

achieve dreams & goals

# Starting a Business

IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST



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# The Checklist Starting a Business

## 1. Business Idea

## 2. Business Market Research.

## 3. Business Plan.

## 4. Legal Setup

### For a Sole Proprietorship:

- Register Business
- Apply for EIN
- Local Business License if required

### For an LLC: Articles of Organization

- Pick Member or Manager Managed
- Tax Setup (Partnership, S-Corp) Decision
- Apply for EIN
- Form 2553 federal tax form for S-Corp or C-Corp
- Local business license if required
- Setup state-level register for each state you do business in
- Capital Compliance: Registration for appropriate capital raising method

### For a Corporate Setup: Operating Agreement

- Decide % ownership
- Decide % voting / process
- Profit sharing vs. money for company for growth
- Decide % participation
- How members are elected
- How members will manage
- How members will operate to manage the business
- Officers – President, Treasurer, Secretary
- Indemnity
- Buy/Sell Agreement

### Regardless of Chosen Entity: Board of Advisors

- Define Purpose
- Select Members
- Maximize effectiveness
- Set meeting schedule

## 5. Company Name

## 6. Trademark

## 7. Registration of company

## 8. DBA

## 9. legal documents

Here are some most common ones:

- Company bylaws for corporations
- Meeting minutes
- Non-disclosure agreement
- Operating agreement for LLCs
- Memorandum of understanding
- Employment agreement
- Online terms of use
- Online privacy policy
- Copyright Licence Agreement

Determine what your business needs. Your company may need specific legal terms such as:

- Royalty Agreement
- Letter of Intend
- Subcontractor Agreement
- Collaboration Agreement
- Exclusivity Agreement
- Independent Contractor Agreement
- Equipment Lease
- Strategic Alliance Agreement

#### 10. **Insurance:** Types to consider

- General Liability Policy / BOP
- Summary
- Project Summary
- External Tasks
- External Milestone
- Deadline
- Directors & Officers (D&O) Policy
- Key Player, Officer Life Insurance Policy
- Errors & Omissions (E&O) Policy

#### 11. **Strategic Setup**

- Values
- Vision
- Mission
- SWOT Analysis for Partners
- Key Initiatives
- Review & Renew Strategic Planning (Quarterly)

#### 12. **Marketing Planning** .

- SWOT Analysis
- Competitive Research
- Develop Marketing Calendar

### **The 6 keys to success with marketing**

- Amazing word of mouth from a great product
- Knowing the lifetime value of a customer
- A tracking system that can tell you cost per lead, cost per user, and conversion rate per channel
- Constant testing of new channels and funnel processes
- Great storytelling
- 10% of your monthly advertising budget should be spent on testing new channels. (test all the channels & track the actual results from each one)

### **Marketing channels**

- SEO: Google, Yahoo, Bing
- PPC: adwords
- Social ads
- Display: Banner ads
- Affiliates
- Linkshare
- Review sites: Yelp, Citysearch, Google Local
- Daily Deals: Groupon, LivingSocial
- Mobile ads: Flurry, Fyber, Nativex, Adcolony
- Television
- Print ads
- Radio
- Buses
- Tradeshow
- Event sponsorship
- Billboards

### **Know your Customer Acquisition cost**

#### **14. USPs**

- What's Your Secret Sauce? (what is impossible for other to copy from you?)
- What is the thing you do / offer Uniquely?

#### **13. Ideal Customer**

- Who exactly is your ideal customer?
- At what point are they in life when they buy your service?
- Why do they buy your service?
- Where do they hang out? (where can you catch their attention?)

#### **How do they visualize their gain?**

- Economically
- Emotionally

- Time gain

#### 15. **Elevator Pitch**

- 10 second
- 30 second
- 2 minute
- 5 minute
- Practice, Practice, Practice (read also Presentation skills)
- Investor Video
- Consumer Video

#### 16. **Branding**

- Brand Identity
- Brand Promise
- Market positioning

#### 17. **Executive Summary**

- Add critical missing components – Professionalize
- More concise messaging based on USPs, Competition, etc.

