



How To Start a Business: The Ultimate Step-by-Step Guide



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In this step-by-step guide, you will get the opportunity to **define why you want to start a business, how to start your business, and what steps to take to create the type of business you want.** You will walk through essentials such as evaluating your finances and available options; determining how to structure your business; setting up your entity with a unique ID number, a bank account, and insurance; and planning how to grow your business.



How To Get Started With Your Business

Several famous people have inspired us with quotes that encourage planning. Most of those quotes can be applied to the process of how to get started with your business:

"By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail." – proverbial wisdom attributed to Benjamin Franklin

"A goal without a plan is just a wish." – Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

"The backbone of success is hard work, determination, good planning, and perseverance." – Mia Hamm

Successful companies and organizations have a plan or a road map. Suffice it to say that the thought of starting a business is much different than making it happen, and as with almost anything else, a plan or a road map can help keep everyone on the same page and ensure objectives are clear, making it easier to communicate and creating a more effective approach to executing the tasks that add up and lead to reaching your established goals.

The process of creating a plan will probably drive you to contemplate why you are starting this business, consider your intentions and where you are headed, and document how you will ensure you stay on track, as well as how you will know you have met, or even exceeded, your goals.

GET STARTED WITH YOUR BUSINESS BY MAKING A PLAN

There are several elements to consider before leaping into any commitment and a few questions to ask yourself to help guide you toward a successful endeavor.

Successful endeavors are led by people who have a clear purpose and who are able to stay committed to a plan by persevering when things are less straightforward and by checking their plans constantly — ensuring they are staying the course to reach their destination.

3 Things To Consider Before Writing a Business Plan

Because a business plan will focus on the strategy, marketing, finances, and operations for your business, it is a good idea to begin with a few questions that will help you home in on the purpose of your business and how you want to conduct it.

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1. Why Do You Want To Start a Business?

There are many reasons why people want to start a business. Some would say most of the reasons could be summed up with one word: freedom. Freedom to create something that is meaningful or to fill a need, freedom to set your own schedule or call the shots, or even freedom to create your own environment. Even if freedom sounds like your “why,” take a moment to define the purpose of starting a business. Are you interested in developing a business for profit? Or to serve a cause and help others?

Understanding why you want to start a business is a good place to start.

Documenting your personal motivation (your “why”) will help:

- Define the type of business you want to start and operate
- Develop the infrastructure that supports your business
- Maintain the momentum needed to pursue this endeavor
- Serve as a reminder when making decisions along the way

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2. Do You Have a Good Business Idea?

With an understanding of why you want to start a business, take a moment to think through the idea of how you will start and operate your business. What exactly do you want to do? Take a moment to jot down five to six things that you are passionate about or that you know you are good at doing, or that others you respect may have complimented you on. Whether it is the way you write, organize garages, or create widgets, take a moment to write down the first five to six things that come to mind. Don’t overthink it – just write them down. Can you think of any businesses you could create based on the things you enjoy or that you know you are good at doing?

These are good starters to use for research. Take some time to do some research to determine whether any of these would have potential for you and your desire to start a new business. Use the internet to search the topics, to see whether there are people who have similar businesses, and to learn how those people have established themselves. Do not be discouraged if you find that others have had a similar thought and have started a similar business already. This could mean there is a need for your product or service, and their work could be very insightful for you as you get started.

