

Small Business – New Business Checklist

Here is a sample checklist for starting your own small business. Use this as a starting-point for creating your own list.

Legal

✓	ITEM
	Create a name for the business.
	Register your business name. This is known as filing a “DBA” or “doing business as” statement, sometimes called a “fictitious name filing.” (The appropriate way to register depends on the state where you live. Check the Web sites of your secretary of state, county clerk’s office, or municipal government. Or, ask at your local Chamber of Commerce or public library.)
	Obtain necessary licenses/permits from federal, state, and local governments.
	File for taxes to be paid at a federal, state, and local level.
	Talk to legal or accounting experts. Decide whether to trademark your business name and whether to incorporate your company for tax purposes.

Finance

✓	ITEM
	Consider hiring a bookkeeper or accountant to set up your company books.
	Visit the bank. Set up business bank accounts separate from personal accounts. Set up a merchant service account to accept credit and debit card payments from customers.
	Visit local small business development agencies and contact the Small Business Administration to explore loans and financing from SBA-approved lenders.
	Discuss business insurance needs with several agencies and get price quotes to compare.

Management

✓	ITEM
	Develop a business plan, including vision, goals, action steps, timeline, and budget.
	Visit a local business development center for advice.
	Consider joining your local Chamber of Commerce.
	Hire independent contractors or employees if extra help is needed.

Marketing

✓	ITEM
	Create a brand identity for the business, including logo, business cards, and letterhead.
	Get listed in local phone book and consider placing an ad.
	Create a website.

Technology

✓	ITEM
	Research equipment to buy.
	Set up telephone and internet service.
	Set up your computer with needed software.