#### 18. **Business Plan Update**

- Further Market Analysis
- Other enhancements

#### 19. **Financial Plan**

##### **Financial: Pre-Startup budgetting**

- Cash Flow Model
- Revenue assumptions
- Cost assumptions
- Revenue by month
- Cost by month by category
- Net income by month by category
- Time to break even
- Funds needed to reach next milestone
- Total expected funds needed

##### **Financial Projections:**

- Enhanced Sales Model
- Enhanced 12 month
- Expand monthly to 24 or 36 months
- Enhanced 5 year projections

#### 20. **Capital Raising**

## Capital Raising: Planning

- Investor Pitch Deck
- Define capital raising length of time
- Pre-funded detailed budget
- Ongoing Pre-Funded budget and Actual Spending Tracking Spreadsheet
- Get additional compliance capital, if necessary
- Decide on what capital sources to focus on
- Where to raise capital
- Crowd funding options
- Banking options
- Non-banking options
- Terms of investment
- Build a series of funding process to ensure you receive multiple term sheets

## 21. Media Relations / Publicity Campaigns

- Make a list of Media and PR channels
- What to share with them?
- Where to find influential bloggers?
- Why would they promote you?
- How would you build a relationship with them?

## Article Marketing

- Pick venues – e-zine, corporate business magazines, professional publications, higher end media,
- Write initial articles
- Publish initial articles
- Create “teaser” articles and submit those, too
- Resource Names
- Roll marketing into budget

## 22. Social Media

- What venues to focus on – Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+
- Get going on Twitter
- Setup a Facebook Business page
- Setup a LinkedIn page
- Engage in debates on other debate sites forums
- Social Media Implementation Schedule
- Join LinkedIn Groups for target market
- Build your tribe, your following and affinity
- Build list of contacts
- Write and post initial Blog postings
- LinkedIn postings/Q&A initial
- Facebook postings/Q&A initial

## 23. Product Management

- Clearly define and document the offering

- Prioritize what you're building
- Get feedback. Innovate & improve.
- Overinvest in UX testing! (Create products customers love)

### **Develop a minimum viable product that works**

- Use a Customer Development/Iterative Process. If it's a physical product, use a workshop to create a basic version.
- Web enabled, not just iPad demo
- Simpler prototypes are often best for allowing rapid learning and iteration
- Define the customer engagement process and work flows
- Continuously improve with customer feedback
- Decide on "leave behinds" and "giveaways"
- Fail fast and pivot quickly

### **24. Networking**

- Local / national venues with the best effectiveness to reach your market
- Local Kiwanis, Rotary, Chamber of Commerce, Clubs, Meetups- get out and meet people
- Get introductions and referrals

### **26. Financial Operations**

- Hire a bookkeeper
- Setup book-keeping software – with remote access
- Setup Payroll/Distribution policy
- Setup initial expense policies & procedures, system
- Setup initial payment policies & procedures
- Normalize budget with chart of accounts
- Import budget into book-keeping software
- Financial Reporting schedule: Keep personal funds separate from business – no co- mingling
- Tax Planning
- Company Medical Insurance
- Monitor expenses against budget and other key metrics
- Monitor Cash Flow & Runway
- Delivery Technology Roadmap

### **27. Sales**

#### **Sales operations: the basics**

- Commission Plan for salespeople, affiliates and joint venture partners
- Define sales systems and sales scripts
- Set Pipeline Metrics/Goals
- Develop/Review Contracts
- Develop standardized proposal
- Create your Sales Funnel
- Upsells
- Downsells

### **28. Trade shows / Conferences**

- Decide best venues with target markets for clients and investors
- Where and when to have a booth/table
- Network, network, network
- Follow up!

## 29. Website

### **Website: Developing**

- Research and establish keyword list
- Develop Landing Page or Sales Page
- Develop Website
- Call to Action – (don't forget Beta testers)
- Email marketing / Marketing automation system
- Set launch date for Website/Landing Page
- Acquire contact information for visitors and investors
- Create drip campaign
- Create webinar for your beta or demo launch
- Deliver webinar for your launch
- Setup a blog site (within your website/landing page)
- Acquire domain
- Choose email/shared calendar provider
- Setup email addresses and CRM systems

### **Your Website Checklist**

Here is a list of everything you need to launch your website. It's also come handy when hiring a website designer to make sure they cover all of your basics!

## 30. Exit Strategies for Your Business

- Sell it to friendly buyer
- Liquidation
- Acquisition: sell it to a business who wants to buy and sell yours
- IPO (going public)