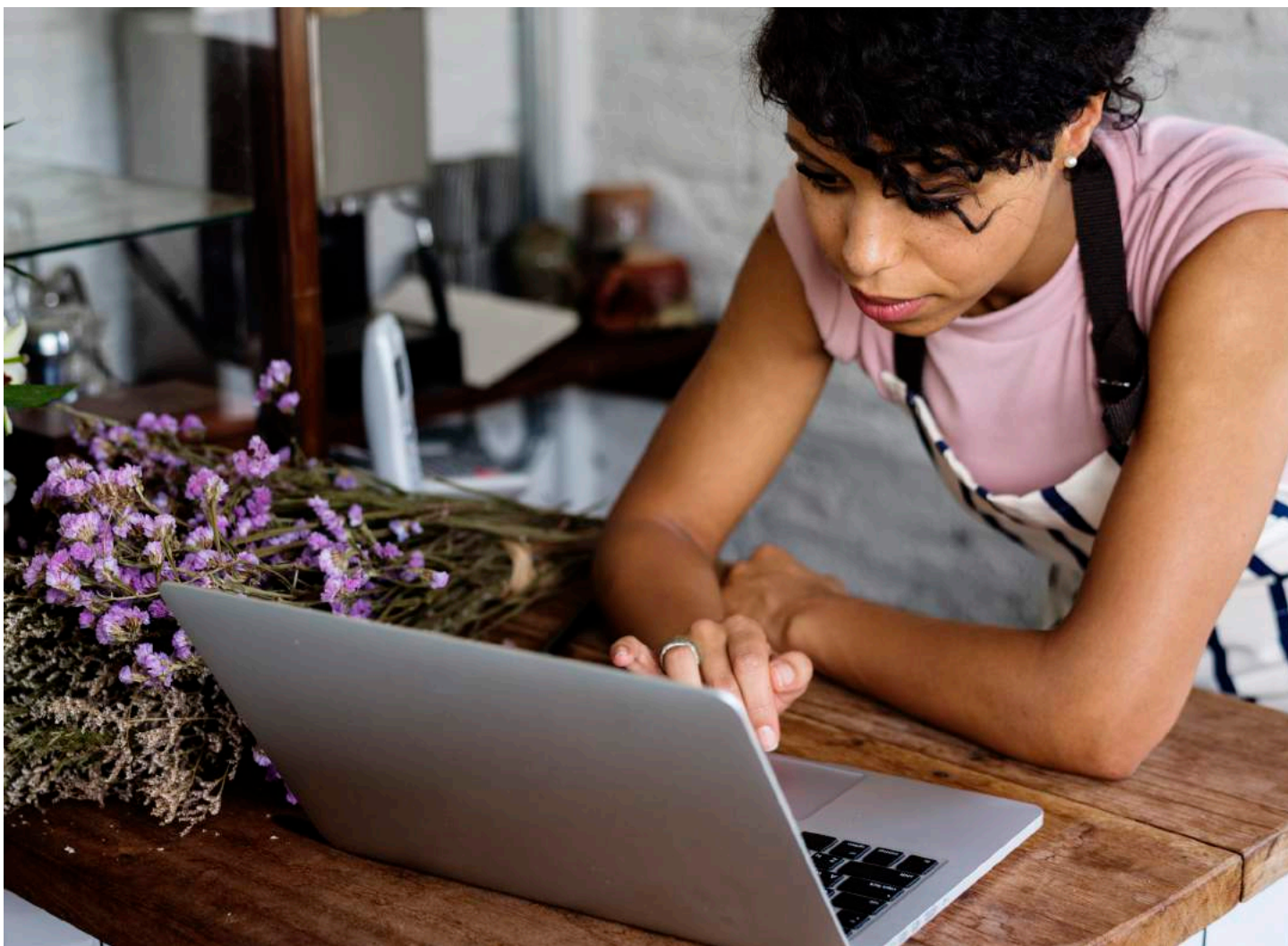
As you investigate the idea, ask yourself these questions:

- Do you need to establish an ecommerce website?
- Could you leverage other platforms that already have a built-in audience, such as Amazon or Etsy?

Portals such as these, and others like Upwork and 99Designs, that support service-based businesses have already established processes and systems that could minimize your need for upfront investments and can also reduce risk and, if needed, help you get started at a smaller scale while you determine whether you need to set up your own infrastructure.

Then, ask yourself these three questions:

- Did your research spark any other ideas?
- Are there franchise opportunities that may be of interest?
- What types of products or services meet the demands in the current market?



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3. Have You Validated Your Business Idea?

Begin to narrow your ideas by getting an understanding of how often consumers are searching for the topic or resource you are considering by using [Google Trends](#) and the [Consumer Barometer](#). These tools can help you begin your market research. Your ability to see how often terms are searched, in what geographic area, during what time of the year, and the way people use the internet could benefit your business.

Utilize the research made available by reputable data analysis companies that regularly make their findings available to the public, such as Pew Research Center, Gartner, Statista, [Dun & Bradstreet](#), or other entities that share survey responses, technology usage data, and other business and/or consumer insights that can provide you with relevant statistics that can help you validate your business idea.

Consider tapping into your network by using a survey tool. Ask three to five questions to get a feel for whether or not your business idea will resonate with others. Post your survey on your social media pages.

Or consider using a service through Fiverr or a similar platform that can create online surveys for certain geographies, targeted audiences, etc. Be sure to check the surveyor's reviews and confirm you feel comfortable with their approach, etc. With a service, you can reach people likely to be customers and receive anonymous feedback to help shape and validate your business idea.

