

---

THE LITTLE BOOKS OF BIG BUSINESS

---



BOOK #2

EMMA MASON  
TURNS PAPERWORK INTO A PROFIT

First Edition 2021

Published by Success Street Coaching LLC

Cover Art & Interior Illustrations by Fiona Reed



**EMMA MASON TURNS  
PAPERWORK INTO A  
PROFIT**



# EMMA MASON TURNS PAPERWORK INTO A PROFIT

MARA  
WILLIAMS

*Illustrations by Fiona Reed*

Success Street Coaching LLC

To my grandparents, always in my heart.

Copyright © 2021 by MARA WILLIAMS

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews.

First Printing, 2021





My name is Emma Mason and I am eleven years old. Winter break just ended and we are back to school on this clear cold January day. I walk to school with my friends Cat, Nick and Max each morning. We meet on the corner by the big tree, next to my house.

My friend Cat started a baking business last fall after a bake sale to raise money for new costumes for the talent show. The talent show was a big success and our medley of songs won the “People’s Choice” award from the audience.

Cat ended up with a busy December making Holiday Twinkle Bars for Mr. Adams at The Blue Moon Cafe. I helped her with some of the baking at the restaurant. Mr. Adams started letting us use his ovens during off-hours so we could bake more bars at one time and not have to use family and friend’s kitchens.

I enjoy helping Cat and admire her business sense. I started looking for an idea for a business I could start. I think I found a great idea.

## CHAPTER 1

Over the holiday break, I spent most of my time at my grandparent's house. They live on a Christmas tree farm. Grandpa grew up on the farm and his father, my great-grandfather, planted the first batch of trees when he was a young boy.

Grandpa spends the year tending the trees on the farm and the day after Thanksgiving, he opens for business. People come from all over to cut their own Christmas trees, drink cocoa and have their picture taken on "The Sleigh."

Most people think of a sleigh as the sled that Santa rides in when he flies around with his reindeer. My grandpa's "sleigh" is a bright red truck that is over fifty years old. He polishes that truck until it shines like an apple. Then he fills the back of it with blankets, pillows and bales of hay and lets families take pictures. He has a beautiful golden retriever that follows him everywhere he goes and loves to go for rides in the truck.

Behind the house, there is a large white barn where Grandpa stores "The Sleigh" at night. My grandparents set up a cocoa station for visitors in the barn with marshmallows and whipped cream during the holiday season.



My grandma also has an area where she sells items she makes for the holidays. She makes Christmas stockings, skirts for around the bottom of the tree and matching pillows for the couch.

Grandma makes all her products in the barn's attic. There is a door in the barn ceiling, and when you pull a string, a trap door opens to a set of stairs that unfolds and drops down. I call it Grandma's "secret attic" because unless you know about it, you won't find it. Grandma has her sewing machine and her craft supplies in the "secret attic."

As I walked into the kitchen, Grandma pulled me aside and said, "Emma, I need some help with my business. Could you meet me up in the attic after dinner?"

"Sure, Grandma," I said with a puzzled look.

I don't know how to make pillows or stockings. I'm not sure how I'm going to be able to help her, but I'll try.

## CHAPTER 2

After dinner, when everyone else was busy in the kitchen making gingerbread cookies, Grandma and I headed out to the barn. She pulled the string to the trap door and we headed upstairs. As we sat down at her sewing table, she pulled out a shoebox full of paper.

“Emma,” she said. “These are receipts for items I have purchased over the last three months. I have been so busy that I have fallen behind in tracking my expenses. I’d like to hire you as my bookkeeping assistant to help me catch up.”

“Ok, Grandma,” I said, “but I don’t know about bookkeeping, so I don’t know how much help I can be.”

“Not to worry, dear,” she said. “I can show you what to do. I just need you to take the time to help me catch up. Let me show you the first step.” She leaned over the table. “Every month, I buy things for my business. I call those “expenses,” and I save the receipts here in this shoebox. I need you to separate the receipts into three piles.”



She continued, “One will be for all the materials I use to make the pillows, skirts and stockings. Receipts for fabric and thread, batting stuffed inside the pillows, or embellishments like ribbon, buttons and sequins, go in stack number one. Those expenses are called “Cost of Goods Sold,” I nodded my head.

“The second pile is called “General Business Expenses.” It’s for anything it takes for me to run the business. I buy things like price tags, paper, pens, as well as tissue paper and bags to wrap up the items for customers as they take them home.”

“That makes sense.” I repeated, “one pile of receipts for materials you use called ‘Cost of Goods Sold’ and one for General Business Expenses.”

“Yes, you’ve got it, Emma,” Grandma said. “There is one more category that I call “Marketing.” You will make a third pile for any receipts that are for promotion. Some receipts in the shoebox are for the tables I rented at the Holiday Craft Bazaar. I also bought a table cloth to cover the tables.”

“I can do that.” I agreed. Then Grandma got busy putting away fabric, buttons and thread into boxes and I got to work sorting the receipts.

