

So you think you want to run a B&B or hotel?



Nick Lawler

Already made the decision? Don't hesitate, get yourself booked onto our next...

'How to run the perfect B&B or hotel'

We only hold these fun and intensive 2.5 day courses, four times a year.
Space is limited!

Email stay@winderhall.co.uk or phone 01900 85107 for our next available course, an application form and programme details.



Congratulations on clicking the download !

I suspect you might be at a turning point in your life and considering what to do in the future. If you are considering running a B&B or small hotel, you are in the right place. The good news is that you are not the first to have considered running a B&B as a lifestyle choice or as a business. The industry is populated with people just like you (and me!) who have shared a similar dream and gone on to turn that dream into reality. Many of us make a success of it, develop a sustainable business and lifestyle and begin to live the dream. I hope the content of 'So you think you want to run a B&B or hotel?' gives you food for thought and excites you about the prospect of turning your dream into reality. The whole team at Winder Hall are committed to your success, from this point on and for as long as you need us. I look forward to welcoming you to Winder Hall for one of our 'How to run the perfect B&B or hotel' weekends. We can crack open the champagne, welcome you to a wonderful business, and toast the beginning of your exciting and successful future!

Nick Lawler

Business Owner, Hotelier
NLP Master Practitioner and Trainer

Escaping the rat race?

So whatever your motive, whether it is:

- A passion for looking after people
- Escaping the rat race
- Living in your dream holiday location
- Supplementing a pension
- Building a business
- A combination of the above and other reasons as well!



KEEP READING NOW TO FIND OUT WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW!

Ten years ago, I was in the same position as you. Today, I run :



- A successful hotel and restaurant in a little village in the Lake District
A conference and party venue in a nearby town
- Outside catering and event management services hosting a large number of weddings each year
- A business networking and education group for the Nationwide Alliance of Business Owners
- Coaching and consultancy services for start-ups and small businesses, specialising in hospitality and service industries where the focus is on people, not widgets




Are you ready for the rollercoaster?

This is the health warning (and the small print). Starting your own business is really hard graft. You need energy, a willingness to learn new skills and the emotional resilience of a rhinoceros. Life in the hospitality industry requires you to work long and unsocial hours. The transition from working for someone else and receiving a regular pay-check (no matter how undervalued you feel as an employee) is a whole lot easier than being your own boss, when your business skills alone will determine how much money you get paid! It can be exciting and also very scary.

My goal is to help new and prospective B&B and small hotel owners save money and make more money by getting it right first time so they really can enjoy the lifestyle of their dreams.

We've been through the process before and want you to benefit from what we've learned as a successful business,
SAVING YOU TIME AND MONEY SO YOU CAN ENJOY THE LIFESTYLE OF YOUR DREAMS!

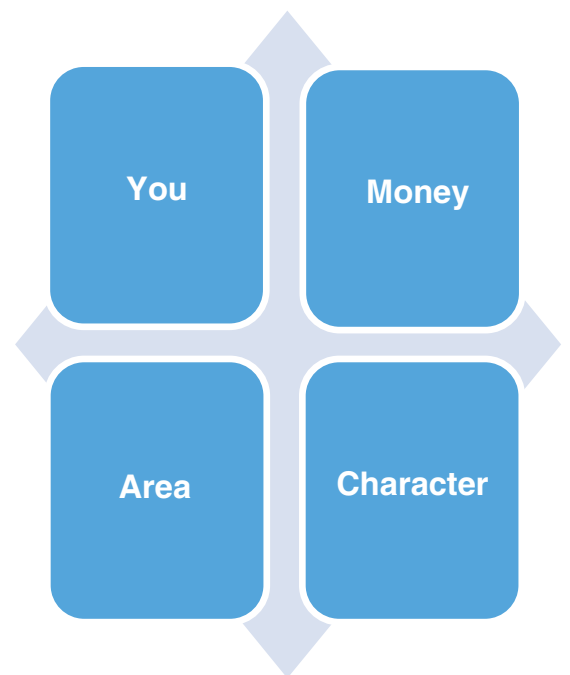
If you feel this is the right challenge for you, read on for some straight forward tips. 

Let's get started and 'knock some shapes out'!



This is Darren, Toni, Charlotte and Jacob, some of the younger, enthusiastic members of the team at Winder Hall, practising their moves on top of our walled garden. I want you to practice the:

“Y M C A”



I've got a more professional looking chart.....