Taking your idea and your newfound insights, begin to develop your market research so you can create a robust understanding of your potential customers, the market demand, and the future opportunities for your business venture.

PLAN

How to Conduct Market Research

Who Will Your Business Serve and What Problem Will Your Business Solve?

When you start a new business, you will want to understand your target audience, define profiles – called personas – and determine whether there is a demand for the type of service or product for these people.

Defining your audience and determining whether there is a demand will help you:



Analyze whether the demand is strong enough to indicate that your product or service will be successful



Understand how you will reach your audience in order to promote your new business



Get a sense for your potential customers' problems or pain points and how to solve them

- o How do they research possible solutions for their problem?



Determine whether your business idea will answer their need, or if you need to adjust your plan

How To Build a Customer Profile and Understand Your Target Audience

PERSONAS

A buyer persona is a written narrative describing your target audience that is based on data and research. The persona should describe the values, preferences, and behaviors of your potential customers and is meant to help you get a sense for the way you would connect with them during the research and buying process.

Data gathered to help you create a persona could include:

- Demographic questions or insights such as age, gender, occupation, income range, marital status, and level of education attained
- B2B insights such as type of businesses, company size, industry
- Competitor and industry — which brands come to mind, and what resources they might use for research
- Product-related questions
 - o What are their general needs for products and services?
 - o What additional information do they need about the product or service?
 - o How can your product help them?
 - o Are they familiar with your brand (if you have one already) or competitors?
 - o What is their general perception about this type of product or service?

Gathering this type of data can be accomplished through surveys, focus groups, or personal interviews. With demographic information, you can also conduct additional research online to get a better understanding of their likes and dislikes for various topics such as social media, cellphone usage, etc. All these pieces of information can help you get a better picture of your target audience and help you write a persona narrative to guide your messaging and marketing mix, among other things.

Determining Your Total Addressable Market

Now that you have more clarity about whom you are targeting and the pain point you are addressing, calculate whether there are sufficient prospective customers who would be willing to pay a high enough price to make your proposed company viable. [Total Addressable Market](#) is a theoretical revenue figure derived from calculating the universe of potential users for a prospective product or service.



KNOW YOUR COMPETITORS AND THE TRENDS

Once you have a sense of who your target audience is and whether your product can provide a solution, turn your attention to the competition and the trends associated with your product or service. Have you discovered a new niche that has not been addressed by any other company or product? If other companies offer something similar enough to be considered a competitor and could potentially be a threat, this could warrant more research.

Evaluating your competition and the trends could help:

- Identify whether the space is too crowded
 - o How does your audience perceive your competition?
 - o If it's crowded, is your idea or service model different enough to dethrone your competition?
- Determine whether your concept is different enough to attract the right audience or, if you are providing a service, whether there is a need for your specialty or niche

- Shape the price point and the promotional tactics you might need in order to stand out
- Inform if there are barriers to entry that might make starting your business more difficult
- Provide insights into your supply chain. If creating a product, will you be able to source materials needed, and given any new understanding about pricing and promotions, can your suppliers meet your needs to keep costs effective when producing your product

Continue to research and understand the marketplace by performing a [market analysis](#) in order to identify risks and opportunities in your industry.

SWOT

A SWOT analysis is the exercise of taking an objective look at factors inside and outside your company that could influence your success.

SWOT stands for

✓ Strengths ✓ Weaknesses ✓ Opportunities ✓ Threats

Strengths and weaknesses should be focused on your internal operations and opportunities and threats will focus on external factors. Often developed in the form of a grid, list each of the potential items that could influence how you start your business. Items include things that you need to overcome or areas that could be strengthened to avoid certain risks.