First was a receipt from The General Store for two yards of red satin ribbon, one yard of gold fabric and a big carton of batting for inside the pillows. This was definitely an expense related to making pillows, so I put it in stack number one, “Cost Of Goods Sold.”

Next was a receipt for a box of black pens, a notebook and a package of paper clips. “General Business Expense,” I said under my breath and put it into pile number two.

I came across three more receipts for stocking supplies from the Red Door Hobby Store and another receipt from an antique store for old buttons and some scraps of lace. All of them went into the first stack.

I found a receipt for a big sign she purchased from Mr. Jackson. He used wood about two feet wide and painted “Mason’s Holiday Trimmings” in big red letters across the board. The receipt for the sign was for \$50, which started pile number three for “Marketing.”

One paper slip was for the booth Grandma rented each Wednesday in November at the City Center Craft Market. She sold products there one day each week during the holiday season. This paper also went into the “Marketing” stack.

It took me about an hour to sort the shoebox into three stacks. I had to ask Grandma about a receipt for a child’s rocking chair and she explained that it was part of her booth display. I put the white paper in the “Marketing” pile.

When my work was complete, Grandma pulled out a calculator. She quickly added up stack number one. She wrote down the total on a small yellow notebook and then handed me the calculator. I wasn't as fast, but I was accurate, and the number I came up with matched her total. We paper-clipped the stack together with the yellow piece on top and put it back in the box.

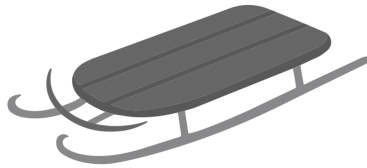
We repeated the same process for piles number two and three. I had to add up stack number two again because my number didn't match Grandma's. I had tried to type faster but realized it was better to go slow and steady for accuracy. Our numbers for stack number three matched and we clipped them together. She had spent \$1,320 on "Cost of Goods Sold," \$75 for "General Business Expenses," and \$175 for "Marketing."

"Tomorrow," Grandma said, "we will add up the total sales I made."

We headed down the steps and tucked them up into the attic. My mom had a mug of cocoa waiting for me. Grandma had been busy making and selling holiday trimmings over the last three months and I was interested in knowing how much she had sold.

## CHAPTER 3

Big snowflakes started to fall in the middle of the night and by the time we were up for breakfast, there were at least six inches on the ground. My brother was thrilled. He received a new red racer sled for Christmas and had been hoping for snow.



We went outside all bundled up and took turns pulling each other around the yard. There was a long hill at the end of the block. We raced up and down the slope, laughing and out of breath. Some of Grandma's other neighbors came out with kids and grandkids and pretty soon, it was like one big party.

We went inside for hot soup, biscuits and apple pie for lunch and then went back out for two more hours of fun.

It snowed off and on for the next three days, so we settled in for our annual New Year's Eve party. Even though my Grandpar-

ents live on a Christmas tree farm, New Year's Eve is our favorite holiday. Each year, they work hard to have the farm ready for the season and make it fun for families to cut their own Christmas trees. But, it is a lot of work to keep the farm in tip-top shape, bring in enough customers to make sales and make sure all the families leave the farm with smiles on their faces. There were many years when my Grandpa, Grandma, and their boys (my dad & uncle) were still outside selling trees late into the night on Christmas Eve.

When Grandpa finally said, "We sold the last tree!" they were all ready to relax and celebrate. During the week between Christmas and the new year, grandpa would make up a bunch of games for the family on New Year's Eve. The games were simple like "The Clothespin Drop," "Musical Chairs," and "Cotton Ball In a Spoon," and the prizes for winning were just as silly as the games.

My dad was in charge of the games this year, so while he was sneaking around collecting prizes and getting the games together, Grandma and I headed back up to the attic.

We sat down at her table, and she showed me her sales book from October, November and December. She explained to me that she kept a new sales book for each quarter of the year.

Since there are twelve months in the year, she has four books; one for each quarter. Book number one was for January, February and March. Book number two was for April, May and June and book number three was for July, August and September.

This last book was for her busiest season, the last three months of the year, October, November and December.

A new sales book is full of alternating white and yellow pages. The book for October, November and December was missing most of the white pages because she tore them out each time she wrote up a sale and gave the white page to her customer. The book was still full of yellow pages because they stayed in the book as her copies of each sale.

There were two white pages left in the back of the book and she showed me how it worked by doing a sample receipt. The white page had a place to write the date in the top right corner, so Grandma wrote "December 31<sup>st</sup>". When she lifted the white paper, I could see that the date was also printed on the yellow sheet directly below it. "How did that happen, Grandma?" I asked.

"This is carbonless paper," she explained. "When you write on the top sheet, it transfers onto the yellow paper like there is a piece of carbon paper transferring the information below. I keep this piece of cardboard between the next set of white and yellow receipts, so it only transfers to a single yellow page."

She completed the pretend sale by writing "Red Pillow with Sled" on the subject line and "\$20" in the amount section.

"The state we live in has a sales tax rate of 5% on all retail sales," she said. "Retail sales mean I sell goods to the public. I have to charge my customers sales tax and then every three months I send the tax I collected to the state by writing a check. The state uses the tax to pay for things like schools, roads and fire departments."

