Acknowledgment

I would like to thank my fiancé, Rob, my parents, brother and godmother for their incredible love and support over the years. Additionally, I’d like to thank the six best friends I’ve made in graduate school for making the past two and a half years more fun and memorable than I could ever have wished for.

Lastly, I would like to thank my advisor, Amanda Holliday, for her help and direction with this project. Writing a business plan is no easy task and I am grateful for her full support in letting me tackle such a project and her instrumental guidance along the way.
Preface
Since 2009, only a few of the 59 core positions within the dietetics profession have experienced increases in median hourly wages to keep pace with the two-year inflation rate (CPI) of 5.5% (American Dietetic Association), one being the Private Practice Registered Dietitian (RD). This not only encouraging for those in this field but it suggests an increasing demand for private practice dietitians and the services they offer, particularly as insurance reimbursement and incidence of chronic disease increases in the United States.

Considering suggestive trends for the growth of private practice dietetics, dietitians are not entering into this business as quickly as expected. According to the American Dietetic Association Compensation & Benefits Survey 2011, private practice dietitians make up a smaller percentage of total dietitians than in previous years and are no longer considered one of the “highest incidence positions” as they were in 2007 (Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics; American Dietetic Association Commission on Dietetic Registration).

Having gone through the process of writing my own private practice business plan, it is not surprising that private practice dietitians make up a smaller percentage of this profession than before. While there is an overwhelming amount of general resources for business plan writing, none are tailored to the private practice dietitian. This makes the research and writing process incredibly burdensome for the dietitian wanting to start their own private practice. Additionally, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND) has not made the area of private practice a priority for education in accredited dietetic programs, thus dietitians do not receive any formal training in establishing a private practice during their education and training. This has assuredly hindered the growth of this field over recent years.

Given the profession’s trends, lacking resources and absence of education provided by accredited dietetic programs, I recommend the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics devote attention and resources towards preparing RDs to establish private practices. Expanding the current education curriculum to include a course that prepares students to start a private practice as well as creating a Private Practice Start Up and Business Planning Guide for RDs who may no longer be enrolled in school, would undoubtedly encourage RDs to write business plans and open private practices. This will enable our profession to meet future market demand, increase earning potential and broaden our overall reach as food and nutrition experts.
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2 Confidentiality Statement

The information, data and drawings embodied in this business plan are strictly confidential and are supplied on the understanding that they will be held confidentially and not disclosed to third parties without the prior written consent of Elle (Laura) Curtin.
3 Executive Summary

I started blogging two years ago hoping to do nothing more than to inspire healthy minds and happy bodies. Sharing recipes, my knowledge of nutrition and engaging workouts with my readers, I wanted my blog—nutritionella—to be a place of encouragement and motivation for women striving to live a happy and healthy, balanced life. Never did I anticipate the reach and impact this blog would develop in just 24 months. Nutritionella has since grown to be a recognized brand in the wellness industry, frequently partnering with other brands and healthy lifestyle blogs to promote the idea of achieving personal wellness through wholesome foods, fitness and self-love.

Opening a dietetics private practice has been a goal of mine for some time. As I prepare to become a Registered Dietitian (RD) in the upcoming months, it is time to expand the reach of the nutritionella brand into private practice. As the blog exemplifies, I have a passion for helping women achieve their wellness goals through nutrition and fitness inspiration. With extensive training & education in nutrition and dietetics, I will be able to offer comprehensive nutrition counseling tailored specifically to my target market: women between the ages of 25-45. With a passion for maternal health and wellness, it is my long-term goal to grow a niche practice specializing in maternal and infant nutrition.

This practice will serve women in the San Francisco Bay Area; San Francisco is an affluent city with a large population of health-conscious, young, professional women – many of whom are also busy mothers and wives with families. City life can make healthful living a challenge and it is my intention to cater my wellness services to urban women – to empower them to make more nutritious food choices and develop sustainable healthy habits for themselves and their families. There are private practice RDs in the Bay Area, but none offer these kinds of niche nutrition services tailored specifically for this population.

The nutritionella blog will provide a strong marketing presence for my private practice as I have developed a broad network of readers, social media followers and relationships with healthy lifestyle influencers over the past two years. Additionally, I will market my services locally by developing relationships with physicians and lactation consultants and serving as an influential nutrition expert within local organizations and websites which share a similar target market.

The health and wellness industry has developed rapidly in recent years and its growth is predicted to continue at a staggering rate for years to come. This creates an ideal market for a niche private practice focused on women’s wellness, particularly in an affluent, urban setting such as San Francisco. I envision great success with the expansion of the nutritionella brand into a women’s wellness private practice and am excited to inspire healthy minds and happy bodies not only through blogging, but also now through my own private practice.
4 Background Information

4.1 Business Concept

4.1.1 Mission Statement
The purpose of nutritionella is to inspire women to achieve physical and mental wellness by means of promoting the adoption of healthful behaviors and thoughts through the written works of a healthy lifestyle blog and a private practice offering professional nutrition counseling and wellness skill development.