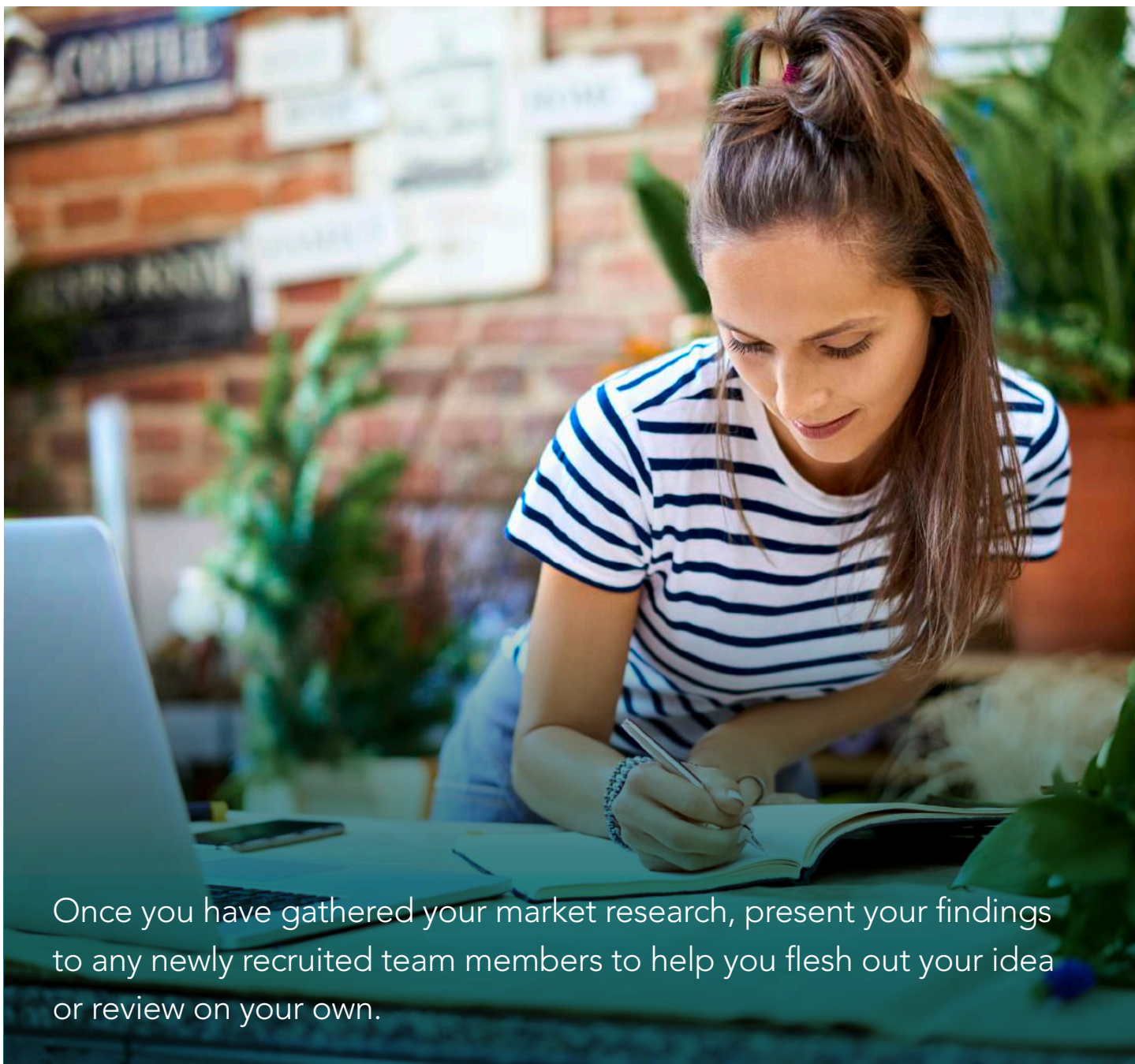
Here are some examples >

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Once your SWOT is documented, use it to determine whether it still makes sense to proceed with your current business plan or if you should consider a new approach before starting your business.





Once you have gathered your market research, present your findings to any newly recruited team members to help you flesh out your idea or review on your own.

Document action items and continue to develop these key insights until you have a good set of recommendations that can be summarized and utilized for a set of next steps or an action plan.

Some key insights that might surface include:

- Developing a complete business plan (we recommend this either way, as it can be helpful if you need to secure funding)
- Requesting funding from outside sources

- Researching additional information on a product or supply chain
- Hiring a consultant to craft a marketing plan or set up a website

Document your findings, your commitments, and your plan before launching your business and they will serve as guides to help you through decisions related to how your business is structured, how you “go to market” with your new business, and how you measure your success in accomplishing the goals you wish to attain.



PLAN

How To Write a Business Plan

Now that you have conducted your market research, you are well on your way to having a business plan and will just need a few more components.

Your business plan will serve as a blueprint that you can refer to when you are beginning the process of starting your business and will also come in handy when you begin seeking external funding or even when you consider selling your business.

The typical business plan will include the following items:

- Executive summary
- Company description
- Management – how the business will be organized and who is involved
- Products or services offered
- Pricing plan
- Marketing plan
- Operational plan
- Expenses and startup capital needed
- Financial plan
- Other/appendix

Find a guide or templates online that can help you develop the components listed above. When all these items are assembled, you've created a business plan. What have you learned from the process and what questions does it raise for you to consider before you start your business?