She calculated the sales tax and wrote it below the \$20, then summed up the total.

Red Pillow with Sled	\$20
5% Sales Tax (.05)	\$1
Total Price	\$21

Next, she tore off the white paper and handed it to me as if I were the customer. That left the yellow paper in the book. “See Emma, now you as the customer have your receipt and I have a copy of it left in the book. That gives me a record of what I sold and for how much. I would like you to transfer all of these numbers from each yellow page onto a single sheet of paper so we can add them all up.”

Grandma pulled out some lined paper and showed me how to make four columns and record each sale in the columns. I flipped her sales book open to the first yellow page. It was receipt number 401. Grandma had sold one pillow for \$20 and had charged 5% tax on the sale. She wrote the numbers on the paper.

Sales Receipt #	Total Sale \$	(5%) Tax \$	Total
401	\$20	\$1	\$21
402	\$30	\$1.50	\$31.50

I saw the pattern and filled in the numbers for sales receipt #402. She had sold one pillow for \$20 and one stocking for \$10

for a total sale of \$30. She charged 5% tax which was \$1.50, so I entered the amounts in the columns.

Grandma sold two hundred and ten items from October through December for the fourth quarter of the year. She sold ten items in October, eighty-five in November and one hundred and fifteen in December. Each item sold between \$10 to \$30. We tallied up the total sales to \$4,400. The tax she had collected was \$220.

I watched her as she carefully wrote out a check for \$220 to the State Department of Revenue. Grandma kept the 5% in a second bank account. When she went to the bank to deposit her money each week, she transferred the tax dollars she collected into a savings account. This wasn't money she got to keep, so she set it aside into a separate account until the time came to submit the taxes.

We took the chart and set it next to the shoebox of receipts for expenses. Grandma had three other shoeboxes with her receipts from her first three quarters of the year already tallied.

She also had a sales chart for her first three quarters neatly stacked with the chart I helped her make. She would give the charts and the receipts to Cat's dad, who was an accountant. He would look over her expenses and sales for the whole year and help her complete her tax return.

I learned a lot about bookkeeping, helping my grandma over the break. Now a new idea for a business was forming in my mind.

## CHAPTER 4

On the way to school the following week, I told Cat, Nick and Max about helping my grandma with her bookkeeping. “I’ve decided to start my own bookkeeping business,” I told them.

“What exactly is a bookkeeping business?” asked Max.

“Well, it’s a service that helps businesses take care of the money or financial records of a business.” I explained how busy Grandma was running her business but didn’t have time to keep her “books” or bookkeeping records up to date.

“That makes sense,” said Max. “I bet my mom could use some help at her bookstore. She has been so busy lately and is talking about hiring someone to help her.

“Maybe I could help,” I said.

“Let’s talk to her on Winner” (the night our four families have dinner together each week. When we were little, we named it “Winner” for “Wednesday Dinner,” and it stuck) he said.

On Wednesday during Winner, I told everyone at the table how I had helped my grandma with her bookkeeping. Cat’s dad paid me a compliment.

“I met with your grandma yesterday to collect her receipts in her shoeboxes and her charts for the year, and everything looks very organized and detailed. Nice job, Emma,” he said.

Before I could say anything, Mrs. England, Max’s mom, said, “Oh Emma, I could sure use some bookkeeping help at the bookstore. It’s been so busy lately. I feel like I’m falling behind. Maybe you could help me.”

“Yes,” I smiled and said, “I’d be pleased to help!”

And that’s how I got my first official client.

The following Saturday, I met with Cat’s dad to learn more about bookkeeping. Cat sat with me at the table while her dad explained the basics.

“Bookkeeping is a fun game, like a puzzle,” he explained. “It is simply a record of all the money transactions that take place within a business. Whatever money comes into a business and whatever goes out of a business is critical information. A bookkeeper keeps track of all those details.”

“In your grandma’s case,” he continued, “she had the receipts for the last quarter of her expenses in her shoebox, and you helped her put them in order. She also had the sales book that showed how much she had sold for the quarter, and you helped her write the numbers on a chart and turn it into a report for me to read quickly.”

“As her accountant, I will look over the numbers on the reports, guide her with some upcoming business decisions and help her file her yearly tax return,” he continued.

“I thought she already filed her taxes,” I said. “I watched her write a check to the Department of Revenue for the 5% sales tax.”

“There are a variety of taxes that help states, cities and the federal government all run,” explained Mr. Casey. “Your grandma filed her quarterly taxes for October, November and December by writing a check and mailing it to the state.

“At the end of the year, we total up her business numbers for the whole year and send in a tax filing to the Federal Government, which is called the IRS or Internal Revenue Service. This is a separate tax that businesses and individuals pay to fund health-care, retirement and education. But the key is that it all starts with the bookkeeping.”

“Once the bookkeeping is done, your grandma, along with other businesses, file their state and federal taxes each year, and accountants like me help them look over their reports and, in many cases, prepare the paperwork for them to turn in.”