This is the only real homework I would urge you to do before you start looking for your dream B&B or small hotel. Sit down over a bottle of wine with your partner and consider these four things:

- Are **YOU** really suited to life running a B&B or small hotel?
- How much **MONEY** do you have?
- What sort of **CHARACTER** will your place have?
- The **AREA** – where do you want to live?

The following pages are my observations and hopefully they will help you make a RATIONAL decision.

Still interested? Give us a ring at Winder Hall on 01900 85107 or email stay@winderhall.co.uk and talk to us about next steps.

We would love to tell you what it's really like running your own B&B or small hotel and help you make a success of it, first time round. Benefit from our experience and learn how to avoid or overcome challenges to develop the lifestyle you want without the stress.

Are YOU really suited to life running a B&B or small hotel?

A cautionary tale:

Our predecessors at Winder Hall were similarly a husband and wife team. They spent years renovating the house, dreaming of the day when they could throw open the doors of their new guest house. A handsome redundancy package paid for the brand new roof, re-wiring and installation of en-suites. Finally, all planning hurdles overcome, hotel freshly painted and tastefully wallpapered, they were ready to throw open the doors to paying guests. Alas, Mrs loved the guests and Mr quickly realised he hated strangers in the house. Worse than this, he was more than occasionally rude, though never intentionally, and whilst some of the more robust guests used to



revel in the experience, I am equally sure the apparent disdain was enough to stop a large number of first-timers making a return visit. Aware of the potential and actual damage Mr could inflict on his new business, the 'working' arrangements were quickly established such that Mrs did all the front of house and Mr confined himself to repairs and maintenance, the paperwork and the kitchen. I have no doubt that it led them to selling the business after only a few short years. My best advice is you have to really enjoy meeting new people and I mean really, really enjoy it. No matter how tired, stressed or sleep-deprived I am, I know I have to find a smile and a kind word and I also know that no request is too big or too small to be attended to, and I expect the same attitude of my team. It is what will set you apart and have your guests return time and again and rave about you to their friends. It is also an attitude that is sadly lacking in far too many hotels and restaurants. It's more than a job. Looking after people (you can call it 'hospitality' if you like) is something you should be passionate about.

On one of our intensive 2.5 day introductory courses, you will learn how the proprietary Winder Hall system keeps you focussed on leading a successful business through FOCUS©:

- **F**ood
- **O**ffice Systems
- **C**ustomer Service
- **U**tilities
- **S**taffing

**So ask yourself the question;
are you really, really suited to
running a B&B or hotel?**



How much MONEY do you have?

This is a pretty important question, especially if you are planning on selling the family home and buying a guest house as a replacement that is also providing you with an income. Most people see their own home as an asset but of course whilst ever you have debt attached to it and it's not providing you with an income, it's actually a liability. So in theory, exchanging one property (liability) for a cash-producing property (asset) is a good thing. Isn't it? Even if you are starting to provide B&B on a really small scale from a spare bedroom, you are potentially offsetting some of your mortgage costs by actually using your family home to produce extra cash. So if I were trying to SELL you into the idea of buying and running your own B&B, this would be a good opening salvo. Not convinced yet? Well no, in the current economic climate, most banks aren't convinced by this argument either.

So the better question to ask yourself is:

Do I have the necessary skills to run my own business?

If the answer is 'not sure', ask yourself:

**Have I got a robust enough plan to acquire those skills quickly...
....and before I go bust?**

This is not the place to tell you how to write a business plan or a proposal strong enough to persuade your po-faced business manager at the bank to lend you some money. What I will tell you though, is you will need more cash (and I mean cash in hand) than you think you are going to need. Seriously, when we took over Winder Hall in 2002, so much stuff broke down within the first twenty-four months that we had never envisaged. Like just about everything in the kitchen had reached the end of its useful life so it all broke down together. Also you will want to make the place your own and that will mean spending money. And I really think you should spend money on making the place your own because you can't help but show pride when you are happy with your offering. Equally it shows when you are not happy with your offering. So you will almost certainly end up spending more money than you budgeted for.

I return to the importance of assessing your business skills under 'Next Steps'.

