



NEW BRUNSWICK

BETTY LEE FOOD SERVICES LTD.

BETTY LEE thinks it cost her about \$30 to start her business. Granted, that was more than 20 years ago and she had humble aspirations at the time. “I just bought my supplies and sold the food that I made at the market,” she says. “With the money I made, I bought more supplies for the next week.”

Betty’s story is an example of what can happen when you love what you do and stick with it no matter what. Today, Betty Lee Food Services produces a variety of specialized hors d’oeuvres (including her prized spring rolls) for supermarkets, hotels and institutions. She also caters dinner parties, business conferences, social gatherings and office meetings. She also boasts a long list of loyal fans living all over North America.

Betty moved to Canada from her native Singapore 30 years ago to complete her university education. She met her husband here and the two decided to settle in Fredericton, New Brunswick. As they started their family, Betty realized she wanted to be at home while her children were young, so she looked for something she could do there.

“I decided I could cook,” she recalls. “I love to eat and I really missed some of the foods we had in Singapore. Cooking was something I could do at home with children around.” It wasn’t quite that easy. Betty was raised in a privileged family in Singapore where it wasn’t appropriate for her to work in the kitchen. She learned how to cook by using cookbooks.

Not wanting to incur a debt, she stuck with her plan of spending only what she made. But, in time, Betty’s cooking became increasingly popular and she had to consider how far she wanted to take the business.



Barrett and Mackay

Armed with a Bachelor and a Masters degree in Business Administration, Betty recognized the opportunity and realized the work and investment involved. She started looking for funding.

“It was hard to find financial assistance because I am a female,”

pressure to deliver on your promises.

Betty still works the Saturday market – something she finds very enjoyable. She still has big plans for her business. First, there may be some improvements and upgrading to her building, then she would like to expand into new markets and export.

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she remembers. “In the end, I just tried to take one hurdle at a time.” She received a great deal of support from ACOA and the New Brunswick Department of Economic Development and Tourism.

What Betty appreciates most about business ownership are the independence and flexibility of being your own boss. She admits, however, that it’s not all fun. Self-employment can be labor-intensive with long hours and much

Betty recently represented Canada on two international trade missions to investigate new market opportunities – to Asia in 1996 and Washington in 1997.

“I always tell people who want their own business not to give up easily. There are always setbacks, no matter what you do. Just be strong and stick with it. Endurance is the most important ingredient of success.”

Betty Lee

WHERE TO REACH BETTY LEE

519 Beaverbrook Court, Fredericton, New Brunswick E3B 1X6
Telephone: (506) 453-0698 Fax: (506) 451-8389