I started to understand how important it was for me to sort those receipts in Grandma’s shoeboxes. “The other thing your report helped us see is one of the problems your grandma is having in her business,” Mr. Casey said.

I was surprised to hear Grandma was having any problems because her products were so beautiful and she had so many customers. “What kind of problem is she having,” I asked?

“Well, the cost of the batting that she stuffs inside each pillow has gone up in price over the last year. The problem is that each time she sells a pillow, she is not making as much money per pillow because it cost her more to make.”

Cat chimed in. “Her “Cost of Goods Sold” is too high.”

“Yes,” her dad agreed. “Your grandma sells most of her pillows for \$20. She buys the fabric, batting and decorations for each pillow she custom designs. In the past, those supplies would cost her about \$10 per pillow. Sometimes a little more and sometimes a little less depending on the supplies she used.”



“I noticed that the cost of the batting went up this year, and the pillows cost \$12 each to make. We try to keep the Cost of Goods Sold to only 50% of the sales price of the pillow. That way, she can still make a fair profit, even after paying for General Business and Marketing expenses. An extra \$2 per pillow doesn’t seem like much, but when you add up how many pillows she makes, it reduces her profit quite a bit.”

“The most important part,” Mr. Casey continued, “is that now that she is aware of it, she can call around to a few other suppliers to see if she can find a better deal.”

Mr. Casey showed me a couple of other bookkeeping details and agreed to work with me each week after Winner to learn more and ask any questions that might come up.

I was getting excited about putting these bookkeeping puzzles together for different businesses, and I had a new idea for the name of my business.

## CHAPTER 5

The weather was cold and wet, so Cat and I decided to hang out in her room and work on our businesses. She needed to cut more tags for her Twinkle Bars. I helped her punch holes in the paper, and we talked about my new bookkeeping business.

“How are you going to charge for your bookkeeping services?” asked Cat. “You don’t have a product to sell like brownies.”

“While you were making our sandwiches, your dad explained to me that bookkeeping is a ‘service’ business, so I will charge by the hour. I don’t have the cost of ingredients like you do, so he suggested I charge the same amount I charge when I babysit.”

“Maybe you could find a way to tell people you are in business to get more clients,” she suggested.”

I looked down at the Twinkle Bar tag in my hand that I had just punched. “I am thinking about making some business cards and handing them out around town.”

“That’s a great idea,” said Cat. “Here, let me finish punching my tags. You look through the craft bin and see if you can find some good paper.”

I dug through the box and found some plain white construction paper. I used a ruler to measure and cut out twelve evenly sized cards. In the middle of each card in black letters, I wrote my name, “Emma Mason.” Underneath my name, I wrote “Bookkeeper.”

I always draw a small checkmark at the top of the page when I finish homework assignments. I remembered I had made that same checkmark on each of Grandma’s receipts. That was going to be my business symbol. I drew a black checkmark in the top right corner of the card and added my phone number at the bottom.



I drew the checkmark and wrote my name on the other eleven cards. Now I was in business.

On Saturday, I walked to Hidden Treasures Bookstore in the center of town. Mrs. England started the bookstore five years ago when Max and I were six years old. When we were younger, we came into the store once a week to listen to Mrs. England read stories in the kid’s reading area.

Today she was sitting behind the checkout counter at the front of the store, going through a stack of papers. “Oh good, you’re here, Emma!” she smiled. “I have the perfect job for you.”

I put my coat and hat behind the counter and stood beside her chair as she showed me a sheet of paper. "This is a purchase order for the new books that were delivered this morning. I need to make sure that the books listed on this slip are the same as the books over there in that box," she said, pointing to a big cardboard box on the other side of my coat. "Let me show you."

I looked at the purchase order and saw a list of ten different book titles with a number next to each line. "You can use the table behind the counter to lay out the books," said Mrs. England. "Just put a little checkmark next to each title once you count and confirm we received the correct number of books."

The door chime went off, and Mrs. England turned to welcome a customer to the bookstore. I got busy and took all of the books out of the box and stacked them on the table. There were duplicates of each book, so I stacked the same books in little piles.

Once the box was empty, I turned back to the purchase order. The first book title was "Morning Sun." I looked over the table and found a small children's book with a big yellow sun on the front cover. I counted three books and put a checkmark next to the number three on the paper. Now I was sure that the checkmark was the correct symbol for my business.

The next book on the list was "No One's Home," and Mrs. England had ordered seven copies. I found the books and counted them, but there were only six in the stack. I looked in the box and around the table, but there were only six books. I put a question mark next to the title and wrote down the number "6" so Mrs. England would know there were only six books in her order.

The following three stacks of books matched the order, but when I came to the sixth book called “Mr. Cowboy,” it was missing. I put a question mark next to “Mr. Cowboy” and finished the remaining inventory.

I took the purchase order to Mrs. England at the front counter and showed her my work. “That’s exactly why I always check the inventory against my purchase order when I receive it, Emma,” she said. “Every so often, there are errors, and I want to be sure I enter the correct numbers into my system.”