FIND THE PERFECT NAME FOR YOUR BUSINESS

When thinking of what to name your business, try to go with clarity over cleverness. It's true that some level of cleverness can make your name memorable – think Google, Zappos or Hulu – however, nothing is more memorable than knowing what your business actually does or how it fits your potential customers'

needs. If you are seeking something clever, make sure it's fun to say, memorable and search engine friendly. Some of these big-brand names have meaning. Did you know that Hulu means "interactive recording" in Mandarin? And Google, in its originating days was chosen to represent 100 zeros with the implication being that the search engine could provide large quantities of information. And, by now you may have guessed that Zappos was originally "zapatos" which is the Spanish word for "shoes."

Be sure to avoid things that are tricky or hard to spell, and make sure to conduct an internet search to see whether the name has already been taken. Another way to see if the name is taken is to try purchasing the domain name. If it's already taken, you will want to find something else.

Make sure to choose something that doesn't limit your business's growth. For example, if you include the name of the city where the business is based, it may be more difficult to expand into another city or region without completely changing your business name.

Finally, conduct a [trademark search](#) before filing your business license. Once you file for your business license, the name of your business will be published in a local newspaper, giving others ample notification that you are intending to use the business name you have chosen. This is the notice required that also enables others to comment or raise concerns if you are intending to use a business name that they have already procured.

How To Choose a Legal Structure for Your Business — Which Business Structure Makes Sense?

Almost every product purchased is backed by a corporation or LLC, and as such, most people know what a corporation is; however, not everyone knows whether one is needed when starting a business. There are several key factors to [consider when choosing your business structure](#). Annually, there are millions who decide to file for corporation status, and there are likely just as many who decide it is not required for the type of business they intend to own and operate.



Starting a new venture – whether as a candlemaker who sells products on Etsy or as a bookkeeper – can easily be established with sole proprietorship.

SOLE PROPRIETORSHIP: A business operated by an individual person without the protection of a legal entity.

You can operate your business under your own name, or you can create a fictitious business name and do business as that fictitious business name:

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME (FBN)¹: Any name used for business (also sometimes called a trade name) that doesn't contain the legal name of the owner/sole proprietor.

DOING BUSINESS AS (DBA): A situation in which a business owner operates a company under a name different from its legal name. The owner must file a fictitious name statement, dba statement, or an assumed name statement with the appropriate agency, for example, the county clerk or secretary of state, that records the names of the business's owners. This enables customers to discover the names of the business owner(s), which is important if a consumer has an issue or needs to sue the business.

Example: Crafty Crumbs Bakery could be a fictitious business name for Jane Smith. She isn't using her legal name, she has created a "brand name," and as a sole proprietor, she can now establish a [business banking account](#) and accept business and operate under this brand.

With the FBN created and certified properly, Jane Smith can:

- Open a business account under the name Crafty Crumbs Bakery
- Acquire a business license and business insurance for Crafty Crumbs Bakery
- Receive checks from her customers made out to "Crafty Crumbs Bakery"
- Establish trade accounts and credit accounts for Crafty Crumbs Bakery

However, every item listed above would still be signed, secured, or endorsed by Jane Smith, the legal owner and sole proprietor of the business.

The FBN or DBA simply represents Jane Smith is doing business as Crafty Crumbs Bakery.

Alternatively, Jane could decide to do business using her own name and not create a brand name. She could still file for a business license and establish her business while using her name, Jane Smith.

Whether you operate under your legal name or an FBN, as a sole proprietor you are personally liable for the business risks, such as financial risk, liabilities acquired for the business, and any injuries caused by the business or that take place at the business site or that arise out of any normal business operations.

Utilize [business insurance](#), such as commercial and general liability policies to protect your personal assets. This can cover business risks and help you avoid liabilities that could incur a risk to you personally.

Numerous new businesses will start as a sole proprietor and utilize business insurance for some protection over their personal assets.



INCORPORATION (LLC OR CORPORATE)

Two main reasons to consider whether forming a corporation is right for your business are:

1. To form joint ownership – allows business owners/merchants to share ownership or expand to take on investors and shareholders who are not involved in the day-to-day operations, and spreads financial risks and rewards across the multiple owners (joint ownership other than a spouse)
2. To limit liability – all owners would split the business risks and protect one person from shouldering all those potential burdens.

