



Women's Business
Development Council

Get to know WBDC's Instructor:

Leanne Shofi

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What was your first job and what skills from that job do you use today? My first job was working with animals at Westport Animal Hospital, and calming their owners in sometimes stressful situations. One skill that I gained

from that job and still use today is empathy, which is a very useful skill in the business and legal world.

What are some of the most common issues small business owners come to you for help with? My practice with small business owners has almost exclusively involved contractual disputes, often resulting from poorly drafted contracts and/or contracts provided by vendors, etc. that were one-sided and not negotiated.

What are some steps small business owners should take to protect themselves and their business when they are ready to hire employees? With the caveat that every business, employer and potential employee is unique, one of the most important things business owners should do to protect themselves and their business is to obtain legal consultation to review the classification of new hires (employee versus consultant) and to review the applicable employment or consultancy agreements, including if applicable non-disclosure and non-compete clauses/agreements and dispute resolution clauses. Carefully considered and well-drafted agreements provide important protection to businesses, whether in avoiding or successfully resolving litigation, and are worth the investment. Another step small business owners should take is to familiarize themselves with state and federal laws applicable to the new relationship.

Come meet Leanne along with Janet Siegenthaler, WBDC's Access to Capital Specialist and Leyla Dam, owner of [Lorca Coffee Bar](#) on November 27th at the [Tips & Tricks for Growing/Scaling Your Business – Panel Discussion](#)