“Let’s see,” she said “ The missing book for “No One’s Home” was probably an error when they packed it. I will call them on Monday to see if they want to send me another book or deduct the cost of it from the invoice.”

“I already knew “Mr. Cowboy” would be missing,” she continued. “They called me right before the order shipped and told me that book was out of stock. They will send it when they get more copies.” She wrote the words “back-ordered” next to the title and crossed off my question marks.

“Thanks for the eagle-eye work, Emma,” she said. “It is important to track the numbers when books arrive in the shop. If I pay my supplier for seven books instead of six, I lose part of my profit. Businesses need good bookkeeping practices like tracking inventory to catch things like that.”

I was pleased to be able to help her with the inventory. I learned something new, and she said that I could help every Saturday when she received her new shipments. She also had some receipts she wanted me to sort into piles - that I knew how to do!

After I finished sorting her receipts, I wrote down the number of hours I had worked for the day. We agreed she would pay

me each time I worked, so she went to her cash register and took out some cash. She made an entry in her bookkeeping register to track the money and put it in an envelope for me. I thanked her for the opportunity, and I handed her one of my business cards.

“What a nice card,” she exclaimed. “Do you have any more?” Mrs. England asked.

“Yes, I made twelve total,” I told her.

“Why don’t you leave me four more?” she suggested. “I have a little business card area right here by the cash register. Maybe others will see your card and take one.”

“Great, thanks so much, Mrs. England,” I smiled. “That will help me build my bookkeeping business!”

As I left the book shop, Cat was coming out the door of The Blue Moon Cafe.

“That’s good timing,” we both said at the same time and laughed.

“How did your meeting go?” I asked.

“Great!” Cat said. “Mr. Adams is ordering five hundred Red Velvet Twinkle Bars for Valentine’s week. We decided to put white cream cheese frosting on the top of each brownie with a big red X and O on top to represent “hugs and kisses.”

“That’s perfect for Valentine’s Day,” I said. “What about your tag with the cat stamped on it?”

Cat smiled. “I ordered a new stamp from the craft catalog last week. It will be a surprise for everyone, but I can tell you. It’s two cats facing each other with their noses touching.”

“That way, they will know they are your Twinkle Bars, just like when you used the black cat with the pumpkin stamp for the

Pumpkin Twinkle Bars for Halloween, and the cat curled up under the Christmas tree stamp for the Holiday Twinkle Bars.”

“Yes,” Cat smiled. “My dad calls that “branding.” Every time someone sees my cat stamp, they know they are my Twinkle Bars!”

We walked across the street to the General Store. We wanted to look at some of the material and makeup for our next Chin-kins performance. My three Winner friends and I have a unique talent that we share at local events. We lie upside down on a couch or chair with our heads hanging down so that it looks like our chins are our heads. We draw little eyes with makeup on our chins, sing songs, and tell jokes with our funny little heads. We call ourselves the Chin-a-kins and have a lot of requests for our act.

We plan to sing “It’s Raining, It’s Pouring” for our next performance and use a small spray bottle to mist ourselves with water. Max and Nick laughed so hard the first time we showed them our wet faces we decided to make it fun and open little umbrellas during the song.

While we walked through the store, I stopped when I saw the coziest yellow bathrobe with matching yellow and red slippers. I took the bathrobe off the hanger and put it on over my sweater. The tag on the sleeve said it was on sale for \$15, and the slippers were another \$10.

“You know Cat,” I said. “I just got paid \$30 for my work at the bookstore. I think I am going to buy myself this robe and slippers.”

“It sure is soft,” she said. “But you might want to think about the ‘opportunity cost’ before you buy them.”

I looked at her blankly. “The opportunity cost?” I asked. “What’s that?”

“Well, it’s looking at what other opportunities you have to spend \$25. If you don’t spend it on the robe and slippers, what else could you buy?”

I thought about what else I could buy for \$25. “I have been thinking of buying myself a professionally printed box of business cards at the stationery store. That way, I can keep the bookstore stocked with my cards, and I can give some to your dad to hand out to his clients.”

“That’s a good example,” said Cat, “If you don’t buy the slippers, you have the opportunity to buy business cards that will bring you more business and make you more money.”

“I also want to start saving some of my money like you do in your kitty banks,” I told her.

“Maybe you could divide up your money each time you get paid by a client,” she suggested.

Cat reminded me of the plan her grandpa had taught her when he helped her start saving. She had five little “piggy banks” that were shaped like “kittens,” so she called them “kitty banks.”

In her Black Kitty Bank, she puts 25% or .25 cents of each dollar that she makes for savings for the future.

In the Orange Tabby Kitty Bank, she puts money for things she wants like bathrobes or art supplies. She called this her “personal fund.” She also put 25% or .25 cents of every dollar in that bank.

The third bank was a metal box used for her Twinkle Bar Business Account. She puts 25% or .25 cents of every dollar she

receives into the box for future business expenses like new pans, tags for her bars and ingredients to try out new recipes.