Establishing a corporate entity separates the risk of the business from the owners of the business. Shareholders do not have personal liability for the conduct of the business owners, and this is the same for small-business owners who own all the stock in a company.

However, many new businesses choose not to incorporate due to the associated costs, such as:

- Costs to form the entity
- Annual maintenance fees
- Tax filing by an accountant for the entity
- Additional CPA fees to file taxes annually (to cover additional forms and work for CPA)

Example:

Incorporating in California

- \$100 to file (form the entity)
- \$25 to maintain (annual maintenance)
- \$800 annual corporate tax (filed by accountant annually)
- \$600 or more – CPA fees to file on behalf of your corporation

Regardless of where you file to incorporate, there are annual fees between \$400 and \$900, not including your CPA fees to file on behalf of the business.

Using an attorney to file for incorporation could cost between \$1,000 and \$1,500 and could also increase the annual filing and maintenance fees by approximately \$300.

These costs can be significant if your business is only making \$20K-\$30K annually. Consider your annual revenue, your personal assets, insurance coverage, and your long-term goals when determining whether incorporating is right for you and your business.



LIMITED LIABILITY CORPORATION (LLC)

A limited liability corporation, or LLC, creates protection by setting a financial liability that is limited to a fixed sum, such as the value of the owner's investment in the business. Small partnerships and solo-business ventures are the typical types of businesses that create an LLC. This includes businesses that intend to have passive shareholders or plan on seeking investors. Incorporating provides a means for expansion when selling shares and accepting investors.

An LLC provides the corporation a shield and limited liability along with the ability to operate within a partnership format, which carries less structure than an established corporation, such as:

- Annual meetings are not required
- Partners with shared control are permissible

In a traditional corporation, partners must determine who is appointed to an office, such as president or vice president, etc. And, if there are more than two partners in a traditional corporation, two could potentially rule to remove another partner. With an LLC, it is permissible to have two or more partners share control and be active members of the business.



LLC OPERATING AGREEMENT

With an LLC, you will also be required to complete and file an LLC operating agreement, which is a statement of how the LLC will operate. There are free templates online that can serve as a guide to prepare you for meeting with an attorney to create this document, and there are also self-service options to help you create legal documentation such as the LLC operating agreement. As a new business owner, determine which option is best for you and your business.



SOLE OWNERSHIP – DISREGARDED ENTITY

Because so many new businesses with a single owner have opted for an LLC, the IRS has created a special category known as disregarded entity and has created special provisions, such as making it unnecessary to file a corporate or partnership return — it just requires filing with a 1040 Schedule C. Always check with a tax advisor to determine your recommended filing status and forms.



CORPORATION

If you are planning to sell stock in order to raise money for your business, then it is possible that a corporation would be more appropriate, even if you are not starting out with shareholders. The corporate entity allows the company to issue stock to its owners. Then the company hires management to operate the business on behalf of the shareholders.

Corporations consist of:

- Shareholders – stock owners
- Board of directors – decide and hire management and appoint officers
- Management – runs the day-to-day operations of the business

There are mandatory meetings and a voting process for certain roles and issues. Since the traditional corporation has a set of operational components related to management and shareholders, it is generally not the right type of organization for a sole proprietorship; however, it is still an option. A sole proprietor can be the board of director(s), hire management, be the sole shareowner, and hold annual meetings for yourself: one shareholder, one director, and one owner. It is required that you follow all documentation such as bylaws, voting, and meetings. These requirements are the activities that need to take place to maintain the financial responsibility shield. If any of the covenants are broken, so is the shield.

If setting up a corporation sounds like the right structure for your business, consult additional documentation, an attorney, or other self-serve resources before making a final decision – in particular, if you are planning on selling stock, refer to an attorney.





CLOSE CORPORATION (C CORP AND S CORP)

Another option to consider is a close corporation, which allows you to operate with a small group of people and without several of the formalities that accompany a traditional corporate structure. Some small businesses find benefit by having a small group of shareholders while still having the flexibility to operate like a partnership.

When it comes to filing federal taxes, there are differences between a C Corp and an S Corp, and the designation must be recorded. With an S Corp, the business income is reported on the shareholders' personal tax returns and some small businesses may find this advantageous. Again, it is important to check with a tax advisor and if you have legal counsel, consult with them as well before making these designations.

Eligibility varies at the state level and some states do not recognize the classification of close corporation. There are several requirements for maintaining this status, so it is best to seek legal counsel to determine whether it is appropriate to set up a close corporation when starting your business.



