

Business Startup Checklist

Once you've finalized your business idea, researched startup costs and analyzed the market, you're ready to tackle the next steps in starting your business. Use this checklist to track your progress:

- Business Plan**
Create a business plan detailing your company goals, operating procedures, competitors, funding, etc.
- Legal Support**
Choose an attorney you can seek legal advice from during the incorporation process and throughout the life of your business. Start by having them review your business plan.
- Accounting**
Hire an accountant to establish your business accounting/bookkeeping and build a relationship for future accounting needs.
- Owners**
If there are to be other owners besides you, spell out the relationship, basis, terms and conditions surrounding their ownership and involvement. Get this agreed upon and outlined in writing.
- Business Name**
Name your business.
- Incorporate**
Select your business structure (S corp, C corp, LLC, nonprofit) along with the state and address where your company will be based.
- Financing**
Acquire financing and funds for your business via a bank loan or investor.
- Federal Tax ID Number**
Apply for your [federal tax identification number](#) (also called employer identification number or EIN). This is used by the IRS to identify your business for tax-related matters.
- Bank Account**
Open a company bank account and obtain a business credit card.
- Licenses and Permits**
Get the necessary permits and/or licenses that may be required by your city, county, state or industry. Your local government or Secretary of State's office should be able to confirm these requirements.
- Insurance**
Get business insurance. Meet with an insurance agent to talk about your industry and business needs to ensure you receive the proper type and amount of insurance.
- Contracts and Agreements**
Create all required contracts, invoices & service agreements that you'll need to bill customers, track payments & maintain records.
- Location**
Decide your business location (home-based or office space) and take the necessary steps to finalize everything.
- Employees**
Hire employees. Register with the proper state agency and obtain the necessary insurance if you are hiring yourself or others as a full or part-time employee of your company.
- Branding**
Create a company logo, professional business cards, letterhead, and other materials to help build brand identity. Secure your business's internet domain name, design a website, and create a marketing plan. Start spreading the word!
- Intellectual Property and Trademark Protection**
Identify and determine if and how you should protect any valuable intangible or intellectual property the business will have.