Starting a Business Checklist

Thinking about starting a business? You're not alone. Every year, thousands of Welsh Entrepreneurs catch the entrepreneurial spirit, launching small businesses to sell their products or services. Some businesses thrive; many fail. The more you know about starting a business, the more power you have to form an organisation that develops into a lasting source of income and satisfaction.

For help with the beginning stages of operating a business, the following checklist is a great place to start.

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| Evaluate and Develop Your Business Idea | | |
| **Step** | **Description** | **Done** |
| 1 | Determine if the type of business suits you. |  |
| 2 | Do a SWOT analysis (write the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats |  |
| 3 | Write a business plan, including a Profit/Loss forecast and a cash flow analysis. |  |
| 4 | Find sources of start-up financing and start applications |  |
| 5 | Do a Personal Survival Budget |  |
| Decide on a Legal Structure for Your Business | | |
| 6 | Identify the number of owners of your business. |  |
| 7 | Decide how much protection from personal liability you'll need, which depends on your business's risks and your personal wealth |  |
| 8 | Consider and discuss taxation issues with your adviser |  |
| 9 | Consider whether your business would benefit from being able to sell shares |  |
| 10 | Research the various types of ownership structures. (Sole Trader,  Partnership, LLP, CIC, Limited Company , Social Enterprise) |  |
| 11 | Get more in-depth information before you settle on a structure. Talk to Business in Focus/ your mentor |  |

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| Choose a Name for Your Business | | |
| 12 | Think of several business names that might suit your company and its products or services. |  |
| 13 | If you will do business online, check if your proposed business names are available as domain names. |  |
| 14 | For sole traders and partnerships consider trademarking to protect the name and buying the Limited company for future expansion. Check there is nothing similar around that you could be potentially conflicting with. |  |
| 15 | For Limited Companies and LLPs: check the availability of your proposed names with companies House. |  |
| 16 | Do a trademark search of the proposed names still on your list. If a proposed name is being used as a trademark, eliminate it if your use of the name would confuse customers or if the name is already famous. |  |
| 17 | Choose between the proposed names that are still on your list. |  |
| Register Your Business Name | | |
| 18 | Register your business with Companies house as a limited company. |  |
| 19 | Register your business name as a trademark if you'll do business regionally or nationally and will use your business name to identify a product or service and want to protect it. |  |
| 20 | Purchase the domain name for your business name if you' intend to have an online presence. |  |
| Prepare Organisational Paperwork | | |
| 21 | Sole Trader (Keep Government Gateway ID and password. Keep UTR available) |  |
| 22 | Partnership - Sort out a Partnership Agreement |  |
| 23 | LLP /LTD Company, CIC - Memorandum and Articles, Keep a minutes book  Keep a share certificate book |  |
| 24 | For Limited companies - Sort out Shareholder Agreements |  |

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| Find a Business Location | | |
| **Step** | **Description** |  |
| 25 | Identify the features and fixtures your business will need. |  |
| 26 | Get quotes for putting in services and check against your business plan and cash flow |  |
| 27 | Decide what area would be best for your business and find out what the average rents are in those locations. |  |
| 28 | Make sure you can operate the type of business in the location you have chosen and that licences and permits are going to be achievable (If working from home, make sure your business activities won't violate any local planning laws on home businesses.) |  |
| 29 | Before signing a commercial lease, examine it carefully and negotiate the best deal. Avoid personal guarantees for leases. |  |
| File for License and Permits | | |
| 30 | Sign up for the Self Employment with then Inland Revenue for sole trader and partnerships. |  |
| 31 | Obtain relevant permits from Local Council as required. |  |
| 32 | Obtain UK licenses, such as specialised vocation-related licenses or environmental permits, if necessary. |  |
| 33 | Obtain any local planning permits |  |
| 34 | Register for Business rates. |  |
| Obtain Insurance | | |
| 35 | Determine what business property requires coverage. |  |
| 36 | Contact an insurance agent or broker to answer questions and give you policy quotes. |  |
| 37 | Obtain liability insurance on vehicles used in your business, including personal cars of employees used for business. |  |
| 38 | Obtain liability insurance for your premises if customers or clients will be visiting. |  |
| 39 | Obtain product liability insurance if you will manufacture hazardous products. |  |
| 40 | If you will be working from your home, make sure your homeowner's insurance covers damage to or theft of your business assets as well as liability for business-related injuries. |  |
| 41 | Consider health & disability insurance for yourself and your employees. Think about shareholder protection (for Limited companies) and Key person insurance. |  |
| Set Up Your Books | | |
| 42 | Decide whether to use the cash or accrual system of accounting. |  |
| 43 | Choose a start date for the business. |  |
| 44 | Set up a record keeping system for all payments to and from your business. |  |
| 45 | Consider hiring a bookkeeper or accountant to help you get set up. |  |
| 46 | Purchase small business accounting software |  |
| Set Up Tax Reporting | | |
| 47 | Familiarise yourself with the general tax scheme for your business structure. |  |
| 48 | Register for PAYE if applicable. |  |
| 49 | Register For VAT if applicable |  |
| 50 | Obtain the HMRC *Tax Calendar for Small Businesses.* |  |