

Business Start Up Checklist

The business start-up checklist below is meant to remind you of the tasks you may have to perform when starting your business. The checklist includes items that apply to many different types of startups. Many of the tasks need to be done for legal reasons even if you are starting a business with little or no money.



- ☐ Choose a business based on your skills and interests
- ☐ Research the business idea
- ☐ Research competitors
- ☐ Determine if there are any patent or trademark restrictions
- ☐ Write a business plan
- ☐ Write a marketing plan
- ☐ Choose a business name
- ☐ Verify your right to use you chosen name
- ☐ See if the business name is available as a domain name
- ☐ Register the business name and get a business certificate
- ☐ Register your business domain name even if you aren't ready to use it yet
- ☐ Choose a location for your business or make space in your home to run it
- ☐ Check zoning laws
- ☐ File partnership or incorporation papers
- ☐ Get any required licenses and permits
- ☐ Determine if there are health or safety laws with which you must comply

- ☐ Register a trademark for your business name
- ☐ Register copyrights for business intellectual property
- ☐ Apply for a patent or provisional patent for inventions
- ☐ Have a business phone line installed if you will be working from home
- ☐ Order phone, Internet, and any utility services needed for a business location that isn't homebased
- ☐ Get appropriate business insurance for your business
- ☐ Arrange for health insurance coverage if needed
- ☐ Talk to an accountant about your tax obligations & record keeping requirements
- ☐ Apply for a sales tax number if needed
- ☐ Apply for an FEIN if needed (Federal Employer Identification Number)
- ☐ Inquire about workers compensation insurance and unemployment insurance if you will be hiring employees
- ☐ Open a bank account in the business name
- ☐ Set up an accounting system or accounting software for the business
- ☐ Setup your funding and create a budget for starting the business
- ☐ Have a logo created
- ☐ Order business cards, envelopes and stationery for the business. Alternately, print them yourself, if you have the capability.
- ☐ Order business checks* with the name imprinted
- ☐ Order inventory
- ☐ Purchase needed equipment and supplies
- ☐ Order signage
- ☐ Order fixtures
- ☐ Find a website hosting company* or cloudbased storefront* provider and set up your site
- ☐ Set up a business email address (preferably using the business domain name)
- ☐ Set up social media pages for the business
- ☐ Start building a permission-based customer email list* for newsletters and promotions
- ☐ Prepare brochures, fliers and other handouts. Print or order a small quantity to promote your business opening
- ☐ Send out publicity releases
- ☐ Decide where and how to advertise your business
- ☐ Contact friends, family and acquaintances and let them know you've started you business
- ☐ Plan and implement low-cost business promotion tactics to market your business
- ☐ Other: