

Business Start-Up Checklist

Starting a new business can be confusing. Where does one begin? I've taken some of the most common start-up issues and compiled them into this checklist. I recommend you print this checklist and use it like a to-do list. First, check off all the items that will not pertain to your business and then start work on completing the applicable tasks.

- Open a business checking account.
- Choose a bookkeeping system.
- Research cost of leasing an office and/or tax deduction for working at home.
- Purchase/lease computer equipment.
- Purchase/lease copier or arrange for an account at a local copy shop.
- Sign up for a Federal Express, DHL or UPS account.
- Order office supplies.
- Obtain free postal mailing supplies.
- Obtain necessary permits, licenses, or zoning variations. Check with both local and state licensing agencies.
- Register your fictitious name with your county (if required).
- Decide on a business structure (i.e. corporation, sole proprietorship, partnership).
- Obtain Federal Tax identification number if incorporated.
- Research and obtain business insurance.
- Research and obtain loans or financing.
- Order office furniture.
- Obtain sales tax permit (if necessary).
- Research and obtain signage.
- Research and purchase computer software.
- Obtain a business telephone line.
- Decide on an Internet Service Provider (ISP) and a host for your website.
- Prepare a business plan.
- Prepare a marketing plan.
- Print business cards, stationary, and invoice or statement forms.
- Decide on business hours.
- Choose a business name and verify that the name is available in your state and on a federal level.
- Obtain payroll and insurance benefit services.
- Join your local Chamber of Commerce and appropriate associations.
- Establish a record keeping system.
- Retain an attorney and CPA, if appropriate.
- Register copyrights.