CV Bookkeeping
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FREE GUIDE · UNDERSTANDING YOUR NUMBERS

Benchmark your business *against your industry*

Benchmarking compares your numbers with businesses like yours, to find what might be worth a question. It isn't a grade: industry numbers are a starting point, not a verdict.

1 What a NAICS code is

Government industry data is sorted by **NAICS codes**, six-digit numbers Statistics Canada uses to group businesses by what they actually do. Every kind of business has one, from massage therapy to yoga studios to bookkeeping.

You do not need to know yours by heart. It is on **your last tax return** (Form T2125 if you are a sole proprietor, or in the T2 software if you are incorporated). If you cannot find it, skip ahead: the tool in step 2 lets you **search by keyword**, so you can type what you do and pick the closest match.

Pick the code that matches what you mainly do, not everything you offer. If two look close, try both and see which set of numbers looks more like your business. Your accountant can confirm which one belongs on your return.

2 Pull free industry data

Use **Financial Performance Data** from Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED). It's free and built on Statistics Canada tax data.

1. **Open the tool**
   Go to **ised-isde.canada.ca/site/financial-performance-data/en** and click **Create a report**.
2. **Revenue range**
   Choose $30K - $5M.
3. **Province**
   Choose your province, or Canada.
4. **Incorporation status**
   Incorporated, unincorporated, or all businesses.
5. **Distribution by, then Value in**
   Choose Total revenue, then Percentage.
6. **Find your industry**
   Search by keyword
   for what you do, or by your NAICS code if you know it. Choose the closest match and create the report.

What you'll see

Revenue and expenses, net profit, and ratios such as gross margin, split into four revenue groups so you can look at businesses closest to your size.

Good to know

- As of September 2026, the newest data is for 2024, a couple of years behind.
- Averages blend very small and much larger businesses.
- An "x" means a figure is hidden for confidentiality. Quality letters run from A (excellent) to E (use with caution).
- Balance sheet figures are only for incorporated businesses.

MY NOTES

3 Turn your P&L into percentages

Divide each line by total revenue, then multiply by 100. Industry data is yearly, so use a full-year P&L (QuickBooks Online and Xero both run one). Here's the method on one sample month.

SAMPLE: BIRCH LANE YOGA, MARCH

LINE	AMOUNT	% OF REVENUE
Revenue	14,565.00	100.0%
Cost of goods sold	5,281.80	36.3%
Gross profit	**9,283.20**	**63.7%**
Rent	4,200.00	28.8%
Marketing	350.00	2.4%
Other expenses	1,004.00	6.9%
Net income	**3,729.20**	**25.6%**

How the math works: Rent 4,200.00 ÷ revenue 14,565.00 = 0.288, or **28.8%**. Cost of goods sold is teacher and processing fees, so for the worksheet Birch Lane's **wages or contractors** line is its teacher fees: **33.4%**.

4 What the worksheet is asking for

Five columns, and only two of them need any thinking. Here it is filled in for Birch Lane Yoga, so you can see what goes where.

LINE from your P&L	YOUR AMOUNT the dollars	% OF REVENUE amount ÷ revenue	INDUSTRY FIGURE from your report	DIFFERENCE, AND WHAT TO ASK one sentence is plenty
Revenue	14,565.00	100.0%	100%	Everything is measured against this line.
Cost of goods sold	5,281.80	36.3%	30%	More of each class fee goes to teachers than average. Rates, or class sizes?
Gross profit	**9,283.20**	**63.7%**	**70%**	**Follows from the line above. Nothing extra to ask here.**
Rent	4,200.00	28.8%	22%	A bigger share than average. A great location, or a lease worth a conversation?
Wages or contractors	4,860.00	33.4%	27%	Teacher fees. These sit inside cost of goods sold, so don't count them twice.
Marketing	350.00	2.4%	3%	About average. Left alone for now.
Other expenses	1,004.00	6.9%	30%	Much lower than average. Is anything missing, like insurance or software?
Net income	**3,729.20**	**25.6%**	**15%**	**Ahead of average even with the rent. Worth knowing why, so it keeps happening.**

The industry column above is **made up for the example**. Yours comes from the report you created in step 2. Copy it with the year and the choices you used, and group your lines the way the report groups its own.

5 Your worksheet

Print this page, or copy it into a spreadsheet. Fill the first three columns from your own profit and loss, the fourth from your industry report, and write yourself one honest sentence in the last one.

LINE	YOUR AMOUNT	% OF REVENUE	INDUSTRY FIGURE	DIFFERENCE, AND WHAT TO ASK
Revenue		100%		
Cost of goods sold				
Gross profit				
Rent				
Wages or contractors				
Marketing				
Other expenses				
Net income				

Read the differences kindly

- **A higher rent share** might mean a great location, or room to talk about your lease.
- **A different margin** can reflect your pricing, class sizes or business model. Different isn't the same as wrong.
- **One year is a snapshot.** Compare a few years to see your own trend.

Questions for your bookkeeper or accountant

- Is this the best industry code for what the business mainly does?
- Are costs grouped the same way the industry data groups them?
- Which difference is worth looking into first?
- How have these percentages changed over the last few years?

MY NOTES

Corrie's take: When I benchmark a client, I'm looking for a good question, not a grade. If your numbers look different from the average, that's often the most interesting part of your story.

Birch Lane Yoga and the industry percentages shown with it are made up, to show the method. General information, current as of September 2026. Not tax or financial advice.

Rather we did the comparison for you?

Our Business benchmark add-on does it for you. Book a free consult.

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