The fourth bank was a beautiful White Kitty Bank. She puts 10% or .10 cents of every dollar she earns towards donations to the animal shelter.

The fifth bank is a Grey Kitty Bank with a silver bell around its neck that makes a “twinkle sound.” She sets aside 15% of every order she gets as her “business seed money.” It is for her long-term plan to open her own bakery one day.

I took off the yellow robe and hung it up. “I’m going to save my money like you, and I’m going to start doing it right away,” I said. “Let’s go have a look at the piggy banks here in the store.”

We went around the corner to the aisle with the banks and found two on the shelf. One was dark blue and shaped like a pig. The other was on sale because it had an ear chipped off. “Let’s finish finding our material for our show, and I’ll find one later,” I said.

We found the big barrel of scrap material and dug through it until we found what we wanted. We bought a yard of the fabric, using the money left over from the original bake sale that had launched Cat’s business.

As we headed to our bikes, I looked in the window next door and saw a bright set of envelopes in Mayfair’s Stationery Shop. That gave me an idea.

“Let’s go in here.” I tugged on Cat’s sleeve as we passed the doorway. It was warm inside as the little pot-bellied stove churned away in the corner.

“Hello girls,” smiled Sally Mayfair. Her parents own the stationery store and sell paper, pens, notebooks, cards and wrap-

ping paper. Sally babysat me when I was younger, and she had always made her visits to my house fun.

“Hi Sally,” I said back. “I just saw something in your window that looks useful.”

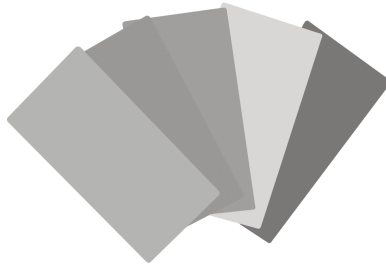
“Help yourself,” she replied. “I’m just doing the week’s bookkeeping.”

I stopped in my tracks. “You do bookkeeping?” I asked. “I’m also starting a bookkeeping business.”

“Oh, Emma, that’s so wonderful! Bookkeeping is something that every business needs. My mom taught me how to do the bookkeeping for our stationery store when I was your age, and I have kept up the books for years. Now I am going to college and studying business and accounting. When I graduate, I plan to open several more stores and call them Mayfair Stationery Shops.”

I was impressed. “Sally, I saw those bright-colored envelopes in the window. I’d like to buy five of them, please. I’d also like to order a box of business cards like these,” I said as I pulled out my handwritten cards with the checkmark in the corner.

When I got home, I laid out my five envelopes on my desk.



They cost \$2.50 plus tax for a total of \$2.63. The box of business cards I ordered was \$15 plus tax for a total of \$15.75. Altogether I had spent \$18.38 at the stationery store. That left me \$11.17 from the money I made this morning at the bookstore.

- In the middle of the bright blue envelope, I wrote “Savings.” I divided my \$11.17 up and put 25%, or \$2.79, into the envelope.
- On the orange envelope, I wrote “Personal Fund.” I would save up for things like the bathrobe and slippers that I wanted. I started this fund with another 25% or \$2.79.
- The green envelope would be my “Business Expense Fund.” I had just spent \$18.83 on envelopes and business cards. I wouldn’t need to repurchase envelopes, and my business cards should last for quite a while. I didn’t think I would have many upcoming expenses, but it was important to start saving. I put \$2.79, which was another 25%, into this envelope. I was glad I had passed up the bathrobe & slippers. This was turning out to be a much better opportunity for the long term.
- On the yellow envelope, I wrote “Donation.” Once a month, my family volunteers at the local community center, and I usually read to the younger kids. They need some new books, and I can use this money to buy them some. Cat suggested 10% for this envelope, which equals \$1.12. I am looking forward to adding more money to this one after my next job.
- The red envelope would be my “College Savings Fund.” I am going to save for college so I can go to business school

just like Sally Mayfair. The red envelope now has \$1.68 or 15% of the \$11.17. It doesn't seem like much, but putting some away each time I earn money will help it grow consistently.

## CHAPTER 6

On Sunday afternoon, we met Grandma & Grandpa at The Blue Moon Cafe for a family lunch. Mr. Adams hosts a buffet every Sunday, and we go about once per month.

My brother brought a deck of cards to practice a magic trick. I made sure to sit at the end of the table next to Grandma so we could talk.

“Emma,” she said with a smile, “thank you ever so much for helping me with my bookkeeping over the break,” she said. “I met with Mr. Casey, and he is putting together my yearly tax return. I am looking forward to starting on new products for the holidays now that the accounting is complete.”

I looked at her with a questioning glance. “But Grandma, I talked with Mr. Casey, and he told me he noticed the cost of your stuffing for the pillows had gone up. You still have to buy the batting, so how are you going to make enough profit?”

Grandma’s eyes twinkled, and she waved over my head to someone who was just walking in the door. “Hello Mrs. Smith, It’s so good to see you again so soon! “

I recognized Mrs. Smith as the lady who bought some of Cat's original pumpkin brownies at our bake sale and helped Cat sell the bars into The Blue Moon Cafe for Halloween.

