

# START YOUR OWN BUSINESS

TEST VALLEY



Your local guide to setting up a successful business

- \* Business start-up guide
- \* Local & national support
- \* Test Valley directory
- \* How to start, step-by-step
- \* Useful start-up resources
- \* Free advice



First published in 2017 by  
Start Your Own Business Ltd  
[www.syob.net](http://www.syob.net)

© Start Your Own Business Ltd 2017

Every effort has been made to ensure the information contained in the book is accurate at the time of going to print. Businesses and organisations have been included in good faith but their inclusion should not be interpreted as a recommendation by the publishers, Enterprise First or Test Valley Borough Council. Please take advice before proceeding with any financial transaction.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, transmitted or stored in a retrieval system, in any form or by any means, without permission in writing from the publishers. This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, resold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publishers consent in any form of binding other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

# **Start Your Own Business In Test Valley**

Andy Pringle

## BUSINESS INCENTIVE GRANT FROM TEST VALLEY BC



*Photo: The Artroom, Andover receiving their Business Incentive Grant*

**Developing a competitive local economy is one of our corporate priorities. This grant is intended to make a positive contribution towards the cost of creating a small business.**

### **What is the Business Incentive Grant?**

Grants of £750 are available to new businesses starting up

### **Who Qualifies?**

Any new small business starting up

The business must be located within Test Valley

### **Any other rules?**

You should apply for the grant BEFORE you start the new business.

The new business start up must be full time, permanent and your only job. The grant cannot be paid to part time start up businesses.

Any planning/building control/licence or other necessary consent must have been obtained.

You will receive two visits from the Council: first to establish whether you are eligible and second after 6 months, to confirm the new business is still operating.

This will be determined by producing documentary evidence e.g. accounting records, invoices, receipts, bank statements in the name of the business and remittance advice etc. If the evidence is produced the grant will be paid.

Only one grant per business will be paid.

Normally you will receive a decision from the Council within 20 working days of the first visit.

Second visits must take place within one year of the initial visit. Applicants should request the second visit.

### **When will I get the money?**

Approximately 6 months after the initial visit a second visit will be arranged

### **How do I apply?**

Application forms may also be obtained from:

Test Valley Borough Council Estates and Economic Development Service, Beech Hurst, Weyhill Road, Andover, SP10 3AJ

David Gleave  
dgleave@testvalley.gov.uk  
Tel: 01264 368309



## Welcome

**This book has been produced as the result of a close working relationship between Enterprise First and Test Valley Borough Council. Both organisations are keen to support business, in particular new and small businesses, which require most help and which both are well-placed to offer.**

Furthermore Enterprise First and Test Valley Borough Council are keen to support businesses by working with as wide a circle of organisations as possible. In Test Valley there is a broad collaborative array of business membership and business networking groups including: Hampshire Chamber of Commerce, which now brings together Romsey, Stockbridge and Andover; the Andover and Romsey Mutual Business Groups, Andover Women in Business and many, many more. The annual Test Valley Business Awards is a perfect example of mutual support which also promotes and celebrates business excellence across the Valley.

This book is an extension of that collective support which inter-linked groups, the Council as well as Enterprise First and the EM3 and Solent Local Enterprise Partnerships offer.

Investing in Test Valley as a great place to work and do business is a Council priority. Supporting new and existing businesses is an obvious way of trying to achieve that goal. The means of doing so incorporates both special economic development programmes such as skills training grants, start-up funding and finance for new independent retailers, accessible expert advice and specialist premises for start ups but, significantly, a culture within the Council which signals “we are open for businesses and business-friendly”.

We hope you find this new source of information on starting your own business interesting and helpful. It is the first time we have brought together so much local and national material on self employment and see it as the start of a growing support network for Test Valley businesses.

**Councillor Peter Giddings**, TVBC Economic Portfolio Holder  
**David Gleave**, TVBC Economic Development Officer



## Free Start-Up Support

**Enterprise First is a not-for-profit company who have been helping new business start-ups in Hampshire since 1981 and they would love to help you too.**

Anyone considering starting a business or who has already become self-employed can receive expert advice on any matter through a variety of channels including face to face meetings as well as telephone, email or skype/facetime on an ongoing basis.

The services complements the other business support initiatives offered by Test Valley Borough Council, including start up grants (see next page) which have been offered for many years.

Dedicated support plus the available grants are part of a strategy to increase the number of business start-ups and self-employed people in Test Valley.

The service is Free and available to residents aged 18+

Appointments can be made by contacting Enterprise First

on 01252 319272

or emailing [info@enterprisefirst.co.uk](mailto:info@enterprisefirst.co.uk)

## CONTENTS

<b>Start Your Own Business</b>		Scirum	34
<b>In Test Valley</b>	<b>iii</b>	<b>Market Research</b>	<b>37</b>
www.syob.net/uk/business/Test+Valley	iii	Why do market research?	40
<b>Overview</b>	<b>ii</b>	Who are your customers?	40
Are you the right type of person?	13	What do they buy?	40
Why are you doing this?	13	Who are your competition?	40
Support of family and friends?	13	Field (practical) research	41
Are your circumstances suitable?	13	Questionnaires	41
Business idea	14	Undercover work	41
What are your skills?	14	Sources of information	41
Are you going to start from scratch?	14	<b>Business Planning</b>	<b>43</b>
Buy a business?	14	Are you really ready?	45
Buy a Franchise?	14	Getting started	46
Legal obligations	14	Executive summary	46
Planning	14	Vision	47
Research your idea and your market	16	Management	47
Prepare a business plan	16	Location	47
Start networking	16	Marketing strategy	47
Setting up	16	Products/services	47
Naming your business	16	Customers	48
Accountancy	19	Competition	48
HMRC (The Tax-man!)	19	Market research	48
Registering for VAT	19	Advertising & promotion	48
National Insurance	19	SWOT analysis	48
Legal issues	20	<b>Business Set-Up</b>	<b>53</b>
IT	20	Types of business structure	55
Furniture	21	Advantages and disadvantages	58
Telecoms	21	<b>Business Premises</b>	<b>63</b>
Stationery	21	Work from home	65
Insurance	21	Office or workspace	65
Summary	21	Lease	65
<b>Business Advice</b>	<b>23</b>	Purchase	65
Business support organisations	26	Licence	66
Adult education classes	26	Serviced offices	66
Business training courses	26	Useful property terms	66
Business exhibitions/seminars	26	<b>Finance &amp; Funding</b>	<b>75</b>
Mentoring organisations	26	How much do you need to start?	77
Networking	26	How much do you need to survive?	77
Open University	26	How much will you need in the early stages?	77
Andover Town Centre Partnership	29	How much do you need to raise?	77
Buy with Confidence Scheme	29	Other lending sources	78
Catalyst Centre	29	Use your personal assets	78
ENTERPRISE M3 LEP	30	Bring in partners	78
Federation of Small Business (FSB)	30	Persuade customers to pay upfront	78
Hampshire Chamber of Commerce	30	Friends or relatives	78
Hampshire Fare	30	Start Up Loan Fund	81
Invest in Hampshire	33		
Mentor-net	33		
Romsey Town Centre	34		

## CONTENTS

Bank loan	81	Packaging	102
Bank overdraft	81	Positioning	102
National Enterprise Allowance Scheme	81	People	102
Private investors	81	Spread the word	102
Competitions	82	Print	105
Peer-to-peer lending	82	Website	105
Prince's Trust	82	PR	105
European funding	82	Networking	106
Invoice financing	82	Customer service	106
Leasing and asset finance	82	Word of mouth	106
Business angels	82	Marketing plan	107
Venture capital	82	1. Start with the end in mind	107
Crowdfunding	82	2. Develop your 'Customer Avatar'	107
Research & Development Tax Credits	85	3. Your product 'Before & After Grid'	108
Funding finder	85	4. Marketing research	110
Better Business Finance	85	5. Communicating with and reaching your customers	110
The Gov.uk website	85	6. Pricing and costing	110
Your local authority	85	7. Competitor analysis	111
Your Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)	85	8. Pulling this together as a simple Marketing Plan	111
Your local Enterprise Agency	85		
GRANTfinder	85	<b>Business Networking</b>	<b>113</b>
Green Grants Machine	85	What is business networking?	115
j4bGrants	85	Why you should consider networking	115
UK Business Funding Centre	85	Where to look for events	116
		Before the event	116
<b>Accountancy &amp; Tax</b>	<b>87</b>	During the event	116
Cash flow	89	After the event	118
Bookkeeping	89		
Break-even analysis	89	<b>Websites &amp; SEO</b>	<b>125</b>
Balance sheet	89	What can a GOOD website do for you?	127
Taxation and VAT	89	Open 24 hours	127
Forecasting	90	Cost effective advertising	128
Working capital	90	Fast, easy, cheap communication	128
National Insurance	93	Why use a professional web designer?	128
Records	93	Where to start?	128
Accounting period	93	What do you really need?	128
Business expenses	93	The right domain name	128
Allowable business expenses	94	Business hosting	128
Capital expenditure	94	Email	129
Private expenses	94	Design	129
Motor expenses	94	What do you really need on the site?	129
Capital allowances	94	Content	129
Bank Account	94	Prioritise your content	129
Summary	94	Support for the future	129
		How do you know if it's working?	131
<b>Marketing</b>	<b>99</b>	Use it!	131
Market research	101	Do I need to spend money on a site?	131
The 7 Ps of marketing	101	How do I select a designer?	131
Product/service	101	Costs and comparing quotes	131
Place	102	Conclusion	131
Price	102		
Promotion	102		



## CONTENTS

SEO	131	Employers' liability insurance	160
How a search engine works	132	Commercial motor insurance	160
Algorithms	132	Other types of insurance	161
SEO ranking factors	132	Commercial property insurance	161
Who is your "Joe"?	135	Buildings insurance	162
Which digital marketing platforms work?	135	Contents insurance	162
The most effective channels and platforms for your business	136	Business interruption	162
		Professional Indemnity Insurance	162
		'Key-man' insurance	163
		Credit risk insurance	163
		Terrorism / kidnap insurance	163
		Conclusion	163
		Quote, unquote	163
<b>Online Marketing &amp; Social Media</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>Common Mistakes</b>	<b>165</b>
What is online marketing & why do it?	139	Inadequate market research	167
Search engine optimisation (SEO)	139	Failing to plan effectively	167
Pay per click advertising (PPC)	139	Spending too much	167
Email marketing	140	Lack of knowledge	168
Blogs	140	Inaccurately defining the market	168
Social media	140	Mismanagement	168
What is social media?	141	Lack of contacts and services	168
What are the benefits?	141	Ineffective marketing	168
How to get started?	141	Failing to rectify mistakes	168
Get connected	141	Refusing to delegate	169
Twitter	142	Time management	169
Other channels	143	You have to be self-motivating	169
Social media tips	143	Starting a business takes energy	169
		You have to be aware	169
		You need to adjust to uncertainty	169
		Conclusion	169
<b>Employing Staff</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>Start-Up Directory</b>	<b>171</b>
What can you do: improving the effectiveness of recruitment?	147	Advice & Support	172
The recruitment process	148	Banks	172
Avoiding the pitfalls	148	Business Information	173
		Clubs & Associations	174
		Education	175
		Exhibitions	175
		Funding	175
		Government Sites	175
		Law	175
		Marketing	175
		Mentoring	176
		Networking	176
		Publications	177
		Start-Up Websites	177
		About the Author	180
		Start Your Own Business Website	180
		Can you help local start-ups?	180
		Thankyou	180
<b>Business Law</b>	<b>151</b>		
UK laws	153		
Working from home	153		
Commercial property	153		
Franchises	153		
Contract law	153		
Licenses	154		
Health and safety	154		
Trading Regulations	154		
Employment	154		
Insurance	154		
Data protection	154		
Intellectual property	154		
Terms & conditions	154		
Legal advice	154		
<b>Insurance</b>	<b>157</b>		
Risk management	159		
Insurance overview	159		
The non-negotiable	160		



# 1

## Overview

---

**This chapter gives you a whistle-stop tour of the key considerations. The order is less important than the content and most of the subjects are covered in more detail later in the book.**

---

**PERSONAL CHECKLIST**



**Are you the right type of person to start your own business?**  
**This list of questions, if answered honestly, should help you find out.**

Question.	Yes	?	No
Do you get on well with other people?	_____	_____	_____
Are you a self-starter?	_____	_____	_____
Are you persistent?	_____	_____	_____
Are you healthy?	_____	_____	_____
Are you a leader (or a follower)?	_____	_____	_____
Are you prepared to cold call/sell?	_____	_____	_____
Are you financially stable?	_____	_____	_____
Are you prepared to take (calculated) risks?	_____	_____	_____
Are you prepared to take professional advice?	_____	_____	_____
Are you really serious about the idea?	_____	_____	_____
Do you have the support of your loved ones?	_____	_____	_____
Do you have experience in this type of business?	_____	_____	_____
Do you have self-confidence?	_____	_____	_____
Can you handle stress?	_____	_____	_____
Are you prepared for long hours?	_____	_____	_____
Can you take criticism?	_____	_____	_____
Do you like completing checklists? Only joking!	_____	_____	_____

If you answered 'yes' to all of the above questions, you are either perfect for the role or you have an unrealistic view of your own capabilities/situation. If like most people, you have some 'no's', do not be put off - simply review those questions and ask yourself how you can turn the 'No's' into 'Yes's'.

## BUSINESS START-UP OVERVIEW

# Is it for you?

**Being self-employed or running a business does not suit everyone. You need to have a passion for what you are doing, may have to put up with stress, loss of sleep, and lack of money. Sounds great doesn't it?**

The upside can be freedom, not having to answer to 'the boss', the opportunity to do something that you love, and the possibility of uncapped income.

### Are you the right type of person?

Thankfully, there are no formal qualifications required to start your own business and anyone can have a go. The truth is only the most determined and hard working survive. If you love what you are doing or can convert a hobby into a business, you stand a much better chance of success.

*(See checklist overleaf)*

### Why are you doing this?

Many people think that the biggest reason for starting a business is to make a fortune. Whilst this is certainly true for some, the majority of small business people probably earn less than their employed counterparts. Independence, creating something new, flexible hours, and personal satisfaction are far better, long lasting incentives. The desire to make money is not usually enough by itself to get you out of bed on a cold and miserable morning when not everything is going to plan.

### Support of family and friends?

Do you have the support of your nearest and dearest? Stress and lack of money can put a strain on any household even without the added pressure of running a new business. It is best to make sure that your nearest and dearest are 100% behind you before you begin.

**TOP TIP!** Although your venture may occupy the greater part of your brain for much of the time, try and make sure that it is not to the exclusion of those around you. It is very easy to become a business bore (as my wife will testify).

### Are your circumstances suitable?

Self-employment can provide a realistic alternative career if your circumstances make it difficult to find or hold onto a job. The flexibility and wide range of choices make it possible for anyone to set up on their own. Single parents, people with disabilities, the unemployed and ex-offenders are often able to support themselves without the need for benefits. However, it is worth pointing out that it is not a good idea to see this as a reliable method of clearing existing debt.

### "QUOTE, UNQUOTE"

*"If you want sleepless nights, either have a baby or start a business"*



## BUSINESS START-UP OVERVIEW



### Business idea

Whether you have identified a gap in a market, are planning to buy an existing business or buy a franchise, you need to make sure that the idea is viable and this section is designed to help you consider your options.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Enterprising student Alex Tew sold enough tiny ads on his website to fund his way through university. Tew, 21, decided to offer spots for a dollar on his [www.milliondollarhomepage.com](http://www.milliondollarhomepage.com) as part of a cunning scheme to raise cash.

### What are your skills?

Think very carefully about your strengths and weaknesses and be honest with yourself. You are unlikely to be able to do everything yourself – certainly not effectively. A successful Business requires sales, administration, accounting, and strong marketing, as well as the core trade/product/idea/profession. The way to succeed is to ‘do all the bits that you can do well, and get help for the rest’.

### Are you going to start from scratch?

Setting up something completely new can be extremely exciting – but challenging. In addition to your core skill, you will have to quickly get to grips with many more tasks which in corporate life are handled by somebody else. With so many different things to think about, it can be easy to overlook something. (See chapter entitled *Common Mistakes*.)

### Buy a business?

Buying an existing business is a good way to leapfrog much of the set up process. Although the cost of purchase may be higher than if you started from scratch, you do gain a trading concern from day one and should be able to get a realistic idea of the potential turnover/profits from the audited accounts.

### Buy a Franchise?

Franchising is the granting of a license by one person (the franchisor) to another (the franchisee), which entitles the franchisee to trade under the trademark/trade name of the franchisor in exchange for a fee.

### Legal obligations

There is a difference between what the law requires you to do in order to start a new business and, depending on your own experience, what you ought to do in order to stand the best chance of thriving. We have tried to cover both and you can learn more about what the law requires: HMRC Tax Status; legal entity (eg sole trader, partnership, limited company etc) in the chapter entitled ‘Business Set Up’.

### Planning

When you are excited about the prospect of stating your business, the planning stage can seem tiresome, however I cannot overstate the importance of this part of the process. Researching your idea thoroughly, preparing a business plan, and a cash flow forecast are vital components of a SUCCESSFUL business (even if you do not need to approach a lender for money – remember, this is for YOU). Simply going through the exercise will serve as a great reality check and will ensure that you have at least thought about all of the key considerations.

**TOP TIP.** There is a temptation to worry that someone else will ‘get in first’ – however this fear is usually completely unfounded. Do not rush – it is better to take your time and get it right. (This will also give you a better chance against any ‘new’ competition if it does exist.)

## WORKING 5 TO 9



**As a teenager, I placed an advert in our local paper, which read something like: 'Investor wanted for a potentially profitable new business idea.'**

To my pleasant surprise, I received a call from someone who asked all the right questions and obviously liked the answers because he agreed to back the venture (a printed guide showing how to get to all football league clubs... long before the Internet).

It transpired that he was a very wealthy businessman and proved to be as good as his word - the guide was printed and we made a profit. However, I was also keen to learn the secrets of his success. He believed that one reason was that his day started at 5am - I have to confess that, at the time, this just sounded like a waste of good sleeping time!

It is only in more recent years that I have 'woken up' to why this may well have played a far bigger role than I gave credit for at the time.

- Working from 5 until 9 (am) gains you 'bonus' hours before the phone starts to ring, e-mails alerts drive you mad (don't open your inbox unless clearing incoming mail is one of your top priorities) and everyday life takes over.
- It is claimed that the lack of distraction and the ability to really focus on tasks means that these hours could be worth double their 9am to 5pm equivalents.
- If you are thinking about starting a new business but are still in employment, this could be the perfect time to undertake research and business planning without interfering with your work commitments. It may also mean that you can retain your salary for longer while building solid foundations for your new enterprise.
- Family and/or social life can still go on as normal (but try not to burn the candle at both ends - you still need a good night's sleep).

There is something quite peaceful and magical about the sun coming up and the birds singing, which makes it easier to think positively and work harder. Having said that, not every one is a 'morning person' and this will be much easier for some people rather than others. My brain is at it's sharpest (no comments please) after a good night's sleep whereas you may be a late person and so working at the reverse end of the day may suit you better.

### The 1 Thing

One of my favourite books is 'The 1 Thing' by Gary Keller. It is a recommended read, particularly if you have a typically entrepreneurial mind which likes to jump around from one thought/subject to another (like mine). The main theme of the book centres around identifying the goals which you want to achieve, breaking them down into long, medium, and short term actions with the most important being the 'one thing' that you can do NOW.

Gary also advocates that your 'one thing' for the day should be tackled before ANYTHING else (yes, even including checking your e-mails and Facebook). This ties in beautifully with the working 5 to 9 philosophy and I can testify that the feeling of satisfaction that comes from achieving an objective before most people have woken up gives you a lift for the rest of the day and every other achievement then feels like a bonus.

PS: The time now is 6.25 AM!

## BUSINESS START-UP OVERVIEW

### Research your idea and your market

Time spent on researching will be valuable – whatever you discover. Do not be afraid to find bad news. It is better to uncover direct competition or flaws in your plan at this early stage rather than when it is likely to cost you real money. Use the Internet, books, magazines, trade press, and libraries. Talk to business advisors, friends, relatives, and other business people.

**TOP TIP.** Learn as much as you can about your competition or how similar businesses work in other areas (there is no better way to find their strengths and weaknesses).

### Prepare a business plan

There are plenty of sites on the web offering to sell you sample plans but be wary before parting with any cash. Some of the more sector specific examples may be useful, but you should be able to find free templates. Alternatively, your bank or accountant will almost certainly be able to offer you one without charge. *(We have a free template which can be downloaded from [syob.net/business-plan.php](http://syob.net/business-plan.php))*

### Create a cash flow forecast

Sadly, money rarely comes in or goes out at the most convenient time (for example you may have to pay for your stock before you can sell it). A cash flow forecast will help you work out roughly what you can expect financially in the future – even if some of it will have to be based upon guesswork. This is vital information, particularly if you are planning to borrow money – it is best to plan for the maximum amount that you will need rather than having to keeping going back to your lender asking for more. *(Download a free cashflow template and instructions from [syob.net/cashflow.php](http://syob.net/cashflow.php))*

**TOP TIP.** Most businesses have peaks and troughs – planning ahead will help you survive the quieter times. A landscape gardener may be well advised to save some of his summer income to carry through the winter months when work could be harder to find. How does this relate to you?

### Start networking

Networking is a great way to make new business contacts (and to put on weight). Often run as breakfast, lunch or social events, it is an opportunity to get to know other local business people and if handled correctly, may ultimately lead to more custom. There will be many formal and informal networks near you. Your local Chamber of Commerce may be a good starting point but there are also plenty of national and local networks and it is a good idea to try a few to see which suit you best before committing to a joining fee.

### Setting up

Making sure that you are completely prepared for ‘take off’ involves a great deal of thought and planning. The more that you can do in advance, the more time that you will have later to concentrate on actually running the business.

**TOP TIP!** This is an exciting stage and enjoyable because it is completely within your control and usually involves making other people happy by giving them money. However, do not get carried away with expenditure and never let the planning distract you from thinking about where your income is going to come from.

### Naming your business

It is often harder to name a new business than we think. It seems like you should be able to come up with something catchy and run with it, but it isn't that simple. You must investigate the possibility that someone else has already chosen the name, and, if so, what their rights are to use it in the area/market you will be serving.

1. Look in your local directories
2. Undertake a ‘Google’ search.
3. If you are setting up a Limited Company, the Companies House website offers a search facility: [www.companieshouse.gov.uk](http://www.companieshouse.gov.uk)
4. Check to make sure that your domain (website) name is available.





Mario Troullis of Trou Digital receiving his Business Incentive Grant from Councillor Mrs Alison Finlay with Peter Birkett, Chief Executive of the University of Southampton Science Park

## LINDY'S STORY



**I found myself as a redundant single parent at the age of 51, having only lived in Andover for a couple of years.**

The redundancy came as somewhat of a shock. However, I was always a driven person with the ambition of having my own business and thought to myself 'don't panic, do something that you enjoy doing'. I loved to cook, so I enrolled on a NVQ course at a local college, got the bug, and completed my Level 3 in Chef Skills.

Newly qualified, I needed to put these new-found skills into action. So, I did some research about local companies providing catering services on business estates in Andover. The area was up and coming, lots of opportunities and development. I had some corporate background experience so I knew what I needed to focus on. To my amazement, there was no offering for any companies on the estate to get a decent lunch or brunch on the whole estate – without them having to travel into the town centre, there were no cash point machines, no news agents, Costa, Tesco Express etc. So, that was my USP as I saw it ... Lindys.

The first six months were difficult. I was running the company as a 'one man band' This meant keeping up with all the strict compliance aspects of running a catering company, trying to market the company, and do the job at the same time.

However, within 10 months, the business started to grow, people got to hear about us and we introduced our corporate hospital catering side.

When we were then approached by a large organisation on the Walworth Estate as asked if we could introduce the 'Lindys' model on their premises, providing the service to approximately 150 staff and all their hospitality and corporate catering. At virtually the same time, we were also approached by another major company which were relocating to Andover and asked to do daily lunches for their staff, approximately 300 lunches per week.

We have also recently done the Christmas Business Luncheon for our Mayor for 80 people. We have amazing local clients, we always listen to their needs and adjust our offering accordingly. We are a small, happy and motivated team. We were very thrilled to have won Small Business of the Year in 2016.

Andover is a community spirited town. Local business people help and support each other – I have mentoring meetings for a few other business owners in Andover, whereby we can share, debate and brainstorm certain challenges we all face knowing that there is always someone to ask – when you don't have that second challenging hat to wear! I believe, Andover is fast becoming one of the most sought after areas for various reasons: the location, the housing development projects, the support and guidance from the local authority, and of course the local community.

### Lindy Darmanin

Lindy's Canteen

[www.lindyscatering.co.uk](http://www.lindyscatering.co.uk)

Tel: 01264 342 802

## BUSINESS START-UP OVERVIEW

### Accountancy

Keeping track of income and expenditure is vital to the financial health of any business, as is complying with the demands of the revenue! Careful planning, book-keeping and compiling annual accounts are often best left to someone with the required experience and skills – an accountant or qualified book-keeper.

If you operate a profitable business, a good accountant will save you a lot of aggravation and possibly money too! The tax laws are complex and an accountancy fees can sometimes be covered by their knowledge of how to legally minimise the amount of tax that you have to pay.

**TOP TIPS!** Shop around (personal recommendations are best). Always agree fees in advance. Do not be tempted by offers of 'creative' accounting to save you tax – HMRC deal with enough accountants to know the good from the bad and who is most likely to be 'trying it on'!

### HMRC (The Tax-man!)

HMRC (Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs), is responsible for collecting the bulk of our tax. Their website has a very informative section dedicated to starting a business and I would strongly recommend that you have a look:

<https://www.gov.uk/working-for-yourself/overview>

There are a number of key dates that you must remember, but these vary depending upon the legal status of your business and whether or not you employ staff. We cover this in more detail later in the book but all of the up-to-date information can be found at the HMRC website: [www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk)

**DID YOU KNOW?** In the early days of the web, an accountancy practice in Hertfordshire were quick of the mark and registered [www.inlandrevenue.co.uk](http://www.inlandrevenue.co.uk) as their domain name.

### Registering for VAT

Value Added Tax (VAT) Value Added Tax (VAT) is a tax on certain goods and services supplied in the UK. At the moment, you only have to register for VAT when your 'taxable turnover' is more than the current threshold (see: <https://www.gov.uk/vat-registration-thresholds>). More information about VAT: [www.gov.uk/topic/business-tax/vat](http://www.gov.uk/topic/business-tax/vat)

### National Insurance

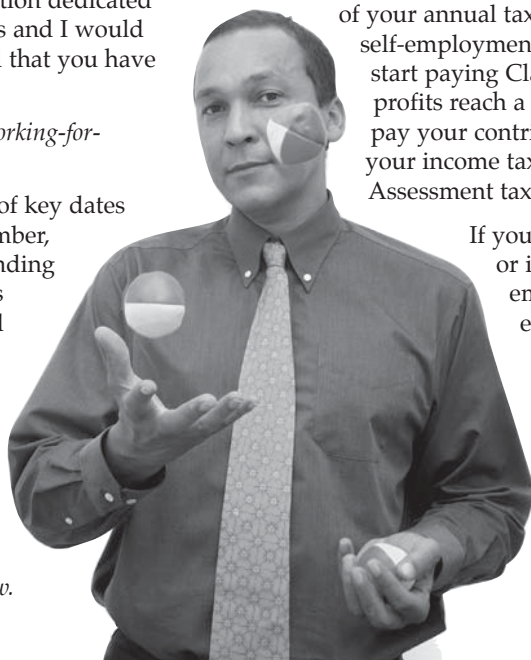
Almost everyone who works for a living pays N.I. It goes toward pensions, benefits and healthcare. Class 2 NICs are payable by anyone who is self-employed.

**Class 2 National Insurance** is a fixed weekly amount, paid by monthly direct debit or quarterly bill. When you register as self-employed, you will also fill in the Class 2 direct debit form. See: <https://www.gov.uk/self-employed-national-insurance-rates>

**Class 4 NICS** are payable by most self-employed people. They are a percentage of your annual taxable profit from self-employment, but you only start paying Class 4 when your profits reach a certain limit. You pay your contributions along with your income tax using the Self Assessment tax return.

If you are in a partnership, or if your spouse is self-employed too, then each person pays their own Class 4 NICs.

If you are an employer, then you will also have to pay Class 1 – and possibly Class 1A or Class 1B – on employees' wages.



## BUSINESS START-UP OVERVIEW

### Legal issues

There are numerous areas of the Law that may prompt you to seek professional legal assistance.

Examples can include: company / commercial issues, commercial agreements / contracts, company and business sales and purchases, company formation / business start-ups, contract advice, joint ventures, mergers, acquisitions and disposals, minority shareholder rights, partnership agreements, raising capital, share schemes, shareholder agreements, terms and conditions of business, restructuring your business, agency & distribution agreements, franchise agreements, commercial property issues.

**Find a Solicitor.** Run by the Law Society, Find a Solicitor is a free service for anyone looking for information about organisations or people providing legal services in England and Wales that are regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA).  
<http://solicitors.lawsociety.org.uk>

### Office equipment

In a well set up office, the equipment, the systems and the environment all contribute to making you and your business more efficient. Instead of cobbling your office together as you go it is far better to plan it properly from the start.

### IT

With most people, starting a new business means investing blood, sweat and tears into their new idea and working hard to see it grow into something to be proud of. It usually also means investing a fair amount of money. If this hard earned cash is invested in the wrong area it can quickly disappear. This is particularly relevant when it comes to IT. Neither the hardware, software nor support come cheap and if you get it wrong you can suddenly find a large hole in your finances replacing the wrong systems. Carefully consider what you are likely to need to support your immediate and future needs.

## ARE YOU A DAYDREAMER?

**Do you spend hours staring out of your office window thinking about all of the other, far more interesting, things you could be doing? No?**

Are you telling the truth?

You may not have to deny it for much longer because new research has found that daydreamers are often the people who make the best entrepreneurs. So... dream on

A report by Barclays Local Business has revealed how employees who show signs of distraction are the ones more likely to get out and start their own businesses. Nearly half of today's bosses admit they planned their entrepreneurial future while daydreaming in their previous employment.

So bosses should stop worrying about social networking sites such as Facebook distracting workers. People now admit that their biggest office pastime other than their job of course, is staring into space and planning how to launch an empire.

John Davis, marketing director for Barclays Local Business, says: "This survey highlights what many bosses have probably suspected for a long time – that for some employees, their current job is the last thing on their mind when they are at work. However, while they may be wasting their employer's time, they are not necessarily being idle, as they are planning for their own future."



# BUSINESS START-UP OVERVIEW



## Furniture

Your business space should be planned carefully, as the right equipment and furniture will not only save you time and effort, but money, too. Old or inconvenient furniture results in a messy workspace, loss of productivity and can eventually lead to back or wrist pain. When you depend on yourself for your income, any time you are not working to your full productivity, you are losing money.

## Telecoms

Advances in technology have dramatically changed the way that we communicate with each other. Mobile phones, broadband and wireless technology all have a part to play in a successful modern business.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Apparently, radiation emissions from mobile phones could place users at risk of brain conditions including Alzheimer's disease. Texting can lead to repetitive strain injury and a London doctor has reported that too much use of a mobile phone could result in osteoarthritis in your thumb! Don't you just love progress?

## Stationery

There is a massive cost difference between buying small and large quantities of stationery. Calculate what you are likely to need to cover you for a reasonable period and then shop around.

Compare local wholesaler's prices as well as internet/mail order.

[www.viking-direct.co.uk](http://www.viking-direct.co.uk)

[www.ukofficedirect.co.uk](http://www.ukofficedirect.co.uk)

[www.ryman.co.uk](http://www.ryman.co.uk)

[www.eurooffice.co.uk](http://www.eurooffice.co.uk)

## Insurance

For peace of mind, please carefully consider whether your business needs insurance. It is one of those costs that sometimes can be 'saved' but then prove costly later.

The types of insurance that you may be applicable are: Public Liability (essential if you are dealing with members of the public), Employers Liability, Professional Indemnity, Key Man, Director's Insurance, Equipment, Buildings & Contents Cover, Motor Insurance, Goods in Transit, Legal Expenses Insurance. Speak to a reputable broker if you are in any doubt.

## Association of British Insurers

[www.abi.org.uk](http://www.abi.org.uk)

## Summary

There is plenty to think about if you want your business to stand the best chance of success. Many of the topics touched upon in this section are explained in more detail further on in this book. However, we would strongly recommend that you make the most of the professional business advice – much of which is free – that is available



Visit [syob.net](http://syob.net) to find local help



# 2

## **Business Advice**

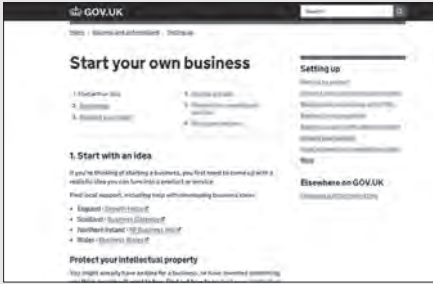
---

**As you will have already realised, there is a lot to learn and a multitude of new skills to be mastered. The good news is that you don't have to face this alone. There is plenty of support out there and this chapter should give you a better idea of what is available and where.**

---

# START-UP WEBSITES

Although there is no real substitute for practical business advice from an experienced adviser, there is an enormous amount of useful information online for start-ups.



**Gov.uk**  
[www.gov.uk/starting-up-a-business](http://www.gov.uk/starting-up-a-business)



**Business is Great (Britain)**  
[www.greatbusiness.gov.uk](http://www.greatbusiness.gov.uk)



**National Enterprise Network**  
[www.nationalearnerprisenetork.org](http://www.nationalearnerprisenetork.org)



**Startups**  
[www.startupdonut.co.uk](http://www.startupdonut.co.uk)



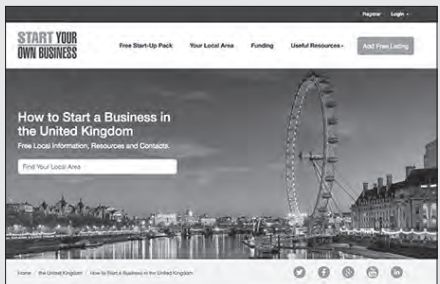
**smarta**  
[www.smarta.com](http://www.smarta.com)



**newbusiness**  
[www.newbusiness.co.uk](http://www.newbusiness.co.uk)



**Start Up Donut**  
[www.startupdonut.co.uk](http://www.startupdonut.co.uk)



**Start Your Own Business**  
[www.syob.net](http://www.syob.net)



## BUSINESS ADVICE

# You can't know everything

Taking advice from the right people will dramatically increase your chances of success and here is a summary of what help is available and where you can find it.



If you only learn one thing away from this book, please can it be that getting a second pair of eyes to have a look at your plan is probably the one single action that will have the most impact on your chances of setting up a sustainable business... as long as they belong to the right person.

Recent statistics unfortunately do re-enforce the belief that up to 80% of new businesses do not last beyond their first anniversary. However, they also show that over 80% of those who sought professional advice prior to launch not only survive, they thrive.

It has to be admitted that one of the key influencing factors is that experienced business advisers or support agencies see it as part of their duty to try and prevent inappropriate ideas from ever starting in the first place. Please do not let this put you off. It is better to find out before you commit time and money to something that is unlikely to work. You can then re-shape your plan accordingly.

An appropriate saying at this point is "you don't know what you don't know"!

In my experience, there are three possible outcomes when a potential start-up asks for help.

## 1. You are not the right type of person

Some people are just not suited to running their own business but this is the least common of the three options. It sometimes has to be accepted that either a person's personality or circumstances may make conventional employment a more sensible option.

## 2. You are suited but the idea is flawed

In this case, it is possible to investigate further to assess whether the idea is basically sound but in need of change or if it should be shelved altogether.

A proposition which has little chance of survival is best forgotten and effort put into finding a better idea. Just because this particular enterprise was not right, it does not mean that you should take the news personally and assume that you aren't suitable either. Going through the exercise will have been informative and will help shape future thinking by highlighting what should be avoided next time.

If the idea is a good one but contains weaknesses, an independent adviser will be able to use their previous experience and knowledge to help you iron out the wrinkles and in doing so possibly save you a lot of wasted energy and expense.

## 3. Both you and the business are ideal

In this instance, it will have done you no harm to have gone through a sanity check and to be re-assured that you are heading in the right direction.

In conclusion, you have nothing to lose!

The following pages contain details of local and national business support agencies but also some ideas of where you can find out more information (online and off line) about starting a business.

## BUSINESS ADVICE

### Business support organisations

Historically, government-funded programmes like Business Link dominated the support landscape and provided a whole host of free services. This picture has been changing noticeably over the past few years and the number of available schemes has reduced dramatically. Even so, there are still a number of business support organisations who would love to help you and some still do offer some free guidance for qualifying individuals. It is best to get in touch or check their website to see what is currently available.

### Adult education classes

In recent years, the number of students enrolled in further education increased by 37 percent, to over 4million. Many classes, particularly those related to starting a business, are held in the evening. To find out what courses are available near you, ask your local schools and colleges for a prospectus.

### Business training courses

Both commercial organisations and not-for-profit support agencies may offer subject specific seminars which could prove useful. Marketing, bookkeeping and social media are current favourites and these are generally delivered by experts in each field.

### Business exhibitions/seminars

If you can spare the time away from your business, attending relevant exhibitions is a very effective method of learning. In addition to the collection of stands (which could provide ideas, potential suppliers or customers) there are generally plenty of free seminars and opportunities to network.

- Business Start Up Exhibition  
([www.bstartup.co.uk](http://www.bstartup.co.uk))
- Growing Your Own Business  
([www.sme-events.com](http://www.sme-events.com))
- The Business Show  
(<http://www.greatbritishbusinessshow.co.uk>)
- The Business Growth Show  
(<http://thebusinessgrowthshow.com>)

### Learndirect

Can help you create a structured programme of learning, to suit your goals and objectives and they can also see if funding is available. If you're looking to top up existing skills with an online course, and learn independently, you can get started straight away. [www.learndirect.co.uk](http://www.learndirect.co.uk)

### Mentoring organisations

Finding a mentor is another great way of tapping into knowledge and experience. This could be someone who already operates a business or has done so in the past. Alternatively, some banks participate in a scheme which enables their managers to work with business owners free of charge (see BBA below).

