

# Go Wild

Whitehorse

Started: 1998

Contact: Darielle Talarico

Go Wild provides two services. It delivers soft adventure eco-tourism activities such as day trips in the Whitehorse area or heli-hiking trips. Go Wild also acts as a booking agent for tour operators which typically involves designing and selling a package of activities provided by other tourism businesses. It has a storefront in downtown Whitehorse which provides a starting point for walking tours and a retail outlet for t-shirts and other northern products.

**Getting started:** In addition to building on her past experience as a booking agent and tourism operator, Darielle spent time researching the market segment, taking a business management seminar at the college, and taking the “Yukon Best” workshop on providing quality service to tourists. A business plan was also developed. Like many small business owners, continued income from other sources has helped cover start-up expenses until the business can get fully established.

**Key to success:** The location of the storefront on First Avenue has helped to raise the profile of the business and ensure easy access for clientele. As the best method of advertising is word of mouth referrals, building local awareness of the business in the community has been a focus. However, as most of the market is outside the Yukon, the internet is used as another important tool for promoting the business.

Attending tourism business trade shows and consumer oriented shows for travelers has also been useful to building a broader network.

**Lessons learned:** Researching Yukon government tourist surveys and other information has helped Darielle tailor Go Wild’s product to the needs and wants of its targeted market. Darielle feels more investment in advertising for the first year should have been done to raise Go Wild’s local profile.

**Future of business:** Go Wild is anticipating growth in the coming years but Darielle wants to ensure it is manageable. She knows that it will take at least 2—3 years of very hard work and determination to build a successful business. Darielle plans to strengthen the eco-tourism focus of the business by delivering responsible, low-impact and educational tourism activities.