OTHER LEGAL ENTITIES

While researching options other than those typically sought after, consider there are also:

- Limited partnerships
- Limited liability partnerships (LLPs) – typically reserved for attorneys and accountants
- Limited liability limited partnerships (LLLPs)
- Public benefit corporations – such as churches and schools
- Nonprofit corporations – fundraising and philanthropic
- Co-ops – e.g., HOAs
- Associations – unincorporated
- Partnerships





LAUNCH

How To Create a Powerful Competitive Advantage

Creating a powerful advantage will be as unique as your business idea combined with your dedication to determining the collective sum of your business and management strengths. Translated: Each company has its own competitive and powerful advantage, and it is fueled by the product or service you offer, the level of customer service you are willing to provide, and the price at which you are able to deliver.

Build on what you do best by thinking beyond your business plan. In your business plan, you identified all the fundamental elements required to open the doors, to line up the tools you will need to be fully operable, and to possibly obtain funding in the future. The key to finding your powerful advantage is to keep pressing beyond the fundamentals.



Develop your powerful advantage for your new business by asking:

- What are my core capabilities?
- Who are my real competitors today?
- Is there a need to fill a gap, and how do I do that differently than others?
- What do I offer that is unique to my business — my unique selling proposition (USP)?
- What level of service would delight my customers (can I deliver the unexpected)?
- What is the vision for my company? How do I achieve it?
- Is the entire sales and service cycle coordinated? Or is it clunky?
- What do I want my company culture to be if I bring on employees or work with others?
- Am I being an effective and collaborative business partner and if not, could I shift?
- Am I being consistent or delivering consistency?

Once answered, use the insights gained to find ways to develop your business's powerful and competitive advantage. Determine whether you will publicize your commitment to this effort, or if you consider part of the advantage to be surprising and delighting your acustomer when you deliver. There isn't one way to define a powerful advantage, so have a little bit of creative fun in determining what yours will be.

How To Create Your Marketing and Sales Plans and Attract Customers

When you were developing your business plan, it was important to identify a target audience and a set of personas and to perform a competitive analysis. Equipped with that information, consider where your target audience might typically research a product or spend some leisure time. Will they frequent a local shopping mall? Do they spend a lengthy amount of time on the internet or looking at social media? Will they be traveling out of airports or train stations?

This information should be included in a document, a [sales and marketing plan](#), that outlines strategies for creating awareness of your product or service.

Pull together your target audience profile, personas, competitive analysis, and assessment of how your potential customers spend their time. Since most people use their time to do a variety of things, such as work, shop, and play, there are most likely several ways to get their attention while they are going about their normal activities. Creating a combination of tactics can help boost awareness more quickly than just creating one marketing piece or establishing a website without driving visitors to your site.

Establish some baseline goals along with a budget before starting any type of marketing activity. Here are a few types of marketing that you might consider using:

- **Digital Ads:** Tools such as [Rev.Up Now](#) can help you pinpoint and choose your online audience so you can guarantee a number of impressions being displayed to your target audience.
- **Paid Social:** Several social media channels offer self-serve platforms that also allow you to choose your audience type so you can be sure you are not spending advertisement dollars on an audience that would not be interested in your product or service.
- **Traditional Advertising:** For traditional media, such as advertising in a newspaper or in a movie theater, the media channel should be able to provide you with the demographics and viewership so you can make an informed decision.
- **Events:** With events and other in-person opportunities – besides understanding who will be attending and whether the audience matches your audience profile – think through the possibility of creating an offer that includes an opportunity for potential customers to provide their email and phone contact information. Create a form on a small piece of paper or use a sign-up sheet clipped to a clipboard that asks potential customers to share their email and phone contact information. Inform them that they are signing up to receive future communications. Be sure to follow up with future promotional opportunities and announcements.
- **Email:** Look for a free or inexpensive tool that allows you to send emails to your contact list. If possible, find a platform that offers some form of metrics so you can see how many people are opening your email, downloading content, or seeking more information.

There are several resources illustrating potential marketing opportunities. Review at least two to three to determine what is appropriate for your business.

How To Build Your Online Presence



You'll want to let your customers know you are open for business and ready to serve their needs by establishing a website. Many startups today function without a website, relying on social media for sales, and while that may be an effective approach for ecommerce sales, it is good to know that consumers still investigate the seller to determine whether they can trust the vendor before actually purchasing from them. However, some say that is a good idea to get established and have three paying customers before setting up your site.

