

Perugia Business Opportunities

We can tell you from first-hand experience that starting a business here is nearly impossible. Taxes, taxes, everywhere, as far as the eye can see, plus a horrendous bureaucracy and competitors that send the tax police to hound you. But we do see a few opportunities here in Perugia for those who really want to stay and have the energy and time (and some start-up cash) to sink into the attempt. We want to underline that we think all three of these ideas are valid and would be willing to help out with advertising and suggestions. Let us know at info@greendoor.it.

Our first idea is for cooking classes. There is an enormous need for this, as everyone wants a wine-tasting lesson or a few Italian cooking lessons to impress Mom and Pop back home. Esteban from the Tana dell'Orso does *degustazioni* of wines with cheese and cold cuts, but we think there's a big opportunity for a foreigner to be the organizer of these classes. You could do the advertising for it (flyering, of course, at first), work with your lecturer to draw up a list of terms and their translations, as well as notes for your students and maybe even attractively printed, laminated recipes that they can then take home. This is an ideal first job because you can lean on someone who already has the structure and the business. You are essentially the promoter. Our friend Phillipa is also available to teach classes about wine in English; again, you would be the promoter. Call 339.451.6547 to discuss it with her.

Another sadly lacking position is Apartment Mediator. Zach used to do this, hanging up endless stacks of posters around town saying "Looking for an apartment? Buscas una habitacion? Suchst Du ein Zimmer?" He'd charge the students €15 to set them up with an apartment from his list of landlord-clients, who then would pay him 7% of the student's rent for each month the student was there. It got difficult because the landlords want to take advantage of the students, and the landlords were the real clients. Another business opportunity would be to work with a reliable apartment service (a seeming oxymoron in Perugia) to help students find apartments. You would be the English-language marketing person, translating when students went to see apartments, and acting as the liaison with the landlord. You would also draw up the English, Spanish, German, etc., translations of a simple contract that spelled out the obligations of the landlord, agency, and student, as well as a translation of an "Apartment Assessment" sheet. This would protect the student from the old "You broke this, so I'm taking your caution"-bullshit. The list would have every large object in the apartment and its state of repair when the student moved in, a list that both the student and landlord would sign.

A second-hand bookstore cries out to us in our dreams. There is exactly one in Perugia, the Bafomatto in Via Alessi - it sells books about the occult. Our dream store would sell about 50% used University For Foreigners textbooks, 50% used paperbacks from all over the world. Students tire of these books and could bring them to exchange them or sell them. We would recommend that you work with an already-established bookstore but watch out for opposition from Guerra Libri, the publisher set up by the teachers at the Uni per Stranieri to publish their own textbooks.

Starting a business here takes a lot of work. Good luck!