4.1.2 Goals and Objectives
I anticipate achieving the following short-term goals within one year and long-term goals within five years of starting this private practice.

**Short-term Goals**

**GOAL:** Launch a nutrition counseling private practice in 2013 to promote and improve wellness among women in the San Francisco Bay Area.

**Objectives:**

- a. Obtain my Master’s of Public Health in Nutrition from UNC by January 1, 2013
- b. Obtain RD credentialing by March 1, 2013
- c. Establish “Sole Proprietorship” of the nutritionella brand by registering with the County Clerk and/or Secretary of State in California by April 1, 2013
- d. Establish appropriate liability insurance for my practice by April 1, 2013
- e. Establish a work location for my practice by May 1, 2013
- f. Recruit and begin counseling clients by July 1, 2013
- g. Meet or exceed billable hour goal estimates as outlined in the financial plan by December 31, 2013
- h. Promote the continued growth of this practice as outlined in the Marketing Strategy

**GOAL:** Grow nutritionella.com, the brand’s healthy lifestyle blog, by increasing both readership and social media following by at least 50% by the end of 2013.

**Objectives:**

- a. Submit at least one article monthly to written and/or online media sources
- b. Develop new relationships with at least eight other established bloggers who are also Registered Dietitians or dietetic students and engage them in social media as well as partnerships such as guest posting, recipe-sharing, health challenges and contests
- c. Engage readers through asking thoughtful questions in blog posts and interactions via social media
- d. Post high-quality content and photos at least four times per week and promote posts via social media including Twitter, Facebook, Google Plus, Instagram and Pinterest, as well as any new and potentially powerful forms of social media
- e. Participate in health, nutrition and fitness related conversations on Twitter, Facebook and/or Google Plus at least one time per week
**Long-term Goal**

**GOAL:** Build a niche market private practice offering maternal and infant nutrition counseling and wellness skill building

**Objectives:**

- a. Continue to explore sound resources to acquire knowledge about maternal and infant nutrition, including but not limited to: recent research studies, journal articles, reputable magazines, books, blogs written by women or mothers on motherhood and pregnancy
- b. Begin counseling maternal and infant patients within the first year of starting my private practice
- c. Obtain the International Board of Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) credential to expand my services to include lactation consulting within 5 years of starting my private practice

5  **Description of the Business**

Nutritionella is a service-based nutrition business that offers nutrition counseling and wellness skill development to assist clients in improving and achieving overall health wellness. This business is unique in that it targets women of child-bearing and child-rearing age who may also be busy professionals, mothers and wives who would benefit from personal or family nutrition counseling and wellness skill development. The ultimate vision for this business is to develop a niche private practice in the San Francisco Bay Area serving busy women between the ages of 25 and 45, with a specialty in maternal and infant nutrition counseling and lactation consulting.

5.1  **History of the Current Business**

While the proposed private practice is a startup business, the nutritionella brand is already well established in the nutrition and fitness industries. Over the past two years, I have developed the healthy lifestyle blog, nutritionella.com, a food, fitness and fashion-focused website targeted towards young women that promotes health and wellness though exemplifying a healthy and active lifestyle.

6  **The Market**

6.1  **Description of the Industry**

The mission of this business is to improve overall health and wellness through nutrition wellness skill development thus my practice will be part of is the “Wellness Industry.” A study completed by SRI International divided this industry into nine categories, beauty/anti-aging, fitness/mind-body exercise, nutrition/weight loss, preventive/personalized health, complementary/alternative medicine, wellness tourism, spa, medical tourism and workplace wellness (SRI International). Based on this and the services I will provide, my practice will exhibit aspects of two of these categories: nutrition/weight loss, and preventive/personalized health.
6.1.1 Current and Future Industry Trends
The health and wellness industry has developed rapidly in recent years and its growth is predicted to continue at a staggering rate for years to come (Cloos et al.). This growth can likely explain the continued salary increases of RDs in private practice. Since 2009, only a few of the 59 core positions have experienced increases in median hourly wages to keep pace with the two-year inflation rate (CPI) of 5.5%. One of those positions is Private Practice Dietitians, which is not only encouraging for those in this field but also indicative of an increasing demand for private practice dietitians (American Dietetic Association) as part of industry growth.

6.2 Target Market
My target market is comprised of women looking to meet personal nutrition and wellness goals and develop healthy, sustainable habits that will promote life-long wellness for themselves and/or their families. I anticipate my target market during the first two to three years of practice to include women of all ages however it is my ultimate goal to work with young women of child bearing/rearing age between the ages of 25 and 45 to develop a niche practice focusing on maternal and infant nutrition and family wellness.

6.2.1 Customer Profile
My niche target market consists of women between the ages of 25 and 45. The majority of my clients will be women in need of nutrition counseling related to pregnancy, weight loss, promoting healthy family behaviors and/or new mothers seeking assistance with breastfeeding. This includes women who may be:
• Trying to become pregnant and seeking assistance with weight loss and/or pre-pregnancy nutrition counseling
• Currently pregnant and seeking prenatal nutrition and wellness counseling
• New mothers in need of assistance with breastfeeding, nutrition and wellness counseling for postpartum weight loss and/or education about feeding their new baby
• Busy mothers struggling with weight maintenance/weight loss and the adoption of healthy behaviors into daily life

6.2.2 Rationale for Target Market
The rationale for choosing this target market is based upon the health implications of maternal wellness, the importance mothers place on maternal and infant nutrition as well as current social and health trends among women.

6.2.2.1 Nutrition-related Health Implications
The nutritional status of a woman before and during pregnancy greatly impacts the health of not only the woman but her baby too, which can be concerning for many pregnant women. Parents first begin thinking about what to feed their baby during the pregnancy period (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.). Excess weight gain and diabetes are both nutrition-related health risks a woman and her fetus (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.). After a baby is born, the mom who breastfeeds provides her child with the best possible nutrition, while also preventing early childhood obesity (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.). Given these three well-accepted facts, it is apparent that providing
women with nutrition counseling before, during and immediately after pregnancy will promote a healthy pregnancy and long-term maternal and child health and wellness.

6.2.2.2 Perceived Importance of Nutrition During Pregnancy

Pregnant women perceive pregnancy-specific nutrition information as important because it is one of the few things that they can apply in their daily lives to protect the health of the fetus (Szwajcer et al. S57-S65). While women are more likely to accept nutrition-related information from health professionals than from sources perceived to be less credible, today they frequently rely on the Internet, social media, books, magazines and advice from friends who are also mothers (Szwajcer et al. S57-S65). **Women trying to become or who are currently pregnant will benefit from professional nutrition counseling as women typically seek out nutrition information during pregnancy, are more likely accept nutrition information from qualified health professionals, such as RDs, during pregnancy as opposed to potentially inaccurate and/or dangerous nutrition information on the Internet.**

It has been shown that women are delaying pregnancy to pursue careers, working longer throughout pregnancy and returning to work sooner after delivery than ever before (U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, U.S. Census Bureau ). Women of childbearing age with busy work, family and social schedules are at risk of becoming overweight or obese due to the access and affordability of calorically dense foods as well as lack of time for healthy behaviors including meal planning and preparation, sleep and physical activity. Obesity remains a national crisis even in San Francisco, which is often perceived as one of the healthiest cities in the country. Almost one in five adults in San Francisco County are physically inactive and obese (Department of Health & Human Services, Centers for Disease Control & Prevention ). This is concerning given the high percentage of women of child bearing age in this city. Women are less likely to be physically active and more likely to be overweight or obese (U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, U.S. Census Bureau ), thus it is not a surprise that one of the most serious issues that medical professionals have faced in the past thirty years is the increase in prevalence of overweight and obesity among American women of childbearing age (Institute of Medicine (US) and National Research Council (US) Committee ).

Obese or overweight women are at greater risk for reproductive related problems such as infertility, excessive gestational weight gain, gestational diabetes, preterm and other delivery complications and postpartum weight retention (Department of Health & Human Services, Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, Division of Reproductive Health ). The prevalence of gestational diabetes increased sixty percent in California over the course of just seven years, from 1998 – 2005 (California Department of Public Health, University of California San Francisco - Institute for Health and Aging ) and likely isn’t stopping there.

**Women who choose both careers and motherhood have less time to educate themselves on prenatal nutrition, infant feeding and also have less time for healthful meal planning, meal preparation, sleep and physical activity which all are associated with a lower risk of**
overweight and obesity. Busy career women of childbearing age will benefit from nutrition counseling and wellness skill development to promote healthy pregnancies, postpartum weight loss, healthy infant feeding behaviors and overall improved family nutrition.

6.2.3 Business Location
This business will be located in the city of San Francisco, California. This is a great place to market nutrition services as this city continues to earn more and pay more despite the recent economic cession. The median household income in San Francisco based on data gathered by the U.S. Census Bureau is $71,304, almost 40% above the national average of $51,914 (U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, U.S. Census Bureau). Additionally, women 25-45 years of age make up a large percentage of the overall population.

6.2.4 Size of the Market
Women between the ages of 25-45 make up close to 40% of the population in San Francisco County (U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, U.S. Census Bureau), many of which are likely busy career women, wives and mothers trying to balance their busy lives with their own wellness. It has been found that women are more commonly delaying pregnancy to establish careers which results in them working throughout pregnancy, and returning to work more rapidly after having a child (U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, U.S. Census Bureau). In general, women are choosing to incorporate work life with childbearing and child rearing more now than ever (U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, U.S. Census Bureau).

6.2.4.1 Market Potential
Given that women between the ages of 25-45 make up close to 40% of the population in San Francisco County (U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, U.S. Census Bureau), the earning potential for career-women in this affluent city and health awareness among residents, there is great market potential for the nutrition and wellness services I will offer.

