HUMMINGBIRDS BOOKKEEPING & TAX SERVICES

Simple Business Startup Checklist

A practical starting point for future and new business owners. Check each item as you complete it, and use the notes area to track your next steps.

How to use this checklist
Not every item will apply to every business. Use this guide to organize your ideas, identify missing steps, and prepare questions for qualified legal, tax, insurance, or financial professionals.

1. Clarify Your Business Idea

- ☐ Define the product or service your business will offer.
- ☐ Identify the customers or clients you plan to serve.
- ☐ Research competitors, market demand, and typical pricing.
- ☐ Write a short statement explaining what makes your business different.
- ☐ Choose a realistic launch date and list your first three priorities.

2. Choose and Register the Business

- ☐ Choose a business name and research whether it is available.
- ☐ Choose an appropriate business structure, such as sole proprietorship, LLC, partnership, or corporation.
- ☐ Register the business with the appropriate state or local agencies, when required.
- ☐ Apply for an Employer Identification Number (EIN), when applicable.
- ☐ Identify required licenses, permits, assumed-name filings, or industry registrations.

3. Set Up the Financial Foundation

- ☐ Open a separate business checking account.
- ☐ Choose a bookkeeping method and accounting software.
- ☐ Create categories for income, expenses, assets, liabilities, and owner activity.
- ☐ Establish a secure process for saving receipts, invoices, contracts, and tax documents.
- ☐ Create a startup budget and estimate at least three months of operating expenses.
- ☐ Decide how customers will be invoiced and how payments will be accepted.

4. Prepare for Taxes and Compliance

- ☐ Identify federal, state, and local tax obligations that may apply.
- ☐ Determine whether estimated tax payments may be required.
- ☐ Create a calendar for tax filings, renewals, payroll deadlines, and other compliance dates.
- ☐ Create a process for tracking contractor payments and payroll, if applicable.
- ☐ Keep business and personal transactions separate.

Build a Business That Can Operate and Grow

The setup work continues after registration. Use this page to create practical systems for serving customers, managing risk, and measuring progress.

5. Protect the Business

- ☐ Review business insurance needs with a qualified insurance professional.
- ☐ Use written agreements, proposals, or engagement terms for customer work.
- ☐ Create secure processes for personal, financial, and customer information.
- ☐ Back up important records and limit access to sensitive information.
- ☐ Identify legal or regulatory requirements specific to your industry.

6. Plan How the Business Will Operate

- ☐ Document the basic steps for onboarding customers and delivering services.
- ☐ Set business hours, communication expectations, and payment terms.
- ☐ Create a method for tracking leads, customers, projects, and follow-ups.
- ☐ List the tools, equipment, subscriptions, and vendors needed to operate.
- ☐ Decide which tasks you will handle and which tasks should be outsourced.

7. Market and Measure the Business

- ☐ Create a simple website or professional online presence.
- ☐ Choose one or two realistic ways to attract customers.
- ☐ Create clear descriptions of your services, prices, and next steps.
- ☐ Track monthly revenue, expenses, cash flow, and unpaid invoices.
- ☐ Review results regularly and adjust pricing, expenses, or services when needed.

My Next Three Actions

1. _____ Target date: _____
2. _____ Target date: _____
3. _____ Target date: _____

Need help with the financial side of your business?
Visit www.hummingbirdsbktax.com or call 512-766-9096.

Educational use only. This checklist is not legal, tax, insurance, or financial advice.