After Mrs. Smith and Grandma hugged, Grandma said to her, "Tell Emma what a great idea we came up with at our coffee time yesterday."

Mrs. Smith smiled, "Oh, you mean the order you are going to place for the batting?" she asked?

"Yes," Grandma said. "And the bulk order for fabrics and embellishments."

"Well," Mrs. Smith cleared her throat. "Your Grandma is one smart business lady. She told me about the problem she was having with the increased cost of her batting, so I just asked her some questions, and she came up with the greatest solution."

I looked at Grandma and said, "What is the solution?"

She looked at me brightly and said, "I'm going to start buying in bulk! I am making so many pillows now that I need a lot of batting and fabric. I called a large fabric store and asked if they had better pricing for large orders. The owner told me that I bought enough material and stuffing to purchase directly from the manufacturer. Because I will buy in bulk, it will only cost me about \$8 per pillow to make them."

"\$8"! I exclaimed, "That's less than you were paying before the prices went up."

"Right," said Grandma, "but because I will buy a larger amount, they will give me a discount. It will also make it easier for me to pick up more materials at once and have enough supplies on hand."

Mrs. Smith finished visiting with us for a few more minutes and then headed to her table to meet a friend. Before she left, she reached into her purse, pulled out a small card, and handed it to me. "Give me a call, Emma, if you would like any help as you grow your business." And with a smile, she was gone.

I stopped by Cat's house the following week to taste her St Patrick's Day Twinkle Bars. She received a candy-making kit for Christmas and was making green shamrock candies for the tops. We headed to town and stopped by Mayfair's Stationery Shop to pick up my business cards.

"Ooohh, I love them," said Cat!

I smiled, "I love them too because they are going to help me get more business just like you."

We split up for an hour, and Cat went to talk to Mr. Adams at The Blue Moon Cafe. I headed across the street to the Hanson Scissors Salon. Patty & Lindsey were busy with clients, so I gave them a wave and left my card on the front desk to see later.

I went next door to the bakery and gave a card to Mrs. Birdsey. She is the tiny woman who works behind the counter making delicious cinnamon rolls. She has a stool she stands on to reach over the counter, making her look like a mama bird feeding her baby chicks. I handed her a card, and she gave me back two cookies, one for me and one for Cat. I met Cat on the porch at The Blue Moon Cafe, and we rode our bikes home for dinner.

For the rest of February and into March, I worked at the bookstore every Saturday, went to school during the week and met with Mr. Casey on Winner to learn more bookkeeping skills.

I didn't receive a single call from any businesses where I dropped off my business cards. I wasn't sure why they weren't

calling. Grandma and Mrs. England were glad to have my help, but no one else seemed to need me. Maybe this wasn't a good business after all.

I went to my desk and opened the drawer to find the card from Mrs. Smith. She helped Grandma when she had a problem with her business, so maybe she could help me.

"You know Emma," she said after I called and explained the situation. "This is a common problem for new businesses. You went into each business and dropped off your card. That is one way of promoting or "marketing" your services.

"The business owners were probably busy when you stopped by. It would be easy for them to set your card aside or forget to follow up with you. With marketing, you have to show up in front of people multiple times before they are ready to hire you."

"What ideas can you think of to be in touch with those prospective clients again and remind them that you are in business?" she asked.

"Well, there is a bulletin board on the front porch of the general store. I could tack up a business card there," I suggested.

"Great idea," Mrs. Smith replied. You could even tack up a large flyer with a few business cards at the bottom so it would be easier to see.

"I like it," I said and started a to-do list in my notebook.

"What other ideas do you have?" Mrs. Smith asked.

"I could go back into the businesses I already visited and ask them if they have any questions."

"Another great idea," said Mrs. Smith. "It is called "following-up" when we reach back out to a potential client."

I added "follow-up" to my to-do list.

“Anything else?” she asked.

“I am going to help Cat serve dessert at The Blue Moon Cafe next week at the St. Paddy’s Day party. I will know many people at the party. Maybe I can have a few business cards in my apron. If I talk to someone who would be a potential client, I can give them a card.”

I was starting to get the hang of this marketing thing and hung up after setting up a time the following week to check in with Mrs. Smith.

Time flew by that week as I put my marketing plan into action. On Thursday after school Cat, Nick and Max and I walked home down Main Street, and we stopped by The General Store to hang up my flyer.

I asked Cat about passing out cards during the party on Sunday, and she thought it was a great idea. We popped into The Blue Moon Cafe to check with Mr. Adams. He was okay with me sharing my cards. We agreed that it would only be to people who might be potential clients. Not everyone at the party would be a business owner, so I would focus on the few that were my potential customers.

After we left, I thought of one more thing that I thought would help a lot.

## CHAPTER 7

On Sunday, I headed for The Blue Moon Cafe after lunch. Cat was already there in her apron and handed me a spare. We had trays with the St. Paddy's Day Twinkle Bars to pass out to guests during the party. Our job was to walk around every twenty minutes and offer dessert.