6.2.5 Competition
According to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics RD Finder program, there are currently 28 registered dietitians offering individual consultation services in San Francisco (Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics). 15 of the 28 dietitians list maternal nutrition as a specialty (Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics). Five of those 15 also list lactation as a specialty however only one is an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics).

6.2.5.1 My Competitive Advantage
While numerous dietitians claim specialties in maternal and infant nutrition, their marketing materials are directed largely at populations needing medical nutrition therapy for chronic disease, not the woman of childbearing age. Offering comprehensive nutrition counseling and wellness skill development designed specifically for my target market will give me a competitive advantage and allow myself to develop a niche practice. My nutrition counseling and wellness skill development lessons can be marketed as “one stop shopping” for wellness.
Additionally, I aim to become a Certified Lactation Consultant through IBCLE within five years of beginning my practice. There is currently only one other private practice RD with this certification in the San Francisco Bay area, which will allow me to further develop a niche in maternal and infant nutrition and expand on the services I offer.

6.3 Salary Market
The table below is a collection of pertinent data from the Compensation and Benefits Survey of the Dietetics Profession 2011 (American Dietetic Association).

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Average Hourly Wage by Percentile</th>
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<th>25th</th>
<th>50th</th>
<th>75th</th>
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<table>
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<th>Criteria</th>
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<td>$66,900</td>
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</table>

The hourly wage and annual salary percentiles for both the State of California and Metropolitan Area of San Francisco are significantly higher than the average for All RDs. This is likely due to the higher cost of living in this region of the country. This shows promise for continued demand and better paying jobs for private practice dietitians in this area.
7 Description of Services & Pricing

7.1 Features & Benefits of Services
As a private practice Registered Dietitian, I will offer the following services to meet a wide variety of client needs:

- Nutrition Assessments & Counseling for wellness and weight management for individuals and families, including pre-pregnancy, prenatal and postnatal women and their infants.
- Wellness skill development to help clients learn valuable life skills associated with weight maintenance and wellness.

7.1.1 Nutrition Assessments and Counseling

7.1.1.1 Individual Nutrition Counseling
Individuals of all ages may benefit from individual nutrition counseling. I will work with clients to help them make achievable and sustainable lifestyle changes to optimize their nutrition, weight management, and improve overall wellness health. All nutrition counseling will include an initial 60 minute nutrition assessment and minimum of one follow up session. Nutrition counseling will be conducted in person, over the phone or via secure online video conferencing. Nutrition assessments will include:

- Weight, height & BMI analysis
- Body fat analysis
- Waist circumference measurement & analysis
- Nutrition Analysis
- Review of recent metabolic panel results ordered by the client’s physician
- Past medical history and current diagnoses
- Current medications and supplements
- Current eating, exercise and sleep habits as well as stress and stress management

Information collection will be conducted using comprehensive nutrition assessment forms prior to the initial visit to allow adequate time for analysis of data and to maximize the productivity of each session with the client. Follow up sessions will be structured to assess progress, barriers to success, revise goals, and provide tailored support for clients.

7.1.1.2 Maternal & Infant Nutrition Counseling
There are many nutrition questions that surround pregnancy. I will work with women to establish and meet pre-pregnancy, prenatal & postnatal nutrition goals based on evidence-based nutrition requirements & recommendations for healthy pregnancies. Nutrition counseling will include an initial nutrition assessment and follow up appointment as described above but will also include an additional 30 minutes dedicated to discussion of:

- High risk foods to avoid and healthy alternatives
- Pregnancy-related eating challenges and managing food aversions
- Trimester expectations
- Eating for appropriate weight gain
- Addressing fears, concerns for weight gain and body image issues
• Nutrition for breastfeeding
• Nutrition & behaviors to promote post-partum weight loss

Additionally, separate counseling sessions can be scheduled to discuss:
• Appropriate infant feeding based on readiness and nutrition needs
• Choosing to formula feed or breastfeed
• Choosing premade or homemade baby food
• Growth charting to measure appropriateness of growth and weight gain
• Infant feeding challenges

7.1.1.3 Family Nutrition Counseling
These services are ideal for busy parents who want to make a family-wide change focused on nutrition therapy to improve family eating behaviors for wellness, promote adult wellness or weight loss and healthy weight gain in growing children. Depending on the needs of the client, nutrition counseling may address current eating habits including snacking, appropriate portion sizing, mindful eating & hunger cues, healthful meal planning and preparation, school lunches, kid-friendly dinner ideas, analysis of grocery purchases and improving acceptance and likeability of healthful, wholesome foods for the entire family. Nutrition assessments will include an abbreviated individual plan for each family member including customized goals, objectives to meet goals and education tools to set each family member up for success. Nutrition assessments will include analysis of:
• Body mass index
• Estimated energy expenditure (calories /day)
• Growth patterns (if under 18 years of age)
• Nutritional implications of recent laboratory values
• Current eating, exercise and sleep habits for the family
Information collection will be conducted using a family nutrition assessment form prior to the initial visit to allow adequate time for analysis of data and to maximize the productivity of each session with the client. Once the initial family assessment has been completed, a follow up session will be tailored to assess progress, barriers to success, revise goals and provide further tailored support for clients.

