

Launching a business?

Follow this checklist for a strong start.

Congratulations on making the decision to start your own business! Bringing your vision to life will be an exciting whirlwind. From picking a name to ordering business cards, there's much to accomplish. Follow our handy checklist so you don't miss a single step on the way to success.

Set the stage for success

Find a mentor or community

Gain insights to help avoid pitfalls and identify paths to success. [Find a SCORE Business Mentor near you.](#)

Add a co-founder or partner

Take time to divvy up the responsibilities and the profits, and put it in writing.

Assemble your pit crew

Your support team should include insurance professionals, vendors, employees, an accountant, and [an attorney or legal consultant.](#)

Get free advice, tools and templates

Tap into resources, such as your local Small Business Administration office, for tips on setting up your company. [Find your local Small Business Development Center.](#)

Lay the foundation

Choose your business name

Pick a catchy, memorable name, then [do a trademark search](#) to make sure it's not taken.

Determine your business structure

Is your business an LLC, partnership, corporation or S-corporation? Learn more about the [different types of business structures](#) to choose the one that is best for you.

Create a business plan

Include information about your goals, operating procedures, contingency plans, financials and so on. If a [full-blown business plan](#) feels too daunting, [start with a lean business plan.](#)

Register a domain name

A domain name is the address where internet users can access your website. [Try to get one that matches your business name](#), so it's easier for people to find you.

Make it official

Apply for an Employer Identification Number (EIN)

You'll need it to open a bank account and process payroll. [Apply for one](#) with the IRS.

Obtain the necessary licenses and permits

Though requirements vary by location, the SBA explains [where to find the licenses and permits that apply to your business](#). Here are some common licenses and permits you may need:

- Building permits
- Business licenses
- Certificate of occupancy
- Fire department permits
- Health department permits
- Property use permits
- Zoning and land use permits

Choose the right space for your business

Is the parking convenient? Is there room to grow? You may also want to consider [foot traffic, nearby businesses and tax costs](#). Before you sign a lease, ask an attorney to review its terms.

Figure out your finances

Find investors

There are numerous options for [funding your business](#). Look to banks, angel investors, family and friends, grants, and the general public.

Open a business bank account

Protect your personal finances, build credibility and save yourself a headache at tax time by opening a [bank account for your business](#). (Don't forget a business credit card too!)

Set up your accounting system

Choose an accounting program (such as Quickbooks®, Xero, Zoho Books or FreshBooks) to keep your books in order.

Order Deluxe eChecks

Enjoy the ease of traditional checks, but without paper, postage or waiting for the mail to be delivered. Take better control of your cash flow with the ability to send payments at the last possible moment — even the day they're due. All you need is the recipient's email address. See why business owners [prefer eChecks 3 to 1](#) over other payment solutions.

Build your brand

Create a logo

Your logo is the face of your company and your best chance at an excellent first impression. [Hire a professional designer](#) to create a memorable logo that makes a lasting impression, or [try your own hand at it](#).

Order business cards

You'll be doing a lot of networking, so [don't be caught without business cards](#).

Set up a website

A business without a website is not just missing out on potential customers. Not having a website damages your credibility as a business and makes it hard for search engines to find you. [Get a professional website](#) to attract attention and showcase your products and services.

Get registered on social media

Attract a following and connect with potential customers through your social media business pages. Start with profiles on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. [Manage your own social pages](#), or let a social media expert [do it for you](#).

Create a marketing plan

Create your plan by [answering a few questions](#) about your business and your goals. The marketing strategy that results will help ensure you don't miss any opportunities to promote your business.

Celebrate!

Throw a grand opening party

Invite friends, family, neighbors and everyone who helped along the way. Don't forget to include nearby businesses, too. Consider using [postcards or doorknob hangers](#) to reach more of the community. If your business is online-only, you can still celebrate by holding a sale, launching a membership program or running a special promotion like free shipping.

Looking for a partner?

Starting a business can be overwhelming. Deluxe has the insights and solutions you need to start strong and keep momentum. Talk with a Small Business Adviser today.

Call 866.240.8691.