About an hour into the party, I saw Lindsey and Patty from the hair salon walk in. They visited with a few friends and had some food. I waited for them to finish eating, then offered them a Twinkle Bar.

We talked for a few minutes, then I said, "I want to find out when would be the best time for me to stop by your salon and talk to you about my bookkeeping business. I know you are busy on Saturdays and don't want to interrupt your work."

Lindsey smiled, "That is very thoughtful of you, Emma. We usually have a meeting on Tuesday afternoons when we aren't as busy. We are trying to catch up on our bookkeeping, and it would be an ideal time for you to stop by. Could you come on your way home from school?"

I agreed, then opened the little notebook-sized calendar I had tucked into my apron. I had seen a stack of small calendars at

Mayfield's Stationery Shop when I pickup up my business cards and went back for one when I realized I needed a way to stay organized. I wrote down my appointment with the Hanson sisters for Tuesday.

Two more business owners came through the party that afternoon; Mrs. Birdsley, the baker, and Mr. Harmon, the gardener. I set up times to talk to both of them. Mrs. Birdsley's name went on my calendar for late afternoon on Thursday after her bakery closed for the day. Mr. Harmon would stop by my house on Saturday when he came to trim some trees in our neighborhood.

Over the next month, I received two calls from people who saw my flyer at The General Store. A seamstress who makes custom wedding dresses requested my help organizing her receipts and tallying her sales just like I did for Grandma. She hired me to come once a quarter (every three months) to keep her bookkeeping current.

Mr. Spellman, who runs the shoe repair store on the west side of town, needed someone to help with totaling sales, sorting receipts and reconciling his checkbook once per month.

I hadn't heard of reconciling a checkbook before, so I asked Cat's dad to teach me. He showed me how to check off each transaction on the bank statement to match the record in the checking ledger. It was essential to reconcile the paper or computer ledger each month so that it would be accurate. It was also another task I could do with my checkmarks.

My Checkmark Bookkeeping business has continued to grow through word-of-mouth referrals. Now that I have customers who are happy with my services, they tell others about me and

my business. I even had to start doing bookkeeping for my own bookkeeping business.

As I was getting more clients, I noticed that I was spending a lot of my time on my bike going back and forth across town. Even though riding my bike was free, it was “costing” me time that I could be working with a client or doing my homework.



I talked with Mr. Casey, and he shared with me how he set up appointments based on location to be more efficient, and I started to do the same.

On Saturdays, I work at the bookstore, the hair salon and the bakery since they are all right on Main Street. I do their bookkeeping every week, and it only takes about an hour per stop.

I arranged my schedule with my other clients for Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. I ride my bike to the far side of town right after school on Tuesdays and do all my clients in that area. I come straight home on Thursdays and do all my clients close to home that afternoon. Some clients only need me once a month, so I created a schedule that I wrote down in my little pocket calendar.

Cat's Twinkle Bar business inspired me to find my own business, and I enjoy helping all of my customers. Each company sells its products and services, and my bookkeeping service helps turn their paperwork into a profit.

Grandma and I have plans next weekend to go to the wholesale market and fill up "The Sleigh" with a big batch of fabric and batting. She is ready to start work on the coming holiday inventory.

My friend Max just started his own business and hosted a big event to get new clients. Some of his clients are two-legged, and some are four-legged. Cat and I helped him with some basic business planning. But I'll let him tell you his story.

To some people, my bookkeeping business, Max's new business, or Cat's Twinkle Bar business may seem like little businesses, but they are each big business to us.

The Little Books of Big Business series follows four friends in Main Town USA on their journey into business. Cat, Emma, Max & Nick each start their own business and learn key principles along the way. This series is perfect for anyone ages 5 to 105 who aspires to be an entrepreneur.

---

Book #1 - Cat Casey Turns Brownies Into A Business

Book #2 Emma Mason Turns Paperwork Into A Profit

Book #3 Max England Turns A Pet Project Into Pay

Book #4 Nick Frank Turns Carpentry Into Cash

Find the next book, activities and worksheets:

[TheLittleBooksOfBigBusiness.com](http://TheLittleBooksOfBigBusiness.com)

---

This book is a work of fiction. All names, characters, businesses, places, events and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or used in a fictitious manner. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, or actual events is purely coincidental. Business principles are intended for educational purposes only. Consult local laws and regulations for up-to-date business requirements and utilize professional services for legal, tax and monetary guidance.

Author's Note: The Little Books Of Big Business series is intentionally set in a small town where characters can interact with local business owners. While this may not be as easy in today's world, kids can still experiment with business principles in their own neighborhood, school or local communities. The story purposely leaves out technology like computers and cell phones. Just as it is important to learn to calculate math with pencil and paper before relying on a calculator, so it is with writing up an invoice, tracking your receipts in an envelope or receiving cash and counting back change.

### About the Author

Mara Williams is a Professionally Certified Coach and Business Coaching Specialist. She is passionate about teaching women and kids about money and business principles through stories and fun activities.

TheLittleBooksOfBigBusiness.com  
SuccessStreetCoaching.com