7.1.2 Wellness Skill Development
In addition to nutrition counseling, I will offer clients assistance with developing various skills that will support efforts to improve overall wellness and help clients meet their health goals. This will include:
• Grocery store tours: what foods to look for, what to avoid, intro to food label reading
• Meal planning: healthy pantry staples, meal planning skill development, RD approved weekly meal plans & grocery lists
• Meal preparation: one-on-one or family cooking class, healthy ingredient substitutions
• Scheduling and prioritizing for wellness: planning strategies,
• Pantry, refrigerator and freezer makeovers: what needs to go and what to stock up on
• Dining out dos & don’ts
7.2 Future Services
To further develop my niche practice, attract additional clients and increase revenue, I will offer web-based individual, maternal and infant nutrition counseling services within 1-2 years of starting my practice.

To continue to develop this niche market and expand the services I offer related to maternal and infant nutrition, I plan to become a Certified Lactation Consultant through IBCLE within 5 years of starting this private practice. At that time I will be able to offer breastfeeding education and counseling to new mothers in addition to the nutrition and wellness skill development services proposed.

7.3 Packages and Pricing
7.3.1 Overview of Pricing Strategy
I have based estimated an hourly rate at $40 which, at 100% FTE, would match the 50th percentile annual salary for RDs in San Francisco at $81,100 per year. This takes into account the location in which my practice will be established, my education, credentials and newness to the field. When compared to other private practice dietitians the pricing of per-visit counseling sessions are similar to those listed on websites of other private practice RDs, which generally range from $125-150 per hour (Scrithfield; Lemond).

7.3.2 Nutrition Counseling
Prices are calculated based on an hourly rate of $40 and include time for administrative duties such as appointment preparation, charting, email and phone communications regarding scheduling and follow-up.

Administrative costs are billed as follows:

- **Preparation:**
  - Assessment Appointments
    - 1.5 hours per individual assessment appointment
    - 2 hours per maternal nutrition assessment
    - 3 hours per family nutrition assessment
  - Follow Ups
    - 1 hour for standard follow up appointment

- **Charting & Communications:**
  - 1 hour per appointment
  - 2 hours per family nutrition appointment

7.3.3 Wellness Skill Development
Prices are calculated based on an hourly rate of $40 and include time for administrative duties such as preparation, travel and communications, estimated at 1.5 hours per appointment.
### 7.3.3.1 Service Pricing

#### A la Carte

**Nutrition Assessments & Counseling**

- **Individual Nutrition Assessment | $260**
  - *One 60-minute nutrition assessment and one 60-minute follow-up appointment*

- **Maternal Wellness Nutrition Assessment | $300**
  - *One 90-minute nutrition assessment and one 60-minute follow-up appointment customizable for pre-pregnancy, prenatal or postnatal nutrition needs*

- **Family Nutrition Assessment | $420**
  - *One 90-minute session including four (4) nutrition assessments (up to 4 people) and one 60-minute family follow-up appointment*

- **Follow Up Visits | $120**
  - *One 60-minute follow-up appointment*

#### Wellness Skill Development

- **Grocery Store Tour | $100**
  - *One 60-minute, private tour of your local grocery store + complete list of RD-approved food staples*

- **Meal Planning | $100**
  - *One, 60 minute lesson on healthy pantry staples, meal planning skill development, healthy breakfast & lunch ideas + RD-approved weekly dinner plan with recipes & grocery lists*

- **Meal Preparation & Cooking Lessons | $100 per hour + cost of groceries**
  - *Private cooking lessons teaching tips for healthier cooking*

- **Pantry, Refrigerator & Freezer Makeovers | $100 each or $275 for all 3**
  - *60 minutes for individual pantry, refrigerator or freezer makeovers + individual list of RD-approved food staples or 3 hours of total makeover madness + complete list of RD-approved food staples*

- **Kitchen Makeover | $350**
  - *3 hours of pantry, refrigerator and makeover madness + 1 hour grocery store tour + a complete shopping list of RD-approved food staples*

- **Dining Out Dos & Don’ts | $100**
  - *60 minutes dedicated to more healthier meals out, restaurant menu analysis or local restaurant hopping for health*
Homemade Baby Food Basics | $100 + cost of groceries
60-minute education and demonstration of the basic skills needed to make, store and serve your baby their first foods. Learn what fruits and veggies are provide the best nutrition and are easiest on digestion. Samples and recipes provided.