Creating a website is the first step in developing that digital trust and relationship. While it might seem overwhelming, there are a few steps you can follow to make sure you are [establishing an online presence](#) for your new business the right way.



How To Make Sales and Land Your First Customers

There are many ways to find new customers, some of which have been around for decades and others that are evolving as technology evolves.

With 88% of consumers performing research online¹ before purchasing a product or service, chances are your customers have narrowed their choices before purchasing. When speaking with a prospective customer, be confident in your product or service and be able to explain or honestly answer any question.

Developing trust online can also be accomplished by asking your customers to review your product, when they are happy with their results. When they are not, make sure you work to rectify their complaint as quickly as possible. If they post a complaint online, you can respond to let them know that you will contact them directly, if they provide their information. If you are willing to work to resolve complaints, you will show your audience that you are reasonable.

Understand their motivation and highlight the benefits of your product so you can share why your product is the best solution. If you are not meeting in person, be sure your website showcases your product and states how it will ease the prospective customer's pain point.

If you already have customers and are seeking ways to find additional customers, there are many opportunities to choose from. If you are selling products or services to both consumers and businesses, [a C2B approach](#) enables you to sift through your customer clients to find among them the subset who also own or run a small business, for example.

If needed, consider using promotional offers — either in person or online — to entice the buyer to decide.



MANAGE & GROW

How To Get Money to Start Your Business

Figuring out how to obtain funding and which funding source is right for your business poses challenges for many startups. While the goal of growing is the same among most startups, the way to go about funding will vary to match the myriad businesses, structures, and business goals in the marketplace.

The first step is to [establish your business credit profile](#) and [Get a D-U-N-S® Number](#) so creditors can assess your creditworthiness. A majority of new startups opt for self-financing, but there is a lot more to know and understand about [startup funding for businesses](#).

Depending on your business structure, it may also make sense to determine how and [where to apply for grants](#).

How To Find and Hire Employees



There are several online portals designed to find employees for you to hire, and many of the portals are dedicated to specific industries, so researching the potential matches is a good place to start.

Before you post your job or start looking for prospective employee profiles, determine whether you need help. There are several online portals designed to find employees for you to hire, and many of the portals are dedicated to specific industries, so researching the potential matches is a good place to start. Determine what kind of culture you want to create for your company and what you need from the new employee.

Once you have these components lined up, create a job posting with a description that is detailed, using keywords that describe the important aspects of the role. Avoid using jargon and make it as clear as possible. Try not to make the post lengthy and keep it to 700-1,200 words. Many of the portals have templates you can follow.

Specifying a salary or salary range will appeal to high-quality candidates who generally know what they want. If your company is going to offer benefits, share some details in the posting.

Here are the required benefits:

- Social Security tax
- Temporary disability insurance (TDI)
- Workers' compensation
- Unemployment insurance
- Leave benefits through the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

In certain states, medical and retirement benefits may be required for certain employees. Check with your legal counsel or tax attorney before posting.

You can also develop relationships with university career centers and alumni associations. These departments offer job postings

for their students and their graduates, respectively. You could also offer paid or unpaid internships that could help you continue to define your needs while helping a student gain experience.

Utilize social media and, if possible, reach out to temporary and staffing agencies, as they are connected to numerous people seeking employment. Ask your personal network for referrals, and post the available job on your website and/or in your storefront window. If you have a local newspaper, use the classified section.

Your community may have other opportunities to find good candidates such as job boards in local coffee shops, church bulletins, etc. Be creative and seek as many places as possible to post the open position to help find your employees.

BEFORE HIRING EMPLOYEES

If you haven't already, you will need to establish an employer identification number (EIN) before setting up employment tax statements, as you will be responsible for employment tax records. You will need to determine how you will manage payroll or whether establishing a [payroll system](#) is appropriate for your business, and you will need to obtain workers' compensation insurance. Check your state for workers' compensation requirements. You will need to determine how to provide labor requirement details that inform employees of their rights and investigate all federal and state labor laws.

Now that you have determined your business structure, validated your business idea, named your company, identified your unique selling proposition, written a business plan, prepared a marketing and sales plan, and learned about hiring employees, you are ready for your next step.

Continue to seek answers to questions you have along the way.

Most entrepreneurs and new business owners have a lot to learn when they are starting a new business. The biggest step was deciding to make it happen and then actually making it happen. Congratulations on taking those steps!

¹ <https://www.pymnts.com/news/retail/2018/omichannel-ecommerce-consumer-habits/>

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