and Health Sciences, has been selected to participate in the Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging Technologist Section's Leadership Academy. The two-day program, held in January 2026, brings together emerging leaders for focused development through lectures, team-building exercises and networking opportunities. Its goal is to cultivate future SNMMI-TS leaders who are committed to advancing the profession and the organization.

Marcon named senior vice president of marketing and communications for Iowa Hospital Association

The Iowa Hospital Association announced that Jordan Juhl Marcon has joined the organization's executive team as senior vice president of marketing and communications. In this role, Marcon will oversee IHA's marketing, communications and brand strategy to support member hospitals and advance the organization's mission. Marcon brings nearly two decades of experience in strategic communications, public relations and brand leadership across Iowa's health care, nonprofit and business sectors to this role. Most recently, she served as director of communications and public relations at ChildServe, where she led organizational communications strategy, built and maintained relationships to advance organizational reputation, and supported executive leadership in shaping strategic direction. Marcon previously held communications and advisory roles with Wixted and Company, the Iowa Grocery Industry Association, the National Pork Board and Vermeer Corporation.



Jordan Juhl
Marcon

Miller announces retirement from Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage

After a decade of service to Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area (SSNHA), Executive Director Cara Miller has announced she will retire effective Jan. 31. During her tenure, Miller has guided the congressionally designated National Heritage Area, whose mission is to tell and preserve the story of American agriculture, through a period of growth and impact. Under her leadership, SSNHA has expanded to 119 Partner Sites across 37 counties, strengthened public awareness and engagement, and successfully relocated its headquarters to 305 W. Park Ave. in Waterloo. Miller also led the organization through its reauthorization with the federal government through 2037, securing long-term stability for the heritage area.

One of the most recent milestones under Miller's direction was the creation of the Iowa Eats Food & Drink Festival, an annual celebration connecting farmers, producers, and culinary artisans with the public. The festival offers Iowans a dynamic way to learn more about where their food comes from and the people who help bring it to the table.

"It has been a privilege to spend the last 10 years of my career leading such an outstanding organization as Silos & Smokestacks," Miller said. "We are lucky to have this National Heritage Area headquartered here in the Cedar Valley and in our state of Iowa. The impact Silos & Smokestacks has had both economically in the region and on agricultural tourism is profound. I am so proud to have been able to be a part of that." ■

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