Any 2 ($100) Wellness Skill Development Sessions | $180
Any 3 ($100) Wellness Skill Development Sessions | $270

Packages

Weight Management & Wellness for Individuals

Food for Wellness | $880 for 8 sessions
Eight or twelve, 60-minute nutrition counseling sessions over the course of 2-6 months which will include a full nutrition assessment + personalized nutrition therapy sessions for improved health & weight management, any combination of the wellness skill development activities + email & phone check-ins & support between sessions
*Prices reflect 10% discount from individual appointment pricing

Maternal & Infant Wellness

New Mommy Nutrition | $1125
Ten sessions (2 pre-conception, 2 per trimester, 2 post-natal) which will include an initial maternal wellness nutrition assessment + pre-pregnancy nutrition counseling, prenatal nutrition counseling with healthy eating plans for each trimester of your pregnancy and post-natal nutrition counseling for high-quality breast milk & post-partum weight loss.
+ Intro to Infant Feeding for $1375
*Prices reflect 10% discount from individual appointment pricing

Intro to Infant Feeding | $240
2, 60-minute counseling sessions to address any of the following: appropriate infant feeding based on readiness and nutrition needs, formula vs. breastfeeding pros & cons, purchasing & preparing baby food, growth charting to measure appropriateness of growth and weight gain, infant feeding challenges + phone and email support as needed

Marketing Strategy
I plan to use both direct and indirect marketing to promote my private practice nutrition services.

8.1 Indirect Marketing

8.1.1 Online & Print Media
By contributing nutrition and fitness related articles and guest blog posts to print and online media, I will provide free content to local, national and international media outlets and in return, gain exposure for my private practice business as well as continue to develop my brand and reputation as a nutrition expert specializing in maternal, infant and family nutrition.
Contributing to local magazines, newspapers and blogs (such as The Noe Valley Voice and Red Tricycle San Francisco) will attract new clients within the San Francisco area. Writing articles and guest posts for national online media outlets will attract local clients as well as clients interested in online video counseling. I will continue to work as a contributing author for websites like Bliss and Lilsugar to reach my target market, as well as reach out to other online and print publishers and brands looking for content.

8.1.2 Personal & Social Media Networking
By networking with Registered Dietitians and other health professionals both in person and through social media outlets such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter, I will be able to broaden awareness of my private practice and nutrition expertise at a national level among other RDs, health professionals, their fans, followers and clients. Over the past two years I have been able to develop a brand out of my healthy lifestyle blog, nutritionella.com, which has allowed me to network with numerous Registered Dietitians, dietetic students, fitness trainers and other well-known health professionals. I intend to continue to develop this brand and build on the social media relationships I've created with other R.D.s and health professionals to help grow my private practice. In addition, I intend to network locally with local physicians, lactation consultants and organizations that may serve as a potential source of client referrals.

8.1.3 Informational Mailers for Healthcare Providers
Family medicine and OB/GYN practitioners, lactation consultants in the San Francisco Bay Area share a similar target market and care for patients who may benefit from nutrition counseling, medical nutrition therapy and/or wellness skill development. Mailers will not only provide local practitioners of my niche services but also inform them of benefits of nutrition counseling, a flow-chart when to general background information about the dietetic profession, the services I offer as well as my training, credentials and contact information. Additionally, I will include business cards to be distributed to patients and staff interested in nutrition counseling for weight loss, pregnancy, or general wellness.

8.2 Direct Marketing

8.2.1 Website
As previously mentioned, I have developed a brand out of my healthy lifestyle blog—nutritionella.com—over the course of the past two years. This has not only allowed me to create relationships with nutrition and fitness influencers but has also enabled me to gradually build an audience of blog readers. Many readers are attracted to my blog because of my expertise in nutrition. Some use it as a source of information and inspiration for eating better, increasing physical activity, improving their general wellness and forming healthier habits. To promote my private practice services, I plan to add a page to my blog with descriptions of the nutrition services I offer, including packages, pricing information, contact information and my credentials. A continuously growing reader base will serve as a source of potential clients for both local and web-based counseling as well as word-of-mouth sources for referrals.
8.2.2 Social Media
In addition to continuing to develop my blog readership base, I will also work to grow my social media presence by engaging with and attracting new followers and fans. Participating in friendly interactions through social media will increase my public presence as a nutrition expert, as well as increase awareness of my private practice and drive traffic to my blog where a list of my nutrition services will be displayed. Cross-promotion of my blog, Facebook, Google Plus Fan pages, Twitter handle and other social media profiles is a potential source of new clients as well as word-of-mouth or internet-based referrals especially once I begin offering web-based counseling.

8.2.3 Interviews and Public Speaking
Through discussions with other private practice dietitians on LinkedIn, I have found some dietitians have had success in attracting new clients through interviews and public speaking within their local community. My blog will continue to be a source for attracting interviews and intend to offer free nutrition talks to local organizations such as The Golden Gate Mothers Group and other meet-ups, parent-teacher organizations, health and tennis clubs in the San Francisco Bay Area.