- Mentorsme  
<http://www.mentorsme.co.uk>
- British Bankers Association (BBA)  
<https://www.bba.org.uk>
- Institute of Enterprise and Entrepreneurs  
<https://ioee.uk>
- SFEDI Directory  
<https://sfedidirectory.co.uk>
- Prince's Trust  
<https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/help-for-young-people/support-starting-business>

### Networking

Networking allows you to meet other business owners, who may well have stories to tell that will help you develop your own enterprise. There is often the opportunity to for speakers to share their expertise. See our networking section for more hints and tips.

### Open University

Want to study in your own time, in your own home or workplace? Then the Open University is for you. You can choose a course from one of the 580 on offer. Each course you take earns points towards a qualification such as a degree, a diploma or a certificate. Most courses have no entry requirements. <http://www.open.ac.uk>

## TEST VALLEY BUSINESS AWARDS



**Now in its twelfth year, The Test Valley Business Awards is well established as the ideal platform for all Test Valley businesses, especially new and smaller enterprises, to gain the recognition they need to grow; celebrating achievements and providing invaluable networking opportunities in a relaxed atmosphere.**

Each year, the Test Valley Business Awards is punctuated by 2 events; a widely anticipated launch event, marking the opening of the application process, and a prestigious Gala Awards Dinner where the year's winners are announced.

Typically attended by almost 200 local business representatives, the Test Valley Business Awards Gala Awards Dinner stands at the forefront of local business events - keeping the business community connected and giving businesses reasons to celebrate, year upon year.

**<http://www.tvbawards.org.uk/>**

## TEST VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL



**The Council's Corporate Plan 2015 - 2019, 'Investing in Test Valley', sets out four strategic aims for maintaining and improving quality of life in Test Valley over the next four years and beyond.**

<http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/aboutyourcouncil/corporatedirection/equality---diversity/>

The Corporate Plan outlines the Council's vision and priorities for the Borough for the next four years. It will set our direction and provide a focus for our activities and services. As a result, it will inform decision making and allocation of resources across the Council.

Investing in a great place to work and do business is one of those 4 priorities. Under this priority there are 5 key themes the first of which is to pursue opportunities that will help support businesses in Test Valley.

The Council prides itself on its range of business support which is aimed particularly at new and small businesses because they need most help and because district councils like Test Valley are best-placed to deliver it.

The Council offers a variety of initiatives including 3 main grants, expert business advice, easy in-easy out business premises, referral to expert organisations and a corporate culture which is "business-friendly."

In September 2016 Neil Eames, Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) Development Manager for Dorset, Hampshire and Isle of Wight, presented the best

overall small business-friendly council award to Leader of the Council, Councillor Ian Carr. Neil also presented Councillor Carr with the David Ramsden commemorative award for Outstanding Commitment to Supporting Small Business in recognition of the Council's hard work over the eight years in which the FSB has been running the initiative.

Neil said: *"These awards acknowledge councils who are proactively supporting the local micro and small business community. We are delighted to recognise the significant and considerable work undertaken by TVBC and we are keen to help promote such examples of best practice to all councils to help support our local business community. The Federation of Small Businesses looks to the region's local authorities to help create the environment for small businesses to survive and thrive, and we look forward to continuing working with Test Valley Borough Council and other councils to keep this momentum going."*

Councillor Ian Carr said: *"I'm delighted that the FSB has recognised our hard work again this year. We are particularly grateful for the David Ramsden commemorative award which acknowledges the longevity of our hard work. The Council is committed to supporting the local economy. We have various grants available to new business owners and we also offer ongoing support such as networking events and business fair opportunities. I would encourage anyone who is considering setting up a business in Test Valley to get in touch with the Council to find out more about how we can help."*

<http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/business>

## LOCAL SUPPORT

# Local Business Support

Do make the most of the help and guidance that is available both locally and nationally. Here is a selection of what can be found in the area.



## Andover Town Centre Partnership

The Andover Town Centre Partnership (ATCP) is a business-led organisation with the key aim of bringing more people into Andover town centre, encouraging them to stay longer, use town centre businesses more often and want to return more frequently. The Partnership represents a number of interests in the town and carry out an annual Action Plan of key improvements in order to attract more visitors into Andover Town Centre.

Our current members include the following, all of whom receive a range of benefits including discounts on a number of services, frequent updates on key town centre issues, affiliate membership of the Hampshire Chamber of Commerce and the ability to be involved in a range of events & promotions:

- Independent retailers.
- National retailers.
- Pubs, hotels, cafes & restaurants.
- Professional sector businesses.
- Local authority & voluntary sector organisations.

To find out more, please visit [www.andovertcp.co.uk](http://www.andovertcp.co.uk)

## Bridging the Gap Armed Forces

<http://solentlep.org.uk/>

The Solent Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and X-Forces have launched a new grant fund for the Armed Forces community - service leavers, veterans, family members, spouses, reservists and cadets - and will support both new start-ups and established businesses with grants of between £5,000 - £75,000 to create jobs and secure investment.

## Business South

<http://www.businesssouth.org>

Business South is a premier business engagement organisation which unites business leaders to drive economic prosperity, with the aim of making the region a great place to work, invest, study, live and enjoy. Business South aims to put businesses in the driving seat and to tell the story of a region that is the best place to do business that offers so much in terms of investment potential, innovation and growth - in short it is a great place to do business, to live and to learn, rest and relax.

## Buy with Confidence Scheme

<https://www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk/>

Are you committed to good customer service, been operating for a minimum of 6 months; then apply online.

## Catalyst Centre

[www.usssp.catalystcentre.org.uk](http://www.usssp.catalystcentre.org.uk)

The Catalyst Centre is a new initiative being developed by Southampton Science Park in association with SETSquared. The aim of the Catalyst Centre is to identify high quality, 'high tech', business propositions which are capable of significant growth and provide the entrepreneurs concerned with intensive support to enable their businesses to develop and flourish.

## LOCAL SUPPORT

### Enterprise First

[www.enterprisefirst.co.uk](http://www.enterprisefirst.co.uk)

Are a not-for-profit company, with public and private-sector funding that allows them to offer independent, confidential advice and support completely free, or at a nominal cost. Enterprise First has been supporting startups and existing businesses since 1981. They offer a range of free support including independent advice, mentoring, practical workshops as well as providing clients with an introduction to numerous networking opportunities. They also manage four enterprise centres providing access to light industrial and office space all on flexible terms. A member of the Cavendish Consortium and the National Enterprise Network, Enterprise First are also a delivery partner for Start Up Loans.

### Enterprise M3 Growth Hub

<https://www.enterprisem3growthhub.co.uk/>

Aimed at businesses looking to succeed in the Enterprise M3 area, the Enterprise M3 Growth Hub is an expert advice and resource network which helps business achieve results quickly through a personal, tailored service focused on Growth.

### ENTERPRISE M3 LEP

<https://www.enterprisem3.org.uk/>

EM3 drives the economic growth of the area by working with businesses, key delivery partners and central government. We translate and signpost opportunities for business and other partners including funding. We bring people, business, public and not-for-profit sectors together and share our insights and data. We do all this to make Enterprise M3 'the' place to do business.

### Federation of Small Business (FSB)

<http://www.fsb.org.uk/>

As experts in business, we offer our members a wide range of vital business services including advice, financial expertise, support and a powerful voice in government. Our mission is to help smaller businesses achieve their ambitions.

### Get Set For Growth

<http://www.getsetforgrowth.com/home/>

GetSet for Growth is a specialist service designed for businesses with the ambition and potential to grow. It is founded on the insights of working with thousands of businesses over the last thirty years. Their approach focuses on addressing the two biggest barriers to growth access to customers and access to finance. .

### "QUOTE, UNQUOTE"

---

*"The problem is that you don't know what you don't know"*

---

### Hampshire Enterprise Circle

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/business/promotinghampshire/hampshire-enterprise-circle.htm>

Run by Hampshire County Council and aims to stimulate investment, and encourage business development in the county. The network has been running for nearly 20 years, and there are now over 1,500 Enterprise Ambassadors from the business community, who promote business, and support the economy.

### Hampshire Chamber of Commerce

<http://www.hampshirechamber.co.uk>

The Hampshire Chamber is owned and led by its membership comprising of local business organisations of all sectors and sizes.

Andover - [andovercommittee@hampshirechamber.co.uk](mailto:andovercommittee@hampshirechamber.co.uk)

[hampshirechamber.co.uk](mailto:andovercommittee@hampshirechamber.co.uk)

Romsey - [info@romseychamber.co.uk](mailto:info@romseychamber.co.uk)

Stockbridge -

[stockbridgebusinessassociation@gmail.com](mailto:stockbridgebusinessassociation@gmail.com)

### Hampshire Fare

<http://www.hampshirefare.co.uk/>

Hampshire Fare has been working with local farmers and producers across Hampshire for twenty five years.

Passionate about the benefits of buying locally we are committed to supporting and promoting the unique and talented local produce and craft communities.

## ENTERPRISE FIRST



### Enterprise First - Support for all businesses

Whatever stage you are at, we're here to offer support and advice to help you achieve your goals. We have a specific support programme aimed at pre-starts and a range of support services for existing businesses.

Our services include:

- Finance and access to funding
- Start Up support
- Business units for let
- One to one business advice
- Workshops on marketing and accounting

Our aim is to help every client, no matter how big or small their need is. Being in business can be a lonely place but there is lots of support on offer. We can help you write a business plan, apply for loans, find new premises or match you with a mentor.

#### Business Advice

Are you ready for the challenges that running a new business will bring? One of the best ways to find out is to talk to people who have already done it and that's where our experienced advisers come in!!

At Enterprise First, all our business advisers have personal experience in starting and setting up new companies.

Their advice is impartial, confidential and free, and they'll help you address and overcome any concerns you may have.

The adviser will work with you on business planning, including looking at the funds you have available, market and competitor research, and the challenges of starting or growing your business.

Many new entrepreneurs have benefited from our advisers' knowledge and experience, as you can see from our case studies. If you have queries and concerns but don't know whether you need a one-to-one session, please contact us anyway and we'll be happy to help.

#### If you would like to meet one of our business advisers, please phone 01252 319272

We're a not-for-profit company, with public and private-sector funding that allows us to offer independent, confidential advice and support completely free, or at a nominal cost.

An award winning organisation with a 97% client recommendation rate, Enterprise First has been supporting startups and existing businesses since 1981. We also manage four enterprise centres providing access to light industrial and office space all on flexible terms. A member of the Cavendish Consortium and the National Enterprise Network we are also delivery partner for Virgin Start Up Loans.

## INDEPENDENT RETAILER GRANT



**As part of the Council's strategy to support Andover and Romsey town centres, an Independent Retailer Grant of £1,000 is available to encourage independently-owned retailers to take up vacant space.**

The £1,000 grant will be accompanied by a package of practical measures to help a new retailer through the difficult first months of trading. The Grant is designed to attract independent retailers into vacant premises in Romsey and Andover, and is one of a series of measures to support the town centres.

A budget for Andover and Romsey has been set aside.

### Eligibility

New or existing businesses moving into ground floor premises which have been vacant for at least one month in the Primary and Secondary Shopping Areas of the towns

- Use Classes A1 (Shops) and A3 (Restaurants and Cafés)
- Dependent on all other relevant Council consents (e.g. planning permission, other licenses etc.).
- The grant does not apply to:
  - Nationally-owned multiple chains
  - Use Classes A2 (Financial & Professional Services); Class A4 (Drinking Establishments) and Class 5 (Hot Food Takeaways)
  - Charity shops
  - Businesses already in receipt of the Business Incentive Grant.

The grant is managed by the Economic Development Officer and signed off by the Head of Finance and Economic Portfolio holder.

Payment is staged, £500 after 3 months and £500 after 9 months.

The council already provides general support for new businesses starting up in Test Valley, which will be available to new independent businesses if they want it. The Independent Retailer Grant complements this general help.

- Enterprise First business advice e.g. mentoring service Support with promotional press release
- Joined-up and supportive approach to TVCB responsibilities through TV Town Centre Team (including licensing, consents, promotion, rate relief)
- Access to business membership and networking organisations (useful contacts on social media marketing, e-commerce, professional advice etc.)

"At November 2016 the Council has awarded 27 Independent Retailer Grants for new town centre businesses in Andover and Romsey since the grant was introduced in April 2013."

For all enquiries or expression of interest in obtaining a grant please contact [dgleave@testvalley.gov.uk](mailto:dgleave@testvalley.gov.uk)

<http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/business/businessgrantsandsupport/grantsandfunding/independent-retailer-grant/>



## LOCAL SUPPORT

### Hampshire & Isle of Wight Business Alliance

[hampshireiowbusinessalliance.co.uk/start-up/](http://hampshireiowbusinessalliance.co.uk/start-up/)  
A membership organisation determined that they will exploit the strengths of each member organisation seek to provide the highest standard of business support.

### Hampshire School for Social Entrepreneurs

<https://www.the-sse.org/schools/hampshire/>  
SSE Hampshire brings together people who want to make a difference through enterprise. It provides an exciting and challenging programme that brings together people who want to make a difference through enterprise.

### Hants Business Directory

<http://www.hantsbusinessdirectory.co.uk/startup-support/files?tid=13>  
Here you will find the professional advice and support you need to succeed.

### Hantsweb

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/business/advice-information/support-contacts.htm>  
A list of local business support organisations provided by Business & Economy at Hampshire County Council.

### Invest in Hampshire

[www.investinhampshire.co.uk](http://www.investinhampshire.co.uk)  
A website designed to encourage investment and re-location to the county. Economic Development Office, Hampshire County Council  
t: +44 (0)1962 846876

### Mentor-net

[www.mentor-net.co.uk/](http://www.mentor-net.co.uk/)  
Mentor-net mentors aim to support, stimulate and challenge, using their own extensive skills, knowledge and experience to help you view your business in a different light, spot opportunities for development and implement the changes needed for a strong future.

### Outset Hampshire

<http://www.outsethampshire.co.uk/>  
Can offer you start-up support and start-up funding. The service has helped thousands of people make a success of starting up in business. Most were unemployed before they took steps to start up, or in jobs that left them unfulfilled. Local residents can apply for 12-months free access to our full programme of online support, and community of business owners, worth £500.

### Prince's Trust

<https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/help-for-young-people/support-starting-business>  
If you're aged 18-30, unemployed or working fewer than 16 hours a week and have a business idea to explore, then The Prince's Trust can help with the rest. They can help you to transform your idea into a watertight business plan, as well as support you with a fantastic package of training and funding. You'll also get to meet other like-minded people and be allocated an experienced business mentor who will be on hand to provide you with advice every step of the way – for up to two years.



## LOCAL SUPPORT

### Romsey Town Centre

Romsey's Town Centre Manager is Mark Edgerley and you can contact him at: [tcm@romseytc.org.uk](mailto:tcm@romseytc.org.uk) at <http://romseytc.org.uk/>

### Scirum

[www.scirum.biz](http://www.scirum.biz)

At Scirum Ltd, we are passionate about helping start-ups and small organisation grow and succeed.

### Solent Growth Hub

[www.solentgrowthhub.co.uk](http://www.solentgrowthhub.co.uk)

A 'One Stop Shop' that helps business navigate its way through the complexity of growth initiatives, and promotes growth opportunities to help unlock business finance options. The Business Growth Helpline offers businesses access to free help, expert advice and specialist services: Signposting by phone or in person to address your business growth needs

### Southern Business Growth Network

<http://www.sbgcn.co.uk/>

SBGN is a cluster of independent business owners who have come together to support the development of new start-ups and existing small businesses in a completely different way. Importantly we all run our own businesses and come with a wealth of support, knowledge and contacts. The real benefits to you are time driven, practical solutions; delivered in a creative, enthusiastic and collaborative manner.

### South East Business Innovation & Growth

<http://www.innovationgrowth.co.uk>

The SIGT benefits from the support and help of a very strong network of successful local entrepreneurs, professional services firms and business coaches and mentors.

### WSX Enterprise

<http://www.wsxenterprise.co.uk>

WSX Enterprise offer practical business support. A wide variety of programmes covers every need that businesses might have, every step of the way – from starting out, to growing, to expanding.

### X-Forces

<http://x-forces.com/>

Supporting ex-forces and their families to start up businesses by providing them with Loans, Mentoring and Support. X-Forces have developed a simple yet effective five-step process to assist with the journey to successful business ownership

### Young Enterprise

[www.young-enterprise.org.uk](http://www.young-enterprise.org.uk)

Supporting all young people, especially those who need our help the most, to build the skills and characters needed to succeed in business and life.

### "QUOTE, UNQUOTE"

---

*"Success is a matter of choice, not chance ~ Deepak Mehr"*

---



Test Valley Business Awards Dinner

## SCIRUM LTD

Flexible and  
affordable support  
to help your  
business grow



### Flexible and affordable support to help your business stand out and succeed

At Scirum Ltd we are passionate about helping start-ups and small organisations grow and succeed. We understand the challenges of starting, maintaining and growing a successful business - many of us at Scirum have first-hand experience in building thriving enterprises - we know the costs involved and pitfalls to avoid.

Our growing network of entrepreneurs, marketing, communications and event management specialists, as well as finance experts, can provide a wide range of skills and expertise to support every stage of your business development.

Our focus is on flexibility for our clients and our people. We find fantastic expertise within our communities - people who cannot or do not wish to work full time and who have experience in running their own businesses. We put them together in virtual teams with multiple expertise for the benefit of our clients. In return, our clients receive the expertise they need at a price they can afford and a resource they can flex, creating business agility without the need to employ new members of staff.

Our services include:

- Marketing, social media and websites
- PR and media relations
- Event management
- Business planning and coaching
- Member and stakeholder engagement
- Finance and bookkeeping.

Our pricing is transparent, our staff are friendly and our approach is pragmatic.

Turning a fledgling of an idea into a successful business requires vision, resilience and funding. When these basic elements are in place, you can start to build the foundations of your business which include planning, financial control, marketing and sales, as well as setting up systems and processes.

Scirum provides the kind of support you need to build your business rapidly - essentially we ensure you avoid the pitfalls. We help you build the infrastructure and systems needed for your emerging enterprise - allowing you to focus on developing your vision, building alliances and growing sales.

We offer start-up support which is designed specifically for you. Why not get in touch today to book a free initial consultation to discuss your start-up?

During the initial consultation, we will discuss your aspirations, your expertise and where you may need support.

Following your first meeting with us we will send you a summary of our discussions with some helpful tips, an assessment of whether you may qualify for a start-up support grant or funding and information about further assistance we may provide.

To make your appointment, please call 01264 860060 or email [info@scirum.biz](mailto:info@scirum.biz).

We also produce a regular blog which provides advice to start-ups and small businesses.

For further information visit our website:

**[www.scirum.biz](http://www.scirum.biz)**

You can also follow us on Twitter (@Scirum)

and Facebook ([www.facebook.com/scirum](http://www.facebook.com/scirum)).



# 3

## Market Research

---

**This is arguably one of the most important stages in the start-up process. Fear of discovering flaws in your idea should not prevent you from thoroughly researching your target market. Discovering and addressing weaknesses in your plan before you start could save time, money and unnecessary heartache.**

---

## ONLINE RESEARCH

**The Internet means that you can undertake meaningful research without leaving the comfort of your own home (or office if you are still employed!). Here is a list of sites that should prove useful.**

**Alexa:** ([www.alexa.com](http://www.alexa.com)) Now owned by Amazon, Alexa provides analytical insights to benchmark, compare and optimize businesses on the web. In simple English, this means that you can assess the popularity of your competitors' sites. Also useful when you have your own site so you can see how it compares.

**Chambers of Commerce:** (<http://www.britishchambers.org.uk>) Your local chamber may list visitor days, which offer you the chance to meet other local businesses and to get a feel for what is going on in the area.

**Companies House:** ([www.gov.uk/government/organisations/companies-house](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/companies-house)) You can get some details about a company for free and use the Webcheck service to see if your chosen name already exists or not.

**Company Check:** ([www.companycheck.co.uk](http://www.companycheck.co.uk)) Although one of many, this is my favourite site for finding out about limited companies. For example: names and ages of directors, which other companies they run, company details such as bank balance at time of last accounts, assets, liabilities and net worth.

**Google:** Search locally using the phrases that your customers are likely to use but you can also learn from other parts of the country and other countries: google.com (US), google.com.au (Australia).

**Gov.uk** (<https://www.gov.uk/market-research-business>) Contains a section dedicated to market research.

**Local authorities:** Your local authority's website will have a business section and possibly a local directory.

**Local directories:** A hunt through the plethora of local sites will help to identify what your customers will find if they do the same search. You may also be able to list your own business (jumping ahead a bit into marketing territory!).

**Local newspapers:** As above but also look at who advertises and which businesses are featured in articles.

**Marketest:** ([www.marketest.co.uk](http://www.marketest.co.uk)) Marketest is an online market research company dedicated to new businesses, entrepreneurs and Start-Ups. Test your business idea and/or your target market.

**National directories:** The likes of Yell and Thomsons still attract large volumes of traffic and well worth a visit.

**National Enterprise Network:** ([www.nationalenterprisenetwork.org](http://www.nationalenterprisenetwork.org)) NEN members offer independent advice and support to those thinking about starting or already running a business.

**Social Media:** Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn are a goldmine if you want to find out more about local businesses and who interacts with them. (See our section on Online Marketing for hints and tips).

**Survey Monkey:** (<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk>) Free online survey software and questionnaire.



## MARKET RESEARCH

# Is there a gap in the market?

**A major part of your initial planning should focus on finding out as much as you can about your potential customers and competitors. Ultimately they will determine whether you just have an idea or a profitable business!**



“Build it and they will come” is a famous line from the film ‘Field of Dreams’.

Although I hate to be the one to break it to you, in terms of starting a new business, this is rarely true. The fact that you are able to provide a particular product or service doesn’t automatically mean that the big wide world is waiting for you to set up in business. Before you start, you really need to see if there is a ‘gap in the market’ or more importantly is there a ‘market in the gap’?

Years of experience in a particular field and proven expertise will certainly give you a head start but there is still no guarantee that you will be able to convert this into sustainable income. Whether you are a seasoned fish bait digger, stuntman or designer of ‘clothes’ for pole dancers (and I have dealt with all three!), you still need to identify, with some level of confidence, that there is sufficient demand for whatever you plan to offer.

According to Barclays Bank

*“Three quarters of all entrepreneurs start up without doing any market testing to establish whether there is a demand for their service.*

*Only three in ten carry out market research to determine whether a market exists for their business in the first place. Fewer still – one in five – draw up a customer profile to build up knowledge about their prospective customers and their buying habits.*

*Knowing who your customers are and why they should buy from you, rather than from your competitors, should be a crucial part in deciding how a business will fit into the market and whether it is likely to succeed. Those that do not assess their long-term market potential and overall competitive stance may risk early closure or failure.”*

Mention ‘market research’ to most people and a vision of clipboards, questionnaires and being pestered walking down the high street might well spring to mind. Although it is absolutely vital that you find out what your potential customer wants or needs, you will be relieved to hear that, in most cases, you won’t need to put yourself through that particular ordeal.

I hope by the end of this chapter, you will understand why it is so important, what questions you need to ask and how you can find the answers.

**TOP TIP!** Do not be afraid of obtaining quotes from potential competitors. You can do this yourself or get someone else to do it for you. I only include this because it has become common practice and your competition is quite likely to do the same to you once you start trading!

## MARKET RESEARCH

### Why do market research?

- To find out whether there is a market
- To get an idea of the size of the market
- To identify your potential customer base
- To find out what they buy and what they are likely to buy in the future
- To discover who they buy from now
- To learn how much they are willing to pay and how often
- To identify the strengths and weaknesses of your competition

Ultimately, the answers to these questions will help you decide what you should offer, how much you can charge and how you can reach your target market.

### Who are your customers?

Imagine if you knew the name, address, and phone number of every potential client who needed to buy your product or service – wouldn't this save you a fortune in advertising?

It may sound like a pipe-dream, but you can certainly narrow your search if you analyse who they are likely to be. Are they domestic or commercial? Large or small? Local or national? Male, female or both? Age range? Do they buy on quality or cost? What is an acceptable price range? But also add as many other criteria that apply to your own trade (i.e. if you fix Ford cars – just target people who drive Fords.)

### QUOTE, UNQUOTE

*"Follow the customer, if they change ... we change"*

SIR TERRY LEAHY Chief Executive, Tesco PLC

### What do they buy?

"Find the revenue stream and then direct it towards your business". If you know what customers are already buying, it makes it far easier to know what to offer them. This could be a better/cheaper/more reliable version of their current purchase or something completely new. Find out what they buy most of, what they are prepared to spend, the advantages and disadvantages of their current provider. Then use this information to shape your alternative.

### Who are your competition?

You can learn an enormous amount from your direct and indirect competition. As well as looking at similar operations locally, find out what happens in other areas, both home and abroad. If they do something well, incorporate it into your thinking – if you spot a weakness, make sure that you do not make the same mistake. Make a note of everything that you find, you will be surprised at how all these little golden nuggets piece can come in useful, sometimes when you least expect it.

## DON'T GET CARRIED AWAY

### A lovely lady came to see me to discuss an exciting new invention...

Considerable thought, effort and money had been put into the design and patenting of her prototype and it was finally at the point where she wanted to move the project forward and raise some additional funding. We talked about product launches but, quite rightly, she would not reveal any of the detail until I had signed a non-disclosure agreement. Once this had been done, she excitedly revealed a set of extremely complex plans and a weighty document which contained masses of data about the product.

In essence, the item was designed to keep mothers dry in the rain while pushing a buggy. Unfortunately, a 30 second search on the US Google quickly revealed that not only did similar products already exist, they were not a big success because they were prone to become airborne in windy conditions!





## MARKET RESEARCH

### Field (practical) research

This includes going out, observing and talking to your customers and competitors 'in the flesh'. Find out what is happening in the real world and be open minded about what you discover – it is far better to learn the truth, be it good or bad, at the earliest possible opportunity.

### Questionnaires

You can glean important information either by conducting formal 'interviews' (the clipboard!!) or through informal conversations with potential customers, members of the general public, or focus groups but bear these points in mind.

- Plan your questions in advance
- Make sure that they are likely to result in unbiased answers (do not slant your questions to prompt the ideal response)
- Ask 'open' questions (start with 'who', 'what', 'where', 'when' or 'how') to encourage fuller answers
- Note all responses as quickly as you are able so you can assess later
- Keep your questions short and simple
- Only ask the key questions and don't ask too many
- Do not just ask friends or family!

### Undercover work

Much can be learned from observing your competitors or similar businesses in other parts of the country (stalking, spying, being nosy?). If they have premises, why not spend time counting their customers and working out how much money they are likely to be taking over the counter?

### Sources of information

A good way of deciding where to search is to put yourself in your prospective customer's shoes. Where do they go? How would they find information? What do they read? Who do they trust? How will they get to hear about you or your competitors? Without doubt, the Internet will feature



Research is essential but the deer-stalker is optional!

strongly in the answers to those questions and the abundance of useful information online has completely transformed the task (see full page article) but there are plenty of other sources.

Places to visit could include: business support organisations; libraries; local authority offices; Citizen's Advice Bureaux; community centres; the Chamber of Commerce; anywhere that has notice boards; trade exhibitions; trade organisations; business conferences; local networking groups.

Reference materials that may unearth useful data: Business magazines; trade journals; local newspapers; national newspapers; local directories; parish magazines; competitor's brochures and price lists.

The importance of this stage of your business planning cannot be over-stated. The time and effort that you put in will have a direct impact on your future success and I sincerely hope that this introduction will help point you in the right direction.



# 4

## **Business Planning**

---

**A common misconception is that a business plan is only needed if you need to borrow money from the bank. Although it is true that all lenders will ask to see one, it is also probably the most powerful tool in your new business armoury. The main components are extremely simple and are made up of common sense, some careful thought, and research. Above all, it is a great opportunity to review your business and to give YOU an idea of what you have to do to succeed.**

---

## WHY WRITE A BUSINESS PLAN?



**Here is a quick guide as to why a company needs a well-researched business plan.**

### 1. More companies stay in business

Studies show that companies that are in business and generate higher than average profits mostly have a business plan that they follow.

### 2. You can understand what to do

Not knowing why things go wrong, why customers don't buy or return, why your competitors are better or more respected than you is a recipe for disaster.

Your plan will help you analyse your business.

### 3. You can allocate resources better.

No company can do everything. You will need to prioritise the work required in the coming year. Choose no more than 7/8 key projects to work on and you will see the results.

### 4. You will understand your finances

If you are always overdrawn at the bank or find it difficult to get new finance then you'll need to forecast your sales and costs. But what are they? Work all of this out with your plan.

### 5. Everyone is aware of your plans

You and your staff, bank manager and other interested parties all need to know the direction the company is going. This is important to pull everyone into the same direction and develop good teamwork.

Planning helps you understand your business. It can be frustrating when there are no customers about and you don't know why.

If you are looking at starting a new small business and need a bank loan then you'll want a fast and easy way to write a business plan that's going to get your application approved at the first time of asking.

If you have never written a business plan before, the whole process can feel daunting especially when it comes to financial projections and marketing. So that's why we have developed a range of ready-made business plans that have all the required sections already completed. All you need to do is customise the plan for your own business.

Established in 2001, **Teneric Business Plans Ltd** have sold plans in the UK and worldwide. These plans and consulting services are guaranteed to get you bank finance or we refund your purchase price. Whether you download a sample business plan or get us to write a business plan for your start-up business, you can rest assured that you have the best resources to hand.

Our exclusive ready made "sample business plans" are available to download online and are quick and easy to customise for your own business. Browse our library of plans at [www.teneric.co.uk](http://www.teneric.co.uk) or contact our consultants to write your plan for you.

**Other websites which offer free downloadable business plan templates include:**

#### **SYOB (our own site!)**

[www.syob.net/downloads/business-plan](http://www.syob.net/downloads/business-plan)

#### **Gov.uk**

<https://www.gov.uk/write-business-plan>

#### **Business is Great**

<http://www.greatbusiness.gov.uk/the-how-to-write-a-business-plan-guide/>

#### **Start Up Loans**

<https://www.startuploans.co.uk/cash-flow-forecast/>

#### **Prince's Trust**

<https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/help-for-young-people/tools-resources/business-tools/business-plans>

#### **Sage**

<http://www.sage.co.uk/business-advice/starting-and-planning/how-to-write-a-business-plan>

#### **Bplans**

<http://www.bplans.co.uk>

## BUSINESS PLANNING

# Failing to plan is planning to fail

Even if you never show it to anyone else, compiling a business plan will help ensure that you have thought your idea through and increase your chances of success.



## Are you really ready?

So you've got an idea, it seems foolproof, you can see an endless market to exploit. What can possibly go wrong? Sadly, many new business start ups will fail within three years, with half of those failures inside the first six months.

So what can do to ensure that you have a better chance of survival? Research shows that having a business plan is vital to the success of your company, yet so many small businesses start without one.

Compiling your business plan can be quite daunting but it shouldn't be an intimidating process – a good business plan can focus the mind as well as assist in securing finance and support.

Going through the exercise of compiling a business plan will clarify your strategy as well as defining your long-term objectives.

The plan itself can provide a 'blueprint' for the way that the business will operate with a series of benchmarks to check your progress.

Ideally it should also contain a cash flow forecast, a vital tool for convincing your bank or potential funders – and possibly key customers and suppliers – to support you.

Consider the funding question from the opposite side of the desk — if a friend or family member asked to borrow money from you for this idea, how would you react?

A good place to start is to ask yourself "where do I want to be in 12, 18 and 24 months time"? From here you can begin to formulate your approach to growing and developing your business idea.

The following pages should give you a much clearer idea of what is involved:

## BUSINESS PLANNING

### Getting started

I have seen business plans which take up less than one side of A4 paper, some that could rival 'War and Peace' and everything in between. Ultimately, there is no perfect 'one size fits all' plan, the most important consideration is that the proposition is viable - your plan should be able to prove this. In theory, there is nothing to stop you simply writing a document which outlines your thoughts but I would strongly advise you to use a template which has already been tried and tested as this will make sure that you don't miss anything vital.

### Online templates and guides

There are plenty of excellent websites offering business planning advice and you will be spoilt for choice if you are looking for free or paid for templates.

You can download our business plan template (free of charge) from [www.syob.net/business-plan.php](http://www.syob.net/business-plan.php)

### Business support agencies, accountants and bank managers

These professional advisers will all tell you how important your business plan will become as your new venture takes shape. Thankfully, they also have the knowledge and experience to assist you with its compilation, and may well have a template that you can use.

### Examples/other people's plans

Do you remember back to school days when you had to look at previous exam papers and answers to help you revise?

Adopting a similar principle can also work with your plan. You will find a wide selection online. They should give you ideas for style and structure, but do not be tempted to copy their wording directly.

### Lending sources

If you are applying to a lender for funding, they will almost certainly have a template that you can use, in fact, some will insist on it.

### Writing your plan

Once you have identified what format or which template that you are going to use, it is time to start committing 'thoughts to paper'. Although the layout is in a set order, you do not have to stick to this when adding information. It is probably best to begin with what you know already and then undertake more research before filling in any gaps or areas of uncertainty.

Strangely, the finished plan usually starts with a section which is best left until last to complete - the executive summary. This is because it should be an 'easy to read' summary of all the other sections.

*Tip: Investors often make an initial judgement on the executive summary alone and only read on if it is strong enough.*

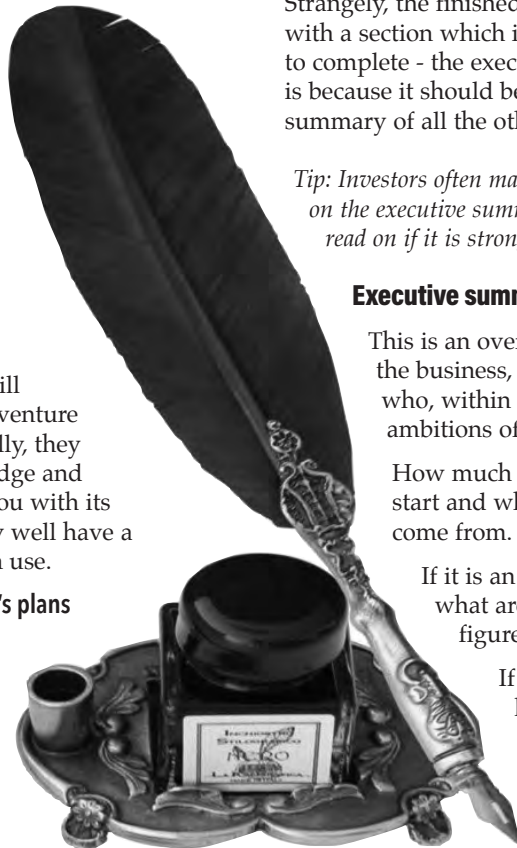
### Executive summary

This is an overall description of the business, what it offers, to who, within what area, the aims, ambitions of the business.

How much money it needs to start and where that money will come from.

If it is an existing business what are the previous trading figures?

If applying for funding, how much do you need? How will it be used? What impact will it have?



## BUSINESS PLANNING



### Vision

- Q. Aims and ambitions of the business?
- Q. What are your short term and long term business goals?
- Q. What are your short term and long term financial goals?
- Q. Do you have an exit strategy?

### Market analysis

- Q. What is your market and where does your product or service fit in?
- Q. How big is this market and how much money is spent on products or services similar to yours in a year.
- Q. Profile your clients in detail, covering what they like or dislike about your service
- Q. Who are your competitors and how are you different from them?
- Q. Give your projections in terms of number of customers, contracts obtained, etc.

### Management

- Q. Who will be running the business and how are they qualified?
- Q. How will responsibilities be divided?

Detail any relevant experience that you have. (Including current qualifications).

Give details of any training you intend to take.

List details/experience of any partners/directors.

Supply CV's for yourself and/or other key members of staff.

If you need to employ staff, outline their role and the experience they will bring to the business.

### Location

Provide details of the location.

- Q. Work from home or business premises?
- Q. How important is location?
- Q. Primary or secondary location?
- Q. Owned or leased and in who's name?
- Q. Has the property got the correct planning consent? What are the lease terms, payment frequency? Is a deposit required in advance?
- Q. Are there any environmental or hygiene regulations to consider?
- Q. What insurance do you need? Public liability? Income protection?

### Marketing strategy

How will you get the edge on the competition? Don't rely on just being cheaper.

- Q. What makes you different from your competitors?
- Q. What promotion tools will you use?
- Q. Do you need to advertise?
- Q. If so, how and where?

### Products/services

What are you going to offer?

List some examples of your products/services.

## BUSINESS PLANNING

Q. How much are you going to charge?

Q. How have you calculated the price?

### Customers

Q. Who are your customers?

Q. Who will buy your product/service?

Q. Where do they live/work?

Q. Do they fall within a certain social group?

Q. What do they need? What are the benefits of your product/service that satisfy that need?

Q. Why will they buy from you? What is your USP?

Q. Is there any seasonality in the business?

Q. How much are customers prepared to pay?

Q. What are your payment terms?

Provide details of any existing or anticipated work or orders.

### Competition

Q. What do you know about the competition?

Q. Who do your customers buy from now?

Q. Who are your main competitors?

Q. How do they do business?

Q. What do you see as their strengths and weaknesses?

Q. How will you take business from them?

Provide details of any work or orders you have now.

### Market research

Describe the market research you have undertaken so far.

Q. What were the results?

Q. Have you any evidence to back up your findings?

It is important to evidence that there are sufficient customers.

### Advertising & promotion

Outline your advertising and promotional plans.

Q. How will you reach your customers and how will you market to them?

Q. Why are they the best options?

Q. How often will you use them?

Q. What will they cost?

If you propose to have a website, provide details of how it will be used to promote the business.

Q. How are you going to ensure that your website is found by potential customers?

Q. Which Social Media activities will you undertake?

Are these all accounted for in your financial projections?

### SWOT analysis

(Stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats)

The SWOT analysis is made up of an assessment of the business's strengths, weaknesses, the opportunities that exist and potential threats from competition and market trends.

It is normally presented in a grid or quadrant with a portion for each consideration.

Strengths & opportunities - you should detail the main strengths and opportunities, which you believe will make your business successful.

Then detail areas in which you feel you have weaknesses and how you might overcome them.

If completed honestly, the SWOT can be really useful when planning short, medium, and long term strategies.

**DID YOU KNOW?** A well respected support agency undertook a survey which identified that more than 90% of the failed businesses questioned admitted that they had not written a business plan.



