

# Homebased Business Startup Checklist

Use this extensive checklist to make sure that you cover all your steps when starting a homebased business



- ☐ Planning Your Business
- ☐ Write your business plan and create a schedule for regular updates to it.
- ☐ Create your marketing plan.
- ☐ Create a financial plan. Determine if you have enough money to survive for six months while your business gets off the ground. Decide if you need start-up funding.

## Making Your Business Legal

### Business name

- ☐ Have you said it aloud to make sure it's easily understood and pronounced?
- ☐ Has it passed muster—including a spelling test—with your family and friends?
- ☐ Have you checked the local Yellow Pages and with your local business authority to make sure the name is available?
- ☐ Have you started your trademark search?
- ☐ Have you filed your DBA?
- ☐ Have you registered your trademark?

### Business licensing

- ☐ Obtain a city business permit.
- ☐ Obtain a county permit, if necessary.
- ☐ Determine whether you need professional licensing from your state.
- ☐ Inquire as to any other permits you might need, including a fire inspection or sign permit.
- ☐ Determine the proper amount of sales tax you need to collect and obtain a "seller's permit."

## Other legal tasks

- ☐ Determine if your neighborhood is zoned for home businesses, and if you need to be aware of any regulations (parking, signage, etc.),
- ☐ Find an attorney who specializes in small businesses.
- ☐ Decide which business structure (sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation, limited liability partnership, limited liability company) you desire for your business, and contact your attorney to get the paperwork underway.
- ☐ If you plan to hire employees, obtain an employer ID from the IRS and any forms you and your employees need to fill out. (Also inquire at your local INS office for an Employment Eligibility Verification form (Form I-9), which proves your employees have the legal right to work in the United States.)

## Money

- ☐ Get a business bank account.
- ☐ Buy business accounting software.
- ☐ Hire an accountant.
- ☐ Determine your start-up financing needs.
- ☐ Create a budget.

## Your Office

- ☐ **List three places for a potential office, and do a physical inventory of your possibilities:**
- ☐ Are there easily accessible phone and electrical outlets?, Will your current desk or table fit in the location?, Is lighting and ventilation adequate?, What is the noise factor?, Is there room to spread out your work?
- ☐ **If you have inventory, list three possible locations for storage and, again, survey each location:**
- ☐ Is it climate-controlled? Will you need climate control?, Is there adequate lighting, ventilation and space for you to easily access your inventory?, Will you need to construct special shelving or add other storage space?
- ☐ Set up an ergonomically correct work space, including a desk, chair and storage areas.
- ☐ Decide which technology you need, including a computer, PDA, communication equipment, an office suite of software and computer peripherals like printer, scanner and storage devices.
- ☐ Outfit the office for visitors if your business requires them. Create a sitting area, and make sure visitors can access it without traipsing through your house.

- ☐ **Make sure your office is safe and secure:**
- ☐ Research business insurance, and contact your insurance agent (or find a new one) to add the policies, Check for fire and safety hazards like loose cords, precariously stacked items, clutter and too many plugs in one outlet, "Hide" your office from the view of strangers by investing in window covers if it's at the front of the house, Install a security system, Create a system for backing up data and storing it offsite.

## Marketing

- ☐ Create a logo and print identity for your marketing materials.
- ☐ Write a marketing plan.
- ☐ Build your website.
- ☐ Join networking organizations.

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