8.2.4 Advertising
To help recruit local clients, I plan advertise my blog using both personal word-of-mouth and business cards. As my business and marketing budget grows, I anticipate using local advertising to promote my private practice nutrition counseling and wellness skill development services.

9 Financial plan
It is my intention to being my private practice as a part-time job and gradually transition to full-time along with blogging as I gain more clients, referrals and as blog advertising revenues increase. Thus, I have set realistic goals for slowly building a practice to enable me to still work full-time at another job. I will minimize startup costs by establishing a home office and counsel patients in their own homes.

9.1 Start-up investment requirements
I intend to establish a home office for private practice administrative work (scheduling, charting etc....) as well as for blogging and will offer counseling in the homes of my clients, thus startup costs are minimal.

9.1.1 Startup costs
Startup costs include one iPad for counseling and education, scheduling, communications and credit card payments ($650 including tax), registration for the RD exam ($200) and business card design ($50). Food models, another startup cost, will be purchased in Year 2 of my practice and are estimated at $300. Otherwise all other costs are considered fixed, as this is a service-based business.
9.1.2 Estimate of Revenue and Expenses

9.1.2.1 Revenue
Sources of revenue include blog advertising and fee-for-service counseling. Estimates are based on the current amount of advertising revenues my blog is currently bringing in and counseling rates are estimated using an approximation of selling one new Nutrition Counseling package per month April-June 2013, two per month July – October 2013 and three per month November – December 2013. These are reasonable estimations given my plan to gradually build this practice while working full-time and blogging on the side.

9.1.2.2 Expenses
Expenses are estimated for the first year as follows:

• Educational materials including books, literature subscriptions and social media apps are estimated at $300 per year
• Travel is estimated at $64 per month based on the price of a monthly public transportation (MUNI) pass in San Francisco
• Business phone is estimated at $80 per month based on the current price of cell phone plans for 700 minutes monthly plus data charges
• Postage is estimated at $20/per month to mail marketing materials to local physicians (8-10 per month at $2-2.50 per mailer)
• Marketing/promotion costs are minimal given there are no website management fees as I am able to do this on my own. Additionally, I already have a logo and will not need funds for this. Marketing materials such as brochure printing, folders and business cards are estimated at $200 per year.
  o $0.35 per x 100 brochures ($35) & 100 fliers ($35)
  o Paper supplies ($30)
  o Business card design and printing ($50 each) based on previous charges for blog business cards from graphic designer and printer
• Professional Fees include registration for the Registered Dietitian Exam ($200) as well as yearly membership to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics ($50) and the Nutrition Entrepreneurs Dietetic Practice Group ($30)
• Insurance is estimated at $180 per year based on a quote for a 1 million dollar professional liability policy discounted for AND members
• Blog expenses are $14 annually for domain registration; web hosting has been paid through 2014

9.1.3 Projected Income Statement
See Appendix I.

9.1.3.1 Break-even analysis (at what level of operation do your expenses equal your sales?)
Based on the break-even point equation below, I expect my expenses to equal my gains at 8 clients purchasing

Break-even point = fixed costs/ (unit selling price – variable costs)
*13.4 or 14 new clients = $3,500 / ($260-$0 variable costs)
*Assuming the new clients all purchase a basic Nutrition Counseling package at $260

9.2 Summary of financial plans and need
Due to the low startup and fixed costs of this private practice, it will be easy to recover investments and begin earning money with just 14 clients annually, which I anticipate to be achievable by the end of 2013. There is no need for additional funding at this time.
References

<http://www.eatright.org/programs/rdfinder/>.


Appendix I: Projected Income Statement
# nutritionella Cash Flow Forecast

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Appendix II: Business Plan Research

Considering the suggestive trends for the growth of the private practice RD profession, I have found it challenging to identify free or inexpensive, current, informative resources for writing a private practice business plan, an essential component of setting up a private practice. While there are workshops and seminars that teach the skills necessary to start a private practice, they come at a price that recent graduates or new dietitians likely cannot afford. The following is a description of the research I have done to seek out credible resources as well as my findings, which have informed the writing of my own private practice business plan.

Interviews
Phone interviews were conducted to gather information from two private practice dietitians and gather information about their experiences in, and starting their own private practice.

Barbara Anne Hughes, PhD, RD, LDN, FADA, is a private practice RD in Raleigh, North Carolina with a diverse professional career including experience in areas of clinical nutrition, consulting, nutrition education and management and private practice. She is a strong advocate for insurance reimbursement for dietetics and started her private practice later in her career. As an insurance and Medicare provider, Dr. Hughes most often counsels individuals with insurance and/or Medicare coverage who otherwise would not pay out-of-pocket for medical nutrition therapy which has been a both a blessing to her practice but also a source of frustration as many clients stop seeking her services if insurance or Medicare reimbursement ends.