## A GOOD REASON TO PLAN CAREFULLY



**One of the most enjoyable aspects of working with new start-ups is that every day is different and you can never predict what interesting (and sometime bizarre) ideas are about to enter your life.**

A great example of this involved someone who turned up for one of our group awareness sessions and ended up teaching a number of lessons which have remained with me ever since... and are now being shared with you!

You may well have attended something similar yourself and know that a common 'ice-breaker' is to encourage participants to introduce themselves and to describe their background, business idea and what they hope to get out of the day. One quite shy individual at the back declared that he had a PHD or similiar in a subject that I had never heard of and certainly couldn't spell. At this point I was fearful that of being way out of my depth and in for a bit of a difficult day. However, he went on to explain that what he really wanted to do was to make chicken sheds! (*Lesson 1 - never pre-judge.*)

This, unsurprisingly, was met with a certain amount of amusement but he had the last laugh because his was the best business proposition in the room on that day. Local farmers had confirmed that they would buy his sheds if they were good enough quality and the right price. (*Lesson 2 - market research can identify demand.*)

The second part of his plan was even better. The materials required to make the sheds could be acquired free of charge. A transport company at the rear of his house was having to pay for old broken pallets to be removed and was delighted to save money by allowing them to be taken away by a local chicken shed builder. (*Lessons 3 and 4 - source your stock wisely and think about the other person's needs as well as your own.*)

I am sure that you can see that if materials are free and someone is willing to buy the end product, you have a fighting chance of making a profit. In this particular case, the surplus did not have to be huge as it simply needed to replace weekly benefit payments. This was easily achieved and although never likely to make him rich, it was the difference between being unemployed and becoming a business owner with a noticeable rise in self-esteem. (*Lesson 5 - a business does not have to make you rich. Job satisfaction and personal pride are equally important.*)

Finally, I did get the chance to go and see the finished article. He still lived at home with his mum and walked me up the garden path, which was surrounded by chicken sheds of all different shapes and sizes, until we reached his workshop. Inside was the most magnificent chicken shed that you are ever likely to see, in fact, if you owned chickens this is where you would want them to live! He was obviously incredibly proud of this creation but did admit that there was just one problem - it was too big to get out of the door! (*Lesson 6 - planning, in every respect of the word, is vital!*)

## PERSONAL SURVIVAL BUDGET

### How much money do you need to survive?

Very few businesses make much money in the first year. The form below will help you work out how much you and your family need to survive over the first 12 months.

Estimated Expenditure	Monthly (£)	Yearly (£)
Mortgage/rent .....	_____	_____
Council tax, water rates .....	_____	_____
Gas, electricity, heating .....	_____	_____
All personal and property insurance .....	_____	_____
Food, general housekeeping, repairs .....	_____	_____
Clothing .....	_____	_____
Telephone .....	_____	_____
Hire charges (TV, satellite, etc) .....	_____	_____
Entertainment (meals, drink etc) and holiday .....	_____	_____
Subscriptions to associations, clubs, publications .....	_____	_____
Car Tax and insurance .....	_____	_____
Car running expenses (incl. fuel) .....	_____	_____
Car service and maintenance .....	_____	_____
Children's expenditure and presents .....	_____	_____
Savings plans, pensions .....	_____	_____
Loan repayments, debts, credit cards .....	_____	_____
Other (please state) .....	_____	_____
<b>Expenditure in the year Sub total (a) .....</b>	_____	_____
<b>Income</b>		
Estimated non businesses income .....	_____	_____
Income earned by spouse or partner .....	_____	_____
Other income (please state) .....	_____	_____
<b>Total non business annual Income Sub total (b) .....</b>	_____	_____
Total Survival Income required in the year from your business i.e. sub total (a) less sub total (b) .....	_____	_____

## BUSINESS PLANNING

### Personal survival budget

Knowing how much you need each month to live on is essential if you want to be able to concentrate on your business without worrying about paying your personal bills.

A personal survival budget helps you calculate the minimum amount you need to take out of the business as drawings each week/month

Remember, this is meant to be the lowest figure possible, not how much you would like to earn if everything goes well.

*(See opposite page for example.)*

### Cashflow forecast

Sadly, money rarely comes in or goes out at the most convenient time, for example you may have to pay for your stock before you can sell it. A cashflow forecast will help you work out roughly what you can expect financially in the future – even though some of the figures will have to be based upon calculated guesswork.

This is vital information, particularly if you are planning to borrow money – it is best to plan for the maximum amount that you will need rather than having to keep going back to your lender asking for more!

### “QUOTE, UNQUOTE”

---

*“Turnover is vanity,  
profit is sanity”*

---

Not having enough money in the bank when needed is one of the most common reasons why businesses go bust - even those who appear to be successful.

A cashflow forecast is generally designed to cover the next 12 months of trading and is effectively made up of three key elements: money in; money out; and a running total of what effect these have on your bank balance

**FREE TEMPLATE** - You can download a free cashflow template and step-by-step instructions from [www.syob.net/downloads/cashflow](http://www.syob.net/downloads/cashflow)



A cashflow forecast needs to allow for the periods of high and low demand in your particular industry.

### Summary

Once you have completed all of the sections, you should have a really clear idea of your target market, what you are going to offer and how you are going to reach potential customers. Income and expenditure will be calculated based on the results of your market research and you will be in a much stronger position to start.

After this, it is important that your Plan becomes a ‘live’ document – it will evolve with your business. You will be able to measure your progress both in terms of market penetration and financial success and prioritise your targets and new opportunities that will undoubtedly arise.

Your business start up is the beginning of a long journey for you, one which will provide you with excitement, independence, success, set backs and ‘freedom from the boss’. Your Business Plan is your route map for this journey. Construct it carefully and you will avoid unnecessary detours and costly errors.



# 5

## **Business Set-Up**

---

**Sole Trader? Partnership? Limited Company?  
Buy an existing business? Take on a franchise?  
You have plenty of choices but which would suit you best?  
This chapter explains the options in simple English to help  
you make the right decision.**

---

## RUNNING A BUSINESS SHOULD BE FUN!

**If you like a challenge and you want to be the ruler of your own destiny, a business is what you need.**

Whether you are a sole trader, partner, or director of a limited company, the secret is not to let the business run you! It's so simple to do that you will think 'I knew all this already' or 'this is not rocket science.' It is a matter of 'doing' not just 'saying'.

Goals and visions are great but are meaningless unless they form the basis of a planned, systematised business. I advise you do the following:

**Read Michael Gerber's 'E Myth Revisited'.** It is a great book.



Michael leads you through all the planning and processes that you need to have in place to succeed in your chosen field. He uses a small business as an example and steers the prospective entrepreneur through the various thought processes but above all he stresses 'do it'.

**Actions speak louder than words.** Read other books about setting up in business and attend as many seminars or workshops as you can.

**Talk to business people.** They will have enjoyed and suffered all kinds of problems and will be in a position to help. If they can't, they 'know a man who can.' Being in business is like being in a club, you will be amazed what you can learn and how keen other businessmen are to help.

**Make sure that your 'advisers' match your ambition.** You will need a good accountant, a proficient commercial solicitor, a banker you can talk to and a reliable independent financial adviser. What you don't need are 'jobsworths' or 'bean counters'. They should all have a clear picture of where you want to go and should be able to advise you how they can help you go forward.

**Find a mentor.** Someone you can freely bounce ideas off and who is prepared to listen to you rather than tell you what they think you should do. Unless you set the agenda the business will not become the business you wanted.

**Research.** You must do the proper market research to ensure that your product or service will be in demand.

**Flying a kite is risky.** Imagine yourself as a customer of your business and how as a customer you want to be catered for and in what style. Try to visualise how your business will look in 3 or 5 years time and how you would like it to feel.

You can now set your goals and start preparing your financial and marketing plans. Run these by your 'mentor' and advisers before finalising them.

Step back and see what it all looks like. Are you happy with your plans? Can you see yourself achieving what you've planned? If not, refine. Get it right. Take a deep breath and plunge!

Enjoy the game!

Derek Speller FCA

**4M4 Business Ltd**

Business Growth Specialists enquiries@4m4business.co.uk

## BUSINESS SET-UP

# Deciding on the right legal structure for your business

For most people, the reason for choosing a particular business structure will depend on its size, trading methods, size of liabilities likely to be incurred and the market the Company will be trading in. Certain businesses seem to fall more commonly into one of the categories than any of the others, for good reason.

It makes sense for you to know as much as you are able to learn about which enterprise structure will suit you best as there are some common pitfalls – for example, do not form a limited company if it's simply unnecessary.

A sole trader can always turn their business into a limited company if it's advantageous to do so at a later date as can some forms of partnerships.

### Types of business structure

Basically, the most common forms of enterprise structure are:

- Sole Trader
- Partnership
- Limited Company

Other forms are described after the main features of each of the above are defined.

#### Sole Trader

Sole trader is the term used for a “one-person” business with or without employees. This type of structure has the following characteristics:

- You do not need to register the business (although you do need to notify HMRC that you are starting a business to avoid incurring a fine)
- It is the “default” business structure i.e. if you are working by yourself and do not take action to set up another type of business, you will be deemed to be a sole trader
- For tax and National Insurance

purposes, you are self-employed i.e. any profits, including wages drawn, are taxed at personal tax rates

- You are personally liable for all your business debts; if your business fails, both business and personal assets i.e. house, car, furniture etc, will be used to pay off the debts
- If you use a name for business different from your own, you must make sure that nobody else is using it already and show your name and address as proprietor on all business stationery and in a prominent place at your business premises.



## BUSINESS SET-UP

### Partnership

A partnership is legally the same as a sole trader except that two or more people are in the position of proprietors. All partners are jointly and severally liable for debts i.e. you can be made to pay off all debts of your partners. It is important to get a solicitor to draw up a partnership agreement covering:

- The proportions of capital put into the business
- Profit-sharing arrangements
- How losses will be made good
- Division of roles and responsibilities
- Decision making and resolving disputes
- What happens if one partner leaves
- Admission of new partners
- Accounting arrangements
- Arrangement for dissolving the partnership

A partnership is a big commitment so it is essential to find the right partner(s) (just like marriage!) – that is, people with compatible and complementary personalities, skills, attitudes and goals.

### Limited Company

In a limited company, the personal liability of the owners for the debts of the company is limited to the nominal value of their shareholding i.e. other personal assets are not liable. Other considerations.

- The company is a separate legal entity and therefore, can sue and be sued just like a person
- You are not “self-employed” in a limited company, but employed by the company as a director
- The directors as employees, therefore, pay tax under PAYE and National Insurance deducted from their earnings
- The company pays corporation tax on its profits
- There must be at least two shareholders – They do not necessarily have to be directors, although they usually are
- A company must have at least two directors or one director and a Company Secretary
- The term Limited or Ltd, must be included in the company name as a warning to creditors that they may not get paid if the business fails

## BECOMING SELF-EMPLOYED

**Sole traders must register with HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and follow certain rules on running and naming their business.**

If you're a sole trader, you run your own business as an individual and are self-employed.

You can take on staff - being a sole trader means you're responsible for the business, not that you have to work alone. You should tell HMRC as soon as you start self-employment, otherwise you may face a penalty. You are considered to have started self-employment when you have something to sell and either have a customer for your goods or services, or you are actively marketing your business.

You can let HMRC know about your self-employment by registering online for business taxes. A Self-Assessment Online account will automatically be set up at the same time.

**Register online at <https://www.gov.uk/new-business-register-for-tax>**





## BUSINESS SET-UP



Retailer 'Sole Trader' is actually a Limited Company!

- You have to draw up documents known as the memorandum and articles of association which have to be registered with Companies House.

The memorandum is a statement that the subscribers wish to form a company, have agreed to become members and, in the case of a company that is to have a share capital, to take at least one share each.

The articles define the powers of the directors, voting rights, how and in what manner it is allowed to trade, define the objectives, state the nominal capital and the limitation of liability.

Companies House offer memorandum and articles of association templates so people who want to form the company without employing a solicitor or accountant can do so simply at modest cost.

- You have to pay an accountant to have your accounts audited annually, although some small companies can claim exemption from audit if the members agree. Annual accounts must be filed at Companies House and there are penalties for late filing. Failure to keep the company's public records up to date can lead to disqualification of directors;
- You need to obtain a certificate of incorporation when you register the company before you start trading;

### Other types

There are other types of enterprise structures that should be mentioned although they are not as common among start-ups as those already described

- **Community Interest Company (CIC)** – A CIC is a relatively new type of not-for-profit organisation designed for Social Enterprises, i.e. organisations that wish to use their profits and assets for the public good. A CIC is simple to set up, with all the flexibility and certainty of a limited company but with special features that ensure they are working for the good of the community.

A CIC has to be approved by the regulator of community interest companies

Whilst the aims of a CIC will be to provide community services of a similar nature to that of a charity, a CIC is free to be able to operate more commercially than a charity, provided that its activities are transparent. In a way, a CIC falls between a limited company and a charity.

A fundamental feature of a CIC is the principle of Asset Lock. This principle is aimed at regulating the distribution and transfer of the CIC's assets and income, including any profits. A CIC must satisfy the condition that all its assets and income are used for the benefit of the community and to be able to demonstrate this to the CIC regulator.

- **A Public Limited Company (PLC)** is a limited company which has decided to allow its shares to be traded publicly, usually via stock markets (known as a "Floatation"). In all other respects it has the same structure as a limited company. There are additional legislative measure involved.
- **A Company Limited by Guarantee** has no shares; instead each member guarantees to pay up to a pre-set amount (usually £1.00) in the event of

## BUSINESS SET-UP

the Company ceasing to trade.

- As there are no shares, profits cannot be distributed except by payment to employees. This structure is best suited to not-for-profit organisations such as social enterprises and charities, clubs and associations;
- **Charity.** A Charity is a not for profit organisation, which is formed on the basis of an agreed constitution by those forming it and that provides free services and support to its beneficiaries. Charities should be registered with, and are regulated by, The Charities Commission
- A **Limited Partnership** allows partners to admit one more “limited partners” who are liable only up to the amount of capital which they subscribe but cannot take part in the management of the business. Very rare because it does not offer many advantages over a limited company;
- An **Unlimited** company is one in which a shareholder may be required to meet the liabilities of the company on liquidation. The only advantage is that the company does not have to publish annual accounts. Again this structure is very rarely used.
- **Co-operative** – an enterprise owned by its members – which include directors, staff and anyone else and is governed on the principle of “One Member, One Vote”

### Advantages and disadvantages

Whichever business structure you choose, there are a number of advantages and disadvantages that you should consider.

#### Sole Trader

##### *Advantages:*

- Simple registration
- Inexpensive
- No need for accounts to be audited
- Lower National Insurance contributions

- Losses can be offset against future profits or other income
- Tax treatment of capital gains is better than for a limited company

##### *Disadvantages:*

- Personally liable for all business debts
- May not sound as “professional”
- Some National Insurance benefits are not available
- Could be paying higher rates of tax
- Options limited when it comes to raising money
- Can be difficult to get credit, but you may have to give it

#### Partnership

As for sole trader plus:

##### *Advantages:*

- Can spread the risk
- Can involve spouse or other member of family or close friend
- Potentially more finance available
- Can take on additional partners, i.e. bring in extra/complimentary skills

##### *Disadvantages:*

- Could be responsible for all debtors of partner(s)
- Need to draw up a partnership agreement
- Could fall out with partner(s)

#### Limited Company

##### *Advantages:*

- Shareholders have limited liability; i.e. they are not personally responsible for the debts of the company
- May give a more professional image, and more credibility with creditors, lenders and investors
- “Perpetual succession” i.e. changes in shareholders do not affect continuity

## KEY CONTACTS



### Companies House

Companies House incorporates and dissolves limited companies, registers the information companies are legally required to supply, and makes that information available to the public.

There are more than 3 million limited companies registered in the UK, and 500,000 new companies are incorporated each year.

All limited companies must be registered ('incorporated') with Companies House. To do this you need:

- a company name (there are rules on what it can and can't include)
- an address for the company
- at least one director
- at least one shareholder
- the agreement of all initial shareholders to create the company - known as a 'memorandum of association'
- details of the company's shares and the rights attached to them - known as a 'statement of capital'
- written rules about how the company is run - known as 'articles of association'

Once the company is registered you'll get a 'Certificate of Incorporation'. This confirms the company legally exists and shows the company number and date of formation.

Once the company is registered you'll get a 'Certificate of Incorporation'. This confirms the company legally exists and shows the company number and date of formation.

For more information visit <https://www.gov.uk/limited-company-formation>

**HMRC website:** [www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk)

**GOV.UK website:** [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

### Tax Help Factsheets

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hm-revenue-and-customs-leaflets-factsheets-and-booklets>

### Webinars, e-learning, emails and video for self-employed

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/webinars-emails-and-videos-if-youre-self-employed>

**Contact HMRC:** <https://www.gov.uk/contact-hmrc>

**Department of Business, Innovation & Skills:** [www.bis.gov.uk](http://www.bis.gov.uk)

## BUSINESS SET-UP

- Increased borrowing power
- Ownership can be made separate from management
- Company can sell shares to raise capital
- Discounts are often more easily obtained
- Possibility of company pension scheme with more benefits e.g. can be used as capital

### *Disadvantages:*

These are primarily to do with cost and administration

- Annual auditing required – Unless small enough for exemption
- Annual accounts must be submitted to Companies House;
- Shareholders cannot apply assets to personal use, nor can they withdraw funds at will;
- Companies generally prohibited from making loans to directors
- Tax payable under PAYE and

corporation tax

- Higher National Insurance contributions
- Annual meeting of members is compulsory
- Directors' meetings must be formally minuted though this could be an advantage in improving communication
- Tax losses cannot be set against personal income

### **Charity**

#### *Advantages*

A registered charity can apply to a range of grant-making bodies or individuals for non-repayable finance, such as:

- Independent grant making Organisations, usually Charitable Trusts
- Central government
- Local government
- Community organisations



Jamie Oliver's 'Fifteen' is a good example of a successful Community Interest Company (CIC).

## BUSINESS SET-UP

- Individual benefactors
  - Private donors
  - European Commission
  - The National Lottery Funds
  - Charities will tend to operate in fields that are non-commercial and where need for a project exists in the community, although some charities do operate with a commercial arm.
  - There can be considerable support from local, voluntary organisations for the provision of voluntary workers.
  - Charities are not-for-profit organisations and do not attract corporation or income tax.
  - A charity can also apply for the Inland Revenue Gift Aid Scheme. If donations have been made by private individuals, the Charity can claim the income tax paid by the individuals from the Inland Revenue.
- volunteers can be difficult to recruit.
- It can be difficult to locate a grant maker who is likely to support the purpose of an applicant Charity. Grant makers frequently change what type of projects they will support from year to year and a considerable amount of hard work needs to be conducted to find out to whom applications could be made.
  - Accounts have to be submitted in a particular format. Grants can be either Restricted (funds for a specific purpose) or Unrestricted (e.g. money for general usage). Restricted Funds have to be for the purpose stated on the application and have to be shown as such in the accounts. If a grant maker discovers that restricted funds have been used for purposes other than that stated in the application, they will have the right to demand return of those funds.

### *Disadvantages*

- An organisation will probably need to register itself as a charity with the Charities Commission, the UK body responsible for monitoring UK-based charities. There are very specific criteria that need to be satisfied before being given charitable status by The Charities Commission. It is more difficult to obtain funding if charitable status has not been issued. There can be quite a lot of paperwork involved, including submitting annual returns.
- A Charity will need to appoint a Board of trustees. This is a group of people who undertake the guardianship of the charity and ensure that the charity is carrying out the purpose for which it was formed. Trustees cannot be paid by the charity.
- It can be difficult to find people willing to work for a charity. Generally pay is less than in the commercial sector and, notwithstanding item 3 of the advantages listed previously,

### **CIC**

#### *Advantages*

- Carrying out community-based and not-for-profit activities without having to register with the Charities Commission.
- Ability to attract grant and donation funding in the same way as a charity can, without having to register with the Charities Commission.
- To be able to legally derive income from commercial activities.
- A CIC will be more lightly regulated than a charity. Shareholders of a CIC can receive dividends, subject to a cap.
- The directors of a CIC can earn income from it, which is not so with a charity, unless specifically provided for.

#### *Disadvantages*

- A CIC is not entitled to the tax exemptions enjoyed by charities.



# 6

## **Business Premises**

---

**Whether you plan to work from home, to rent or buy commercial premises, it is best to understand the advantages/disadvantages of each option. With the kind help of local property professionals, this chapter explains the legal and practical considerations.**

---

## THE ART OF WORKING FROM HOME



**Many new entrepreneurs choose to set up their offices from home as an inexpensive way to get started in business.**

This makes sense on many fronts. It involves minimal outlay — and a small tax allowance can be claimed for office running costs. Home can be a quiet place that aids concentration and, in a world with 24/7 technology on tap, it is ideal for allocating work hours around other responsibilities.

There are environmental benefits, too. Working from home cuts out commuting, resulting in a better quality of life, higher productivity and a lower carbon footprint. In addition, there is less congestion on the roads and fewer emissions so both air pollution and fuel consumption are reduced.

However, working from home does require discipline since it comes with its own set of distractions. Here are some tips on how to make a home office work for you:

1. Notify your mortgage lender and home insurance company
2. Contact your local authority to check that you will not have to pay business rates
3. Consult an accountant regarding your income, VAT and capital gains.
4. Tell the neighbours as there might be more disruptions, depending on the type of business
5. Create a separate 'work zone' away from any distractions. Don't allow disruptions by family members just because you are there. Adhere to working hours that suit you on a regular basis.
6. Get into work mode by dressing professionally and creating regular breaks.
7. Combat loneliness by organising regular meetings with other home-based entrepreneurs or business clubs to communicate new ideas, catch up on news or simply for human interaction.
8. Rent office space on an ad hoc basis if you are concerned about presenting a professional face when holding meetings or receiving clients.
9. Establish clear boundaries such as not answering your business phone or catching up on paperwork during private time.
10. Most importantly, make sure your business does not take over your personal life. Your work-life balance must be actively protected.



## BUSINESS PREMISES

# Home or away?

**Deciding where to run your business could be determined by the nature of your work, running a restaurant from home is probably not a good idea and a window cleaning business is unlikely to need swanky offices!**



### Work from home

Working from home is definitely the cheapest option, but not always the best. You will need to ensure that you can separate home and work life. Will you be able to motivate yourself and concentrate, or possibly even more tempting—avoid the temptation to work all the time?

**Advantages:** Cost, convenience, easy to set up, the kettle is close by!

**Disadvantages:** Domestic distractions, possibly lone working, holiday cover, the kettle is close by!

**TOP TIP!** Check to make sure that your lease/house deeds do not prevent you from operating from home. If required, obtain permission from your landlord or building society.

### Office or workspace

Starting in an office or workshop will involve higher set up costs than working from home but may be more appropriate particularly if you are planning to employ staff or if your customers come to you.

There are important health & safety issues that you will need to be aware of if you are planning to work from any premises. The HSE (Health & Safety Executive) offer free explanatory leaflets at <http://www.hse.gov.uk>

### Lease

A lease is a contractual agreement to rent a property. But do you rent or buy? Your financial situation could decide this for you, but if you chose to lease/rent, think extremely carefully about the implications.

1. Lord Forte is famously quoted as saying three most important considerations are LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION! However, the better the location the higher the rent!
2. Length of lease?
3. You may have to pay a substantial premium for a longer-term lease.
4. Who is responsible for repairs?
5. Take legal advice.

You want security, but do you want the legal obligation and for how long? Business success or failure may mean that you need smaller/larger premises in the future. Ask about a 'break clause' which could present an 'escape route' at a defined point.

### Purchase

Purchasing your property could prove to be an attractive long-term proposition. You will be giving yourself security of tenure, possibly an asset that will rise in value, and any repayments will be reducing your loan rather than simply paying rent to somebody else. You will need to use a solicitor to conduct the purchase, and definitely pay for a full structural survey.

**TOP TIP!** If you are taking on a business that relies on passing trade, take time to sit somewhere nearby at different times of the day and conduct a head count. Try not to look too suspicious as an arrest at this stage would not count as good publicity!

## BUSINESS PREMISES

### Licence

With a license, the property owner is effectively saying “OK, you can occupy my property for a while, but I can interrupt at any time and ask you to leave.” The advantage to the owner is obvious, but it can also be a flexible and inexpensive way for a new start to move into premises. Licences are usually relatively short term.

### Serviced offices

Working from your garage or garden shed can appear amateur to prospective clients and lack the kudos of an official business address. But there is an alternative that will keep you sane without bankrupting your business before it’s even off the ground. Renting a desk in a shared office offers the best of both worlds. You’re still your own boss, but you’ll have the business support services, such as internet connection, a receptionist, meeting rooms and technical support, all available on site. You’ll have total autonomy, but feel like you are part of a community.

### Useful property terms



### Rent and rent review

It tells you how the rent is to be paid, how much it is and when it changes and what happens if you are late with the “rent”. It will also tell you what is defined as rent. When the rent changes, it will normally be “upwards only”. This is a detail landlords have been getting away with and in the current climate, is completely unjustifiable. A rent review may be based on RPI or the turnover of the business. However, “market rent” is the most usual and you need to look out for “assumptions and disregards”.

### Repairs and decoration

Remember, you will be obliged to do what you agree to, all the way through the lease. It can affect other things like a break clause. The landlord may want you to repair and decorate everything inside and out but that does not need to be the case.

### Alienation or disposition

This is about being able to get out of your lease before it comes to an end and includes: Subletting, Assigning, Break clauses, Surrender.

### Service charges

This is about the landlord passing costs on to tenants. It will be too late to argue over when the first bill drops on your desk. So be clear about what these costs are and how much they could become. Find ways to reduce, contain or cap the cost.

### User

This means “what your business does” but it is more than that. You may find you need permission to change what your business does, even slightly. In retail situations this can be much more complicated.

### Insurance

What needs insuring? What are you responsible for insuring? What is your landlord insuring? Who is paying and how much? Is the landlord on a commission?

### Yielding up and dilapidations

Yielding up means how you are required to give the property back. Dilapidations are the difference between the condition the property should be in according to the lease and the actual condition it is in when you have moved out. Because of the substantial cost involved, it is really important to get this right well in advance of any commitment.

### Security of tenure

This is about your right to a new lease at the end of the term. The law has tried to balance the tenant’s need for continuity of business with the landlord’s need to maximise investment value. You need to be aware of your rights. The phrase to look out for is “outside the act”.

## OVERVIEW OF LEASING BUSINESS PREMISES

**An overview of what is involved in procurement (or 'acquisition' as it is sometimes known) and the responsibilities and challenges of occupying business premises.**

You should seek help and advice, rather than get drawn into tricky and potentially costly situations. For start ups, serviced offices may well be the sensible option but if you really do need premises on a formal lease, then this overview is for you.

### **Rights and responsibilities - what are you getting yourself into?**

So you have found premises and you are ready to get in and start trading.

#### **BUT WAIT!**

To do that, you'll have to sign a lease. It is annoying. You'd rather just get in and get on. Can't you leave that bit to the solicitor? After all, isn't that what he/she gets paid for? No! Changing the fundamental terms of your lease is not what a solicitor gets paid for and by the time they see what might need changing, it will be too late to renegotiate anyway. So on that basis; you have to get it right.

Rule No. 1 - give yourself plenty of time to negotiate - you will need it.

Rule No. 2 - the lease is the defining document for occupying premises.

You may never need to "use" it but when you do, you want to know where to find it and what it says. It will contain things you must do, dates to diarise and other things you may not do.

Of the main rights and responsibilities in a lease, there are some terms to avoid and there are some you can benefit from. The rest can usually be improved through negotiation. It is vital to remember that you will be held responsible for whatever you sign up to. So it is also vital you know what you're signing. If you don't, it may become a stick you are beaten with (See Property Terms).

### **Where from here?**

This is a light touch look at leasing business premises. There is so much more to tell you about the specific situation you may find yourself in. For example make sure you are not paying rent and service charges for parts of the building that should not be included in the floor area. Imagine how it would feel to find out after you sign the lease that the floor area is 5% less that you were told. Not bothered? On a £50,000 rent, that is £12,500 over five years. Think about who has measured it and who is paying the rent.

Other regulations you should consider that go hand in hand with taking a lease may include: Health and safety, Environmental health, Planning, Fire safety, Disabled access, Asbestos management.

Will it cost you an arm and a leg to have premises that comply? The last two in this list are increasingly important. Were you aware that around 4,000 deaths per year are caused by exposure to asbestos? You should never allow yourself or anyone you work with to be exposed to asbestos; you should never allow yourself or your company to become liable for asbestos in a building.

Be aware of the benefits of and the simple things you can do to stay on the right side of the Disability Discrimination Acts. Think about the phrase "make reasonable adjustments" and put a plan together to show how you would make your goods or services accessible to everyone regardless of any disability or impairment. That will not be the whole answer but it is the start you need to make.

This is a generic examination of commercial lease and cannot cater for every situation. It is invariably recommended that professional advice is taken in good time to ensure the right outcome.

For a more detailed conversation on this or any aspect of leasing business premises, please call **Culverwell Consulting** on 01962 773882 or Jim Culverwell Direct on 07785 953759 or email [jim@culverwellconsulting.co.uk](mailto:jim@culverwellconsulting.co.uk) It is what we do everyday!



## WHEN IS THE RIGHT TIME TO MOVE INTO YOUR FIRST OFFICE?



**Jumping in and acquiring your first office space can be a very exciting prospect for any small business. However, there are also many important things to consider before dipping your toe into the water.**

Moving into an office away from home working is not guaranteed to improve the professionalism of your business, nor is it going to improve the products and/or services you provide.

But what it can do is give you a dedicated work space and improve your work-life balance. You should consider moving into your first office space when the following scenarios begin to crop up:

- You are planning a number of face-to-face meetings with clients and potential clients and do not wish to invite them round to your humble abode.
- You have freelancers or sub-contractors you wish to work with on a regular basis.
- You struggle to complete work due to distractions at home.
- Your business's profit margin is healthy and you can afford to take on the added expense of dedicated premises.

Admittedly some business start-ups and small businesses make mistakes along the way when selecting office space. Many people work to limited budgets and subsequently they believe the cheaper work space they can find the better. However, paying that little bit extra each month can secure you a much improved working environment, thus improving the efficiencies of your business.

Many new business owners also dive in head first ignoring critical legal information. Whilst on the face of it most office agreements will appear relatively straightforward, it is highly recommended that any tenancy agreement is reviewed by a solicitor before putting pen to paper. The last thing you want is to agree to a contract that ties you in to premises for too long, posing a real risk if you encounter any business problems in the early stages.

Freelancers and small business owners should be aware there is a lot involved with renting and maintaining an office space and that you should only consider renting office space for the first time when truly necessary.

Article kindly supplied by Workspace [www.workspace.co.uk](http://www.workspace.co.uk)

## BUSINESS PREMISES

# Local Premises

Whether you are considering a virtual office or taking over a whole building, here is a list of local contacts which we hope will help with your quest.

### Andover Basepoint

<http://www.basepoint.co.uk/locations/andover>  
Set in an attractive landscaped courtyard setting, with 70 unfurnished studios, workshops and managed offices. Purpose-built in 2003, facilities include a full-time reception, licensee's breakout area, serviced meeting rooms and a free car park. All managed offices and workshop spaces are Cat 5e wired and come complete with state-of-the-art digital phones and superfast broadband.

### Andover Business Park

<http://www.andoverbp.com/>  
56 acres serviced and good to go. Industrial, warehouse and distribution units from 25,000 sq ft to 600,000 sq ft. Detailed planning consent for a single cross-docked unit of 573,405 sq ft. 6 acres for retail, leisure and trade uses.

### Andrew Greenwood

<http://www.acgreenwood.co.uk/>  
Andrew Greenwood specialises in the sale of businesses as going concerns throughout Central Southern England. They sell catering businesses such as Restaurants, Tea Rooms, Cafés, Takeaways, Guest Houses, Hotels, Public Houses and Wine Bars etc., as well as retail businesses such as Newsagents, Convenience Stores, Post Office Stores and Off-Licenses etc. along with miscellaneous concerns and occasional manufacturing/engineering businesses.

### Belvoir

[www.belvoirandover.com/commercial.html](http://www.belvoirandover.com/commercial.html)  
Wisdom comes with age. Established in 1997 we have over 18 years' experience of successfully selling & letting every type of property, in all kinds of markets. Our commercial property staff are recognised as local property experts.

### Castledown Enterprise Centre

<http://www.theenterprisenetwork.co.uk/enterprise-centres/ludgershall.html>  
The modern, purpose-built Enterprise Centre, two miles from Tidworth and five miles from Andover, has a range of 19 offices offering between one and five desks, as well as hot desks, a large networking area and separate meeting room – all with free high-speed broadband. Conference and/or training space is also available at the neighbouring Castledown Business Centre

### The Commercial Centre

<http://www.thecommercialcentre.co.uk/>  
The Commercial Centre in Picket Piece, Andover is a thriving business complex offering offices to rent, commercial business units to rent and industrial units to rent in Andover, Hampshire, within two miles east of Andover town centre. TCC provides highly affordable business premises, which are 'easy-in/easy-out'. For long-term rental or short-term rental. All businesses that rent either an office space, commercial unit or industrial unit in The Commercial Centre are offered a FREE business listing and web link on this website to help promote their business even further.

### Hamilton Parker Buckingham

<http://www.hpbproperty.co.uk/>  
Hamilton Parker Buckingham is an independent UK based property partnership that has become one of the leading agencies in the south of England. With decades of experience and a wealth of knowledge available to their clients along with the dedication to support them in the entire process while constantly striving for innovative concepts sets Hamilton Parker Buckingham out from the rest.

## ANDOVER BASEPOINT



**Basepoint Business Centre in Andover was once described by Sir George Young as a Greenhouse where small businesses are nurtured and grown until they are strong enough to be planted into the Region of Test Valley.**

Basepoint takes a great deal of pride in the service we provide in support of our SME's and are particularly proud to be associated with this analogy.

The centre which is set in an attractive courtyard setting within a safe and secure environment is comprised of a mix of offices, studios and workshops.

Since opening its doors in October 2003 it has been home to over 550 businesses, many of which have gone on to make a more permanent commitment to both Andover town and the local economy.

The centre operates on short term license agreements, which by their very nature are low risk. This means you are only ever committed to giving a minimum of two weeks written notice to go out at the end of a calendar month, although longer commitments can be arranged if required.

It has the latest telephone and broadband technology that also operates on the same short term basis as

the license agreement.

There is free parking within the centre and there are meeting rooms available for hire Monday to Fridays at an hourly rate.



The meeting room is also available to external clients.

If you are not ready to make the commitment to a physical office the centre operates a virtual service which ranges from a Virtual office starter which is postal address facility to Virtual Office Pro with a telephone and answering service which is ideal for the fledgling business taking its first steps into the local economy.

**For more information visit our website at [www.Basepoint.co.uk](http://www.Basepoint.co.uk) or give us a call on 01264 326326**



**BUSINESS PREMISES**

**Invest in Hampshire**

[investinhampshire.co.uk/eng/property-search](http://investinhampshire.co.uk/eng/property-search)  
 Includes details of many commercial, industrial, and retail opportunities in the area including Nursling Estate; at Romsey - Abbey Park Industrial Estate, Greatbridge Industrial Estate, Budds Lane industrial Estate and Belbins Business Park.  
 (See full page overleaf for more details)

**Myddleton & Major**

<http://www.myddeltonmajor.co.uk/mandm.html>  
 Our team consistently delivers results in agency, management and professional work. We work across the South of England for clients, ranging from major financial institutions and listed property companies to individual property owners. We understand their needs and objectives and tailor our service to achieve them. We look beyond the obvious to seek to maximise the client's return, whether selling or letting, redevelopment or managing an asset.

**Portway East & Portway West Business Parks, Andover**

<http://investinhampshire.co.uk/west-portway-business-park>  
 Portway Business Park are situated on the western side of Andover and benefit from being within five minutes of the A303. The Parks are fully serviced and provides a range of units up to 10,000 sq m. The Business Park covers an area of 75 hectares and accommodates nearly 200 units. Current occupiers include Stannah Stairlifts, Mitutoyo, Howard Tenens, Euronics and Verdo Renewables. West Portway is also home to a mixed commercial and leisure including Macdonalds, Premier Inn hotel and SCATs. East Portway Business Park includes the 80 unit Basepoint Business Centre, which is currently at 95% occupancy. Both Business Parks are covered by local Wi-Fi broadband and are the subject of a major initiative to provide high fiber bandwidth.

English | Français | 中文 | Português | Español  
 Call: +44(0)845 840 4444  
 Search Website... Search  
 Home Sectors Talent Services Success Stories Hampshire Property News Contact Us  
 With over 500 ha of developable land, Hampshire can accommodate new companies wanting to invest and grow, offering significant opportunities for investors, developers and occupiers.  
 Adanac Park, Southampton  
**Welcome**  
 Whether you are already in the UK or based overseas, setting up a new headquarters or launching a new business, we can help you.  
**Why locate in the UK?**  
 The UK is one of the leading business locations in the world and the number 1 destination for inward investment (FDI) in Europe.  
 Find out more  
**Why choose Hampshire?**  
 Located on the UK's south coast, within an hour from London and well connected to Europe and the world, Hampshire offers world-class research facilities, a highly skilled workforce and an outstanding quality of life.  
 Find out more  
**Where are we?**  
 Explore Hampshire with our interactive map »  
 Hampshire is home to outstanding business locations, including the major towns of Basingstoke, Farnborough, Portsmouth and Southampton.  
 Key locations »

## BUSINESS PREMISES



### Romsey Basepoint

<http://www.basepoint.co.uk/locations/romsey>  
Basepoint Romsey now comprises 80 business units. These range from fully managed offices for one person to spacious workshops suitable for a wide range of business uses. Basepoint Romsey's managed offices and workshop units offer modern, contemporary workspaces including reception services, serviced meeting rooms and business support. Located within the Abbey Park Industrial Estate, the centre is close to Romsey town centre. For further information contact Kate or Sam on 01794 513080 or email: [romsey@basepoint.co.uk](mailto:romsey@basepoint.co.uk)

### The Stockbridge Technology Centre (STC)

<http://www.stockbridgetechnology.co.uk/>  
STC was launched in April 2001 to ensure continued technological developments for the horticultural industry. This grower-led initiative has created an independent horticultural centre of excellence supported by both the production and supply sectors of the industry.

