
Small Business Start-Up Checklist

Posted by Bryan - 2008/01/14 10:48

The following is a list of steps which provide a general guideline to anyone who is starting a new small business.

The Checklist

Read and thoroughly answer the preliminary questions in the Pre-Business Plan Start-Up Questionnaire.

Read and thoroughly answer the questions found within the Business Plan Guidelines

Prepare a written business plan, complete with pro-forma financial statements. This can serve as an operating guide as well as a financing prospectus.

Decide whether you wish to operate as a sole proprietorship, partnership, limited liability company or corporation. (for more information regarding this, see Small Business Identities)

If you decide not to incorporate and wish to protect the name of your business, you may file a TRADEMARK or SERVICE MARK with the Secretary of State's office.

If operating a business with a business name that is different from your given name, you must register that name in the CITY or TOWN where your business is located. This is called filing a d/b/a ("doing business as") and the fee varies slightly, according to your location.

Determine whether you need to obtain any state licenses or permits to operate your business. You should also inquire about local licenses or permits at your local town office or city hall.

Check with the local code enforcement officer to determine if your business will be in compliance with local zoning ordinances.

Miscellaneous Tasks

If you decide to incorporate, or if your partnership or proprietorship has employees, you will need to:

Register for a Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN). Complete and file IRS Form SS-4, EIN. You are required to file this if you: pay wages to one or more employees; or are required to have EIN to use on a specific return, statement or document (often banks will require this for business checking account); or plan to incorporate (in which case owners drawing salaries are considered employees). This form can be obtained from the nearest IRS office, or call 1-800-829-3676. IRS forms and publications can be downloaded from: [I.R.S. Wiki Page](#)

Register for Applicable State Income Tax Withholding. Complete and file the Application for Tax Registration from the State's Department of Labor.

Have employees complete and keep in employer's files: Employee's Withholding Certificate W-4 obtained from the IRS and Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 obtained from the U.S. Dept. of Immigration and Naturalization. This form can be downloaded from: [IRS](#) or call 1-800-829-4933.

Obtain Worker's Compensation Insurance from the business's insurance carrier.

Obtain and post the required labor posters that summarize the state's labor laws.

If you plan to sell a taxable product or service, you must obtain a State Sales Tax Number by filing the Application for Tax Registration with the State's Revenue Services.

If necessary, contact the State's Department of Labor or Bureau of Labor Standards to determine compliance with the Occupational Safety and Health Acts.

Contact an insurance agent regarding the necessary insurance coverage your business will require.

=====