Lara Field, RD, CSP, LDN has over a decade of experience in clinical practice at two of the top ranked Chicago-based pediatric hospitals and specialized in pediatric nutritional care including the pediatric intensive care unit and pediatric gastroenterology and hepatology clinics. In 2008, Lara founded her private practice in Chicago, Forming Early Eating Decisions (FEED), to help parents establish healthy eating habits for themselves and their families. Additionally, Lara has extensive food allergy training and offers food allergy management counseling services. Unlike Dr. Hughes, Ms. Field does not accept insurance and charges clients a direct fee-for-service and has had no trouble finding clients within her market area.

I’ve gained incredible insight from discussing the business of private practice with these two women. Both are private practice business owners but neither wrote business plans prior to starting their practice. They learned by trial and error and both mentioned how valuable a business plan would have been at the time they began their businesses. Dr. Hughes and Ms. Fields own very different practices with different clientele and conduct business very differently thus I have gained a better understanding of the various ways one can conduct their own private practice.
Groups

Small Business and Technology Development Center
The Small Business and Technology Development Center of North Carolina (SBTDC) is a business advisory service of the University of North Carolina System, which is administered by NC State University and operated in partnership with the U.S. Small Business Administration. The SBTDC is also a partner of the North Carolina Department of Commerce (The University of North Carolina's Small Business and Technology Development Center, 2012). The SBTDC helps North Carolina businesses grow, and offers confidential services, most of which are free of charge, to help entrepreneurs and small business owners develop and grow their businesses.

During this process, I have met with 2 SBTDC business counselors who provided me with individual assistance in writing my business plan. They advised me in the areas of writing a financial plan and offered valuable guidance regarding pricing, services I will offer and my marketing plan.

Nutrition Entrepreneurs, a dietetic practice group (DPG) of the Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics
Nutrition Entrepreneurs (NE) is a national network of over 3,500 dietetic professionals seeking, creating and sharing technical knowledge and tools to establish, expand, and successfully manage a nutrition and food-related business. NE has numerous Specialty Groups to support members with particular interests including Private Practice. I was able to utilize resources such as webinars on setting up a business, trademark and intellectual property and information about marketing plans for private practice.

Literature

Books

Making Nutrition Your Business: Private Practice and Beyond
The broad, general scope of this book makes it a great resource for the RD who is just starting to research the business of opening a private practice. It covers topics such as the personal traits it takes to go solo, how to structure one’s business, the essentials of money management, tips for setting up office space, how to use technology and marketing to better the practice as well as the various career opportunities in nutrition writing, speaking and consulting.

Authors: Faye Berger Mitchell, RD & Ann M. Silver, MS, RD, CDE, CDN

Surveys

American Dietetic Association Compensation Benefits Survey of the Dietetic Profession 2011
This biennial report has become the most authoritative source for data on salaries, benefits, and work settings for core jobs in the dietetics profession. This report was helpful in analyzing the wages and salaries of Registered Dietitians in private practice and within the region of which I anticipate opening a private practice. I used the data in this report to inform the pricing structure for my private practice, which took into consideration national and regional salary averages as well as average salaries/wages based on experience, credentials and position.
Journal Articles

*Getting Started in Private Practice: A Checklist to an Entrepreneurial Path*
A broad, all-encompassing guide to getting started in private practice, this article provides a list of essential steps and tasks necessary to make measurable progress towards a career as a nutrition entrepreneur working in private practice (Gross & Ostrowski, 2008).

*Medical Record Retention and Maintenance for Private Practices*
We are taught that meticulous record keeping is an essential piece of our role as Registered Dietitians because it enhances our ability to assess and monitor patient care and ensures accurate transmission of information. As our healthcare system moves towards providing more comprehensive patient care, medical records will become even more important in informing practitioners across a continuum of care. This article provides basic knowledge about patient retention challenges, the legal requirements and voluntary standards of medical record keeping as well as the essential components of a medical record as it pertains to the private practice dietetics business (Stein & Hager, 2009).

*Practical and Legal Considerations of Private Nutrition Practice*
This article discusses four factors that are pivotal for success in regards to the practical and legal aspects of private practice nutrition businesses. It describes the personal characteristics needed to be a successful nutrition entrepreneur, the common legal and financial ownership practices for private practice dietitians; the adequacy of capitalization and the appropriateness of pricing which includes equations for predicting start up costs and setting your price using the break-even analysis. Additionally, this article touches upon important topics such as taxation, record keeping, fee collection, which are commonly overlooked when starting a private practice business.

Business Planning Guides

*Business Start Up & Resource Guide: Starting a Business in North Carolina*
This guide, published by the aforementioned SBTDC, is a comprehensive, 58-page document designed to assist anyone wishing to start his or her own business. It includes many valuable tools a checklist for starting a business and attaining small business financing, worksheets to determine concept feasibility and a sample outline of a business plan, to name a few. I formatted my business plan according to the sample provided in this document, which I found to be more thorough than other samples such as the SCORE and SBA business plan templates. *Published by:* The University of North Carolina’s Small Business and Technology Development Center

Appendix Works Cited