### Stratfords Commercial

<http://www.stratfords-commercial.co.uk/>  
Stratfords Commercial is an independent firm of Chartered Surveyors and Commercial Real Estate Agents based in Andover specialising in Commercial and Industrial Property. We are currently marketing a range of Industrial, Office, Retail, Development and Investment Properties. Do let us know what you are looking for so that we can send you full particulars when something suitable becomes available.

### Walworth Business Park

<http://www.walworthbusinesspark.co.uk/>  
Conveniently located adjacent to the A303 on the eastern side of Andover and close to the town ring road. Walworth Business Park totals approximately 200 acres, which provides a combination of factory, distribution, retail and office facilities in a wide range of sizes. If you are thinking of expanding or relocating your business, you'll find yourself in very good company.



## BUSINESS PREMISES

### Walworth Enterprise Centre

<http://www.walworth-enterprise.co.uk/>

Walworth Enterprise Centre has been in existence since the mid-eighties. It is a serviced managed site and was set up to enable small businesses to benefit from the favourable Licence Agreement 'Easy in, Easy Out' terms, which provides a stable business base with little long term financial commitment.

There is no minimum stay and your deposit is returned in full, provided the Unit is left in a good state of repair. So whether it is two months or ten years, we will accommodate your requirements, including moves to larger units wherever possible.

The Enterprise Centre consists of 38 different size units to enable businesses to set up quickly and take on extra or new space if they outgrow their original premises. Each Unit has heating and individual intruder alarms and a few have comfort cooling. There is also CCTV in constant operation and ample free parking. We have a secure/controlled main door entry system.

The site is owned by Test Valley Borough Council and managed by Kier, who have two offices within the Centre – Reception and the Walworth Marketing Suite. The Centre Manager is on site five days a week.

Tenants also benefit from the supportive environment, professional, friendly Reception staff, advice and interaction with other small businesses. As customers have commented, "the Centre has a family feel to it." We have the added attraction of a free meeting room with a wi-fi connection. Close to the A303 and ten minutes from the Town Centre, the Centre is in an ideal location and is part of the wider Walworth Business Park, which is being regenerated, demonstrated by Ocado's current multi million pound distribution scheme.

There is a delightful and welcoming coffee house on site – Bake 'n' Baps Coffee Shop/ Takeaway baking speciality/ celebration cakes. So, whether it's that early morning espresso to kick start your day, mid-morning munchies or lunch, you will not go hungry at work! Caters for on site meetings/office celebrations.



A warm welcome awaits at Walworth Enterprise Centre



# 7

## **Finance & Funding**

---

**Financing a new business can be a challenge, particularly in the current economic climate. However, without enough capital, a new business will shrivel and die very quickly. The previous chapters should have helped you identify what will be needed for your business to start, and then to succeed. The next step is to ensure that you have enough money to support both you and your enterprise.**

---

## BANK FUNDING



**The “credit crunch” is no longer in all the headlines and the press have stopped searching to find stories of banks not lending to businesses. Start ups are rising and looking for funding, but will the banks help?**

Banks do want to lend money, however, only in a safe and responsible manner, and with rates higher than in the past. Lending, after all, is one of their key activities. They prefer deals which meet their tightened lending policies. In order to gain finance, a deal should be positioned with this in mind. All businesses need money to trade, and understanding the way that a business is funded is a proficiency in its own right.

When it comes to funding a business, the options open to entrepreneurs are numerous. Be it your own cash, overdraft, business loan, factoring or leasing. It is a minefield to the inexperienced eye. It is not only high street banks that can help with lending for start ups, there are a number of other lenders with competitive rates, often lower than the high street with a more personal service. This wide range of options, together with the banks being more responsible with their lending, makes it wise to use the services of an expert to obtain your financial requirements.

If a lender has turned you down once than a further attempt will raise extra questions and reduce your chance of gaining what you are looking for. That is why it is advisable to get it right first time, not when your bank has already refused!

You should ensure that you have the following key items, when going to your bank:

- A well written/researched business plan
- Financial forecasts
- Your break-even figure and understand how any additional overheads will affect this.
- Your Personal income, expenditure, and a list of your assets and liabilities.

Your business plan should be detailed but not too long. Most lenders see several business plans every day and so your plan should be to the point, but giving all the right details in a precise way.

When discussing the financial aspects of your business be prepared, for the lender to ask detailed questions about the figures in your plan. You should be able to demonstrate a complete understanding of them, and that they are achievable. Don't take an annual figure and divide it by twelve, especially your sales forecast.

If you present your plan the right way, you can raise funding. The changes in banks' lending policies have made it harder but I can reassure you that “lenders are keen to do business in the current market as long as the deal is right”.

## FINANCE &amp; FUNDING

# Money, money, money

**“The love of money is the root of all evil;” “money brings the worst in people;” “money makes the world go round” - and it is usually at the heart of any business success or failure.**

Not having enough cash is a clear route to disaster, but so is borrowing too much. This section should give you a clearer idea of how to plot a route between the two.

## How much do you need to start?

A cashflow forecast is an essential tool at this stage (see chapter 4: Business Planning). This will help you calculate your initial financial requirement as well as the money needed for early days of trading.

You will have to think about:

1. Actual start up costs.  
Premises, equipment and stock will probably have to be paid for before any income is due.
2. Your own personal needs.
3. The cost of running your business.

Most of the major banks websites offer downloadable forms for this.

## How much do you need to survive?

Sadly, the personal bills continue to come in after you start up a business and you need to make provision for these! Work out your own personal SURVIVAL BUDGET by adding together all of the items that must be paid to keep you afloat in the early stages – these include living costs, food, utilities, credit cards, but NOT lavish entertaining or expensive holidays. (Well not at this point!).

## How much will you need in the early stages?

Once you have started, there will be ongoing costs that you will have to consider. These could be staff wages, purchasing more stock or paying for advertising. Your cashflow forecast will give you an idea of how much income you can expect, but this may not be sufficient to cover all outgoings in the early stages. It is vital to work out what the difference could be in the worst case scenario and build this cost into your financial planning.

## How much do you need to raise?



Total start up costs  
+  
Amount required to see you through the early stages (including your survival income)

—  
=

Total that you need to raise.

The more money that you can put in yourself, the better. Borrowing usually involves either the payment of interest or giving up a share of your business.

## “QUOTE UNQUOTE”

*“A lot of people have become pessimists from financing optimists!”*

CT JONES

## MONEY

### Other lending sources

The world of funding has changed dramatically over the past few years. Whereas the banks used to be virtually the only player in town, there are now numerous other options. We have tried to describe as many as possible here but please do take professional advice before proceeding with any financial commitment.

### Use your personal assets

Using personal equity, such as savings or re-mortgaging your house can give you the freedom to run your business your way. However, it is important to draw up a business plan, mapping out when you expect to see a return and what you can afford to lose.

### Bring in partners

If you're a sole trader you could consider taking on partners to raise finance. You'll need to negotiate what share of the profits each person will receive, agree how decisions are going to be made, and decide who is going to take on responsibility for

the roles within the new business. A written partnership agreement should definitely be drawn up before you start to trade.

### Persuade customers to pay upfront

Larger organisations can sometimes be persuaded to pay upfront to fund a project or product you are developing if they need it for their own business. It may also be worth offering more favourable terms to customers who are prepared to pay a deposit in advance.

### Friends or relatives

'Friends, Family and Fools' are a good potential source of investment because they know you and believe in your ability. However, try and keep the transaction on a business level. Explain that there are no guarantees. Friends and family must understand the high-risk nature of the venture and that there is a strong chance they might not make as much as they anticipated, or might even lose their investments completely.



**DID YOU KNOW?** The Body Shop group was formed with a £3,000 loan from a family friend. When the company was sold to L'Oréal in 2006, founder Dame Anita Roddick and her husband reportedly received over £100million – but friend Iain McGlinn made £150 million!

## CROWDFUNDING EXPLAINED

**Crowdfunding has been growing steadily around the globe and predictions are that this phenomenon is set for even greater expansion in the next few years. So, what is it and how can it help entrepreneurs get funding and support for a project?**

Let's start with a quick definition: Crowdfunding is the process whereby many people (the crowd) offer small amounts of money (funds) to a project they think will create value (the vision).



When talking about crowdfunding we often use the term 'campaign' to describe the process of communicating with the crowd. A good definition of a campaign is: a planned set of broadcasts that aim to motivate the crowd into adding value to a project within a given timeframe. A campaign is really about canvassing people for their support to a cause of some description. In crowdfunding it is always about asking people (the crowd) for their consent to develop the vision you want to create, we call this crowdconsent.

In principle this is very straightforward. The reality of course is that crowdfunding is a little more complex. Especially when you consider there are actually five distinct models to choose from. To help remember these, I created the acronym DREIM, which stands for: Donation, Reward, Equity, Interest and Mixed. Crowd motivation changes with each model which is briefly outlined below.

**Donation** is straight forward philanthropy. It is open to charities, non-profits and some co-ops. Motivation in this model is for the warm glow of knowing the crowd has done something good for a charity or social cause. This could be on any scale from local skate park to a major international response. Generally there is also a specific action involved (e.g. bike rides over a set distance or sponsored run).

**Reward** is by default the most common model of crowdfunding people think of because of the bigger US platforms that tend to dominate the media (like Indiegogo or Kickstarter). This model is often for funky new kit that gets produced in some back street garage or a trendy new design of an old favourite. Motivation for the crowd in this model is social capital (i.e. being the first to have a connection with the latest gizmo). This is one of the fastest growing areas of crowdfunding (Indiegogo and Kickstarter together have an average of 500 projects per day). This is a problem for smaller projects as they are all competing to be heard in a very crowded space.

**Equity** is by far the most complicated model because of the legal framework entrepreneurs have to be able to comply with. Motivation is in the first instance for the potential returns the crowd can gain. The UK government has also introduced the EIS (Enterprise Investment Scheme) and the SEIS (Start-up Enterprise Investment Scheme) where by investors can get favourable tax reliefs for their investments in early stage enterprises.

**Interest** is straight forward debt. Established companies with a good trading history can apply for debt from the crowd and pay this back with interest just as they would with their bank or other lending institution. Motivation for the crowd here is the return of their capital plus a little extra in interest.

**Mixed** is just as it sounds a mix of crowdfunding models. It tends to be used with Reward + one other model of crowdfunding. Done in phases this is still quite an uncommon crowdfunding strategy as it means two quite distinct campaigns need to be created. However, the benefits can be massive when it is done right.

With the increasing use of crowdfunding as a main stream funding route you need to have a polished campaign. Read the full article at: [www.syob.net/downloads/crowdfunding.pdf](http://www.syob.net/downloads/crowdfunding.pdf)

**Chris Buckingham** – I am the author of Crowdfunding Intelligence and strongly advice you grab a copy and read through it before you launch. There are lots of helpful explanations and some much deeper insights in the book. [www.minivation.co](http://www.minivation.co) is an accompanying site to the book and here you can find a raft of additional templates and helpful tips for a campaign. For crowdfunding curation follow my twitter account @minivation and for questions or to spread the word on what has worked for you use @CrowdedChris.

## EUROPEAN FUNDING

**Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) represent over 99% of businesses in the EU. One of the main objectives of the European Commission is to support their growth and innovation. The financial environment has been considerably improved so that SMEs could get a better access to finance in order to maximise their competitiveness.**

### EU funding for SMEs

**COSME:** Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises is managed by the European Commission through the Executive Agency for Small and Medium sized Enterprise (EASME) <http://ec.europa.eu/easme/en> which is a programme specifically designed to support SMEs. With a budget of €2.3bn from 2014 to 2020, COSME will support SMEs in their access to finance and markets; supporting entrepreneurs; and improve the conditions for business creation and growth. [http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/cosme/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/cosme/index_en.htm).

**Enterprise Europe Network** <http://een.ec.europa.eu/>, funded by COSME, helps SMEs to find business and technology partners, and understand EU legislation.

**EU Investment Bank (EIB)** provides finance and expertise for investment projects as an alternative to traditional banking services (guarantee, microfinance institutions, private equity and venture capital funds across Europe). More information: <http://www.eib.europa.eu/projects/priorities/sme/index.htm>

**Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs** is an exchange scheme, allowing new entrepreneurs to learn from experienced entrepreneurs. The “young” entrepreneur can apply to spend from 1 to 6 months in another EU country with an experienced entrepreneur and will receive EU financial support to help with travel & daily living costs. <http://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu/index.php?lan=en>

**Horizon 2020 SME Instrument** is for SMEs with innovative and growth potential to become world-market leaders. SMEs could receive up to €2.5million in funding, business support and mentoring. Business innovation support could be found under the section Societal Challenges and the specific part Leadership in Enabling and Industrial Technologies. <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-section/sme-instrument>.

**ESIF**, European Structural & Investment Funds where the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) with €57 billion includes 20% of funding allocated explicitly to SMEs. [http://ec.europa.eu/contracts\\_grants/funds\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/contracts_grants/funds_en.htm)

**Access to finance:** Video presentation: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N\\_24hdG8Z20&list=PLImEREKFYU8W\\_-qmHYDICCBBuLfDQPj9j](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N_24hdG8Z20&list=PLImEREKFYU8W_-qmHYDICCBBuLfDQPj9j). More information: [http://europa.eu/youreurope/business/funding-grants/access-to-finance/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/youreurope/business/funding-grants/access-to-finance/index_en.htm)

### Other useful sites

**Micro-Finance:** EaSI, Employment and Social Innovation Programme is dedicated to microfinance and social entrepreneurship finance. EaSI helps the SME by providing loans of up to € 25,000 to individuals for setting up or developing their business. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1081&langId=en>

**EU Tenders:** TED is the EU Official Journal for tenders. SMEs can browse, search and sort procurement notices by country, region, business sector and more. <http://ted.europa.eu/TED/main/HomePage.do>

**EU Business Portal:** [http://ec.europa.eu/small-business/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/small-business/index_en.htm)

**Practical guide for business in Europe:** [http://europa.eu/youreurope/business/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/youreurope/business/index_en.htm)



**Author:** Laurie Barriol, Inspire-EU Consultancy

Inspire-EU is a European Funding Consultancy based in Southampton (UK) providing EU project development and management support focused in EU funding for artistic, cultural, educative and social projects making a positive difference. The company is also organising EU funding workshops and EU monthly newsletter.

**“EU funding for artistic, cultural, educative and social projects making a positive difference”**

www.inspire-eu.com

E-mail: [laurie.barriol@inspire-eu.com](mailto:laurie.barriol@inspire-eu.com)

Tel: +44 (0)7539 679 247

Twitter: [https://twitter.com/INSPIRE\\_EU\\_com](https://twitter.com/INSPIRE_EU_com)

LinkedIn: [uk.linkedin.com/pub/laurie-barriol/11/128/330/](https://uk.linkedin.com/pub/laurie-barriol/11/128/330/)



## MONEY

### Start Up Loan Fund

The Government's Start Up Loans scheme was originally set up to help under 30's but is now open to everyone. It offers loans of up to £25,000 to pre-starts and businesses which have been operating for less than 24 months. The money has to be repaid over terms of up to five years, with interest payable. A mentor is appointed to assist every successful applicant and this could be as valuable as the loan itself.

### Bank loan

Banks are still in the lending game but you will not be surprised to learn that they are only keen to support robust proposals which do not expose them to unnecessary risk. This generally means that they will expect you to be supplying a sizeable chunk of the money required and will often ask for this to be backed up with some sort of security. Your application will have to be accompanied by a robust business plan and cashflow forecast but please bear in mind that most favourable lending decisions support realistic rather than wildly optimistic projections.

### Bank overdraft

Interest rates will be higher than longer term lending but ideal if you have short-term or a need for intermittent finance.

### National Enterprise Allowance Scheme

Available to suitable applicants who are in receipt of qualifying benefits and meet the programme's criteria. Loan funding and business support is included.

### Private investors

This will require you to sell part of your business in return for an agreed amount of money. The investor will be showing faith in your idea but will also want to see a financial return. This is one of the quickest and easiest ways of obtaining funding if you know the right person. It could also be advantageous if the individual brings relevant experience, knowledge, and/or contacts. However, do think very carefully about the effect that this will have on your control of 'your' business and the true long term cost of the arrangement.

The government have introduced a couple of schemes to encourage private investors and the tax advantages that they bring have made it an attractive proposition.

- **The Seed Enterprise Investment Scheme (SEIS)** is designed to help small, early-stage companies raise equity finance by offering tax reliefs to individual investors who purchase new shares in those companies. SEIS is intended to recognise the particular difficulties which very early stage companies face in attracting investment, by offering tax relief at a higher rate. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/seed-enterprise-investment-scheme-background>
- **The Enterprise Investment Scheme (EIS)** is designed to help smaller higher-risk trading companies to raise finance by offering a range of tax reliefs to investors who purchase new shares in those companies. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-enterprise-investment-scheme-introduction>



Free guide available from [www.startuploans.co.uk](http://www.startuploans.co.uk)

## MONEY



### Competitions

Keep your eyes open for ‘Dragon’s Den’ style competitions. Not only do they offer the chance of winning cash prizes or investment, they are a great way of letting the world know about your business.

### Peer-to-peer lending

Peer-to-peer lending, abbreviated P2PL, is the practice of lending money to unrelated individuals, or “peers”, without going through a traditional financial intermediary such as a bank or other traditional financial institution. Zopa ([www.zopa.com](http://www.zopa.com)) is the UK’s largest peer-to-peer lending service but there are more and more appearing every day as this is an arrangement which could work well for everyone involved.

### Prince’s Trust

If you’re aged 18-30, living in the UK, and unemployed or working fewer than 16 hours a week and have a business idea or some ideas to explore, then they can help with the rest. This includes transforming your idea into a watertight business plan, as well as supporting you with a fantastic package of training and funding. <https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/help-for-young-people/support-starting-business>

### European funding

There are numerous European funds designed to help SMEs but they are often related to either overseas trading or job creation. See article overleaf for full details.

### Invoice financing

Invoice financing is where a third party agrees to buy your unpaid invoices for a fee. There are 2 types of invoice financing in the UK.

‘**Factoring**’ – also known as ‘debt factoring’ – usually involves an invoice financier managing your sales ledger and collecting money owed by your customers themselves. This means your customers will know you’re using invoice finance.

**Invoice discounting** - with ‘invoice discounting’, the invoice financier won’t manage your sales ledger or collect debts on your behalf. Instead, they lend you money against your unpaid invoices - this is usually an agreed percentage of their total value.

### Leasing and asset finance

Leasing or renting assets (e.g. machinery or office equipment) can save you the initial costs of buying them outright.

### Business angels

Are a particular type of informal investor, usually a successful entrepreneur, who is willing to invest in high-risk, high-growth firms at a very early stage, and adds value by supplying hands-on business advice.

The UK Business Angels Association is the national trade association representing angel and early stage investment in the UK. (England, Wales and Northern Ireland).

<http://www.ukbusinessangelsassociation.org.uk>

### Venture capital

A source of money for start up companies, particularly for those with high growth potential. In return for their investment, the venture capitalists generally receive significant ownership of the company and seats on the board. The BVCA is the industry body for the UK private equity and venture capital industry.

<http://www.bvca.co.uk/>

### Crowdfunding

(See full page in this chapter)

## GRANT FUNDING

**A wise entrepreneur once told me that there were three components for a successful business; a good idea, strong management and adequate finance. Without any of these in place, the business would not be a success. This article looks into the third of these pillars of business start-up, investment, often the one that holds back otherwise rapid progress towards a high-growth business.**

Alongside loans and equity finance, there are upwards of 4,000 national and EU grants for UK businesses, totalling £10bn. So the law of averages would suggest that there is at least one grant suitable for your business. The challenge then is knowing where to look and how to access it.

### Grant funding - Equity free finance for business

Government grant funding schemes exist to help build a strong economy, with a particular focus on supporting small and medium sized businesses (SMEs) and job creation. Although SMEs make up over 99% of all business in the UK many business owners don't benefit from grant funding as they either don't know about them or regard them as too difficult to access. But from your artisan bakery to a global software company, there really is a grant for everyone.

### What types of grants are available?

**Regional & National UK Grants:** Grants available to a wide range of businesses include £1,500 grants for apprenticeship schemes, UKTI Passport to Export funding for businesses that are looking to export and the broadband connection voucher scheme, which provides up to £3,000 to upgrade to faster internet.

For technology based or innovative startups seeking funds for market research or proof of concept there are the InnovateUK competitions, plus little-known private grants such as Nesta's social innovation schemes.

**EU Grants:** For technology-based companies, these include Horizon 2020, a new EU innovation funding scheme with a budget of 79 bn euro and Eurostars, which allows UK SMEs to partner with international companies on large-scale technological projects.

**Sector-specific Grants:** These are as varied as the number of industry sectors themselves, such as niche funding programmes for healthcare innovations coming from the Maudsley Charity, NHS Fund, Creative England and others.

This is just a tiny sample of the many of grant funding possibilities available, and it does take time to tailor the grants to your individual client's needs. And once you start to look into different funding schemes, delve into a mountainous stack of abstract criteria and instructions, it is tempting to:

- (a) give up overwhelmed by the sheer amount of unintelligible legal speak
- (b) pen a half-baked application that falls flat on its face.

Short of contacting a specialist grant funding agency, what else can you do to significantly improve your chances of getting a grant?

### Five top tips for Grant funding

Here's five top tips which might help you avoid the most common mistakes companies make. And, without further ado, here they are:

#### 1. Understand the political and social aims of the grant

Every government grant scheme exists to further the political and social agenda of the funding body. The key is to understand the agenda and spell out how your proposed project would fulfil it.

Sometimes this agenda is explicitly stated in the application criteria, but often you need to dig deeper to find it. For Innovate UK Smart grants, for example, showing how your project will increase employment and produce spillover effects throughout the UK economy is an often overlooked yet important aspect of the grant application.

#### 2. Highlight your team's credentials

Funding bodies want to know why they should fund you and not your competitor. Do not mistake grants for charity money; the government, like an investor, looks for solid ROI and it is your job to show that you not only have a brilliant idea, but also the ability to execute it.

## GRANT FUNDING (CONTINUED)

Funding bodies need to see a clear and convincing case for your credentials, and especially your track record. Past achievements, awards, powerful partnerships are some aspects you better hone in on in order to leave no doubt that your company deserves a grant.

### 3. Provided evidence and quantify the business opportunity

Too often grant applicants focus on their product at the expense of the specific problem they are addressing and the market opportunity the solution might open up. Funding bodies want to see evidence of a big and rapidly growing market, backed up by credible statistics whenever possible.

### 4. Have a clear commercialisation strategy

For the purposes of grant funding for a new product or service, a highly specific vision, strategy and implementation plan go a long way. You need to have a route to commercialisation that would produce decent ROI. Know your customer segments; the chunk of the market you can reasonably win and over what time period; your revenue streams and pricing strategies for each one; your distribution channels and key partners. Better still, show how you are already validating each of those.

### 5. Check your Technology Readiness Level (TRL)

Most grant schemes fund projects at a specific TRL ranging from an idea to a market-ready, finished product. One mistake we often see is when companies just have an idea and apply for a grant to develop it. Unfortunately, that's not quite how most small business grants work. Even Innovate UK Smart Proof of Market usually funds "new" ideas building upon old and proven concepts and products.

Another common mistake is when a product is already in the market. Since most business grants aim to bridge the gap between research and commercialisation, such products are deemed too mature for grant purposes. Keep in mind that we are talking about projects here. A company may well have a successfully commercialised product and still apply for a grant to fund new development (that could be building upon its old product or be a completely new innovation project).

### So where to start?

Here are some tools to help you find out about various schemes so you can stay up-to-date with current offerings:

#### UK Gov. grant finding websites:

<https://www.gov.uk/business-finance-support-finder> (for general information)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/innovate-uk> (for technology)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/boosting-private-sector-employment-in-england> (regional grant funding)

**Green technology grants:** <http://www.greengrantsmachine.co.uk/default.aspx>

**European grant funding:** <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/>

**Manufacturing:** <http://www.batbusinessservices.co.uk/mas-grants>

Finally, there is help out there for entrepreneurs, and some of it is free. For instance InnovateUK's mission is to fund, support and connect innovative SMEs to accelerate sustainable economic growth. It has supported the establishment of Catapult Centres as innovation centres for businesses, scientists and engineers to come together and access niche technical expertise, infrastructure, state-of-the-art facilities and equipment to bring products and services to market faster.

There also Knowledge Transfer Networks which act as innovation hubs for individuals to find resources, information, events, special interest groups and social networks across scientific, technological and creative sectors.

I hope this feature is of some reassurance to SMEs and startups fearing entrenched bureaucracy and encourages you to consider grant funding as an external investment route. If you do, just remember to stay focussed on what's important – your business.

**Robert Bentley** – Wessex Partnerships [www.wessexpartnerships.com](http://www.wessexpartnerships.com)

**Wessex Partnerships** is a specialist grant funding consultancy that connects businesses that need funding with expertise that can get it, with over £60m secured in 15 years.

## MONEY

### Research & Development Tax Credits

HMRC to pay cash to companies that are doing innovative R&D. If you're a "tech start-up", you may well qualify. You can get up to 25% of your R&D spend refunded each year after you file your accounts.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/corporation-tax-research-and-development-rd-relief>

### Funding finder

Find government-backed support and finance for business, including grants, finance and loans, business support. Search by location, size and activity. <https://www.gov.uk/business-finance-support-finder>

### Better Business Finance

Better Business Finance provides impartial information and support to businesses and entrepreneurs looking to develop and grow; whether the business is seeking finance, starting out or exporting abroad.

<http://www.betterbusinessfinance.co.uk>

### The Gov.uk website

Has a section dedicated to finance and support for your business. It helps you locate government-backed support and finance for business, including: grants, finance and loans, business support eg mentoring, consultancy, funding for small and medium-sized businesses and start-ups. You can customise your search by location, size and activity.

[www.gov.uk/business-finance-support-finder](http://www.gov.uk/business-finance-support-finder)

### Your local authority

has a vested interest in encouraging new businesses to be formed in the area. Not only is it good for the economy generally, you may be creating new jobs, and/or occupying commercial property which will generate more income for them. Local Authority grants tend to be quite modest and often about £250-£500.

### Your Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

Local enterprise partnerships are partnerships between local authorities and businesses. They decide what the priorities should be for investment in roads, buildings and facilities in the area.

So far 39 local enterprise partnerships have been created. See the full list and map of local enterprise partnerships at:

<https://www.lepnetwork.net>

### Your local Enterprise Agency

The National Enterprise Network is a unique membership body representing business support organisations in the UK. Their local help finder will point you in the direction of an agency near you who may well be able to tell you what grants are available in the area.

[www.nationalenterprisenetwork.org](http://www.nationalenterprisenetwork.org)

### GRANTfinder

Is a grants and policy database and includes details in excess of 8,000 funding opportunities. Services include access to: a flexibly searchable database; Newsflash service; deadlines listing; and Research Help Desk. What's more, and information is continuously updated.

<http://www.grantfinder.co.uk>

### Green Grants Machine

Is where you can get information on all the latest funding schemes to enable your company to become more environmentally friendly. It is a FREE website to help you find the funding on offer to boost your business's bottom line by improving its environmental performance. Search through the UK's most comprehensive source of information on grants, loans, awards and other funds available to help businesses go green.

<http://www.greengrantsmachine.co.uk>

### j4bGrants

Can help you find grants and other funding support to start and grow your business. Register for FREE now to find out what business grants are on offer to help boost your bottom line.

<http://www.j4bgrants.co.uk>

### UK Business Funding Centre

Have a Funding Finder engine to explore funding schemes for your UK small business. <http://www.ukbusinessgrants.org/>



# 8

## Accountancy & Tax

---

**It goes without saying that HMRC will take a keen interest in your new venture. Legally, you are obliged to supply them with information that will determine how much tax, National Insurance, and possibly VAT that you will have to pay. This chapter gives you a simple overview of the key points, but we strongly recommend that you take professional advice. If you are not an accountant yourself, it is probably best to engage someone who is and to get on with what you do best - make the money.**

---

## KEY ACCOUNTING DATES

**HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) must receive your tax return and any money you owe by the following deadlines. The tax year starts on 6 April and ends on the following 5 April.**

	Key Dates for Self Assessment
<b>April</b>	<p>HMRC sends a reminder telling you to complete a tax return.</p> <p>To complete your tax return online you must be registered to use the Self Assessment online service. If you registered online as newly self-employed from April 2014, then you may already be registered for Self Assessment Online. If you are not registered, go to: <a href="http://www.gov.uk/log-in-register-hmrc-online-services">www.gov.uk/log-in-register-hmrc-online-services</a></p> <p>Complete your tax return using the records you have kept. You will be provided with an immediate calculation of tax and NI contributions due.</p> <p>If you wish to complete your self assessment tax return on paper, ring the Self Assessment Orderline to ask for the forms.</p>
<b>31 October</b>	This is the deadline for paper tax returns. HMRC will work out the tax and Class 4 NI contributions and let you know how much you must pay, before the due date of January 31. If you miss this deadline, you must submit your return online.
<b>31 January</b>	This is the deadline for online tax returns. You must pay the balance of any tax and Class 4 NI contributions you owe by this date. You may need to pay a first payment on account for the following tax year by this date.
<b>31 July</b>	You may need to pay a second payment on account by this date.

### Penalties

Penalties can be charged if you make an error in your tax return or other documents. Therefore, you should show HMRC that you have taken reasonable care by keeping accurate records checking with HMRC when you don't understand something, disclosing any error you discover in any return or document that you have previously sent to HMRC.

### How do you pay?

HMRC recommend that you make payment electronically. You can:

Pay by debit or credit card over the internet using a service called Billpay, or Use your bank/building society services to pay over the internet or telephone.

HMRC accepts Faster Payments and you can contact your bank for further details. More information on how to make a payment can be found at: [www.gov.uk/pay-self-assessment-tax-bill](http://www.gov.uk/pay-self-assessment-tax-bill)

If you find you can't pay your tax bill the most important thing is not to ignore it. If HMRC has contacted you about an overdue payment, you should contact them. Call the Business Payment Support Service on 0845 302 1435 with any issues.

### What do you pay?

Your bill for tax and/or Class 4 NI contributions will depend on your taxable income. Everyone is entitled to a certain amount of income without paying tax, called Personal Allowance. In the tax year 2015-16, the allowance is £10,600.

### Budgeting for your tax bill

You can budget for your tax bill by using the ready reckoner tool on the HMRC website - [www.hmrc.gov.uk/tools/sa-ready-reckoner/index.htm](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/tools/sa-ready-reckoner/index.htm)



## ACCOUNTANCY & TAX

# Do we need to be afraid of accounting and taxation?

The answer is NO! Yet many business owners, both start-ups and existing ones feel these are part of some mysterious science that only accountants can understand.



Actually it's about simple arithmetic, knowing where and how to enter the numbers and what story they're telling us.

When most potential start-up owners are asked what they know about financial management, they'll either reply "nothing" or "not very much".

But we are all financial managers. We receive and spend money every day – the difference between personal finance and business finance is only a matter of scale – and knowing the jargon (see glossary of financial terms overleaf).

Once you know the basics and with a few hours training, you'll be able to do all your own financial work yourself, if you wish, certainly in the early stages.

The key considerations:

### Cash flow

- What income we're receiving and when
- What we have to spend and when
- How much money we have in the bank now and in the future
- Credit Control – vital – keeping a track on payments due from customers

### Bookkeeping

- This is about how to record all transactions, expenses, credit/debit card payments and petty cash
- If doing your own books, do it on a "little and often" basis – don't let paperwork build up in piles.

### Break-even analysis

- How much we have to sell in order to make an overall profit
- What our pricing structure should be
- Controlling costs
- Profit and Loss Accounting
- Are we earning more than we're spending?

### Balance sheet

- This represents the financial health of the business, a statement of assets and liabilities have in cash or in the bank, how much money is owed to you and how much money you owe to others. There are number of arithmetic tools available to extract information about how the business is performing, known as Management Ratios.

### Taxation and VAT

- Those dreaded words – Yet easily dealt with provided you make provision for what's owed and don't regard tax due on income or VAT collected as YOUR money – it isn't, so just put it aside and pay what's due, when it's due, without having nightmares about it.

## ACCOUNTANCY & TAX

- It's very simple for small businesses to estimate both their Tax and VAT liabilities.
- Important legal point. If you employ a bookkeeper or accountant and they make a mistake in Tax or VAT returns, YOU are legally responsible – you cannot use the excuse that you didn't know.
- Bearing the above in mind, therefore, it's best to know as much as you can about the financial state of the business on a day to day basis, so when you're signing a Tax or VAT return, you'll at least have a feel for whether the figures are correct.
- Open a deposit account to transfer money from your current account that you calculate you'll need to pay your Tax and VAT.

### Forecasting

No element in business is separate from any other element – it's all inter-connected. For example, when preparing a cash flow and profit and loss forecast, you'll need to know your sales potential and an accurate estimate of future expenditure, including the cost of raw materials, staff, rent, equipment – and so on – whatever is appropriate to your business.

Your pricing, volumes and frequency of sale should be estimated from your market research. Ensure your pricing is going to produce profits and don't fall into the trap of believing that offering lower prices than the competition will bring you success.

Your business plan should be an integrated piece of work that reflects the viability of your business idea – and don't forget that the business plan is for YOU – to prove to yourself that your idea will succeed, is sustainable and scalable – there's no point in fooling anyone, including yourself, by producing false forecasts on the basis of getting investment or a loan from the bank – if the forecasts are not based on market evidence, the business is likely to fail.

Any investor or lender is much more likely to provide the funds that you need if the forecasts are based on market evidence rather than pie in the sky. When you apply for finance, don't be anxious that you're asking for too much – you'll need what your business plan requires and that your forecasts reflect – investors and banks will respect your thoroughness.

### Working capital

This is the amount of money you need to pay for the day to day running of the business and to meet all your liabilities. Many, many businesses fail because they do not estimate their financial needs at start-up correctly, i.e. they do not calculate the working capital they'll need to get them through the early stages of their business life.

Unless you're very fortunate, you're unlikely to be making profits in the early stages and it might be difficult for you to obtain credit from suppliers – so you need to account for this in your calculations for start-up capital – as well as knowing that if you extend credit to your customers, they'll never pay you on time!

## VALUE ADDED TAX (VAT)

**You must register for VAT if your taxable turnover exceeds the VAT threshold in any 12 month period, or you expect it to exceed the VAT threshold within the next 30 days, or you take over an existing VAT registered business as a going concern. You have 30 days from the date you meet any of these criteria to register.**

Usually, VAT registration can be completed online and if you apply online, you will be enrolled automatically so that you can submit your VAT return online (there is no longer a paper version).

The VAT threshold can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/vat-rates>; if your turnover is below the registration limit, you can choose whether to apply for voluntary registration. The standard rate of VAT at the time of going to press is 20%.

## GLOSSARY OF FINANCIAL TERMS

**This is a guide which will help your understanding of accounting terminology - do an exercise with your own business forecasts and plans and identify how each definition applies to elements of your business.**

**Asset:** Assets fall into two categories: **(a) Fixed Assets.** Machinery and equipment the business needs to provide products and services. **(b) Current Assets.** Finished goods with a sales value, cash balances at the bank and people and companies who owe the business money .

**Books:** Books of Account are the means by which all financial transactions are recorded.

**Break-Even:** The Break Even Point is the trading level, measured either in terms of total sales value or total number of units sold.

**Capital Equipment:** This is equipment purchased specifically to manufacture product (e.g. machinery). It will be subject to depreciation (see below).

**Cash Flow:** The term used for the payments and receipts when they happen. It is not a measure of profitability.

**Costs:** **(a) A Direct Cost** is a cost which is directly related to sales and production. Examples are: raw material costs, manufacturing wages, distribution costs, workshop or factory power. **(b) An Indirect Cost** is a cost that is not directly related to sales value. Examples are: rent, salaries and wages, business rates, office expenses, office equipment, non-manufacturing wages, phones. **Overhead:** The overhead is the total of all indirect costs. Direct costs are likely to vary with sales volume. Indirect costs have to be paid irrespective of the level of sales.

**Creditor:** A creditor is a person or company that the business owes money to. e.g. Suppliers, VAT office, Inland Revenue, bank (loans and overdrafts), employees, outworkers.

**Debtor:** A debtor is a person or company that owes the business money.

**Depreciation:** This is an accounting procedure which allows for the loss of value of fixed assets over time. It is regarded as a cost.

**Drawings:** Monies taken out of the business for personal use by a sole trader or partners in a partnership.

**Gross Profit:** The Gross Profit is the difference between Total Sales and Direct Costs.

**Liability:** A liability is money owed by the business to creditors.

**Liquidity:** This is the term used to describe the availability of cash in the business and is directly related to working capital (see below).

**Net Profit:** Net profit is the gross profit (see above) less overhead (see above). The net profit determines the level of taxation.

**Over-Trading:** This is the term used to describe the situation when the business does not have sufficient cash to finance increases in sales.

**Profit and Loss A/C:** This is a financial statement showing a summary total of all transactions undertaken by the business during a specific trading period .

**Working Capital:** Working Capital is the amount of readily available cash in the business needed to meet the day to day costs and liabilities of the business.



## ALLOWABLE EXPENSES

### Allowable business expenses

An allowable business expense is money spent on the day-to-day running costs of your business. This can include things such as rent, lighting and heating of business premises, telephone and running costs of vehicles used in the business.

EXPENDITURE	Non-allowable	Allowable
<b>Cost of goods bought for resale or goods used</b>	Cost of goods or materials bought for private use, depreciation of equipment.	Cost of goods bought for resale, cost of raw materials used, direct costs of producing goods sold, adjustments for opening and closing stock and work in progress, commissions payable, discounts given.
<b>Car, van and travel expenses</b>	Non-business motoring costs, fines, costs of buying vehicles, travel costs between home and work.	Car/van insurance, repairs, servicing, fuel, parking, hire charges, vehicle tax, motoring club membership, train, bus, air, taxi fares, hotel costs and meals on overnight business trips.
<b>Wages, salaries and other staff costs</b>	Own wages, and drawings, pension payments or NI contributions, payments made for non-business work.	Salaries, wages, bonuses, pensions and benefits for employees, agency fees, sub-contractor labour costs, employer's NI contributions.
<b>Rent, rates, power and insurance costs</b>	Costs of any non-business part of premises, costs of buying business premises.	Rent for business premises, business and water rates, light, heat, power, property insurance, security, use of home as an office (business proportion only).
<b>Repairs and renewals of property and equipment</b>	Repairs of non-business parts of premises or equipment, costs of improving or altering premises.	Repairs and maintenance of business premises and equipment, renewals of associated small tools and items of equipment.
<b>Accountancy, legal and other professional costs</b>	Legal costs of buying property and large items of equipment, costs of settling tax disputes and fines for breaking the law.	Accountants, solicitors, surveyors, architects and other professional fees, professional indemnity insurance, trade or professional journals and certain subscriptions.
<b>Interest on bank loans, credit card and other financial charges</b>	Repayment of the loans or overdrafts, or finance arrangements.	Interest on bank and other business loans, overdraft and credit charges, hire purchase interest and leasing payments.
<b>Phone, fax, stationery and other office costs</b>	Non-business or private use proportion of telephone, fax, computer hardware or other equipment costs.	Telephone and fax running costs, postage, stationery, printing and small office equipment costs, computer software.
<b>Other business expenses</b>	Payments to clubs, charities, political parties, costs of ordinary clothing. Entertaining clients, suppliers, customers, family and friends.	Protective clothing, advertising, mainsheets, free samples, website costs.

