

Ultimate Small Business Startup Checklist

This checklist is designed to guide you through the essential steps of starting your own small business. Print it out and check off each item as you go to stay organized and on track.

Research & Planning

- Define your business idea
- Research market demand & competitors
- Identify target customers
- Write a business plan

Legal & Administrative Setup

- Choose a business structure (LLC, sole prop, etc.)
- Register business name (DBA if needed)
- Apply for an EIN
- Register with state & local authorities
- Obtain necessary licenses/permits

Finances

- Open a business bank account
- Get a business credit card
- Set up bookkeeping/accounting system
- Understand sales tax obligations
- Explore funding/loans/grants

Branding & Online Presence

- Choose a business name & logo
- Buy domain name
- Create professional email address
- Build a website
- Set up social media accounts

Workspace & Equipment

- Decide on home office, commercial space, or shop

- Buy equipment, software, and tools
- Set up utilities/internet
- Purchase insurance (general liability, property, etc.)

Products & Services

- Define your offers clearly
- Price products/services correctly
- Set up supplier/vendor accounts
- Build product samples/portfolio

Marketing & Sales

- Develop marketing strategy
- Create branding materials (business cards, brochures, etc.)
- Launch digital ads or social campaigns
- Build customer email list
- Network with industry peers & partners

Operations & Growth

- Draft SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures)
- Hire and onboard employees/contractors
- Set KPIs (Key Performance Indicators)
- Review and adjust strategy regularly
- Avoid scaling too quickly

Ongoing Compliance & Protection

- File annual reports/taxes
- Renew licenses/permits
- Maintain insurance coverage
- Protect intellectual property
- Stay updated with legal obligations