



NOVA SCOTIA

# ARTPLUS ADVERTISING LTD.

**S**YLVIA HO understands the realities of a deadline and the demands of her customers. It's essential when you work in a service industry – it's critical when your service is to help others to promote and build their own businesses. "If I can't deliver the calibre of product customers want and when they want it," she explains, "then neither of us will achieve our goals."

Sylvia's company, ArtPlus Advertising Ltd., is a graphic design firm based in Sydney, Nova Scotia. The company produces visual identity and promotional materials critical to other businesses. These include logo designs, product and informational brochures, folders, annual reports, signage and tourist magazines. "We can provide full creative services," offers Sylvia. "Everything from helping our clients to identify their needs, to developing, managing and delivering the finished products."

She established the company in 1987. "The primary reason for starting my own business was that I was unemployed and didn't want to leave Cape Breton," she explains. "I was trained in graphic design and had experience as manager of a design studio and print shop... so I decided to give entrepreneurship a shot."

Drawing on her previous work experience and her education – Sylvia is a graduate of Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts in Singapore and the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design – she started approaching both public and private sector organizations as well as hospitality and not-for-profit agencies. Anyone, she says, who might have needed her specialized services.

Sylvia discovered that finding the \$50,000-\$60,000 she needed to start her business wasn't easy. She obtained



Barrett and Mackay

funding from ACOA and set up shop at home. The decision to relocate her business to her home a year after opening was out of necessity rather than choice. "It was certainly less expensive to work from home, and it makes it easier to meet deadlines when the work is right here. That's impor-

tant when you have some big projects in the shop. But sometimes working at home makes it difficult to relax because you're always thinking of all the work that needs to be done... and it's sitting in the next room."

*"Make sure you know exactly what you're getting into and if you're still up for the challenge... go for it."*

thanks to perseverance and training, she has managed to stay at the cutting edge of technology. She encountered success quickly – many businesses knew of her impressive qualifications in the industry and sought her out.

Sylvia plans to keep going just the way things are. "It takes dedication,

hard work and experience, but it is worth everything you put into it. If you're just thinking about starting your own business now, take my advice... examine the costs and sacrifices before you decide. Make sure you know exactly what you're getting into and if you're still up for the challenge... go for it."

It was difficult to be without a technology support network, but

## WHERE TO REACH SYLVIA HO

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