## ACCOUNTANCY & TAX

### National Insurance

If you are self-employed you will have to pay National Insurance contributions (NIC).

You pay two different classes of NIC if you are self-employed – Class 2 and Class 4.

Class 2 NIC are a fixed weekly amount – £2.80 per week for 2015/16, assuming your profits are above the small profits threshold. Class 4 NIC are based on the level of your self-employed profits.

For latest rates and a fuller explanation see: <https://www.gov.uk/self-employed-national-insurance-rates>

### Records

It is very important that you set up a record keeping system and keep all records and supporting documents. You must keep your records for at least 5 years after the 31 January submission deadline of the relevant tax year. HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) may check your records to make sure you're paying the right amount of tax. You must keep records of all money coming into and going out of your business including all cash, cheques and credit card transactions.



**Useless fact** - Luca Pacioli is regarded as the Father of Accounting & Bookkeeping and he died 500 years ago!

Your records should be adequate to allow you to complete an accurate Self Assessment return.

You will be expected to keep a full record of:

- All sales made and other business income, as it is earned.
- The cost of all business expenses and purchases as you pay them, no matter how little they cost.
- All purchases of business stock, goods and raw materials.
- Mileage records.
- Capital expenditure; keep a separate record of all purchases and sales of business equipment, machinery and vehicles, together with the receipts.
- Keep a record of the market value of equipment or vehicles introduced into the business that you owned before starting your business.

### Accounting period

You may find it useful to organise your records into accounting periods. These normally last for 12 months although they can be for longer or shorter periods, and end on a date which you choose. Your first accounting period begins on the date you started in business and ends on the date you close your accounts each year and calculate profits. For example, you could close your accounts on 5 April to coincide with the end of the tax year. If you select a date other than 5 April you may have to do some additional calculations.

### Business expenses

You can deduct, from your profits, all you spend for the sole purpose of earning business profits. You cannot claim anything you spend for a non-business purpose, for example, premiums on personal insurance policies, Income Tax, personal National Insurance contributions or drawings. What you spend the money on affects whether you can get tax relief for it.

## ACCOUNTANCY & TAX

### Allowable business expenses

An allowable business expense is money spent on the day-to-day running costs of your business. This can include things such as rent, lighting and heating of business premises, telephone and running costs of vehicles used in the business.

### Capital expenditure

Capital expenditure is money spent on items you would expect to last for a number of years. They are referred to as assets and would include items such as equipment, machinery and vehicles.

Do not include these costs in your day-to-day business expenses, as special rules apply. You may be able to claim capital allowance but the amount you will depend on a number of factors, such as the type of asset purchased and when it was bought.

### Private expenses

Where expenses relate to both business and private use, only the business part is allowable.

For example, rent, rates, lighting and heating bills for premises and telephone charges could be partly for business and partly for domestic purposes.

Where there is both business and private use, cost must be apportioned to claim only the business part.

If you use a vehicle for both business and private use, there are two methods that can be used to calculate business motoring expenses. Whichever method you choose, you must keep mileage records to calculate the split between business and private use.

Home to office (or fixed place of business) is classed as a private journey and is not allowable.

### “QUOTE UNQUOTE”

*“This may be a company car but I own the company!”*

### Motor expenses

Motor expenses are classed as an “allowable expense” if the mileage is wholly and exclusively for business purposes. It can include travel to a temporary work place but it doesn’t include:

Normal travel between home (or anywhere that is not a workplace) and your permanent workplace  
Private travel

There are two ways of working out motor expenses if you’re self-employed.

A fixed rate for each mile travelled on business, using HMRC fixed mileage rate.  
Actual expenses, using detailed records of business and private mileage

### Capital allowances

You can claim capital allowances when you buy assets that you keep to use in your business, e.g.: equipment, machinery, business vehicles, e.g. cars, vans or lorries

If you’re a sole trader or partner and have an income of £82,000 or less a year, you may be able to use a simpler system called cash basis instead. In most cases, the value is what you paid for the item.

### Bank Account

Although not a legal requirement, we would strongly encourage you to operate separate personal and business bank account. This will help you obtain a much clearer instant view of the true financial position and will make accounting to HMRC far simpler.

### Summary

As you will have gathered from this overview, there is quite a lot to take in and you may be best advised to engage the help of an accountant. You can spend the freed up time earning money and developing your business.

The next few pages list local firms who are keen to help you.

## OAKTREE BUSINESS MANAGEMENT



**Firstly, welcome to Andover, the town of many new entrepreneurs, new families and new businesses.....with a real community spirit!**

Andover is a town with beautiful surrounding villages, so when you need advice, like who is the good local butcher, baker or dare I say, accountant?, we are very much like-minded people who look out for each other and recommend the ones we know and have had a good experience with; because we believe that you only recommend people that you can trust and who are seen as part of that local community.

Our accountancy business started around the kitchen table doing small-scale business and personal accounts. We started to grow a business without really knowing it! - our client numbers swelled over several years, from both our own efforts and the recommendations of our existing client-base and now we find ourselves with our own offices in Andover Town Centre and a client list of over 300 companies & individuals and 6 people on our headcount!

Since we moved to the Andover area in around 2000, the town has a very different feel and dynamic than it used to do. Looking from the outside it seemed, at that time, as if Andover was the place that time forgot, the sickly sibling of the 'bigger towns'; Basingstoke, Salisbury, Newbury and Winchester.....a few years ago, the idea of a traffic jam of any 'loose' description would have been laughable!

However, over recent years, the town has established a tangible upwards trend in population size (newcomers to the area a very significant proportion), population wealth, age-range and new small businesses.

One gets the real sense that Andover has now reached a 'critical mass' in terms of it's development into a thriving business and community, with the lowest unemployment levels in the area (and Hampshire as a whole) versus the rest of the UK. There is a large 'catchment area' within the rural/semi-rural community who have the wealth, education and incomes to either a) purchase goods and services or b) set up their own businesses.

All the above is reflected in the fact that circa 70% of Oaktree Business Management's business is dealing with start ups - entrepreneurs that understand their business & customers but need advice or guidance on the accountancy aspect. We offer a wide range of services from payroll, bookkeeping, Vat, year end accounts and self assessment tax returns.

If you would like more information on our accountancy services please call us on 01264 324103 or visit our website <http://www.oaktreebm.co.uk/>



## ACCOUNTANCY & TAX

### Andover

#### **BRC Accountants**

<http://www.brcaccountants.co.uk/>  
BRC accountants is a firm of Chartered Accountants based in Andover, Hampshire. We provide accounting, tax and support services, including bookkeeping and payroll services, to a wide range of businesses and individuals. We also act as business consultants and advisors to our clients.

#### **Buckleys Chartered Accountants**

<http://www.buckleysca.co.uk/>  
We are a team of Chartered Accountants located in Ower near Romsey, serving clients all across the Southampton, New Forest and Salisbury areas.

#### **Clifford Fry & Co**

<http://www.cliffordfryandco.com/accountants-andover>  
Our highly skilled staff provide business support and services to a wide range of corporate and private clients in Andover, offering clear, realistic and friendly advice.

#### **Croombs Chartered Accountants**

<http://www.croombsca.com/>  
Croombs Chartered Accountants are a local firm of Accountants in Andover, offering timely, tailored advice to businesses in the £0 to £2m turnover bracket. We specialise in helping you understand the numbers and find a way through the maze of regulation.

#### **D. Velida & Co**

<http://www.dvelida.co.uk/>  
We are proud to have played an active role in the local business environment and of the part we continue to play in the development of many of our clients.

#### **Hysens Chartered Accountants**

<http://www.hysens.co.uk/>  
Our aim is to provide the best possible service to all our clients whether they are a multi-million pound turnover company, a small business or a personal tax client.

#### **Langdowns DFK**

<http://www.langdownsdfk.com/>  
We are an independent member of DFK International, an association of independent accounting firms and business advisers, enabling us to provide advice on international business and tax matters. By working together and applying innovative thinking we are able to add value and deliver complete business support.

#### **M W Accounting**

<http://www.mwaccounting.co.uk/>  
M W Accounting offers a unique and personal accountancy service to small and medium-sized businesses. Our friendly approach, expertise and attention to detail removes any accountancy concerns you may have, allowing you to concentrate on your main focus – running your business.

#### **Oaktree Business Management**

<http://www.oaktreebm.co.uk/>  
Oaktree Business Management is an independent, down to earth, honest and friendly accounting company based in Andover, specialising in accountancy, bookkeeping, payroll, VAT, company accounts etc.

#### **Richard Kyte Associates**

<http://www.richardkyte.com/>  
Believing that a good business is built on solid foundations, we provide you with individual attention for sound business advice including accounts preparation and taxation. If you are thinking of setting up a business, acquiring an existing one, or just in need of an accountant for any reason, please call us on 01264 359178

#### **River View Tax & Accountancy Ltd**

<http://www.gemmamerritt.co.uk>  
We offer a full range of services and advice, to both businesses and individuals. This includes; annual accounts and returns for SME's; sole trader accounts; self assessment returns; Payroll; Company Secretarial Services and budgeting, forecasting and planning advice and assistance.



**ACCOUNTANCY & TAX****Summit Accounting**

<http://www.summitconsultingltd.com/>

Summit Consulting is more than an accountancy firm. Our professionals embody a wealth of business experience managing companies of all sizes and in a variety of industries, and aiding their expansion and growth.

**The WOW Company**

<http://www.thewowcompany.com/>

Wow is a national firm of accountants offering a genuinely proactive service to small businesses across the UK, from start-up to £5m turnover. We make it easy for you to manage your wealth and business finances, so you can do more of what you love.

**Romsey****Boler Wiseman**

<http://www.bolerwiseman.com/>

We will provide business support services to equip you with additional time, confidence and energy to focus on maximising your business potential. Boler Wiseman Limited is an independent professional firm of Chartered Accountants, Tax Advisers and Business Advisers.

**Jerram Surlis Limited**

<http://jerramsurlis.org/>

We offer a traditional service and the majority of new introductions come to us through referral from existing clients. We are always happy to offer a free initial chat to see if we can help you with your business or personal tax affairs.

**Macklin & Co**

<http://macklinandco.co.uk/>

Macklin & Co is a Romsey based firm of accountants established for over 25 years. Our clients range from private individuals to limited companies.

**Paige Associates**

<http://paigeassociates.co.uk/>

We are renowned for our personal and efficient service. We can work flexibly

with you to suit the needs of running your business so evening and weekend appointments are easily arranged. We will come to your premises if it makes life easier for you and provide a free collection and delivery of accounts and paperwork if required.

**Stockbridge****Bryars & Co**

<http://www.mbryars.com/>

Bryars & Co. Chartered Accountants in Stockbridge, Hampshire offer a range of accountancy services to small and medium sized business and private individuals. We are very flexible and can do as much or as little accountancy work as you need and we are always pleased to discuss individual requirements to find the most cost effective way of proceeding.

**Test Valley Accountants**

<http://www.vectisaccountants.co.uk>

Provide a personalised service to local business owners and individuals. For help with any of your accountancy and tax needs, please give us a call. All initial consultations are free of charge.

**Whitchurch****Derbyshire Accountants**

<http://www.derbyshireaccountants.com>

We provide accounting and taxation services, including bookkeeping and payroll, to a wide range of businesses, charities and individuals in Whitchurch, Andover, Basingstoke and the surrounding areas.



# 9

## Marketing

---

**Having a great product or service is not much good if nobody knows about it. An understanding of the basic marketing principles should give you a clearer idea of how you can present your business to the best effect, make your target market aware of your existence, and to help convert interest into paying custom.**

---

## A HANDY DEFINITION OF MARKETING



*I was interested to read that the American Marketing Association, one of the best-known marketing bodies in the world, revisits the definition of marketing every five years. The latest definition reads:*

**Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large.**

**Is that how you would describe it?** I always describe it in terms of a visual image (which may confirm that I need to be taken away by men in white coats) this is a sheepdog, sheep and a sheep pen. The sheep are your potential customers, the sheepdog is your marketing material – and that marketing material is designed to persuade your customers into the sheep-pen – which is your business.

**Yes, I get that so far...** OK well, you cannot set off a sheepdog to round up sheep until you know where those sheep are and how they tick. In marketing terms this means it is crucial to understand the needs, wants and location of your target audience first. The sheepdog does not naturally do a great job any more than words and images just chucked onto a page will do.

It needs to understand the way to work – or if you prefer – manipulate your sheep and it does this without scaring them off or driving them in the wrong way or failing to move them at all. This is why it is handy to work with an expert sheep-dog trainer – or marketing consultant!

**Where do most companies go wrong?** Probably a combination of the following:

- they always do what they have always done without measuring whether this is actually working
- they mention the features but not the benefits to their customers
- they forget to differentiate themselves from their competitors (so why would I buy from YOU?)
- they do not market consistently and continually, so their message gets lost in the noise and they get rollercoaster income instead of steady business
- their marketing literature is bland, predictable and fails to engage - what I call marketing wallpaper
- they spend a fortune on marketing literature that looks great but says little and ends up in a box holding the door open because they don't know HOW, WHEN and WHERE to use it

*How do you pick a marketing company?*

Find out about their local reputation, look at who they work with, see if you like the way they put themselves across – if they have engaged with you they are likely to be able to engage with your potential customers on your behalf.

**Jane Buswell** ([www.businessfulcrum.co.uk](http://www.businessfulcrum.co.uk))

## MARKETING

# Stand out from the crowd

Marketing should be more than having some business cards printed, putting an ad in the local paper or placing a sign on the pavement and waiting for the customers to come flooding in.

Preparing a comprehensive marketing strategy will help you think about where your business will fit into the market and how to get it there. It is no good creating a fantastic product or service if nobody knows about it.

### QUOTE, UNQUOTE

*“Doing business without advertising is like winking at a girl in the dark: you know what you are doing, but nobody else does”*

EDGAR WATSON HOWE

### Market research

Your market research should have helped you to identify your target market, where they are located, what are their needs, how do they spend their money, how do they find their suppliers. The next step is to make them aware of your business and to actively encourage them to buy from you. In marketing speak this is defined as: Putting the right product in the right place, at the right price, at the right time.

You need to create a product that a particular group of people want, put it on sale in a place that those people visit regularly, and at a price that matches the value they feel they get out of it; and do all that at a time they want to buy.

There's a lot of truth in this.

However, a lot of hard work needs to go into finding out what customers want, and identifying where they do their shopping.

Then you need to figure out how to produce the item at a price that represents value to them, and get it all to come together at the critical time.

### The 7 Ps of marketing

The 7 Ps is probably the best-known way of approaching this challenge.

The 7Ps are:

1. **Product (or Service)**
2. **Place**
3. **Price**
4. **Promotion**
5. **Packaging**
6. **Positioning**
7. **People**

### Product/service

- Q. What does the customer want from the product/service?
- Q. What needs does it satisfy?
- Q. What features does it have to meet these needs?
- Q. Are there any features you've missed out?
- Q. Are you including costly features that the customer won't actually use?
- Q. How and where will the customer use it?



## MARKETING

- Q. What does it look like? How will customers experience it?
- Q. What size(s), colour(s), will it be?
- Q. What is it to be called?
- Q. How is it branded?
- Q. How is it different?
- Q. What is the most it can cost to provide, and still be sold sufficiently profitably?

### Place

- Q. Where do buyers look for it?
- Q. How can you access the right distribution channels?
- Q. Do you need to use a sales force?
- Q. What do your competitors do, and how can you learn from that?

### Price

- Q. What is its value to the buyer?
- Q. Are there established price points for products or services in this area?
- Q. Is the customer price sensitive? Will a small decrease in price gain you?
- Q. What discounts should be offered to trade customers?
- Q. How will your price compare with your competitors?

### Promotion

- Q. Where and when can you get across your marketing messages?
- Q. When is the best time to promote? Is there seasonality in the market? Are there any wider environmental issues?
- Q. How do your competitors do their promotions?

### Packaging

- Q. How will your product look and feel?
- Q. What will be the first impression?
- Q. Is your style consistent?

### Positioning

- Q. How do people think and talk about you when you're not present?
- Q. How do people think and talk about your company? What positioning do you have in your market, in terms of the specific words people use when they describe you and your offerings to others?

### People

- Q. Have you developed the habit of thinking in terms of the people inside and outside of your business?
- Q. Have you got the right team around you to execute your plans? This can include employees as well as the wider network of support that you are going to require
- Q. Are you the right person? (Only kidding!)



### Spread the word

As you will quickly discover, there are so many 'opportunities' to promote your business, you could easily spend every penny you earn on marketing. So, how can you create the maximum impact without breaking the bank?

### Corporate image & design

As they say, "you don't get a second chance to make a first impression". For many of your clients, the first time they encounter your business will be online, via a letter, flyer or advertisement. It is vital to make sure that your message is as strong as if you were there in person.

A great starting point is to think about branding your business. If you think only big corporate names need to think about their brand identity, think again. Branding is all about the simple things like logo, consistent colours, fonts, style, and image. That's as true for a one person home-based business as it is for a multi-national conglomerate.

## WHAT IS YOUR USP?

**Marketing your business is about standing out and not blending in. The number one priority for all business owners should be to break out of obscurity. If no one knows you exist how can they ever buy from you?**



You need to put as much distance between yourself and your competition as you can. The way to do this is by working on your USP.

Traditionally known as a Unique Selling Point/Proposition I decided an update for the old USP acronym was required. Would you rather buy from a company who ram a Unique Selling Point down your throat, or entice you with their UTTERLY SEDUCTIVE PROPOSAL?

In 2013 the Utterly Seductive Proposal was born. In 2014 my book 'Your Utterly Seductive Proposal' was published.

The importance of a USP to any business cannot be stressed enough. If you don't believe me [and why should you?] just try making a few marketing tools without having a USP. Start with a simple business card, a social media post, try a leaflet, write an article, plan a video or a website. Take your pick. Exactly WHAT are you going to say?

The words you use could be the important business decision you ever make. They dictate what others think and what they do i.e. if they actually buy from you.

*"A USP is central to your marketing and fundamental to your sales."*

### How to create your very own USP

#### 1. Identify Who is Your Ideal Target Client [ITC]?

Unless you know who/what you're aiming at, how will you hit it? If you don't know who you're trying to attract you can't possibly know if the marketing messages you're creating are likely to resonate with your ITC.

How to spot your ITC: The ITC will value your products and services, be enthusiastic in your direction, will not be overly concerned with price and will refer you to others. Take your top 3 clients and imagine 100 of them; how would your business look then?

#### 2. Dig Deep and Answer These Questions

- What are the top 3-5 benefits of your product?
- What is it I can only get from you and no one else?
- What journey can you take me on that no one else can?
- Why should I look forward to doing business with you over anyone else?

The answers will give you your own exceptional qualities. Think about these areas:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Innovation                             | 6. Technical superiority   |
| 2. A pioneering method, process or system | 7. Zero risk   |
| 3. Guarantees                             | 8. A promise   |
| 4. Individuality                          | 9. Exclusivity   |
| 5. Speed                                  | 10. If all else fails think of a gimmick that you can easily be remembered by [callnorman.co.uk] |

#### 3. Bring it all Together

The aim to create a 15-20 word phrase that powerfully conveys why your ITC should do business with you over anyone else. It's not easy. Work at it. When you have something rubber stamp it across every marketing tool you have and become known for it. Make it your anthem. Keep improving it.

This is where you need to be aiming to make your business's products and services the topics of conversations at cocktail parties and business networking events.

Good luck.

**Tim Coe** [USP Marketing Consultant] [www.myusp.biz](http://www.myusp.biz)

## THE BENEFITS OF PR



### What is PR?

Public Relations is about reputation - the result of what you do, what you say and what others say about you. According to Britain's industrial leaders, reputation is a company's most valuable asset.

### What can PR do for you?

#### 1. Build awareness

If you want people to buy your product or use your service, they need to know you exist and understand your unique selling proposition (USP). This brand awareness is vital to a company's success. Advertising may help, but PR is viewed as more reputable, providing a credibility that other promotional options do not offer. Media coverage for your story, launch or charity event, for example, can generate the necessary consumer attention and get you noticed.

#### 2. Create interest

Stories in the media can entice your target audience to sample your product or enquire about your service. This kind of coverage, rather than paid-for advertising, can make what you have to offer more attractive.

#### 3. Provide detailed information

A well-structured PR campaign can result in your target audience being exposed to more in-depth information about products and services. Through articles, newsletters, social media and websites, for example, PR delivers information that can help prospective customers/clients gain a better understanding of what you offer.

#### 4. Spread the word

Social media makes it easy for you to develop your PR and create your own publicity, if managed strategically. What better way to spread the word about your product or service than through your existing online audience?

'Word of mouth' is now also 'word of Twitter or Facebook' but it remains a vital component to the success of your business. Any negative buzz can be handled quickly and relationships with your audience maintained.

#### 5. Build customer relations

PR creates a beneficial opportunity for both the company and the target audience to communicate and develop a relationship. An excellent customer relation tool, PR is intended as helpful and informative, and with social media, it can provide a 2-way conversation.

#### 6. Manage a crisis

In building relations with your audience and the media through PR, you are better prepared to manage a reputational threat. If you have invested time in building a reputation through the media, the public (and journalists) will be inclined to give you the benefit of the doubt should a crisis arise. With the contacts you have developed, you will be able to respond speedily to potentially damaging issues. PR doesn't just promote, it also protects.

#### Is PR really necessary?

Yes! The benefits of PR are integral to the success of any organisation and no business plan is complete without its communication strategy.

Whatever your budget, it is worth investing in PR.

#### PR packages from jag press & publicity

Save time and get PR guidance from an expert. Take a look at the PR packages, specifically aimed at SMEs, from jag press & publicity.

Depending on your requirement, and your budget, you can select from a range of packages to help you achieve your objective: from a press release template and bespoke contact list, to a social media strategy, to a full package of guides, templates and advice.

To ensure you are on the right track, most of the packages include a minimum one hour consultation with the Director of jag.

Go to [www.jagpresspublicity.co.uk](http://www.jagpresspublicity.co.uk) to see how jag can support your PR needs.

Alternatively, give us a call on **01403 793836**

E-mail [ann@jagpresspublicity.co.uk](mailto:ann@jagpresspublicity.co.uk)

Follow us on Twitter @jagpr

Find us on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/jagpresspr](http://www.facebook.com/jagpresspr)).



## MARKETING

### Print

At the very least, you will have to consider ordering stationery (letterheads and business cards) that portrays your business professionally. It may be tempting to print something off at home on your computer, which may save you a few pounds, but it could cost you much more in lost business.

Once you have made the decision as to what you need to get started, you need a printer. Here are some tips to ensure that you are able to find the right printer who is able to supply professional looking printed material at the right price.

- Ensure your quotes are 'like-for-like'. The best idea is to get one quote, and then use that terminology to explain what you want to other printers.
- Every printer has different equipment, and asking the same printer to print a business card and then a catalogue, is a bit like asking a motorbike courier to deliver an envelope, and then a pallet of boxes.
- Ask a trusted colleague. You will find that the most talked about printers in the town are either the best or the worst! Ask someone who they use, to sort the good, the bad and the ugly!
- Check, Check and check again. Print isn't an easy industry, so check details at every point you can. Make sure your artwork is up together and 'print-ready' to avoid extra charges, check the proofs thoroughly as strange things can happen, and make sure you check regularly with the print company to ensure delivery is on target!

### Website

... but what about the web? Being one of the first places your potential clients will see your business its certainly worth serious consideration. What do you really need on your website? What should you ask a web agency and which agency should you work with? How do you spot the hidden costs? Are you comparing like with like?

These are just some of the questions that armed with the right answers will allow you to see through the many offerings available, avoid the pit falls and confidently take your company online.

### Advertising

As a new business you will be bombarded with opportunities to advertise in all manner of ways. When deciding where to spend your budget, try and judge how to reach your potential customers effectively and economically. Be very wary of 'special offers' and impressive circulation figures – it is better to reach one customer who will buy than 100,000 who don't!

### QUOTE, UNQUOTE

---

*"Half the money I spend on advertising is wasted; the trouble is I don't know which half." John Wanamaker*

---

### PR

Effective use of PR can provide a strong way to get your business known. Sadly, your competition has probably realised this too. This means that you have to work extra hard to create a buzz, as only the most interesting stories will get you the free publicity that you crave. (Many publications now insist that you advertise with them before giving you 'free' editorial - even more reason to make sure that your story is genuinely 'news-worthy').



**DID YOU KNOW?** A West Yorkshire chip shop owner was investigated after a complaint that his shop smells of fish and chips.' Wakefield Council said it was obliged to investigate the complaint - mad, but fantastic free publicity for the business.

## MARKETING

### Online marketing

Internet marketing is enjoying a boom and can be relatively inexpensive. Companies can reach a wide audience for a small fraction of traditional advertising budgets because there are no print or distribution costs. The nature of the medium allows consumers to research and purchase products and services at their own convenience. (See dedicated chapter).

### Networking

Business networking is more than just a way of having a friendly chat over breakfast, it can also be an extremely effective way to draw in more clientele. For most small business owners, proper networking skills are necessary for their continued existence and success.

Networking takes many forms. Whether a business owner is cold-calling clients on the phone, or meeting other business owners in the area for breakfast or lunch, the networking never stops.

Networking leads to referral business, and referral business leads to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty. (See separate Networking chapter for hints, tips, and a list of local networking clubs)

### Customer service

Finding new customers can be extremely expensive, so treat your current customers well and they will keep coming back to you.

### Word of mouth

Last and definitely not least. Word of mouth advertising is probably the cheapest and most effective marketing tool in your armoury. A recommendation from a satisfied customer is far more persuasive than any paid advertisement. Harness this secret weapon by asking for referrals and positively encourage your happy clients to tell their friends.

## DO YOU ENCOURAGE REPEAT BUSINESS?



**Businesses spend millions of pounds casting their fishing lines, hooking people and reeling them in to be customers. But once you've gained custom, just how do you keep it?**

The downfall for many companies is that they don't know how to retain consumers. It seems like this has fast become the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow and few firms manage to do it well. But why bother? What are the real advantages to retention?

Studies across a number of industries have revealed that the cost of keeping an existing customer is just 10 per cent of the cost of acquiring a new one. So, economically it makes pretty good sense. Putting together a good retention strategy will also lead to increased customer profitability as the longer the relationship, the lower the account maintenance cost.

The bad news is there doesn't seem to be one particular foolproof method to keep customers coming back for more: let's face it, if there was, everyone would be doing it. But firms that can boast great success in their customer retention endeavours often have one thing in common – great customer service.

**Keeping consumers happy means your actions must speak louder than your words and a proven rather than a promised commitment will put you way ahead of the competition.**

## YOUR MARKETING PLAN

# Your marketing plan

Until a plan is written down, it is little more than a set of ideas. Writing your marketing plans makes you commit to it, makes it more organised and is something that you can refer to, action and measure against.



## Marketing plan

Check out our step-by-step guide to thinking about and writing an effective marketing plan.

### 1. Start with the end in mind

Set specific objectives: for example, winning new customers, retaining existing customers, increasing order sizes or selling new products.

Make sure you think about the implications of your marketing plan for the rest of your business – for example, production/capacity, training requirements and cash flow.

Try and put together some basic, realistic sales forecasts and budgets.

### 2. Develop your 'Customer Avatar'

To make your marketing effective, you need to have a clear idea of your ideal target customer. This description is sometimes known as a 'customer avatar'.

If you plan to sell to individuals, how would you describe them? Describe them by gender, age, marital status, occupation, income, location, how many children they have and anything else that may be useful. If you plan to sell to businesses, think about company size, sector, location and what sort of person in the business you are targeting (Office Manager, Accounts Department, Managing Director etc.).

Think about the things that affect their buying decision: what, when, how and why they buy.

- Describe your market and the characteristics and size of each market segment; what are the key market trends?
- Describe your ideal customer. Are they individuals or businesses? Consider age, gender, shopping habits, social etc. For businesses, consider size, industry, location, job title etc.

## YOUR MARKETING PLAN

- Where are your customers based?
- What prompts or motivates your customers to buy your products or services?
- What might trigger a potential customer to think of you – this can help you think about where to do your marketing and the message you give.
- Have you sold your product/services to customers already or do you have customers waiting to buy? If so, try and describe them in detail.
- Think about the profitability and sales potential of different groups of customers (known as market segments) and of different products or activities.

**FREE WORKSHEET DOWNLOAD** Download our customer avatar worksheet with examples at [www.agilemarketing.agency/syob](http://www.agilemarketing.agency/syob)



"Sell the hole, not the drill." People do not buy 'things' they buy what the 'things' can do for them.

### 3. Your product 'Before & After Grid'

Be clear on your products and services. Don't try and be all things to all people. When marketing your product or service, think about the benefits not the features. For example, if you are selling firewood, you are selling the warmth (or decorative effect!) not the wood.

- Describe your product or service using as many trigger keywords as possible.
- If you think about features, think 'so what'? Always ask the extra question: 'Which means that?'. For example, I am a garden maintenance company and cut your lawn? So what? Which means that...you get your weekend back with more free time.
- Think about the benefits and value of people buying your product or service. Facts are great but appealing to peoples' emotion is better. I cut your grass so you can spend more time with your family enjoying the garden.
- Think about 'pain points' – how will you improve their life or business? Often it is useful to put this down as a 'before and after' list.
- Think about the profitability and sales potential of different groups of customers (market segments) and of different products or activities. Most companies make 80% of their profit from 20% of their products.
- Produce a 'before and after grid' in terms of haves, feelings and emotions – for example; before – you have to cut the grass, after, you do not have to cut the grass themselves. Before, you feel stressed, after, you feel relaxed. Before, you never have time at the weekend to be with your family, after, your family life is better and happier. Selling, more free time, being relaxed and being happier is far more powerful than just offering to cut the grass!

**FREE WORKSHEET DOWNLOAD** Download our before and after grid and sample value statement at: [www.agilemarketing.agency/syob](http://www.agilemarketing.agency/syob)

## THE VALUE OF VIDEO



**The use of video to show off your business, products and services is becoming more and more popular. The future has officially arrived - a video revolution for content marketing.**

As video is one of the newest ways to market and promote companies, many people still have doubts about is it worth it? Well the answer is yes!

**Sales:** Let's get straight down to business; video has the ability to generate some serious money.

Adding a product video on your landing pages can increase conversations and interactions by up to 80%, and studies also show that up to 74% of users who watch explainer videos online actually buy the product.

Vision is our most dominant sense - so these kind of amazing statistics for how effective video is really do add up! We all know imagery is eye-catching when scrolling through social media or on websites, so just imagine if you began adding moving images into the mix as well.

**Personality:** Video is the best tool in the box to get your business's unique personality out there. It's no secret that in this day and age, the internet is a crowded place, so use video as an opportunity to make you and your business stand out! This can be achieved by having a polished and punchy promotional video on the landing page of your website. Social Media will also be where your personality will shine through - from uploading short 'behind the scenes' videos of something exciting that's happening that day via your smartphone to boost interest, to posting short explainer videos and tutorials that can get your name and product spread far and wide within a few clicks!

**Trust:** Following on from unique personality - trust is also the foundation of sales, which means that building trust should be a priority at the top of your list. The whole idea of content marketing is based on building long-term relationships with consumers, which is ultimately them trusting that you are the real deal - so definitely put as much effort into this as possible which can be easily achieved through video.

**The search engine:** Google loves video! Did you know that you are 53 times more likely to show up first on Google if you have an embedded video on your website? - It's a huge thing to think about, as your ultimate aim should be to show up on the first page. It's good to note that Google now owns YouTube!

**On the go:** Mobile user friendly. It's no secret that nowadays video and mobile go hand in hand and a big part of this is because the world is so used to having instant information within a few clicks. People have increasingly busy lives, so having your smartphone, WiFi and 4G on tap is the reason why mobile video views have increased by a massive 400%.

**Video does it all:** Videos really can explain anything. Launching a new product or service? - create a video showing how it works in simple stages with polished visuals and in some cases use voice-over. Need to explain a difficult concept? - Think about using animated videos and don't be afraid of getting really creative.

Overall, if you are serious about content marketing, you must be serious about video. Video advertising is becoming more accessible, affordable, worldwide and sometimes even free - so there is plenty of opportunity to get involved and be present.

Although some video opportunities are free and easy to use (and can be highly successful), you should not always rely on this D.I.Y approach in every circumstance if you want to see real results. Making a great marketing video for your tailored business requirements needs professional creativity and knowledge of human psychology - there is a real science behind it! All of these components together make it possible to create real miracles online.

A successful video can be spread on the internet in a matter of days, get millions of views and bring in a lot of money.

By Heidi Bawden

**Heidi Bawden Video Production**  
www.heidibawdenvideo.co.uk

## YOUR MARKETING PLAN

### 4. Marketing research

Try and do some basic marketing research – if you know which ‘niche’ you want to target, carrying out marketing research enables you to build up a customer profile, which can be used to guide future marketing activity.

- Ask some potential customers basic questions about what they think about when deciding to buy
- Research what customers think and value, such as product features, quality, service and image. It is not just about price.
- Look for factual evidence, information and data online or using your local library or business support agencies (such as your Chamber of Commerce).
- Check that there is sufficient customer demand in your target area to sustain your business.
- Most importantly, when you get started, get as much customer feedback as possible.

### 5. Communicating with and reaching your customers

Think carefully about how you are going to promote your business and deliver your products or services. Consider the points below:

- When writing marketing materials, you should always use YOU in your text...never refer to ‘them’ or ‘our customers’ otherwise the person reading the text does not identify with what you are saying. Using ‘you’ makes it more personal and more effective. Try reading some blogs and tips on writing marketing copy and effective headlines.
- Consider how you can communicate with your customers – what publications do they read? Can you use the local parish magazines? Do you have a mailing list or e-mail list? Advertising is often too expensive but can work if it is very targeted.

- Consider how you are going to deliver your product or service to your customers (known as distribution channels). Will you sell direct, through retailers, online or via a shop?
- Think about what messages you are going to give your potential customers in order to engage them and encourage them to buy (remember have, feel, emotions)
- How will you measure customer satisfaction?
- What marketing methods will you use to reach your potential customers? Consider both online and traditional marketing methods.
- Identify customers’ buying cycles so you can time your marketing activities – are they seasonal? Are they time-sensitive based on some other factor?

**FREE DOWNLOAD** Download our free list of tools to communicate with customers at: [www.agilemarketing.agency/syob](http://www.agilemarketing.agency/syob)

### 6. Pricing and costing

Think carefully about how you are going to price your product or service in the marketplace. Remember, it is not always about the price and some of the most successful companies are the most expensive!

If possible, you should ask some potential customers or existing customers their views on price – are they very price sensitive or is it quality that matters more?

When thinking about pricing, you should consider:

- How you will price each product or service?
  - Market pricing – pricing similar to competitors
  - Penetration pricing – gaining market share through very low margins
  - Cost plus pricing – adding a margin to your production cost

## YOUR MARKETING PLAN

### 7. Competitor analysis

- Who are your competitors and how many are there?
- List your direct and indirect competitors and look at what they do in terms of their products, their marketing activities and their marketing messages.
- Consider why people will choose to buy from you rather than your competitors.
- Think about your 'benefits and value statement' and how your products and services compare to those of your competitors.
- What do your competitors do well? Can you do better?

**FREE DOWNLOAD** Download our free 'Competitor Worksheet' at: [www.agilemarketing.agency/syob](http://www.agilemarketing.agency/syob)

### 8. Pulling this together as a simple Marketing Plan

A single page marketing plan that is regularly updated and used is far better than a 30-page plan that is left in the cupboard. We have covered a lot to think about and hopefully, you have now looked at your customer, your product and your marketing communications.

Now it is time to pull this information together into a simple marketing plan.

Our simple, one-page marketing plan helps you to summarise:

- Who your customers are
- What is most important to them
- Your marketing objectives
- The key actions to get you there

By completing this simple plan, it will help you to set some goals and activities which you can actually get on with.

You can then revisit your plan to see what worked (and what did not!) and update it.

It is then a matter of 'rinse and repeat' ... pick what worked from your plan, set some new actions and then continue to refine and improve your marketing.

**MORE FREE DOWNLOADS:** Single-page marketing plan template; Marketing Calendar

**DOWNLOAD THESE AT:** [www.agilemarketing.agency/syob](http://www.agilemarketing.agency/syob)

### QUOTE, UNQUOTE

*'Marketing is a journey, not a destination'*







# 10

## **Business Networking**

---

**The idea of business networking can seem terrifying to some people. Yet it is vitally important to business these days, a great way to make contacts and increase business without a lot of cold calling. It is actually quite easy and painless. All you need to do is attend a networking event and begin making connections for yourself and your business.**

---

## WAKE UP AND SMELL THE COFFEE!

**I am no shrinking violet, but I still remember the traumas around my first foray into networking. Having stepped out of corporate life, the concept was pretty alien to me but I did realise that I wasn't going to get any work if the local business community didn't know I existed!**

So, that first time, I bullied myself into getting changed to go out from the safety of my home office and into the unknown. I scolded myself about being late because I had twice come back into the house once for my mobile phone and once for my business cards.

I dragged myself to a local pub with a big neon sign over my head that said "Nervous Networker" and was immediately made welcome by a group of local business owners who shared challenges, opportunities, business gossip and quite a few bad jokes.

There is no question that networking works. The reason why, of course, is that 'people buy people'!

My advice to you is go along and try them all. Nothing is wasted; this is after all marketing in the most fun way possible and probably the cheapest! Some will fulfil your need for peer support; some will provide you with tangible business opportunities.