I want to give you £100,000! Everyone in business makes mistakes and they cost money! I've made some **GREAT** decisions and I've made some **SHOCKERS**. With the benefit of hindsight, the cost of my mistakes is at least £100,000. Here are some of the things I've wasted precious money on over the last ten years:

•Accountants•Advertising•Banks•ConsultancyFees•Crockery•DoubleBookings•Equipment•Food•Furniture • Gardening•Glassware•GraphicDesign•HirePurchase•IT•Linen•LostSales•Recruitment•Stationery•Tax•Tele- phone Systems •UtilityBills•Wallpaper•WebsiteDevelopment

Interested in the BOTTOM LINE? Give us a ring at Winder Hall on 01900 85107 or email stay@winderhall.co.uk and talk to us about next steps.

What sort of CHARACTER will your place have?

All houses are more than their inhabitants and have a character of their own. So far from starting with a blank canvass you will have to mould your offering to the personality as well as the physical and functional characteristics of the building you are turning into a business. Character is also about the sort of guests you want to have around. Business or leisure? Pets or no pets? Lounge areas? Big TV screens? Alcohol? Breakfast or no breakfast? Room service or no service? Evening meals, B&B or room only? Lots of extras and lots of chintz or absolutely back to basics. The great thing is you can determine it all. The critical thing is CONGRUENCY. It has to feel seamless for guests and they will pick up on inconsistencies and things that don't match the overall atmosphere and intentions of your establishment. Branding is more than your letterhead!

The AREA – where do you want to live?

My family and I live in a beautiful valley in the Northern Lake District. I would love to think that people just visit Winder Hall because of who we are and how we look after our guests but I know it isn't the driving decision. People come because it is the Lake District and they mostly come armed with maps, rucksacks, boots, wet weather gear (of course) and an itinerary. When we started seriously looking to move to the Lake District, we did make one clear distinction: we knew our business had to be located inside the boundary of the National Park. Buying a business inside the Park comes with a price tag, possibly as much as a £100,000 extra over and above a property just outside the National Park. For us, this was definitely a price worth paying, for two reasons:

- We wanted to live in the mountains and our free time is still so short that being able to walk out the door and into the hills without having to drive anywhere is just magical.
- The second reason for needing to be inside the National Park is marketing. As a small business we've still got lots to learn but in the beginning we knew nothing about how to attract customers and as I said earlier, attracting customers is pretty damn important. Your life will consist of more than your business and finding an idyllic location, particularly if 'far from the madding crowd' is your heart's desire, can have significant drawbacks. We have a tiny shop and a pub in the village but apart from us, these are the only amenities. Running out of milk and eggs at breakfast time can be awkward to say the least!

Where do you want to live?

... and will there be enough business to support your lifestyle?

So whether it is the city or country life that calls you to its heart, consider the pros and cons carefully. I also suggest talking to family and friends. Those people who know you best can provide a great sanity check on your decision making rationale.

Your Next Steps

If you are having fun so far, let us take you through the next steps on 'How to run the perfect B&B or hotel'. At the same time, you can start evaluating your own skills and building a financial plan that will help you:

- Find the right property in the right area
- Negotiate a loan
- Give yourself realistic sales targets and budgets against which you can chart your progress.

I wish I had done all of this but we were incredibly naive when we started in business. Like most domestic households we were good at watching the pennies but useless at managing the pounds. We would have been able to tell you how much we spent at the supermarket each week but we committed ourselves to the largest financial investment of our lives without a second thought. How true is this for most of us? Ask yourself these questions:

- How much time do I spend managing the grocery bill or my credit card debt?
- How much time did I spend evaluating the financial consequences of buying a house?

If you find yourself a bit disappointed with the answer, don't worry, you are normal! But if you are dreaming of running your own business one day soon, start developing your financial muscle NOW. My ambition is not to put you off but to help you make the right decision and then help you get your business off to a flying start. Interested in taking this essential, time and stress saving next step? Invest in your success by committing to:

- Spend the weekend with us at one of our 'How to run the perfect B&B or hotel' courses. These courses are designed to:
- GIVE YOU an inside look at what is actually involved in running your own B&B or hotel.
- GIVE YOU valuable information on the skills you need to build a successful and profitable business.
- GIVE YOU our complete Operations Manual. Just like buying into a franchise but at a fraction of the cost.
- Commission a market study before you buy. We will show you the key components included at 'How to run the perfect B&B or hotel'. We will even do it for you!

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