### So some practical hints and tips.

- Avoid joining 2 people deep in conversation Look for people standing alone but looking out into the room
- Get the handshake right – firm and not clammy please
- Don't start talking before someone else has finished.
- NEVER sell directly
- Smile

The whole point of networking is to meet as many people as possible, so don't stand in a corner with your mates. To get past any discomfort you might set yourself a goal of how many new contacts you want to meet. You might also station yourself by the tea and coffee and show people how to use yet another coffee machine designed to confuse! Whatever, take the bull by the horns, walk up to people you don't know, introduce yourself and start a conversation

*"Where have you come from today?"*

*"Whose guest are you?"*

*"I find these events a bit nerve-wracking, how do you find them?"*

### 3 easy ways to get away from people who you have got stuck with!

Keep your glass with just a little liquid and say you are going to get a top up.

Go to the loo...

Say – "well its been great chatting to you but there are one or two other people in the room that I must catch up with so if you excuse me..." smile, walk away.

Never lose sight of the main aim, don't just place the business cards you have gathered in a teetering pile. Send new contacts an e-mail saying nice to meet them, suggest a coffee to find out more about them. Ask all of them where else they network and GO FOR IT!

**Jane Buswell**

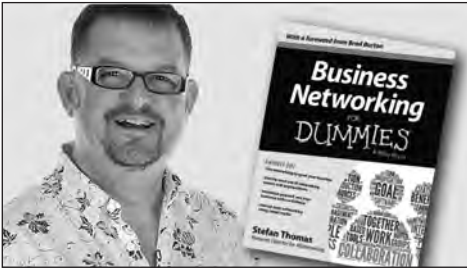
[www.businessfulcrum.co.uk](http://www.businessfulcrum.co.uk)



## BUSINESS NETWORKING

# How to start networking

**Stefan Thomas, author of the best selling 'Business Networking for Dummies' explains how you can get the most out of your business networking.**



### What is business networking?

On your phone you have an address book. As well as your family, your friends, the local pizza delivery service (or is that just me?), you've probably got the numbers and contact details for your clients, suppliers and advisers? If you've been in business a while you may have many contacts in there. If you're just starting out there might not be quite as many. Yet.

Business networking is the simplest way of growing your personal network. Those trusted suppliers, invaluable advisers and, of course, customers and clients that will fill up your address book are out there. You just haven't met them yet.

You're already networking if you're in business by talking to other people about your business. People at the school gates, or pub, or pizza takeaway (I should get out more).

Business networking usually means events that put a number of business owners together. Often over breakfast, lunch or dinner, or sometimes over drinks or coffee. Broadly speaking, there are two types of networking events.

"Open" networking - where there is a room full of people and you mingle and chat and exchange cards.

Structured events where typically, everyone present has a chance to speak about their business briefly (for 40 seconds typically) and then 121 meetings are arranged between the attendees in the room. At both types of event there is also usually a speaker, typically picked from the members of the organisation.

### Why you should consider networking

What's missing in your business right now?

- Clients?
- Prospects?
- Suppliers?
- People to help you move the business forward?
- People to talk to when you're having a rubbish day (or to brag to when you're having a brilliant day)?

Business networking gives you the opportunity to meet a lot of people, and choose who you want to work with.

### "QUOTE, UNQUOTE"

*"Business networking is the simplest way of growing your personal network"*

Business networking gives you the chance to build a virtual team around you, find prospects, clients and suppliers and take advice from people more experienced in business than you, or with experience in a different field.

Any marketing activity you undertake as a business is likely to be geared to ultimately meeting the person you have addressed the marketing to.

## BUSINESS NETWORKING

Business networking is a short cut to getting in front of people quickly, and in a friendly and neutral environment.

### Where to look for events

The sponsors of this article, 4Networking, have a free iPhone and Android app which will find 4Networking events near you literally at the click of a button. Just search "4Networking Meeting Finder" on either the iTunes App Store or the Google Play Store, download it and away you go.

Alternatively visit their website 4Networking.biz and their "Book a Meeting" page allows you to search for groups near you or based on the date the group runs on. 4Networking run over 5,000 breakfast, lunch and evening meetings a year. If there isn't a group near you currently, call 4Networking HQ on 0845 123 4444 and ask for details of starting a group yourself - it's a terrific way of building your profile and network locally.

You can also contact your local Chamber of Commerce to see if they run any networking events locally, or simply ask your contacts which groups they attend.

And if all of the above fails - try Googling "business networking" plus the name of your town.

### Before the event

Any networking event will provide you with opportunities to grow your business, so it is VERY worthwhile being prepared in advance. Here are some top tips to ensure you make the most of the event.

- **Business cards** - I know we live in the 21st century and we all keep all of our contact details in our phones BUT business people still expect other business people to have business cards. At some networking events the formal passing of business cards is part of the event itself. Get some printed - and pay for them. Nothing undersells your business more than "Printed for free by" on the back of your cards.

- **Your 40 second introduction** - At most business events you will have chance to introduce you and your business to the other people in the room. 4Networking events start with the "40 second round" where each attendee takes turns to introduce themselves. It is extremely worthwhile having a prepared introduction.

You would prepare any other marketing material in advance and this should be no different. The chapter of Business Networking for Dummies which deals with this subject in detail is available for free - just go to [noredbraces.co.uk/free](http://noredbraces.co.uk/free) for details.

Business networking is a short cut to getting in front of people quickly, and in a friendly and neutral environment.

- **A notebook** - Or Evernote, or your preferred application for making quick notes. Whether you prefer a pencil and paper or something on your iPad or 'phone, it is extremely worthwhile having the ability to make notes. That way you can scribble down the details of any conversation, and action points, rather than rely on your memory in what might be a very busy event.

- **Check the timings and details with the organisers** - What time does the event start? Is it expected that I'm there for the whole two hours or can I drop in when I want? Is there a payment on the day? Do I need to bring cash? Are there any other specific details which you need to be aware of? You will feel a whole lot more relaxed if you know exactly what you are attending and all of the relevant details, rather than trying to find an Email you received a week ago at the same time as trying to park the car.

### During the event

Once you're there - what now?

- **Stick to the format** - If the organisation specify a format then stick to it. You want to be remembered for the right reasons, and not for being the person who took 3 minutes in the 40 second round.

## WHAT IS A CHAMBER OF COMMERCE?



by Maureen Frost, Hampshire Chamber of Commerce ([www.hampshirechamber.co.uk](http://www.hampshirechamber.co.uk))

A good question you might ask. Many people, particularly those in business will have heard of the term but few know the full extent of what a Chamber of Commerce offers. Some of the common perceptions we hear are:

### **It's an organisation full of solicitors and accountants**

Actually that couldn't be further from the truth. Whilst we obviously have some of these professionals in membership we also have a very wide variety from tourism and leisure, education, manufacturing, transport and logistics. Some of our more unusual members include a Cathedral, Tea Importer, Bingo Hall and a Zoo!

### **Why should we pay a membership fee when you are government funded**

Chambers are themselves small businesses. Our Chamber employs 26 people and receives no government funding (with the occasional exception if we are delivering a project). We are not-for-profit and funded from membership fees and from the services we provide to members and non members such as export documentation.

### **You are only interested in big business**

Whilst we have many of the larger organisations in our area as members in reality over half of our businesses employ less than 10 people and we try to help start ups with many Chambers like ourselves offering discounted rates for your first 2 years of trading.

### **It is full of men in grey suits too formal and not relevant to the current day**

Another interesting misconception as the majority of our events have more than 50% women attending, our chamber team is very female dominated and our events programme offers something for everyone. Some of our more fun events have included Team Duck Herding, Carols and Ice Skating, Cocktail Making and Speed Networking.

Of course there is the more serious side to the Chamber too but we try to deliver events that are interesting and informative to businesses of all shapes and sizes in a relaxed and friendly setting.

### **What can my Chamber do to help me start and grow my business?**

Apart from the discounts already mentioned we provide a free legal advice line, help with HR and legal documents, access to and help to obtain grants, business related training workshops, a member to member discount scheme to help you source suppliers as well as a range of business benefits that include competitive rates on Telecomms, healthcare, utilities, lead generation, and very important to a start up many opportunities to raise your profile in our monthly business magazine, e-shots to other members, exhibition opportunities and via our social media channels.

The Chamber of Commerce means different things to different businesses. If you are not already a member why not contact the membership team at your local Chamber and find out what we can offer you and your business. You will usually be welcome to come along and sample an event before joining.

(Photograph by Kimberley Garrod - [www.kimberleygarrod.co.uk](http://www.kimberleygarrod.co.uk))

## BUSINESS NETWORKING

- **Don't prejudice the people in the room**

- This is the biggest mistake I see people make in networking. The biggest referrals and the most lucrative opportunities often come from the least expected sources. Don't ever turn anyone down for a conversation or a One to One meeting if they offer. Don't ever think that anyone isn't worth talking to or that they wouldn't be interested in what you have to offer.

- **Say it like you mean it** - When you do your 40 seconds or your introduction, make sure you sound enthusiastic about what you do. Nobody expects you to be a perfect presenter - but you can be nervous and still passionate. Have your 40 seconds written down if you need to. You want other people to be interested in you, that interest needs to come from you first.

- **Two ears, one mouth** - Remember that age old piece of advice? You have two ears and one mouth, use them in that proportion. Whenever you are in conversation with people, don't be tempted to simply broadcast about what you do. Far better to find out about them and their business first. If you listen to what they say, you might even find out that they urgently need a service like yours!

- **Make notes** - Write down anything you need to remember. If you have offered to follow up with someone, make a note so you don't forget, particularly if you go straight into another conversation.

- **SMILE** - This one should be at the top. Nobody wants to talk to someone who looks as though their pet goldfish has just died. Remember to look as though you're enjoying being there and enjoying the conversations you're having. Who knows, you may be enjoying it, you've just forgotten to tell your face.

### After the event

So much of the good work that is done in networking meetings goes to waste because people forget to follow up in between. You may be the very best at what you do.

You may offer the best value. You may be the only person who does what you do. But I don't need your service when I meet you. There are SO many ways to keep in touch, and most business owners don't bother. Be the one who stands out by following up and keeping in touch.

Nobody expects you to be a perfect presenter - but you can be nervous and still passionate.

- If you have had 1-2-1 meetings with people, at the very least fire them off an Email referencing the conversation and promising to keep in touch.
- If you have specifically offered to follow up with them, make a note to do so and then do it. Don't break the first ever promise you make to them.
- DO NOT try to sell to them on your first follow up. Everyone else will. You will stand out particularly if your early contact is personal.
- Find them on LinkedIn, Google+, Facebook or Twitter and connect. That way you're getting onto their turf and connecting on their terms.
- Maintain a CRM (Contact Relationship Management) system that suits you and reminds you to keep in touch with your network.
- PICK UP THE PHONE - despite the huge impact that social media has made, it is still ok to pick up the 'phone. In fact so many people hide behind Emails that actually talking to people will help you stand out.
- Look out for opportunities for the people that you meet. The greatest networkers, the people who win the most business through networking, are the ones who give out the most.

Everybody will welcome your call if you're the person who gives them referrals, and, when you need something in return your network will happily return the favour.

## BUSINESS NETWORKING

# Local Networking

If you like the idea of getting out and doing some business networking, here is a list of local groups who would love to see you.

### 4Networking

<https://www.4networking.biz>

Relaxed, fun and friendly business networking. Network locally, regionally and even nationally. Swap advice and biz with 50,000+ members online.

### Informal Business Networking (Andover)

Contact Julia Homan on 01264 848138  
Julia@justhrsolutions.co.uk

### Andover Women in Business

<http://www.awibc.co.uk/>

For over 20 years Andover Women in Business – affectionately known as AWIB – has provided a friendly, informal and supportive group, bringing together both employed and self-employed women from all walks of life in and around Andover Tel: 07834522510 Email: info@awibc.co.uk.

### Andover Mutual Business Group

[www.andovermbg.com](http://www.andovermbg.com)

Tel: 01264 721680 / 07879 470849

### Basepoint: Andover Networking Hub

[www.basepoint.co.uk/locations/andover/networkinghub](http://www.basepoint.co.uk/locations/andover/networkinghub)

The Networking hub is a free B2B networking event hosted by Basepoint. Providing people with the opportunity to meet new people, build on existing business relationships and generate new leads.

### BNI Hampshire

<http://bnihampshire.com/index.php>

BNI is a networking organisation specialising in referral-marketing. BNI Hampshire has 10 groups meeting across the county.



## BUSINESS NETWORKING

BNI Hampshire networking events foster a professional business environment to help its members exchange valuable business referrals and new ideas to help build a better business.

### BoB Hampshire

<http://www.bobhampshire.co.uk/>

Our concept is to facilitate collaboration and synergies between businesses and being part of a team. During the meeting you will have the opportunity to present / showcase your business to your prospective sales team for 60 seconds. Networking Hub & Events making it more profitable, more effective

### Fabulous Women and Marvellous Men

<http://fabulous-women.co.uk/>

Are you an ambitious business owner or planning to start a business soon? Would you like to meet like-minded entrepreneurs in a supportive and collaborative environment? Welcome to Fabulous Women and Marvellous Men.

### Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)

<http://www.fsb.org.uk/wessex>

The Federation of Small Businesses is the UK's largest campaigning pressure group promoting and protecting the interests of the self-employed and owners of small firms. Formed in 1974, it now has around 200,000 members across 33 regions and 188 branches.

### First Friday Network

<https://www.firstfriday-network.co.uk/>

The First Friday Network is a monthly free business networking event held on various Fridays with meetings across Hampshire. All the networks are linked but are run by local business people. Serving the business community by way of offering a venue to network, promote and exchange ideas.

### Forum for Private Business

<https://www.fpb.org/>

The Forum of Private Business (Forum) has been helping small businesses get their voices heard on the issues that matter to them for 37 years.

### Hampshire Chamber of Commerce

<http://www.hampshirechamber.co.uk/>

Meeting business contacts through events and informal social gatherings is one of the most successful methods of networking.

To help expand your business contacts and give you access to potential customers and suppliers, the Chamber holds regular well attended networking events, business exhibitions, social functions and other high profile business events throughout the year.

### ICAEW Business Advice Service

<http://www.businessadvice.service.com/>

Web based search which allows you to find an ICAEW Chartered Accountant near you offering a free initial business advice session.

### Institute of Directors (Hampshire)

<http://www.iod.com/connecting/local-networks/south/hants-and-isle-of-wight>

The Hampshire branch is recognised as the premier business organisation for the business people in Hampshire. We aim to facilitate networking relations, provide an unsurpassed platform for conducting business and represent the concerns of our members locally, nationally and beyond.

### Justcurry

[www.justcurry.biz](http://www.justcurry.biz)

Just Curry is a Business Curry Club concept that focuses on regular curry nights with no formalities, providing an opportunity to relax and meet with other business owners. The "Clubs" operates via LinkedIn Groups.

### Ladies Who Latte

Please contact Ashley Sandy ([ashleysandy@mac.com](mailto:ashleysandy@mac.com), mobile: 07540 784959) or Fiona Whitehead ([fmwhitehead@icloud.com](mailto:fmwhitehead@icloud.com)).

### Pure Networking Events

[www.hampshirechamber.co.uk/events-and-news/events/pure-networking/](http://www.hampshirechamber.co.uk/events-and-news/events/pure-networking/)

Pure networking events are included as a complementary part of your Chamber membership. Events take place across the country and are informal and designed for members to make new contacts over a tea or coffee with fellow members and staff.



## ANDOVER WOMEN IN BUSINESS

andover women  
in business ●●●●

**For over 20 years Andover Women in Business - affectionately known as AWIB - has provided a friendly, informal and supportive group, bringing together both employed and self-employed women from all walks of life in and around Andover.**

Our reputation attracts a lot of attention and we now have members from across the Test Valley Borough.

AWIB offers help and shared experiences for business and professional women and provides a platform for networking on a more natural and informal basis.

Meetings are usually held on the first Tuesday of each month. The normal format is dinner followed by a speaker.

Events are organised appropriate to the members' needs throughout the year.

May 2017 the club reaches its 25th anniversary; a flexible, affordable, forward thinking and innovative collective, which is why we survive and flourish with many having retained membership since inception -yet we continue to attract young entrepreneurs and professionals.

Members come to our meetings for different reasons; to network and increase business contacts, to get help and support, to socialise - particularly if you work alone and miss the camaraderie and interaction of work colleagues, to find out how other women meet business challenges and to bounce ideas off a group of friendly and experienced women.

We also provide opportunities to network with other groups and organise B2B and B2C events, occasionally including businessmen!

A variety of speakers, events, workshops and fairs offers members many opportunities to learn, earn and grow!

Ladies may attend up to 2 meetings as a paying guest; thereafter they must apply for membership (fee presently £30 per annum) to be able to continue to attend meetings/events

- Make Friends and become known in the business community.
- Benefit from the help and support of other like-minded businesswomen
- Enjoy a varied programme of events including monthly meetings and social functions.

For more information:

**E-mail: [info@awibc.co.uk](mailto:info@awibc.co.uk)**

**Website: [www.awibc.co.uk](http://www.awibc.co.uk)**



## BUSINESS NETWORKING



Small Business Saturday gathering in Andover

### Romsey & District Chamber of Commerce & Industry

<http://www.romseychamber.co.uk/>

Through the Chamber, members can access a range of services and support and be part of a community of business people working to ensure commercial prosperity. 18 Market Place, Romsey, Hants, SO51 8NA.

Tel: 01794 513135

e-mail: [info@romseychamber.co.uk](mailto:info@romseychamber.co.uk)

### Romsey Mutual Business Group

The Romsey Mutual Business Group regularly meet at the Cromwell Arms and you can find out more about the group by contacting Paul Russell.

[Paul.Russell@carterjonas.co.uk](mailto:Paul.Russell@carterjonas.co.uk)

### Romsey Retail & Business Forum

Romsey Retail and Business Forum (RRBF) holds an evening event every other month. The activities vary. All local retailers and business owners are welcome. For more information contact [info@romseychamber.co.uk](mailto:info@romseychamber.co.uk)

### Second Fridays

<http://www.secondfridays.co.uk/>

Second Fridays, is an independent business and entrepreneurial networking group, for people who realise the potential of successful networking with the objective of bringing together like-minded owner-managers for a couple of hours of social exchange, enabling the development of business relationships and future friendships.

### Southern Entrepreneurs

<http://www.southernentrepreneurs.com/>

Southern Entrepreneurs offers its members a variety of different networking opportunities. We are committed to bringing exciting networking opportunities to members so they can meet and greet like-minded professionals. From this, members can expect to grow their client base and look at ways to work with key business contacts. Many members find our networking opportunities extremely helpful in growing their personal and business profiles.

## BUSINESS NETWORKING

### Stockbridge & District Chamber of Trade

Gerald Dodson, Wykeham Gallery  
e-mail: -gerald@thedodsons.co.uk

### The Business Exchange

<http://greatbusinessexchange.co.uk/>

The Business Exchange seeks to link the growing number of new businesses we are seeing in the UK with bigger, more established corporates, in order to help British SMEs get to the next level.

By making it easier for the small business community to understand and take advantage of the range of pledges on offer from big businesses, this site will open up a whole new world of opportunity to British entrepreneurs.

### Wessex Women's Network

<http://www.wessexwomensnetwork.co.uk/>

The Wessex Womens Network was founded by Avril Owton MBE in 2003 to encourage and support women in Hampshire.

There is a growing list of around 100 members at present from the area between

Winchester, with members' ranging from experienced business women to women who are starting their first business venture.

### Women in Business Network

<http://www.wibn.co.uk>

WIBN is a Business Networking organisation for women only. It is a network created for women, by women. We offer all business women and business owners the opportunity to meet with like minded women, once a month, at our facilitated network meetings. We have a wide diversity of professions in our membership ranging from sole traders to large business organisations. We welcome visitors to our meetings.

### "QUOTE, UNQUOTE"

---

*"We have two ears and one mouth use them in that proportion!"*

---

## BNI

I remember my very first BNI meeting back in September 2002, it was a daunting thought that you would have to talk to other business people at 6.45am and try and make sense. As I approached the hotel I could hear the buzz of people talking and when I walked in to the room I was greeted by over 20 smiling faces and was made to feel very welcome. I joined straight after the meeting that day and never looked back. At that stage I had a cleaning company and used to get £250,000 per year from my BNI Referrals. I sold the business to another BNI member in 2006 so BNI really worked for me.

I became a BNI Director Consultant in London and launched 15 groups for them. When the franchise for Hampshire came up for sale it was a no brainer for me to buy it nearly 2 years ago.

In Business you need to network and what I liked was the support network of my fellow members, the coaching and training BNI give and also the structure and tracking of business. BNI Is also a global organization with over 180,000 members in 60 different countries – they can't all be wrong....

I do say to people BNI Can wotk for any business it just does not work for every person. Like anything you reap what you sow and that is why BNI is based on the theory that "Givers Gain". Follow the system and it will work for you.

You are allowed to come along a couple of times before you decide whether to join or not so, nothing to lose by coming along and making contacts with other like-minded business people.

My Role is to make sure if you join that I make it work for you so email me on [alyson@bnihampshire.com](mailto:alyson@bnihampshire.com) to arrange a visit. Also have a look at BNI Hampshire's YouTube channel and listen to some of the members experiences.

### Alyson Roach

Executive Director, BNI Hampshire  
[alyson@bnihampshire.com](mailto:alyson@bnihampshire.com) 07989 320893 (Office)



# 11

## Websites & SEO

---

**With more and more trade being conducted online, having a well-designed, effective website has become an essential requirement for all businesses. As with conventional design and print, it is not as simple as creating some pages on cheap software at home, uploading them to the Internet and hope that the world will come knocking on your door.**

---

## Webkick's top digital marketing tips for start-up businesses



**Starting your own business can be tough; taking endless hours of your hard work, and unwavering dedication to build up your reputation and get those all important sales rolling in.**

At times, starting your own business can be both exhausting and expensive but, of course, it's more than a little rewarding, especially if you're embarking on something you feel really passionate about.

Precisely because of this, starting your own business also takes a whole lot of smart thinking and forward planning; understanding your market, your customers, and exactly what they want in order to ensure your success. This, we feel, is exactly what digital marketing is perfect for...

### What is digital marketing?

For anyone who isn't sure, digital marketing is another term for the aforementioned 'online marketing' - the marketing of goods and services online - and is a comparatively inexpensive way to get your business in front of the right people.

And the best part about it? It's entirely measurable and traceable; allowing you to track what your customers are engaging with and where they're coming from in order to help you tailor your offerings and increase your sales. Great!

So, in light of this, what are our top tips for getting the best out of your digital marketing, as a start up business?

**Get yourself a responsive website:** there are billions of people across the world who use the internet on a daily basis, and 80% of them do so on a mobile device. Investing in a website, and ensuring it's responsive, will allow you to reach as many of those surfers - your potential customers - as possible.

**Invest in Search Engine Optimisation:** it's all very well having a lovely looking, responsive website, but if your content isn't optimised, people will struggle to find it when using search engines! Ensure you've done your keyword research and included those words and terms within your copy, your page titles, and images.

**Keep a blog:** keeping an updated blog is a great way to build customer loyalty, keep you high up on Google rankings, and increase the profile and value of your brand. They keep content fresh which is great for search engines, and give potential customers information they can use and share; ensuring you're always at the front of their minds.

**Get social savvy:** used in the right way, social media is an incredibly powerful tool to enhance the value of your brand; allowing you to monitor your reputation, increase your profile, and promote you as an expert in your field. What's not to like?

**Get creative with video:** video is a really fun, interesting way to show your customers what you do, and how you do it. It's also the perfect way to communicate a little something we call 'social proof'. Essentially, social proof is a fancy term for personal recommendations; asking existing customers to talk about their positive experiences of your business, and using that to convince others to purchase from you.

All in all, digital marketing is an incredibly effective, and cost effective, way of getting your business out there - in front of people who are most likely to engage with you - in order to generate leads and increase sales.

Our advice to anyone reading this and thinking about digital marketing would be... Do it! You won't regret it.

**For more information about digital marketing, please visit: [www.webkick.co.uk](http://www.webkick.co.uk)**

## WEBSITES &amp; SEO

# Why your business needs to be on the Internet.

Mark Richard of Webmybiz explains what having a good website can do for you.



## What can a GOOD website do for you?

So you've started a business — and whether it's small or large, you need to consider investing in your own website. The Internet is one of the quickest methods of communication — and if you're not using it, how will you compete with those that are?

More and more people want to research businesses and products on-line and then buy in the traditional, offline way. If you're serious about promoting your business, then a good website is your virtual shop window, enticing potential customers, instilling confidence in you and the goods and services you offer. So if you cut corners and don't have a website, you could be doing your business more harm than good!

Your website may be as simple as letting people know your phone number and opening hours - a digital business card or as complex as a fully automated booking system or a searchable database of your products.

## Open 24 hours

Your website is open for business 24 hours. Let your website work for you, giving your customers what they want when they want it. It's busy increasing brand awareness and increasing sales while you sleep! If you're not online, you can bet your competition is. If you don't have a website, or your customers find your website difficult to use, they won't hesitate to click on to your competitor's site!

## WEBSITES & SEO

### Cost effective advertising

A lineage advert in the local paper can cost upwards of £30 per week — imagine how much a colour advert with text and images would cost! And it would only run for a day or a week at the most. Your website is an online advertisement, it's permanent but can be updated regularly, and can be much more cost-effective if used properly.

### Fast, easy, cheap communication

Why print & post out brochures when your customers can download them? You can offer instant information and faster communication via your website and email - much cheaper and faster than fax or post.

A good website allows you to provide better customer service and value-added extras that put you above your competitors. You can offer articles, information, forums, newsletters - all of these things add to your customers' perceived value of your products or services and build better relationships.

It also gives you the chance to advertise your business, promote your services, attract new customers and relay information — why would you want to limit your potential?

### Why use a professional web designer?

Like doing your own plumbing, it is more cost-effective to employ a professional so you can concentrate on what you do best — running your business!

Your website should be clean, tidy and modern; it should portray a professional image and market your business well. It needs to meet accessibility guidelines whilst giving your customers a pleasant experience, encouraging feedback, increasing sales and increasing brand awareness.

### QUOTE, UNQUOTE"

---

*"If your business is not on the Internet, then your business will be out of business" Bill Gates*

---

### Where to start?

- Q. What do you really need on your site?
- Q. What should you ask a web agency?
- Q. Which agency should you work with?
- Q. How do you spot the hidden costs?
- Q. Are you comparing like with like?

These are just some of the questions that armed with the right answers will allow you to see through the many offerings available, avoid the pit falls and confidently take your company online.

### What do you really need?

A website should be useful and add value to your business, give the right impression and make potential customers want to contact you. The content should always be current and as your business grows your website grows with it.

You need your site to be easily found by potential customers, simple to use and navigate and clear in content and contact information.

If you're serious about making the right impression employ the professionals. Self-made sites won't fill your customers with confidence about your approach to business.

For business you need a robust, secure and professional site. Creating a detailed brief which lists your preferences and objectives will help at this stage.

### The right domain name

If your exact business name has already been taken select something close and memorable. Avoid using dots and dashes in the name as these are easily forgotten. Ideally you should use the .co.uk or .com for business in the UK.

### Business hosting

Your site needs to be available 24/7; if a potential customer visits your site and it is not available it is unlikely they will return. Hosting can now be found at very low prices but consider if it really is a saving? Ask where your site will be hosted, if data is backed up and how the security and upkeep of your server is managed.



## WEBSITES & SEO

### Email

Once you have your company domain you can also set up your email. Again take note from the hosting section and pay for right support and security levels suitable for business.

### Design

There is a strategy behind all good web design, usability studies have clearly shown that using the right navigation, images and copy will retain your audience for longer so therefore more likely to purchase or contact you.

Your home page should allow your customers to instantly recognise your company, use your company branding i.e. logo and colours to form a template and style.

### What do you really need on the site?

The more functionality you have the higher the cost. Start with the basics and add the rest later. If you get the site built right the first time you should easily add functions as you grow.

### Content

All web content should be written with both your audience and the search engines in mind. Your audience should always be priority, capture your audience with short bulleted statements that are quick and easy to read. Use of images should be limited so as not to clutter the page and increase the time your page takes to appear.

### Prioritise your content

Your homepage should have your phone number clearly shown, the services you offer and links to the other pages you would most like your audience to view. Your most lucrative offers should be the first to be seen!

Professional copy can make a real difference and assist your position in search results.

### Support for the future

How often will you need to change the content of your site? How important is your site to your business? Getting the right support and hosting are the ongoing costs you need to understand at the start.

## E-COMMERCE

**Before starting an ecommerce business you have to be honest with yourself about how much you understand online business and the nature of ecommerce itself.**

Ecommerce is extremely involved, both from a technical standpoint with regard to the website platform, but also from a marketing standpoint as well. In this regard it is not very different from a bricks and mortar business with regard to the investment of both time and energy.

On the other hand there are some obvious advantages, like not being limited to a local marketplace. Ecommerce is more dependent on marketing than a traditional business, and your success will definitely be proportionate to your online traffic. You will need to learn about inbound marketing techniques, search engine optimization and email marketing to have a real chance of success. It is not as simple as setting up an online store and waiting for customers to pour in.

Key questions that need to be asked are: What are you going to sell? Who is going to buy? How will they know that you and your products exist? Which E-Commerce platform are you going to use? What is the most suitable payment gateway? How are you going to ship your products to the customer?

Shopify has many articles about selling products online. From learning 'how to sell online' to 'advanced tips and tricks,' they cover everything you need to know to run a successful online business. See: <http://www.shopify.co.uk>



## 10 WAYS TO BOOST YOUR WEBSITE PERFORMANCE



A common problem for many website owners is that it doesn't deliver the response they hoped for, or their website visitors are not staying on the site or not finding their website at all.

### 1. Can your visitors find what they're looking for?

Is the navigation on your website clear and consistent? Is it the same on every page? It is essential your visitors can get around your website quickly and easily, or else you will find they won't hang around for long.

- Consistent navigation menus, including a link to the home page on every page.
- Navigation must be properly labelled —buttons and text links must describe the destination page.
- Place a link to a site-map on every page — if visitors get lost, they can use the site-map to navigate (also helps search engines index the site).
- Make sure all pages are accessible to visitors in a couple of clicks.

### 2. Design — keep it simple.

Is your website full of flashy graphics, garish colours and annoying pop-ups? Think about it — will it give a good visitor experience when they have to wait 5 minutes for your website to load, or can't find what they want for the endlessly distracting animated graphics? The following design rules work well:

- Neutral colours — pale backgrounds, dark fonts.
- Consistent fonts, font sizes and colours.
- HTML text as opposed to text in graphics.
- Quick to load images with small file sizes

### 3. Layout - make it easy to scan.

Long pages of information can be difficult to digest. Use short paragraphs, bullet points, highlight important information and keep the content to the point.

### 4. Copy - what's in it for me?

What your visitors want to know is 'what's in it for me' — tell them the great benefits of your services, why they should buy from you. Give your visitors a clear call to action, e.g 'contact us today for a free report...' etc.

### 5. About us / contact us pages

Make sure your website include pages about the company and how to contact the company. Not just a form or email address, but names, telephone numbers and postal addresses. This will reassure visitors that there is someone there, and they can contact you.

### 6. Trust — make your visitors want to buy from you.

Gaining your visitors trust is a great way of getting new business. Money back guarantees, returns policy, easy to contact, secure site? Make sure all of this is included on your own website.

### 7. Testimonials / case studies

Testimonials from happy customers prove your offering is sound and your business is viable. But never ever make up false testimonials. Dot them around your site and on appropriate product/services page.

### 8. Optimise your website

Once you're happy with the design and content of your website, then you need to optimise the pages for the search engines. Check which key phrases visitors will use to find your website, and ensure you insert the appropriate key phrases into your page copy.

### 9. Are you social?

Do you use the social networks and have accounts with sites such as Twitter, LinkedIn & Facebook? Make sure you add links to the different networks.

### 10. Keep it fresh and keep in touch.

It's essential you update your website regularly. There's nothing more off putting than seeing out of date information on a website. The more proactive you are with your site, the more you will impress visitors to your site and keep the search engines happy too.

### Forty First Marketing

## WEBSITES & SEO

### Content management system

If you have content that will change often, have the site built with a content management system. This will allow you to easily update your content without ongoing charges.

Using technology can really help your business develop, look for the agency that is interested in your business and who will make suggestions to you... rather than just provide a website and rely on annual hosting to make their money.

### How do you know if it's working?

Review monthly statistics showing detailed information ranging from how many people visited your site, the most popular pages to the best referrals. Prioritise content based on the most popular pages and see which promotion increased visitors so you can repeat the best and review the rest.

### Use it!

Don't have your website as an extra that nobody mentions. Use it on everything that a potential customer might see, be it on your letterhead, order form, business card or local advert. Make sure you check emails that come from your website; a response the same working day is expected.

### Do I need to spend money on a site?

Especially if a friend or relative offers to help. Keep your business head on when asking this question! Can they really design a site that will put you above your competitors? Will they be around to support the site if errors appear?

What if you want secure ecommerce added - do they know how to handle the data? It can seem like a saving but it could have serious consequences to your business.

### How do I select a designer?

Contact several that you think present themselves well online and arrange to meet at least two face to face. Discuss what you are looking to achieve and ask what ideas they suggest - do they just design websites or will they help you develop and build your business online?

Ask the agency what their experience is - if they are self taught and focused on the technical side of development they may not develop a site to the requirements of your audience. Having the latest flashing spinning features is a great showcase for their new ideas but is it really what your business needs?

Ask if you can talk to previous customers, view their websites and read testimonials.

### Costs and comparing quotes

As with anything in life you get what you pay for! Think long term, it is no good getting a cheap start up site that can't be developed.

Template sites can be less expensive but also inflexible and leave you tied to one company as often updates are via a central CMS. Bespoke sites can cost a little more (not always) but are easy to develop and can be hosted anywhere.

Ask for a breakdown of all quotes so you can really compare like for like. Break a quote down to the following areas - design and development, copy, images, CMS, hosting, email, SEO, statistics and ongoing support.

### Conclusion

You need a website and in most cases, you will be best advised to engage a professional designer to create this for you.

### SEO

Search Engine Optimisation will prepare the meta-tags placed in the code of your site pages to help the search engines collect search results. SEO work along with keywords in your content and linking between other websites will all contribute to improving your positioning on the search results pages. (See full article on next page.)

### "QUOTE, UNQUOTE"

---

*"The Internet is becoming the town square for the global village of tomorrow" Bill Gates*

---

## WEBSITES &amp; SEO

# Search Engine Optimisation

Creating a beautiful site is only the beginning - you now need to make sure that it can be found by anyone looking for what you offer.



I am sorry to have to break some bad news to you. Creating a site that you are pleased with and getting it online is only the first part of the job! By going live it has joined over one billion others in fighting for the search engines' attention and at this point it is highly unlikely to get many visitors or feature very highly on any search listings.

All is not lost though - there are things that can be done to improve this situation but you do need to know what they are.

## How a search engine works

Although there are still lots of different search engines trawling the web, the three big players that you really have to consider are Google, Bing and Yahoo. Even then, Google are by far the most dominant player with over 60% of the market. Bing have about 20% and Yahoo 12%, which means all of the others account for only 8% between them. For the object of this exercise, we will focus on Google but they all are broadly the same.

The one thing that they have in common is that their main aim (apart from making money) is to match a search phrase with the most suitable pages on the web in seconds.

To achieve this they send automatic robots called 'crawlers' or 'spiders' out to explore the Internet and to build an 'index' of the sites that they find.

When you perform a search, Google then scours their enormous database to allow them to present a list of the most relevant sites and lists them in order of popularity. Here lies your challenge - how do you get them to see yours as one of the most **relevant** and **popular**?

## Algorithms

In days gone by, a match was made using nothing more than 'key' words. If you searched for 'Aardvarks in Aylesbury', the site that used those words the most was considered to be the most relevant. This made it possible to stuff your pages with chosen words and fool Google into sending you traffic. As you can imagine (and may well have experienced in the past), this resulted in completely irrelevant topics, often with unrelated products to sell appearing at the top of the search results.

Not only was this irritating for the user, it meant that Google was not working as effectively as it should. They are constantly evolving and there are now hundreds of different ranking factors that make up the algorithm (automated calculation) to determine which results to show.

## SEO ranking factors

Moz.com (an incredibly useful site if you want to learn more about his subject) asked 150 SEO 'experts' to rate the most important ranking factors. They scored each item out of a possible maximum of 10 to create a list of the biggest influencers. Their answers are and an explanation of each factor can be found at: [www.syob.net/start-business/effective-seo/846](http://www.syob.net/start-business/effective-seo/846) but here is a quick summary

## WEBSITES & SEO

### 1. Domain level link features

This covers the links that point to your site overall. Even though Google has changed the way that they view inbound links and it is much harder to manipulate this factor, it is still very important.

### 2. Page level link features

Similar to no.1 but this refers to single pages rather than the site as a whole. Your site may contain a page about a specific topic which attracts lots of influential links in its own right.

### 3. Page level keyword & content based features

This is all about the make-up of the pages themselves. What is the main subject? Do the words used give Google enough clues to identify that it is a useful article/page?

### 4. Page level keyword-agnostic features

This includes all the other aspects of the page which have nothing to do with the main focus itself or the keywords used. The content should be the right length, easy to read, unique, and fast loading.

### 5. Engagement and traffic/query data

"Are people sticking around and interacting with my site?"

### 6. Domain level brand metrics

This relates to what you are doing to influence how people react to your brand.

### 7. Domain level keyword usage

Correct usage of the right words can help Google identify the subject of the page.

### 8. Domain level keyword-agnostic features

Make sure that your site is designed for mobile as well as desktop usage, no pages return errors or load slowly, your domain name is not too long, and that it uses an appropriate TLD (top level domain - .co.uk, .com, .net or .org are likely to be best).

### 9. Page level social metrics

Is your site mentioned on the social networks? Do people recommend your site or articles to friends or acquaintances via Facebook, Twitter etc.

I hope this helps!

## HOW DO YOU DO IT?

### People often ask how we have managed to get our site to the top (or near the top) of the search listings for so many key phrases.

My slightly flippant reply is usually something along the lines of "I bought a copy of a book by David Viney called 'How to get to the top on Google'".

You may find it hard to believe but, in part, it was as simple as that. The book itself is still available and full of great content, much of which is as relevant today as it was when I first read it several years ago.

Google have been constantly changing their algorithms and it has become harder and harder to manipulate their results if your aim is to try and raise the profile of a poor or irrelevant site. The flip side of this is that if you are offering a genuine service online which will satisfy your visitors needs, you should be able to feel confident that your efforts will not be trampled upon by unscrupulous and manipulative competitors for that top slot.

The top listings that appear for almost all searches are paid adverts as this is how Google make their money. Thereafter, it is up to you to show Google that your site should rank highly in what are known as the 'organic' (not paid for) listings.

My hope is that this chapter will give you a better idea of what you will have to do to achieve this but you could also do far worse than invest a few quid in David Viney's book if you want to learn more.



## GLOSSARY OF WEB TERMS



**So you don't get lost in geek-speak, here is the plain English for many of the key terms that you will hear.**

**Anti-Virus program** - A computer program made to discover and destroy all types of computer viruses.

**Bandwidth** - A measure for the speed (amount of data) you can send through an internet connection. The more bandwidth, the faster the connection.

**Computer virus** - A program that can harm a computer by displaying messages, deleting files, or even destroying the operating system.

**CMS** - Content management system — allows you to update your website content using a non-technical online interface.

**Cookie** - Information from a web server, stored on your computer by your web browser. The purpose of a cookie is to provide information about your visit to the website for use by the server during a later visit.

**Domain** — the name used to identify your website i.e. greenwoodsolutions.co.uk

**E-mail address** - The address used for sending e-mails to a person or an organisation. Typical format is username@hostname.

**Firewall** - Software that acts as a security filter that can restrict types of network communication. Most often used between an individual computer and the Internet.

**Hits** - The number of times a web object (page or picture) has been viewed or downloaded.

**Home page** - The top-level (main) page of a web site. The default page displayed when you visit a website.

**Hosting** - Space on a server where your website resides.

**HTML (Hypertext Markup Language)** HTML is the language of the web. HTML is used to define the content, layout and the formatting of the web document.

**SEO/Search Engine Optimisation** — setting your code to work with the search engine spiders.

**URL** — universal resource locator, the correct term for the full address of your website (www.)

**Web browser** - A software program used to display web pages.

Kindly supplied by Susie Greenwood of **Greenwood Solutions** Web: [www.greenwoodsolutions.co.uk](http://www.greenwoodsolutions.co.uk)

## WEBSITES &amp; SEO

# Paying for online advertising

Choosing the most effective digital strategy to reach your audience.

By Mark Tillison of Tillison Consulting.



AdWords, SEO, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube - All familiar names but should you PAY to advertise your business there?

Maybe, maybe not.

Before you start spending time and money on marketing activities, there are two critical steps you should understand.

## Who is your "Joe"?

Define the audience you're trying to reach. This can not be "anyone", though it might feel like that. The exercise of profiling your ideal customer and naming that profile is the context in which you'll make every marketing decision, spend every marketing penny and write every ad, blog post and product or service description - knowing that you're talking to "Joe" is much easier than trying to talk to "anyone".

What motivates Joe, what does Joe care about and what makes Joe need your business and when?

Why should Joe buy your product or service - what creates the demand?

Why should Joe buy from you?

This is a good foundation for profiling your ideal customer and the channels you might choose to reach them.

## Which digital marketing platforms work?

Before choosing Facebook and Google AdWords or Twitter over Search Engine Optimisation (SEO), it is critical to understand how, fundamentally, the platforms fit into the digital marketing funnel and what outcomes you can expect from each.

There are, broadly speaking, three stages of the digital marketing funnel; Brand Equity, Search and Conversion.

### Brand equity

The Brand Equity stage is about creating awareness, interest and desire for your business, product or service.

### Search marketing

The Search Stage is about attracting traffic to your website when users are searching for a solution to a problem they have, pain they need to resolve or a desire or demand they're seeking to fulfil. Typically, Searchers are in a "buying mood". They know what they want and they're ready and willing to spend money on it. Therefore, arguably the most effective form of digital marketing, traffic from Search Engines typically produces a higher "conversion rate" than brand traffic from Social Media platforms.

### Converting more visitors in to sales

We reach the final and arguably the most critical part of the digital marketing funnel; conversion rates.

## WEBSITES & SEO

In digital marketing, we use the term “conversion” to describe the desired outcome from a website visit. For some campaigns, that might simply be the number of minutes a user spend on their site, for others it might be a more specific outcome such as a contact form completed or a phone call (a lead) or for eCommerce stores, the simplest of all - a sale.

The Conversion Rate is the most important metric which also determines the Cost per Conversion and therefore the ROI - the metric business owners should be most concerned with.

### The most effective channels and platforms for your business

Paid Search campaigns using Google AdWords or Bing Ads are the fastest way to get relevant, high-intent traffic to your website to test how well your website converts that traffic in your leads and sales.

If you have the budget for it, paid search campaigns are recommended as a starting point, proving that a longer term investment in SEO will produce leads or sales, not just traffic.

Which platform(s) you choose will depend on your target audience.

**Google AdWords** - your audience will see your text and banner ads alongside content on news sites, forums, blogs and games sites.

**Facebook ads** - is more likely to be suited to businesses marketing to consumers rather than businesses. Users will see your promoted posts in their newsfeed and ads alongside the newsfeed when using desktop devices.

**Twitter ads** - are suitable for B2B and B2C marketing, with users seeing your promoted Tweets or promoted Account in their newsfeed.

**Instagram** - great for B2C marketing, especially for visual brands with stunning photography to show off.

**LinkedIn ads** - offer unique targeting criteria for B2B marketing which you won't find on other platforms. Users see your promoted posts in the newsfeed and ads alongside content on the desktop LinkedIn site.

**Pinterest** - is great for B2C marketing, particularly for visual businesses. Users will see Promoted Pins in the news feed and in search results.

**YouTube** - is owned by Google and can be used to market to a B2C or a B2B audience.

Take care to choose a CMS platform and hosting that is fast, particularly for mobile devices is “responsive”. A responsive design simply means that the website scales to the screen of whichever device a user is using to access your site - get this wrong and you'll miss a huge number of conversions from mobile devices and risk damaging your brand in the process.

At all stages, data is your best friend. Measure at every point and make sure your results are improving, whether that's audience reach, response, engagement, traffic, time spent on your website, conversion rate and cost per conversion.

All ad platforms have their own analytics and measurement criteria. You should also add Google Analytics to your website and learn how to understand how you can get more of them to reach your goal - more leads and sales!

Finally, never stop testing. To stay ahead of your competitors in an increasingly competitive online marketplace, testing new ad copy, new landing pages and new keywords is essential.

Mark Tillison  
**Tillison Consulting**  
[www.tillison.co.uk](http://www.tillison.co.uk)



# 12

## **Online Marketing & Social Media**

---

**Apparently there are more than 4.5 BILLION pages indexed on the internet so how on earth will anyone find yours? Having spent time and money to ensure that you have a web presence, it is worth giving some thought to raising its online profile.**

---

## E-MAIL MARKETING TIPS

**As a start-up business, you'll be fully aware just how difficult it can be to get the sales process started. Being able to embrace and rely on additional digital marketing techniques - such as SEO, social media, and affordable 'Pay Per Click' - is essential. One marketing channel that often gets overlooked, however, is one of the most obvious: email marketing.**

Email marketing enables you to reach out to an existing customer base and generate a lasting relationship that helps upsell products and services, as well as promote engagement and interaction. There is even scope to invest in B2B mailing lists from reputable sources such as Experian UK and Thomson Local in order to promote your business. Of course, the most successful email marketing involves direct engagement with your target audience. That's why we're pleased to provide a few top tips on email marketing to help you generate the mailing lists and interactions you need:



**1. Make things simple** - Think about how many mailing lists you have subscribed to over the years. Whenever you've made a purchase online, or requested information, you've undoubtedly been entered into a relationship that continues long after this initial interaction. Special offers, limited deals, targeted newsletters... these are all the result of signing up to a mailing list. Ensure you make it simple for users to do the same with your business. From clear sign-up boxes on your website to instructions on printed marketing material, use every opportunity available to ensure you capture the email details of your audience.

**2. Add value** - Going back to your own email subscription experience, how often have you unsubscribed due to being bombarded with emails or having irrelevant information sent to your inbox? Relationships are key to any business, so being able to add value to a customer's life is key. Avoid sending too many emails - you don't want to end up being classed as spam - and ensure you take the time to consider the message you're sending and the goals you have. Adding value to the customer experience will provide your business with a successful strategy going forward, and will help cement a customer base that values you.

**3. Test and refine** - You may well have heard talk of A/B split testing in relation to email marketing. This simply means sending emails to your customers that feature subtle differences you can track. Say, for example, email A leads with a large image and a clear 'Click now' message, and email B opens with an introductory paragraph followed by a 'Click now' message. Through split testing, you can determine which was more effective for your campaign, and thereby tailor future email campaigns accordingly. Testing and refinement are fundamental to your marketing success, so ensure that each campaign is afforded a level of analysis.

**4. Personalise** - One timeless rule in advertising and marketing is being able to personalise the message being sent. Establishing a relationship with the customer is essential and, thanks to effective sign up forms, you should be able to capture important details like names, ages, gender, etc. Personalise your emails accordingly and you'll see the level of interactions increase. After all, an email identifying you with the opening, "Hi Chris" in contrast to "Hi customer" is far more engaging.

**5. Spend time on crafting your message** - Time is precious when it comes to marketing, but affording the correct amount of time to each task is of the utmost importance. When it comes to email marketing, no element is more important than the subject line. Spend time trying to craft a message that connects on a level that tempts people to open, and avoid using such phrases such that will trigger spam filters - FREE, Amazing, Info you requested, Alert, etc. - as your emails will be red-flagged and ineffective. If you're unsure exactly how to write quality subject lines, work with professional copywriters and marketers to hone your message.

These are just a few simple tips for refining your email marketing offering. At Whitefish Marketing, we can offer full advice on how to achieve an effective campaign. Simply contact us today and we'll provide you with all you need to know about driving greater success to your start-up business.

## ONLINE MARKETING

# Let the world know!

Although relatively new in business terms, online marketing and social media are extremely powerful tools if you want to access millions of potential customers.



### Did You Know...

Google now processes over 40,000 search queries every second on average, which translates to over 3.5 billion searches per day and 1.2 trillion searches per year worldwide.

That's a huge potential market for your products & services that can't be ignored.

### What is online marketing & why do it?

Online marketing is the marketing of products & services on the Internet. It covers many different activities, which include search engine optimisation (SEO), pay per click advertising (or 'sponsored links' such as Google Adwords), email marketing, blogging & social media.

Online marketing ensures your website is found in online searches, across a wide variety of search media and it increases the traffic to your website. However, one of the most important things about online marketing is that it generates pre-qualified traffic.

People have already made the decision to search for your products or services before they arrive at your website, since they are already actively searching on keywords relating to your products and services.

A highly visible website will enhance your company image online and raise the profile of your organisation, and last but not least, all of your online marketing activities will generate leads, enquiries and sales.

Here is an overview of the major online marketing activities that you can consider.

### Search engine optimisation (SEO)

SEO can improve the chances of your website being found in an online search on sites such as Google & Bing, for keywords relevant to the products and services that you sell. It's a long term strategy for your website, ensuring your web pages are 'optimised' for success in the search engines. The optimisation process looks at several factors which include keyword research, the design & structure of a website, internal & external links and meta tags. It takes time for a website to rank in the search engines and search engines are now very fussy about giving sites high rankings unless they deserve it! Gaining high rankings is not easy and search is becoming more and more competitive.

### Pay per click advertising (PPC)

PPC is a great way to kick start your online marketing activities, particularly if you want quick results from the search engines and can't wait the months it can take to gain high rankings. Businesses pay for text ads to appear alongside search results on sites such as Google and every time someone clicks on one of them, a fee is paid. How much you pay depends on how competitive the keywords are that you sponsor.

## ONLINE MARKETING

### Email marketing

Email is a great way of keeping in touch with your customers and prospects, and much, much cheaper than sending out printed newsletters. Emails can be used in all sorts of ways — to give tips and useful information, special offers & promotions and to keep your customers loyal to you. Make sure you build your list in-house rather than buy in lists as most people view emails they haven't subscribed to as spam. A well-crafted email, sent on a regular basis ensures your prospects don't forget about you and makes it easier to cross sell and up sell products & services.

### Blogs

A blog (or web log) is a website or a page on your site that is updated regularly with news and articles, a bit like an online diary but much more than that. Blogs are a very popular way for businesses and organisations to add regular content to their website and also interact with visitors to their website as people can actually comment on the blog posts'. Comments can be moderated so you don't have to worry about unsuitable comments being put up.

There are plenty of reasons to start a blog:

- Search engine friendly — posts can be indexed and be found in searches quickly (a few days)
- Allow organisations to interact with their audience
- A very easy way of keeping a website up to date — posts can be put up quickly and easily without needing any technical expertise
- Visitors can subscribe to blog posts by email or by a 'feed'
- Responsibility of the blog can be split between a few members of staff, so one person doesn't have the worry of keeping it up to date themselves.
- Gives you the opportunity to put your view on something, particularly if your organization is in the news — good for PR

- Some blog platforms are free — so low cost to experiment with
- Like SEO, will raise your profile online and allows your organisation to have a 'voice'.

Common blogging platforms include Blogger.com, Wordpress & Typepad.

### Social media

Social media is becoming increasingly popular and a great way for businesses to interact with their target market. As social sites have exploded in popularity, many businesses are seeing the benefits of being on them. You can gain fans, use social media for PR and find out what people really want.

The most popular social media sites are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn (popular with business professionals), Google+, and YouTube. All of these sites are free and allow businesses to further raise their profile online. But beware — social networking can be addictive!

For further information & advice on any of the above activities, please contact Sam McArthur, Forty First — [www.forty-first.co.uk](http://www.forty-first.co.uk), or email [sam@forty-first.co.uk](mailto:sam@forty-first.co.uk).



Vlogging (video blogging) has become big business. Zoella (above) reputedly earns £50,000 per month.

## ONLINE MARKETING



Word of mouth now takes place online as well as in the pub or village shop.

### What is social media?

“Social media is the social interaction among people in which they create, share or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks.” In simple English, it is lots of different sites that allow you to spread the word online.

There are now hundreds of social media ‘channels’ and you can find a list at:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_social\\_networking\\_websites](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_social_networking_websites)

But which ones are the most important? The top social networking sites ranked by estimated number of monthly visitors:

1. Facebook - 1,100,000,000
2. Twitter - 310,000,000
3. LinkedIn - 255,000,000
4. Pinterest - 250,000,000
5. Google Plus+ - 120,000,000

### What are the benefits?

- Google loves social media
- It is a free way of raising brand awareness
- You can spy on your competition!

- You can communicate with your market
- You can keep up to date with trends
- You can encourage people to visit to your website

### How to get started?

The first step is to sign up to:

Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com>)

Twitter (<http://www.twitter.com>)

LinkedIn (<http://www.linkedin.com>)

Pinterest (<https://uk.pinterest.com>)

Google + (<https://plus.google.com>)

There may be other relevant sites depending upon business type and location but these are arguably the best five to focus on at the beginning.

At the very least, this will allow you to add a link from each of these back to your own site - this is a great pointer for Google!

### Get connected

There are various ways of growing your network on Facebook, LinkedIn and Google + but the easiest and possibly most effective one to start with is Twitter.

## ONLINE MARKETING

### Twitter

Twitter is all about who you follow and who follows you. The trick is to gain as many relevant followers as you can. Like any marketing channel, you need to reach the right audience.

#### Step 1 - start following

It is as simple as finding the right people and then clicking the 'follow' button on their page. For example:

- Friends
- Relatives
- Existing customers
- Suppliers
- Allied trades (anyone who is likely to work with you or your customers)
- Potential customers (if you can identify type of person, their interests, trade etc.)
- Trade organisations (any relevant body plus whoever follows them)
- Competition (find a competitor's page and follow who they follow and who follows them)

- Local people (search by geography)

For the local search, sign up to [www.twellow.com](http://www.twellow.com) - this is a free location based Twitter directory.

Once you've followed 2,000 users, there are limits to the number of additional users you can follow. This number is different for each account and is based on your ratio of followers to following; this ratio is not published.

Hopefully, by the time you are following 2,000 people, you will have started to attract followers of your own. To prevent being stuck at this point, you can now start removing anyone who has not followed you back (after a reasonable period - possibly a week or 10 days).

A great FREE tool to help you with this is Managefitter [www.managefitter.com](http://www.managefitter.com)

#### Step 2 - add content

The next step will be to start adding content (posts which on Twitter are called 'tweets') to your page because the other way to gain new followers is by providing interesting or relevant content.

## GOOGLE ANALYTICS

**Google Analytics is a free web analytics service offered by Google that tracks and reports website traffic. It is now the most widely used web analytics service on the Internet and can help you understand more about the performance of your website.**



Analytics is a powerful application for tracking traffic patterns on your website. The fact that it's an entirely free program, and integrates with other Google programs, like AdSense and AdWords, only makes it that much more valuable. Considering most people already use at least some Google products, it makes sense to use Analytics, because it is such a powerful, yet easy-to-use, product.

Once you have signed up, you will be able to see at a glance how many visitors that your site is attracting every day, month or year. This data can then be broken down by country, the type of device being used and, possibly most importantly, where they came from. This allows you to measure how effectively your social media activities are working but also how much traffic you are receiving from the search engines.

There is a little bit of web wizardry required initially to set this up and to make sure that the data is being accessed but beyond that it is an extremely easy package to understand and to use.

Find out more at: <http://www.google.com/analytics>

## ONLINE MARKETING

This works for two reasons:

1. Many potential followers search by key phrase so the more relevant key phrases/subject covered in your posts, the further your net will reach.
2. If any of your followers like what you have posted, they may tell all their followers (re-tweet)

The type of content that may be relevant could include:

- Latest offers/special deals
- Company news
- Link to interesting article/blog on your site
- Industry news
- Funny or interesting facts

If you can regularly add engaging content, you will encourage re-visits, new followers and re-tweets and a useful way of finding non-company content is to use Google Alerts. You will need to open a Google account (but there are a number of additional good reasons to do so!)

Google alerts notify you of any relevant articles that have appeared on the web and contain the keywords that you have chosen. These alerts can be as frequent/infrequent as you like. Click on the link to any item of interest and then in most cases click on the 'tweet' button. If there is no tweet button, simply copy the article's URL and create a tweet on your own Twitter page.

Adding content need not take up all your time!

The great thing about the web is that it is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Thanks to mobile technology, you can choose where and when to spend time on your social media. There are also several useful tools which will reduce the pressure on your workload.

**Hootsuite (free)** [www.hootsuite.com](http://www.hootsuite.com)

Helps you keep track and manage your many social network channels.

It can enable you to monitor what people are saying about your brand and help you respond instantly. The biggest benefits are:

- You can add a post to up to 5 social media channels at the same time
- You can schedule when the posts go live so you can add them whenever suits you.
- You can bulk upload (monthly fee)

**Tweetadder (small cost)** [www.tweetadder.com](http://www.tweetadder.com)

This handy software helps by:

- Automatically following anyone who follows you
- Triggering an automatic reply to anyone who follows you
- Helping you locate suitable people to follow by keyword or geography

### Other channels

Once you are happy with Twitter you can follow a similar strategy with the other channels. They all vary slightly but the main principles remain the same. As your audience grows (Richard Branson has over 7 million followers!) so does the value of the time that you put into this. Creating a post to reach one person takes the same time as a post to to 7 million.

### Social media tips

- Stick with it – this is likely to grow over time rather than be a quick win
- Little and often is better than a splurge every now and then
- Keep looking for people to follow/new followers
- Monitor your success\*

\* Once you have a Google account, you can link your site to Google analytics and this will show you how many visitors come directly from each social media channel

Good Luck!





# 13

## **Employing Staff**

---

**Taking one or more employees is a major commitment and should be approached with caution. Whilst it is often a vital step if a business is to grow, it also brings with it financial and legal implications.**

---

## HAVE YOU CONSIDERED OUTSOURCING?



**Running your own business can be exhilarating. It can allow you the freedom to work whenever and wherever you like.**

However, it can also be tiring, draining and frustrating! It can often mean working longer hours than those you originally anticipated as you struggle to do everything yourself and fit everything into your working day.

But there is a solution. Outsourcing some of your workload to a Virtual Assistant (VA) can ensure you protect your working time and grow your business faster and more effectively.

### The benefits of outsourcing

Your most valuable resource is your time. It doesn't matter how hard you try or how much you wish it, you will never have more than 24 hours available each day.

So stop trying to do everything yourself and work smarter. Hire a VA and you'll be able to:

- Grow your business
- Expand your team
- Get more tasks completed – especially those you're not currently able to fit into your day!

Outsourcing enables you to pass over those tasks that are more mundane and routine, enabling you to focus on what you're good at – the very thing you probably went into business to do.

### Other benefits you can gain from hiring a VA

Obviously, by hiring a VA you'll immediately gain another pair of hands in your business – but there are other benefits you may not have thought about too.

A VA will potentially give you access to an additional set of skills, without the need for you to spend time training! Your business can also be perceived as more professional and larger, especially if a VA is dealing with your phone calls and emails.

### What types of task can you outsource?

The obvious advantage of outsourcing to a VA is the various tasks you CAN pass over, for example:

- Business administration. PowerPoint presentations, bookkeeping tasks, mass mailing, database management and taking charge of your email.
- Social media management. Including creating a social media plan, managing your various platforms, interacting with your followers and following influential people in your niche.
- Blogging. A VA can research and plan your blog posts, source images and carry out maintenance on your WordPress site.
- Workshop and event planning. Letting your VA handle your event planning and organisation, leaving you free to create and deliver content that really wows your audiences.
- Call answering service. Giving your business a voice, even when you're out and about. A VA can field your calls, deal with queries and also qualify potential new clients.

With all of the benefits available, why not look into outsourcing? You'll gain a valuable team member and your business will blossom as a result!

Award-winning Virtual Assistant, Amanda Johnson provides remote solutions for small to medium sized businesses through her company Your Executive Secretary. Their dedicated and bespoke service offers you access to a broad range of secretarial, administrative and organisational skills, as and when you need them.

Amanda shares lots of great information to Business Owners who are looking to outsource their administration on her website [www.y-e-s.co.uk](http://www.y-e-s.co.uk) or you can contact Amanda to discuss your requirements by telephoning 01202 872061.

## FINDING THE RIGHT STAFF

# Taking on your first employee

**If you are to free yourself from having to do everything in your business, you will have to either outsource or consider taking on staff. Jim Gilhooley of Morgan Gil HR explains how to recruit the right people.**

The average cost of recruiting an individual ranges from £3,000 to £8,500, not accounting for the cost of training. Hiring the wrong person can be expensive.

Some simple hiring smart steps can go a long way to ensure you avoid this and get the right people. For SMEs, getting it right is crucial.

## What can you do: improving the effectiveness of recruitment?

There are four key steps:

- The key thing and first step SMEs – and some bigger companies – commonly fail to do is to identify exactly what type of person is needed for the job. This includes knowledge, skills and experience but also the personal characteristics (e.g. initiative) and motivation a recruit brings. Sounds simple, but have you ever recruited someone you wish you hadn't?

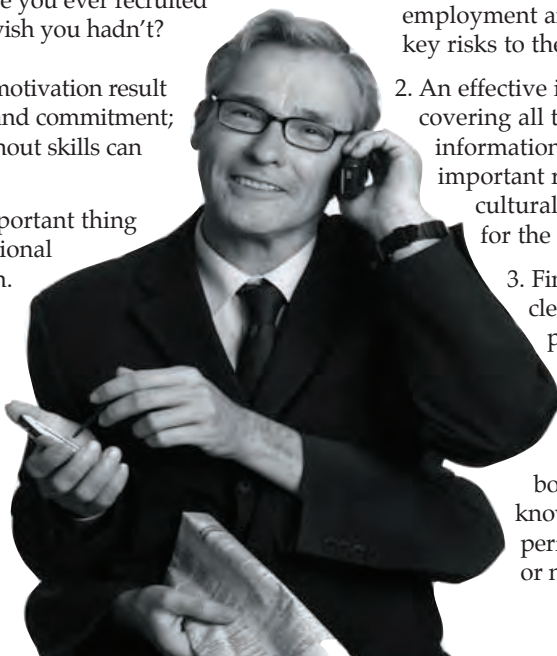
Skills without motivation result in low morale and commitment; motivation without skills can lead to disaster.

- The second important thing is to be professional in finding them. This requires going to the appropriate sources. We now live in the online recruitment world where it is easy to advertise jobs and attract applicants.

- However, there are many other sources which are as, if not more, discerning depending on what type of person is required. If agencies are used, ensure you manage them rather than being driven by them.
- The third step is interviewing effectively. Various techniques and approaches increase significantly the interviewers understanding of the candidate's personal qualities, motivation and skills and chances of successfully determining how they will perform a job.
- The fourth step is to employee them properly.

There are three parts to this:

1. A bespoke contract of employment covering the key aspects of the employment and managing the key risks to the business;
2. An effective induction process, covering all the basic factual information needed but also important relationships and cultural aspects of working for the organisation;
3. Finally, clear and clearly communicated performance goals or targets with agreed review periods during the first year so both you and they know whether they are performing as required or not.



## EMPLOYING STAFF

### The recruitment process

One engineering company with a 30% turnover in staffing asked me to look at their recruitment and processes to identify how to reduce this. It became apparent that they did not really follow the steps.

Their recruitment processes were revamped, including finding recruits through broader sources, raising their recruitment profile locally, training managers in skills-based interviewing, new documentation and reducing the number of people involved in the process from ten to five. Turnover fell, the cost of recruitment was halved and most importantly, the quality of recruits improved.

To summarise, with the right process, hiring smart and improving the quality of your recruits is definitely achievable.

### Avoiding the pitfalls

So now you have done it! You have gone through the recruitment process and decided on the right person to join your business.

All successful and growing businesses at some point will think about employing their first member of staff.

How do you now introduce them successfully and ensure their performance meets your requirements?

There are a few essential actions.

#### 1. Legalities and documentation

Unfortunately, many first-time employers do not do this well. The good news is that it is relatively easy to do well. Key requirements are:

- Bespoke contracts of employment, covering all mandatory legal items, but also the additional items which are necessary to protect your business from other risks. Mandatory items include type of contract, pay and benefits, location of work, etc.

Additional items can include use of internet/email/social media, when holidays can be taken, confidentiality, etc.



"Note: Please don't misconstrue my 14 previous jobs as job-hopping. I have never quit a job."

## FINDING THE RIGHT STAFF

- Relevant employment policies. These do not have to be extensive, but will include Disciplinary & Grievance, Conduct, Health & Safety, Sick Absence, Equal Opportunities and others which are particularly applicable to your business e.g. Restrictive Covenants.
- Focused Job Description communicating clearly what the new employee is expected to do within the first six months, together with any specific work objectives, training plans and the support to be provided. Many of these documents can be downloaded for a small fee from [www.simply-docs.co.uk](http://www.simply-docs.co.uk) for example.

### 2. Induction and probation

- The recruit will bring the skills, expertise and experience you require to contribute to your company. However, it may be an unfamiliar organisational environment and climate to them. It is easy for new employers to include only technical aspects of the work and basic information (where the toilets are, how the IT works, etc.) and to neglect more intangible aspects of working in a new company i.e. 'the way things are done round here', 'key contacts', 'mistakes to avoid', etc.

New employers can then be disappointed when the new employee does not fully meet expectations, or are demotivated. With a broader induction, ranging over the first few weeks or months, negative effects can be substantially reduced.

- Probationary periods are always a good practice, mostly because they ensure the new employer formally reviews progress with a new employee, provide feedback and surface any issues. These discussions should not only take place at the end of probationary period but regularly throughout. How often will depend on the length of the probationary period.



### 3. Your time/their commitment

Recruiting, although time-consuming, can almost be the easy bit. Once the new recruit joins, the demands on your time will increase in the short-term as you support them getting up to speed. It can be frustrating, particularly if they are making mistakes and adding to your workload. It is not uncommon to think that you can do things faster yourself. But patience and perseverance will pay dividends in the future as your business grows. Otherwise, why did you hire them?

### 4. Making a mistake

It does happen. Occasionally, we make the wrong recruitment decision. The key thing when this occurs is to deal with the situation early and effectively before it develops into a significant issue. It is seldom an easy or stress-free decision to let an employee go early, but it may be necessary for the good of your business.

However, if you have already put in place the actions in 1-3 above, the will go a long way to implementing your decisions while protecting your business.

**For further information on how to avoid costly mistakes and improve the effectiveness of your recruitment, contact Jim Gilhooley, Morlan Gil Human Resources Ltd. MGHR also run recruitment workshops.**



# 14

## **Business Law**

---

**Complying with the law must be one of your most important considerations and you may need to consult a solicitor to ensure that any legal decisions are made with full knowledge of the laws that may affect your business. This section covers some of the most important issues and we hope that it gives you a useful overview.**

---

## DO YOU NEED A BUSINESS PRENUP?



**Like entering into a marriage, every new business is hopefully an exciting prospect, entered into with a view to a fulfilling and financially rewarding future.**

You may decide to go into business on your own or with a business partner. In both cases you will consider whether to incorporate as a Limited Company and how to structure your shareholding, opt for a Limited Liability Partnership, or to simply trade as a self-employed individual. You will look into business bank accounts, decide on accounting software or find an affordable accountant. You might decide you need to register with the Information Commissioner's Office if you are likely to be handling personal information about individuals.

In many cases with so much to think about when you start out, those starting up for the first time will not have a view to the mechanics of how to manage the future of the business. Such scenarios as selling the assets and goodwill of the business, illness or death or falling out with a business partner are far removed from your mind.

Many small businesses are made up of husband and wife, siblings or best friend teams who decide to split everything 50/50 which is great until it comes to a parting of the ways. Too many small businesses fail to consider getting anything in writing that will work as a legal and binding guideline for those unforeseen circumstances or divorce. The value of a properly drafted shareholder agreement or partnership agreement therefore cannot be under-estimated.

Scenarios that I have come across include: a husband and wife with no written agreement wanting to go their separate ways. The husband wanted to keep the business but she wanted her 50% out of it so he was forced to close the business as he could not sustain it without her share.

Two brothers would simply not compromise on which one would continue to run their jointly owned company. The High Court was therefore forced to wind up the business and neither brother got anything at the end of the day.

Two companies working with an oral joint venture agreement fell out when one was disappointed with the level of return on the venture in the first year. Strangely enough each party had a different recollection of the original agreement. The matter is still going through the courts.

By contrast I have worked with businesses that see the point in covering all bases in a legal shareholder or partnership agreement. This can be the result of sitting down together and making sure everyone is on the same page and that the members and business are protected going forwards.

My advice is therefore to think smart and plan for the future and record any agreements in writing.

Caroline Buchan

**Barrister & Company Secretary**

<http://www.carolinebuchanbarrister.co.uk>



**BUSINESS LAW**

# How to comply with the law

Commercial law can be complex and we would strongly advise you to contact a local lawyer before committing yourself to any legally binding contracts.



## UK laws

You should be aware of the laws that relate to your sector and to running a business generally. The over-riding rule is that prevention is better than cure - make sure that you do not break the law by finding out what you need to know BEFORE you start to trade.

Setting up a business is an exciting time but without the right legal advice it can also be a legal minefield. Prevention is better than cure. A specialised business solicitor can help you identify future legal problems and advise you on what steps to take to prevent problems before they happen, which will protect your business from risk and save you money.

To find your nearest business law expert, visit 'find a solicitor' at [www.lawsociety.org/find-a-solicitor](http://www.lawsociety.org/find-a-solicitor)

## Working from home

Check with your local authority to make sure that you do not need planning permission. Also it is advisable to check your tenancy agreement or the deeds of your home to rule out the possibility that here maybe exclusion clauses that prohibit you running a business from the property. Other considerations may be business rates and Capital Gains Tax if any part of the home is exclusively used for business.

## Commercial property

Commercial property law is extremely complex and should not be tackled alone. Leases and agreements generally have long term implications and heavy financial penalties. It is a specialised area of law so look for someone with relevant experience.

## Franchises

Taking on a franchise will definitely involve signing a legally binding agreement. A solicitor will be able to guide you through the process and make sure that you are not committing to something which you might later regret.

## Contract law

Contracts occur in every business. It might be as simple as the agreement with the milkman to deliver the milk and your obligation to pay for it, or it might be an order you made with a major supplier. While it is good practice for all business contracts to be in writing it is not essential. The contract may be formed orally, by parties agreeing the terms on the telephone but bear in mind that this could be open to differences in understanding of what has been agreed. Always read the 'small print' and take appropriate legal advice before entering into any contractual agreement that could end up with a dispute.

## BUSINESS LAW

### Licenses

Some types of businesses do need to obtain special licenses before they open for business. The .gov website contains a useful 'license finder' tool: <https://www.gov.uk/licence-finder>.

The Citizens Advice site has a description of the the most commonly required licenses (by trade): <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/law-and-rights/legal-system/licences-and-other-types-of-official-permission/>

### Health and safety

Health and safety laws apply to all businesses. As an employer, or a self-employed person, you are responsible for health and safety in your business. Laws are there to protect you, your employees and the public from workplace dangers. The HSE (Health & Safety Executive) site is for employers and those who want some basic information on what they must do to make sure their businesses comply with health and safety law. See: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/index.htm>

### Trading Regulations

Your local authority will be able to advise you on local trading regulations such as opening hours.

### Employment

If you employ people you have certain duties such as the provision of a contract of employment, fair disciplinary procedures and Employer's Liability Insurance.

### Insurance

The next chapter covers this in more depth but you must consider any action or event which involves your business which could result in it being sued. This could involve Professional Indemnity and public Liability.

### Data protection

The Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) is an Act of Parliament which defines UK law on the processing of data on identifiable living people. It is the main piece of legislation that governs the protection of personal data in the UK.

### Intellectual property

Some common types of intellectual property rights (IPR) are trademarks, copyright, patents, industrial design rights, and in some jurisdictions trade secrets: all these cover music, literature, and other artistic works; discoveries and inventions; and words, phrases, symbols, and designs.

### Terms & conditions

Terms and conditions are used for legal purposes by websites and internet service providers that store a user's personal data, such as e-commerce and social networking services. A legitimate terms-of-service agreement is legally binding and may be subject to change. (*See opposite page*)

### Legal structure

The various options are covered in the chapter 5 entitled 'Business Set Up'. If you need to form a limited company or are creating a partnership, you may well advised to take legal advice to ensure that this is done correctly. Going into business with others, even if they are friends, is notoriously unpredictable. Someone who behaves perfectly rationally normally sometimes can be entirely different when it money and stress become involved. Make sure that you have a written agreement which covers all eventualities.

### Legal advice

Taking professional legal advice is not cheap but is essential for many of the subject mentioned here. The true cost of not seeking help may only materialise in years to come but could prove to be considerably more expensive in the long run. Many solicitors offer a free introductory session so, at very least, prepare a summary of your possible legal needs and obtain a quote for any assistance that may be required.

### "QUOTE, UNQUOTE"

---

*"Ignorance of the law excuses no man from practising it"*

---

## TERMS & CONDITIONS



**It really is good practice to have in place a set of Terms and Conditions which you provide to your customer explaining the terms which apply when they purchase goods or services from you.**

This is particularly true online. Your website should always specify your Terms & Conditions. Templates can be copied and pasted from other sites but may not offer the protection you need in law.

In the absence of published terms then the law will imply terms to the contract which may or may not work in your favour. If you expect to be paid within a certain period you need to set this out in your Ts & Cs otherwise the law will imply when payment will be made which may not fit with your cashflow! Set out below are the essential points which you should cover in your terms:

**1. Who is the contract between?** If you are providing goods or services yourself to the customer then the terms should state that the contract is between your business and the customer. The name and address of your business along with the legal status (e.g. sole trader, partnership) should be specified. The customer should also be identified as far as possible by referring, for example, to the customer as the person who has ordered the goods or services. If you are acting as an agent, a booking agent as an example, the contract will be between the entity you are acting as agent for, such as the event organiser, and the customer. If this is the case then it needs to be stated clearly.

**2. Ordering & Delivery** – the process for ordering the goods or services and the delivery arrangements should all be set out clearly. If you have a particular process which you want your customers to follow then this should be explained.

**3. Price & Payment** – the terms should either specify the price or refer to a quotation or price list. Set out when you want to be paid and the payment method. Phrases like “we would prefer payment to be made before we deliver your goods” should be avoided. Be clear when you want to be paid!

**4. Late payment charges** – it is a good idea to protect your business and incentivise your customers to pay on time. This can either be a flat fee for each day the payment is overdue or calculated as interest on the amount due from the due date until you receive payment. Remember though that the late payment fee needs to be a reasonable assessment of your loss (not a profit opportunity!) otherwise it could be unenforceable.

**5. Cancellations & Returns** – state your cancellation policy and how returns work. If you are selling over the internet you will have to be mindful of the regulations that apply to distance selling. You can read more about this subject at: <http://www.which.co.uk/consumer-rights/regulation/distance-selling-regulations>.

Other regulations may also apply to your business.

A good source for information on this subject can be found at: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/284446/off979.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/284446/off979.pdf).

**6. Ownership** – if you are selling goods it is always advisable to state that the goods will continue to be owned by you until you have received payment in full. This gives you the right to re-possess the goods in a worst case scenario where the customer cannot or will not pay.

**7. Limit your liability** – it is possible to limit your liability to the customer to the cost of the goods or services provided should anything go wrong. Liability cannot be excluded or limited where you have caused death or personal injury to someone.

**8. Complaints** – details of how the customer can contact you in the event of a complaint should be set out.

**9. Which law applies?** – It is particularly important to state which law applies when you are dealing either over the Internet or outside of England. If you want English law to apply and the courts in England to decide a dispute then you need to say this.

© Mairéad McKenna

Mairéad McKenna is the founder of McKenna Hughes Ltd which provides legal support to SMEs. She has more than 20 years' experience as a lawyer representing both large and small businesses.

McKenna Hughes Ltd [www.mckennahughes.co.uk/](http://www.mckennahughes.co.uk/)



# 15

## Insurance

---

**It is important when you're starting your own business to think of the risks that your business faces. You include this as a vital part of your risk management strategy. The outcome of this thinking will go some way to helping you decide upon the types of insurance you need, and also at what level the insurance cover should take effect.**

---

## PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE



**Public liability insurance is possibly the most commonly required insurance cover for new businesses as it covers the cost of claims made by members of the public for incidents that occur in connection with your business activities.**

This is the explanation provided by the ABI (Association of British Insurers).

Public liability insurance covers the cost of compensation for:

- personal injuries
- loss of or damage to property
- death

Policies vary from insurer to insurer, but most public liability policies cover you for:

- incidents that occur on your business premises
- incidents that take place off-site, at events or activities organised by your company

### Do I need it?

You should consider public liability insurance if:

- you own business premises that members of the public, customers or clients visit

- your business organises off-site events or activities that are attended by members of the public
- for more information see the ABI's guide to planning an event
- you run a business from your home and people visit your home for professional purposes

Public liability insurance covers anyone, apart from employees, with whom you interact as part of your business operations such as:

- people visiting your business
- customers
- clients
- people taking part in events or activities you have organised
- people watching events or activities you have organised

Public liability insurance does not cover employees, temporary staff, students or people on work placements – for this you need employers' liability insurance.

### Buying public liability insurance

You can buy public liability insurance directly from an insurer or from a specialist broker through the British Insurance Brokers' Association (BIBA).

The cost of your premium is usually based on:

- the nature of your business
- the number of people you employ
- your insurance claims history

For more information on business insurance see the ABI guide to insurance for small businesses (pdf) on the ABI website: [www.abi.org.uk](http://www.abi.org.uk)

### About the ABI

The ABI does not sell insurance. They speak on behalf UK insurers. They provide consumers with general information on insurance and savings products and services. They promote best practice, transparency and high standards within the industry. As a forward-thinking organisation, they work with government, regulators and policymakers – both in the UK and internationally – to ensure the insurance industry meets the highest standards.

## INSURANCE

# Are you adequately covered?

Darren Beckinsale of Business Insurance Service outlines the key considerations for start-ups and of the types of insurance you should consider.



## Risk management

Before we deal with the different types of insurance, let me first say a few words about risk management. All UK public companies are required in their Annual Report to detail their assessment of the key risks facing their business. Additionally, they are then required to detail the steps that have been taken to mitigate these risks. The regulator, the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) oversees this process.

While it is not an accounting requirement for small businesses or firms in start-up to undertake this process, it is very much best practice to do so. In any case, if you employ more than five people, you are required to record your risk assessment findings for health and safety and fire procedures. Rather than seeing the risk gathering process as a burden, it should inform your business and, as you will see, it will have positive implications with regard to insurance.

When undertaking a risk management exercise, you should first identify all the material risks that your business faces. For every type of risk identified, you should draw up an action plan to minimize the damage that such a risk event would cause.

## Insurance overview

For a small business, insurance can at first, appear daunting. With some thought however, it needn't be. This guide is aimed at helping you negotiate the various types of insurance that are available. Some types of insurance you will find are non-negotiable, others you will need to assess on their own merits.

The insurance industry exists to help you manage your risks and in the event of a loss, pay claims against those losses which otherwise could be catastrophic for a fledgling business. Most non-life insurers will be able to assist you in insuring your business.

## INSURANCE

If your business is more complicated in nature you can also employ a broker who will act as a middle man between your business and the insurer. It can be worth shopping around for cover as the insurance industry is a competitive place. Be sure though, to talk to the insurer about all the risks you wish to insure as more competitive rates can be achieved by combining the insurance with one insurer.

Let us now turn our attention to the types of insurance that you should consider.

### The non-negotiable

For businesses of certain types, some insurance is required by law.

### Employers' liability insurance

It is the law in the UK that if you employ staff you must have minimum employers' liability cover of £5m.

Only in the event that: i) your employees are members of your family or ii) they work abroad are there exceptions.

If you require cover but do not obtain it, you are liable to be fined up to £2,500 per day.

Note that you must also display your certificate or at least have it available for inspection. Failure to do so can also be punishable with a fine of £1,000.

Employers' liability cover (EL) covers you in the event that your employees become ill or die as a result of working at your premises. Being sued for compensation can be expensive not only in terms of any payout but also as a result of legal expenses.

Some things to bear in mind:

- Check that your policy covers temporary labour or holiday workers if this applies to you.
- Note that employees injured while driving for the company are often not covered by EL insurance and further cover is required for this.



- Former employers can bring legal actions against a company even after they leave its employment. It is important to keep your old certificates.

Unlike other types of insurance, an insurer cannot refuse to pay out on an EL contract even in extreme circumstances such as you being negligent or have provided inaccurate information. Their only sanction will be to refuse you further cover.

### Commercial motor insurance

If you use motor vehicles for your business, you are legally obliged to have motor insurance cover. It is your responsibility as the owner of the business to ensure that you have adequate insurance to cover all company vehicles.

If your employees are using their own vehicles on company business you are not obliged to pay for their motor insurance cover. However, you are required to ensure that they have the minimum cover required by law. It is worth asking to ensure that your employees have disclosed the fact that they are using their personal vehicles for work purposes to their motor insurance provider.



## INSURANCE

Commercial motor insurance is much the same as private motor insurance. There are the usual three main types of cover:

**Third Party Cover** - This is the minimum cover required by law. It covers you against costs that arise as a result of injuries to other people and damage to their vehicle.

**Third Party Fire and Theft** - This type of policy covers everything that basic third party policies cover with the added protection against your vehicle being stolen or destroyed in a fire.

**Comprehensive Cover** - As the name suggests, is the most comprehensive cover available and in addition to third party fire and theft, also covers:

- injuries to other people and damage to their vehicle
- medical expenses and accidental damage
- the cost of replacing your vehicle's contents

Note that if you run a business which, by its nature, involves use of vehicles, for example a fleet of couriers or a taxi business, specialist motor policies are available and you should talk to the provider about the specifics of your business.

### Other types of insurance

#### Commercial property insurance

Commercial property insurance covers the cost of repairing or rebuilding your business premises. Additionally it covers losses to your fixtures, fittings or stock in the event of a risk loss such as:

- Water damage
- Wind damage
- Fire
- Flood
- Subsidence

As with your normal home insurance, cover is broken down into building and contents cover

## FREE INSURANCE QUOTE

**At the Business Insurance Service we understand that having the right insurance is vital, and we make it our business to ensure that your business has the cover it needs.**

As a one-stop commercial insurance broker and risk management solution provider, we will work with you to understand your business's key risk areas, and provide expert advice on the insurance solutions that are right for you - whether that's getting the best price for an off-the-shelf policy, or arranging a tailored business insurance package that includes specialist cover.

We will compare policies from across the UK commercial insurance market and provide you with tailored recommendations based on your key risk areas. We will advise you on package business insurance that will cover core business risks and liabilities, as well as policy extensions and optional extras matched to your business.

We can help save you money and time, and deliver a unique insurance and risk management solution that will minimise your exposure and add value to your business. Call us today on 01273 789 979, or visit our website for a free, no-obligation quote: [www.businessinsuranceservice.co.uk](http://www.businessinsuranceservice.co.uk).



## INSURANCE

### Buildings insurance

Buildings insurance covers the cost of repairing or rebuilding your business premises if damaged or destroyed. Though buildings insurance is not required by law, it is strongly suggested that you take out cover. Even if you own your building outright, you will still require cover in the event that you need to repair or re-build your premises. If you rent your premises, it is the duty of your landlord to ensure that buildings cover is provided.

Remember that the important value to insure when looking at your building is the cost to rebuild, not its current market value.

Unless you have specifically requested it, and therefore paid an additional premium, most commercial building insurance will not cover you for:

- **General wear and tear** – everyday things that happen to your property over time such as carpets or wall coverings discolouring.
- **Acts of war or terrorism** – buildings insurance policies usually exclude damage caused by terrorism, but specialist insurers can provide cover for

commercial properties for an additional premium. See later in this guidance for more detail.

### Contents insurance

Your commercial contents insurance covers you for the cost of replacing lost, damaged or stolen items within your premises. Importantly for some businesses, this includes items of material or finished goods held in stock. It is important to discuss the valuation of your stock and equipment with the insurer or broker when arranging cover. If your business has any cyclical variations, be sure that these peak periods are covered.

### Business interruption

In the event of a significant loss event hitting your business, for example a large fire, the loss of your buildings or stock may actually be of secondary importance in a financial context. Your inability to trade will hit profits for some time after the event and there may also be additional costs to cover in terms of third party fees and business continuity plans. You can insure against these losses by taking out business interruption cover. This type of policy will cover you for the loss of sales and profits during the period that you are unable to operate.

## THE TRUE COST OF FRAUD



**Researchers at the University of Portsmouth studied more than 40,000 insurance claims to get a better picture of the average fraudster.**

They concluded that most fraudulent claims were made by 'first-timers' typically aged 31-50 and for less than £500.

The report cites a number of transparently fraudulent claims including a tall tale about a seagull making off with an expensive watch, and another about a smashed TV covering the floor in glass, despite the fact the flat-screen in question didn't contain any glass.

**The Association of British Insurers has calculated that fraudulent claims add an extra £50 to insurance bills.**

## INSURANCE

### Professional indemnity insurance

If your business provides other businesses or individuals with professional advice, you should almost certainly consider professional indemnity insurance (PI). This type of cover protects you in the event that your advice turns out to be incorrect and further, it results in financial loss for your clients. Banks, insurers themselves, law firms, accountancy professionals, technology professionals, management consultants and architects are just some examples of businesses that require PI cover.

### Product liability insurance

If your business designs, manufactures or sells physical products rather than professional services, product liability insurance maybe something for you to consider. Your business may be held legally responsible for any injuries to people or damage to property caused by a faulty product. It is important to note that you could be held liable for faulty products even if you did not manufacture them.

### 'Key-man' insurance

No, this is not concerned with losing your keys, but it is a potentially important consideration for a small or fledgling new business. If your business relies upon a single or a few important people you should consider cover. For example, what would happen to your business without you as the owner, or perhaps a lead salesman? 'Key-man' insurance can provide protection in the event that this individual is unable to be productive for your business for whatever reason.

### Credit risk insurance

Credit risk insurance is worth considering if you have any doubts over your ability to turn debtors into cash. This can be important if you have a high concentration of sales with a small number of customers or if you have a general worry over creditworthiness (although obviously you should be considering this before offering credit terms!)

### Terrorism / kidnap insurance

As mentioned, most building insurance policies specifically exclude terrorism from the situations they cover. Many insurers now offer specific policies that cover businesses that operate in dangerous or sensitive areas of the world, kidnap and ransom insurance is available from specialist insurers in the event of such an unfortunate situation. Whilst unlikely for the vast majority of small businesses, the potential for coverage exists.

### Conclusion

In general, if the risk exists, the chances are there will be an insurer who can cover it. That is why it is worth spending the time to properly evaluate the risks that your individual business faces.

No two businesses are the same and therefore no two sets of cover are identical. With such a myriad of different types of insurance it is understandable that you may feel slightly over-awed or perhaps even fearful of the potential costs of insurance. Don't be.

Talk your insurer or broker through your risks and also ask them about "bundling" your cover. In this scenario, rather than individually pricing certain types of cover, your insurer will look at your business in the round and price for you on the entire basket of coverage you require.

For the owner of a small business, it is not really a case of can you afford insurance, but rather a case of can you afford not to be insured.

### Quote, unquote

---

*"In modern business it is not the crook who is to be feared most, it is the honest man who doesn't know what he is doing." William Wordsworth*

---



# 16

## Common Mistakes

---

Whether you are planning to turn your hobby into a business or you have global aspirations, many of the pitfalls in the early stages are very similar. Not only that, they have been faced by hundreds of thousands of start ups that have gone before you. We have collated some of the most common traps, to help you avoid having to experience them first hand.

---

## CAUTIONARY TALES



**There are lessons to be learned from those who have already tried and not succeeded, and some have failed in a spectacular way. These examples are primarily included for entertainment and interest but do serve as a reminder that, in business, things do not always go to plan.**

**Commodore Computers** – The Commodore C64 was the ‘must-have’ machine for 1980’s nerds until they introduced its ‘new improved’ replacement. Unfortunately, it was not compatible with its mighty predecessor and therefore alienated their previously loyal following. Despite limping along for a few more years, the company folded in 1994.

**Swissair** – Swissair used to be the national airline of Switzerland and had been operated profitably since 1931. However, a massive expansion plan in the 1990’s resulted in the company carrying borrowings which could not be supported after the decline in air traffic following the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001. Closed its doors the following year.

**Woolworths** – Affectionately known as ‘Woolies’, Woolworths had been successfully supplying UK shoppers for 100 years before its demise in 2008. 30,000 jobs were lost together with one of the most familiar high street names.

**Enron** – At one time, Enron was valued at \$90 billion and one of the largest companies in the United States. When it went bankrupt in 2001, closer examination concluded that their massive turnover disguised systematic fraud and insider trading.

**Polaroid** – A classic example of not keeping up with your market. Polaroid were undoubtedly leaders in the world of photography and processing in the 1980’s but they failed to embrace the opportunities presented by new digital technology. Polaroid went bankrupt in 2005.

**Pets.com** – US pet owners all knew the name thanks to massive marketing spending but nobody brought any products from them. An extremely quick rise and then spectacular fall in 2001.

**White Star Lines** – Massively successful shipping company until the Titanic hit an iceberg. The rest is history!

**DeLorean** – Immortalised in the “Back to the Future” films, the DeLorean gull-winged DMC-12 sports car was destined to be the future of luxury motoring in the 1980’s. Flamboyant company owner John DeLorean had managed to persuade investors, which included Hollywood celebrities to part with \$175million to turn his dream into reality. This was quickly followed by a further \$100million from the Irish Government who wanted to see the car built in their country. This was in spite of a report which showed that the project stood less than a one in ten chance of success. The DeLorean Motor Company went bankrupt in late 1982 following John DeLorean’s arrest in October of that year on drug trafficking charges. He was later found not guilty, but it was too late for the DMC-12 to remain in production.

## COMMON MISTAKES

# Don't get caught!

Business owners face challenges every day. Here is a quick checklist of the some of the most common traps that you need to avoid.

## Inadequate market research

Possibly the most common error and the easiest one to make. Confidence and positive thinking are admirable traits until they prevent you from taking the time to identify if there really is strong enough demand for your business.

## Failing to plan effectively

Even the most successful businesses experience seasonal variations and/or peaks and troughs. Make sure that you allow for this in your plan.

## Not enough capital

Assessing small business start up costs is tricky. Most business owners project

operating costs to the point of break-even. (The break-even point is when income from the business equals the expenses to stay in business.) Start up costs should include all the costs required to open for business, and all the operating costs to the point of profitability. This means that the 'break-even point,' should be when the owner estimates he or she will be able to get paid the minimum salary required. Estimating start up costs should include the following:

- **Start up purchase costs:** Equipment, furniture, insurance, business licenses, etc.
- **Re-occurring costs:** Utilities, telephones, out-sourcing, insurance, business licenses, etc.
- **Advertising/marketing costs:** Here are some of the biggest pitfalls for small business owners. Even big businesses often have no idea how much they will need to spend to bring in enough business. Most can only estimate this.
- **Product or inventory costs:** The purchase and/or financing costs of inventory.
- **Holding costs (of products or inventory):** If inventory is required, housing, insuring, and handling inventory can become expensive.

## Spending too much

While this seems to be easy to avoid, this is one of the most common start up mistakes. One distinct advantage of the home-based business is low overhead, but many of these business owners buy services they don't really need, or max out their credit cards on equipment, computers, mobile phones, PDAs, copiers, printers, and other gadgets. **Don't buy anything unless you know you need it.**



## COMMON MISTAKES

### Lack of knowledge

Most people do not lack the knowledge about the industry they start a business in, but about business in general. Just because you know your stuff at your job, does not necessarily mean you could succeed on your own. Leaving a job to start a business even in the same industry means:

- **You wear all the hats** – While in your job you might be responsible for purchasing, in your business you'll also have to fill all the other roles such as customer service, human resources, management, custodian, delegator, administrator, filing clerk, office manager, payroll administrator, consultant, and CEO.
- **The buck stops with you** – This one is huge. So many people get overwhelmed in their own business because they did not account for the seemingly boundless obligations.
- **Sticking to the Law** – You need to know what laws your business is subject to. This includes licensing and permits, employees, insurance requirements, tariffs, taxes, payroll withholdings, record keeping, and more.

There is an enormous amount of expertise required to operate a business.

- Administrative Techniques
- Advertising – types, effectiveness, costs, creation, monitoring
- Bookkeeping – record keeping
- Financial management and forecasting, profit and loss
- Law
- Marketing
- Personnel management
- Networking
- The product or service itself

When in a pressure situation, many owners take shortcuts, make poor decisions, and choose sub-par services.

### Inaccurately defining the market

A small business can easily exhaust all capital in advertising. Whether it's traditional print ads or pay per click, if the target market is not reached, the mistake could be realized too late.

### Mismanagement

New small business owners often start without a plan or fail to follow their plan. Learning to prioritise, organise, and improvise can be new to people who have not worked in management positions.

### Lack of contacts and services

There is nothing worse than needing a contact for a business transaction, and losing the deal before you can find the help. Having no or poor subcontract services can leave you scrambling to find help.

### Ineffective marketing

This mistake can include inefficient marketing, poor content, ill timed advertising, wrong target market, and overspending, and many more. Learning your market and how to get business could be the most important aspect. Having more than enough business can compensate for mistakes or shortcomings in other areas.

### Failing to rectify mistakes

Sometimes business owners fail to recognise mistakes, but even worse, when they do spot them, they do nothing. This happens for several reasons. If the business owner has come from an employment, many times he or she does not fully grasp that the buck now stops with them. These owners often become immobilized in the face of a blunder, and do nothing. This is where a business mentor can be a lifesaver. Every new business owner should have a seasoned mentor to turn to in turbulent times.

### “QUOTE, UNQUOTE”

---

*““I have not failed. I have just found 10,000 ways that won't work.” – Thomas Edison*

---



## COMMON MISTAKES



### Refusing to delegate

Small business owners are usually 'take charge' people. They know their businesses better than anyone else and can do every job. These owners often retain duties and responsibilities far beneath their capabilities and not in the best health of the business. Like the Captain of a ship refusing to give up swabbing the deck because he felt no one could swab a deck like him, these owners hold on to tasks. Many a business ship has run aground with clean decks.

As a small business owner, you must decide which jobs would be better off delegated or out-sourced. Do not hang on to any duty, which would be better delegated. Some people might do the job differently than you, but effectively reach the same results.

### Time management

Time is money. There are so many distractions in today's world of business. Few people manage their time effectively. Phones, email, the Internet, online meetings and software updates, can consume your time if not used wisely. Home-based business can even face additional interruptions from family and chores.

### You have to be self-motivating

When you're an employee, you have a job description and someone is usually telling you what to do. You will be in charge of your own actions as a small business owner. You can't just wait for business to happen. Becoming self-motivated with the kind of discipline needed can be a tough

adjustment for people coming from long-term employment.

### Starting a business takes energy

You can't afford to just coast along, go through the motions, or get burnt out. If you feel like quitting, you cannot just give two weeks notice and leave, without losing your investment and future income. Many new small business owners cannot even afford holidays for several years.

### You have to be aware

Again, the employee might not be trained to look for new opportunities. As a business owner, this is imperative. The chance to get new customers, move into a new market, offer a new product or service, could be missed if you're not aware.

### You need to adjust to uncertainty

As an employee you are pretty much guaranteed a regular pay-check. As an entrepreneur, there's no guarantee. You will deal with the uncertainty of the fluctuations of the economy. However, you can learn or acquire the skills and traits needed to start and run your own business. You will not have a boss; you will be calling the shots. The successes of your business will belong to you.

### Conclusion

There are plenty of potential pitfalls waiting for the new business owner - the trick is to learn from those who have already been caught and make sure that you find ways of avoiding the same fate.



# 17

## **Start-Up Directory**

---

**There are plenty of resources that can help you on your way. This directory lists some of the publications, websites and contacts which have proved to be the most useful.**

---

## START UP-DIRECTORY



### Advice & Support

#### Business support helpline (run by HM Government)

<https://www.gov.uk/business-support-helpline>  
Tel: 0300 456 3565/0191 581 0052.

E-mail: [enquiries@businesssupporthelpline.org](mailto:enquiries@businesssupporthelpline.org)  
Get business support and advice on the phone or online. Help with starting and running a business.

Open: Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm

#### National Enterprise Network

<http://www.nationalenterprisenetwork.org>  
National Enterprise Network is a unique membership body representing the enterprise support sector across England. This site contains a search facility to enable you to find local advice.

#### Now Let's Get Started

<http://nowletsgetstarted.co.uk>  
Small business start-up specialist: info, tips and guidance for new, aspiring and growing businesses.

#### SFEDI

<http://www.sfedi.co.uk>  
We're the government-recognised, not-for-profit standards setting body for both Business Enterprise and Business Support. That means that we research what is needed for all those thinking of, preparing for, starting or running their own self employed or micro enterprise then develop National Occupational Standards to support them and those supporting them. We are dedicated to bringing enterprise know how to enterprising people across the UK and internationally. We believe in nurturing the entrepreneurial spirit in everyone. Think of us as a national skills movement for enterprise.

#### Shell LiveWIRE

<http://www.shell-livewire.org>  
Established in 1982, the Shell LiveWIRE programme offers free online business advice and funding to young entrepreneurs in the UK (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland).

#### Start Up

<http://www.startupnow.org.uk>  
We provide support for women who have been in prison, have come into contact with the criminal justice system which has had an impact on their chances of employment, as well as young women who are 'at risk' of offending.

#### The Prince's Trust

<https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/help-for-young-people/support-starting-business>  
If you're aged 18-30, living in the UK, and unemployed or working fewer than 16 hours a week and have a business idea or some ideas to explore, then we can help with the rest.

#### Young Enterprise

<http://www.young-enterprise.org.uk>  
The UK's leading charity that empowers young people to harness their personal and business.

### Banks

#### Bank of Scotland

<http://www.bankofscotlandbusiness.co.uk/starting-a-business/>  
For new businesses with a turnover up to £1 million, our Business Current Account includes 18 months' free day-to-day business banking\*.

#### Barclays

<http://www.barclays.co.uk>

#### HSBC

<http://www.business.hsbc.uk/en-gb/everyday-banking/business-accounts/business-bank-account-500k-start-up-uk>  
Free banking for 18 months when you start your business with HSBC. Free Banking means that we won't charge an account maintenance fee or for payments into your account covered by our standard account charges

## START-UP DIRECTORY

### Lloyds Bank

<http://www.lloydsbank.com/business/home.asp>

Whether you're just starting out or more established, we have a range of products and services to put you in control of your business banking. With our range of useful tools and guides we can help you grow your business.

### NatWest

<http://www.business.natwest.com/business/start-ups.html>

Entrepreneurial Spark supports entrepreneurs, providing a range of free services including office space, IT, specialised mentors and networking opportunities.

### Santander

<http://www.santander.co.uk/uk/business/current-accounts/start-up-business-current-account>

If your small to medium sized business is in its first year of trading, has two directors, owners (shareholders) or partners and this is its first Business Current Account with

us, you could be eligible for either 12 or 18 months free business banking.

### Business Information

#### Businessballs

<http://www.businessballs.com>

Free career help, business training, organizational development - inspirational, innovative ideas, materials, exercises, tools, templates - free and fun.

#### CBI

<http://news.cbi.org.uk>

The CBI is the UK's premier business lobbying organisation, providing a voice for employers at a national and international level.

#### Citizens Advice

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk>

We provide free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. We value diversity, promote equality and challenge discrimination.



**Citizens Advice** - run by volunteers and offer impartial advice

## START UP-DIRECTORY

### Cobweb

<http://www.cobwebinfo.com>

Cobweb is a leading publisher of guides, factsheets and reports covering the facts, risks, opportunities and practical trading issues faced by business start ups and business owners in over 600 small business trades, professions and sectors. Our services are mainly accessed via subscription by business advisers, information professionals, enterprise support agencies, banks and business funders.

### Companies House

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/companies-house>

Find company information. File your annual return and accounts. Change your company details. Starting a company. Running a company. Closing a company

### is4profit

<http://is4profit.com>

is4profit is an independent, information resource offering business advice for the UK's micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.

### National Business Register

<http://www.start.biz>

Free information on setting up a business. A fully working website included in registration. Data of every UK company, business, domain and trade mark. Complete business start up.

### Real Business

<http://realbusiness.co.uk>

As the champion of UK enterprise for more than 17 years, we are now the most-read SME website dedicated to high-growth businesses and entrepreneurs.

### This Is Money

<http://www.thisismoney.co.uk>

Thinking about starting up a business? Top tips to make it a success

### UK Business Forums

<http://www.ukbusinessforums.co.uk>

A collection of business related forums including a 'Startup Clinic'.

### Clubs & Associations

#### Business Scene

<http://www.business-scene.com>

Business Scene is a Business Support Network for SMEs, Start Ups and Entrepreneurs. We are a community both on and offline helping and connecting our members, creating an environment conducive for doing business and raising your profile.

#### Enterprise Rockers

<http://www.enterpriserockers.co.uk>

Enterprise Rockers is a 'network of networks' – we are a free to join in band of people who get together through online and offline networking, linking those that engage with us to existing organisations that can help them if necessary.



**Enterprise Rockers** - driven by a passion for micro business

## START-UP DIRECTORY



In the UK, FSB stands for Federation of Small Businesses.  
In Russia, it is the government's anti-terrorist squad!

### Federation of Small Businesses

<http://www.fsb.org.uk/default.aspx>

The Federation of Small Businesses is the UK's largest campaigning pressure group promoting and protecting the interests of the self-employed and owners of small firms. It has around 200,000 members across 33 regions and 188 branches.

### Forum of Private Business

<http://www.fpb.co.uk>

FPB offers tailored legal cover, and helps you to stay up to date with ever-changing regulations, make essential savings and give you a voice where it counts.

### Institute of Enterprise and Entrepreneurs

<https://ioee.uk>

The Institute of Enterprise and Entrepreneurs is for anyone who is thinking about starting or already running their own business, those who support them and those employed in innovative and entrepreneurial businesses.

### Education

#### Learndirect

<http://www.learndirect.com/business/products-and-services/our-enterprise-innovation-and-development/>

Tailored courses to improve your business.

### School for Startups

<http://www.schoolforstartups.co.uk>

Driving to help aspiring and new entrepreneurs kick-start businesses via tailored training programmes

### Exhibitions

#### Business StartUp

<http://www.bstartup.com>

Business Startup is a free exhibition for anyone thinking about starting a business or expanding a business.

### Funding

#### Start Up Loans

<https://www.startuploans.co.uk>

A government funded scheme to provide advice, loans and mentoring to start-up businesses.

### Government Sites

#### Health and Safety Executive

<http://www.hse.gov.uk>

Is the body responsible for the regulation and enforcement of workplace health, safety and welfare.

#### Intellectual Property Office

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/intellectual-property-office>

Intellectual property: an overview. Trade marks. Patents. Copyright. Designs. Law and practice.

### Law

#### The Law Society

<http://www.lawsociety.org.uk>

The Law Society exists to support, promote and represent all solicitors so they can help their clients. The site contains a useful search facility.

### Marketing

#### Journolink

<https://journolink.com>

JournoLink is an interactive platform enabling you to manage your own PR and send out your business stories to journalists, broadcasters and bloggers.

## START UP-DIRECTORY

### Marketest

<http://www.marketest.co.uk>

Online market research. Marketest is an online quantitative Market Research company dedicated to pre-startups, startups, new businesses and/or new products/services.

### Small Business Trends

<http://smallbiztrends.com>

Small Business Trends is an award-winning online publication for small business owners, entrepreneurs and the people who interact with them.

### Mentoring

#### Association of Business Mentors

<http://www.associationofbusinessmentors.org>

The Association of Business Mentors (ABM) is the independent, not-for-profit professional body for Enterprise and Business Mentors. Their purpose is to inspire and champion excellence in Business Mentoring, to advance awareness and standards in the business mentoring profession, and to make a sustainable difference to mentors, the organisations and people that they help.

#### Horsemouth

<http://www.horsemouth.co.uk>

The social network for informal mentoring, where everyone can give and gain. You can search for a mentor, be a mentor, or simply browse the profiles and stories on the site.

#### IBD

<http://ibd-uk.com>

With over 200 plus Business Advisers & Mentors available nationally, ibd work with Business Organisations from UK central government to local authorities and regional organisations. ibd advisers know how to run a business.

#### Mentorsme

<http://www.mentorsme.co.uk>

The free site offers businesses access to a list of quality-assured business mentoring organisations across Britain. An easy-to-use search engine allows businesses to refine their searches according to the life stage of their business and their location in Britain.

### Rockstar

<http://rockstargroup.co.uk>

The Rockstar Mentoring Group is for entrepreneurs looking to grow or raise finance. Their mission is to achieve measurable goals for businesses at the SME level, Established and Start Up level. They provide experienced and successful mentors on a one to one, face to face basis.

### Networking

#### 4Networking

<https://www.4networking.biz>

Relaxed, fun and friendly business networking. Three 10-min business appointments at EVERY meeting. Network locally, regionally and even nationally. 50,000+ members online. 5000+ unstuffy business networking events each year.

#### BNI

<http://www.bni.co.uk>

BNI have over 13,000 members in the UK and Ireland alone, passing nearly 680,000 referrals worth over £409 million every year! It is quite literally the best way to build a better business.

#### British Chambers of Commerce

<http://www.britishchambers.org.uk>

The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) is a dynamic and independent business network with Accredited Chambers in every nation and region of the UK, and in key markets around the world.

#### Business Biscotti

<http://www.businessbiscotti.co.uk>

Business Biscotti is a dynamic interconnected business community made up of local groups and online networking.

#### Enterprising Women

<http://www.enterprising-women.org>

Enterprising Women's goal is to help women achieve the success they want, by empowering, connecting, training, inspiring, campaigning, promoting, celebrating and supporting them in whatever way we can. We warmly welcome all female business owners, new and well-established, from any sector, background and from all parts of the UK.



## START UP-DIRECTORY

### Find Networking Events

<http://www.findnetworkingevents.com>

The UK's number one resource for information on Business Networking Events, Workshops, Seminars and Business Shows.

### First Friday Network

<https://www.firstfriday-network.co.uk>

The First Friday Network is a monthly free business networking event held on various Fridays with meetings across the country, including East Sussex, West Sussex, Surrey, Kent and Hampshire.

### The Athena Network

<http://theathenanetwork.co.uk>

UK's Leading Business Community for Female Executives and Entrepreneurs. Focusing exclusively on female executives and entrepreneurs.

### The Business Network

<http://www.business-network.co.uk>

There is a very good reason why The Business Network is still so popular over 21 years on from its launch in the UK - it works! Attracting senior decision-makers to the monthly, lunchtime events, the unique, professional and business focused format offers an effective environment for building close working links and establishing a 'support network' of business contacts.

### WIBN

<http://wibn.co.uk>

WIBN – The Women in Business Network is a membership organisation for women who wish to gain new business opportunities through word of mouth. Whether employed or a business owner the network has a huge diversity of businesses involved. Our members support and encourage each other through collaboration and the sharing of business contacts and opportunities.

### Publications

#### Independent

<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/features/the-10-best-business-start-up-books-7637448.html>

The 10 Best business start-up books



### Start Your Business Magazine

<http://www.startyourbusinessmag.com>

Start Your Business was established over a decade ago and remains one of the UK's most successful small business magazines.

### The Guardian

<http://www.theguardian.com/small-business-network/2014/oct/03/entrepreneurs-how-leave-day-job-start-business>

How to leave your day job and start your dream business

### The Telegraph

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/yourbusiness/11533081/How-to-start-a-business-for-99.html>

The Telegraph business section covers start-ups and includes an interesting article about how to start a business for £99.

### Start-Up Websites

#### Business Advice

<http://businessadvice.co.uk>

Business Advice provides content for those early on in the entrepreneurial journey – the five million micro businesses seen as the “engine room” of the British economy.

## START UP-DIRECTORY



### Business is Great (Britain)

<http://www.greatbusiness.gov.uk/start/>

How to set up and register a company, and on the steps that you will need to take to turn your idea into a business.

### Business Wings

<http://www.businesswings.co.uk>

Advice and inspiration for budding entrepreneurs and small business owners. Whether you're looking for the latest small business news or information on starting a business, Business Wings has a wealth of small business start-up guides.

### Business Zone

<http://www.businesszone.co.uk>

Provides free, practical and no-nonsense advice for small businesses. Enter The Pitch to win big business prizes. Educating, empowering and enabling small business to succeed. [www.thepitch.uk](http://www.thepitch.uk)

### bytestart

<http://www.bytestart.co.uk>

First established in 2004, ByteStart is now one of the most popular small business information sites in the UK. Independently run, bytestart provides no-nonsense guides and help for start-ups and small businesses.

### Enterprise Nation

<https://www.enterprisenation.com>

Enterprise Nation was founded in 2005 by Emma Jones MBE. Its mission is to create an inspirational environment for business owners and would-be entrepreneurs, a supportive community, informational books and events, and a campaigning voice to help small businesses in the UK flourish.

### Entrepreneurial-Spark

<http://www.entrepreneurial-spark.com>

Aims to develop entrepreneurs who have a #GoDo attitude with a solid grasp of how to create value...which makes them investable. With mentors, ambassadors and supporters, workshops, pitch practice and a full time 'entrepreneurial enabler' the focus is on the individual.

### MyBusiness

<http://mybusiness.co.uk>

My Business provides practical information on areas such as finance, employment law, operations and marketing, helping small business owners run more efficient and profitable companies.

### OnStartups

<http://onstartups.com>

An online community and blog for start-up entrepreneurs.

### SmallBusiness.co.uk

<http://www.smallbusiness.co.uk/starting-a-business/>

SmallBusiness.co.uk provides useful resources, products and services for small business owners and start-ups. Free online advice, news articles, guides, tips and features that can point you in the right direction to start your own small business.

### Smarta

<http://www.smarta.com>

Smarta is a new support platform for business owners and entrepreneurs. Our aim is to provide a one-stop-shop where business owners can connect, learn and actually \*do\* business.



## START UP-DIRECTORY

### Start a Business (Gov.uk)

<https://www.gov.uk/starting-up-a-business/start-with-an-idea>

The Government's guide to starting a business. Very clear and simple to use.

### Start Up Donut

<http://www.startupdonut.co.uk>

The Donut websites are aimed at helping businesses to succeed by providing reliable information and resources that can save business owners time and money.

### Start Up Grind

<https://www.startupgrind.com>

Startup Grind is the largest independent startup community, educating, inspiring, and connecting founders in over 185 cities.

### Start Up Success

<http://www.startupsuccess.co.uk>

Advice, tips and essentials for starting and growing a business

### StartinBusiness

<http://www.startinbusiness.co.uk>

For starting up, buying, or expanding a business in the UK and Abroad

### Startups

<http://startups.co.uk>

One of the most comprehensive advice platforms available on the web. Covers everything you need to know to start, buy, run or sell a business.

### Virgin

<http://www.virgin.com/richard-branson/how-to-start-a-business>

Richard Branson's top tips for starting a business

### Virgin Startup

<http://www.virginstartup.org>

Virgin StartUp, with support from the Virgin Group is run on a not for profit basis, so every pound goes towards their commitment to change the prospect of startups, for good.

### wikiHow

<http://www.wikihow.com/Start-a-Small-Business>

How to start a small business. A six part guide with illustrations.

ABOUT | STARTING A BUSINESS | GROW A BUSINESS | NEWS | EVENTS | ENTREPRENEUR STORIES | MENTORING | FAQS | APPLY FOR FUNDING NOW

**Virgin** **START** **THE NOT-FOR-PROFIT VIRGIN COMPANY** **FOR ENTREPRENEURS**

Welcome to Virgin StartUp

**Eligibility checker**  
Are you eligible for a start up loan?

Are you over 18?  Yes  No

Are you a British citizen or UK legal resident?  Yes  No

Do you wish to start or expand a business in England?  Yes  No

SUBMIT

**3 key steps to getting started**

- 1 Apply for Funding
- 2 One of our partners will contact you to assess your idea and support your loan application
- 3 If your loan application is approved we'll assign you with a mentor

Apply for Funding Now >

Tweets by @VirginStartUp

Virgin StartUp @VirginStartUp  
Want to do business with other countries? An international trade show could help you make connections. #aventionista via @infanbud

## AND FINALLY

### About the Author



#### Andy Pringle

My passion for enterprise began at school when a friend and I decided to put on a disco... to meet local girls! Almost by accident, I discovered that it is possible to make money doing something that you enjoy.

Since that time I have run my own businesses and still do so today, am the author of several books (if you have trouble sleeping, some are still available on Amazon for as little as 1p), and have experienced both the highs lows of being an entrepreneur (selling Christmas trees door to door was not one of my better ideas).

For the past 15 years, I have worked with hundreds of new business start-ups as a business adviser and mentor and have learned that there really are things that you can do which will dramatically increase your chances of success.

Taking the right advice in the early stages has to be the most important of these and this book has been designed to show you where help can be found locally.

I also hope you have also picked up some useful pointers along the way and that one or two of the items might even have made you smile too!

### Start Your Own Business Website

Start Your Own Business was formed in 2005 to help anyone running their own business or thinking of doing so. The aim was to provide a resource that could highlight the support that is available in each area on a LOCAL basis. Our humble beginnings involved printing a very thin newspaper and handing it out to potential start-ups in our local area. Over time, the papers grew both in size and in area of coverage but it was only when the information could be shared via the Internet that things really started to boom. We can now offer useful local information and the theory of starting a business to start-ups all over the world. See: [www.syob.net](http://www.syob.net)

### Can you help local start-ups?

We are happy to promote any relevant business or organisation who offers goods or services to new business start ups in each area. See: [www.syob.net/free-listing.php](http://www.syob.net/free-listing.php)

### Thankyou

Thank you very much to all the friends and family who put up with my rather too frequent flights of fancy, of which this is just the latest in a long line. Also, it would not have been possible without help and support from: *everyone at Enterprise First, Mark & Henriette, Roger Cawte, Hammie Tappenden, David Vane, Jane Buswell, Derek Speller, RocBase, Tim Coe, Jim Culverwell, Chris Buckingham, Laurie Barriol, Robert Bentley, the team at Bartercard, Stefan Thomas, Brad Burton, Maureen Frost, Alyson Roach, Steve Wilson, Mark Tillison, Chris Surridge, Amanda Johnson, Jim Gilhooley, Darren Beckinsale, my Mum, next door's cat, and anyone who knows me!*

Finally, thank YOU for reading this book, I sincerely hope that you found it helpful and that your business is a great success.

Good luck!

Andy ([andy@syob.net](mailto:andy@syob.net))