Steps to Start Your Small Business

Your essential checklist to transition from employee to entrepreneur

Assessing Your Skills and Talents

This section helps you identify your strengths and potential business ideas through a self-assessment checklist.

- [ ] List your top skills and how they can solve problems for others.
- [ ] Identify hobbies or activities you enjoy that could be monetized.
- [ ] Evaluate past job roles to find transferable skills.

Choosing the Right Trade or Service

Decide on a business niche using a structured decision-making framework.

- [ ] Research market demand: Use Google Trends to analyze interest in potential business ideas.
- [ ] Conduct a SWOT analysis to evaluate strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of each idea.
- [ ] Survey potential customers to gather feedback on your business concept.

Certification and Licensing

Follow these steps to ensure you meet all certification and licensing requirements.

- [ ] Contact your local Chamber of Commerce for guidance on required certifications.
- [ ] Research state-specific licensing requirements for your chosen business.

- [ ] Apply for necessary permits through the appropriate government agencies.

Setting Up Your Business

Ensure your business is legally and operationally ready with this setup checklist.

- [ ] Register your business name with your state’s Secretary of State’s office.
- [ ] Open a business bank account to separate personal and business finances.
- [ ] Set up accounting software to manage finances and track expenses.

Marketing and Promotion

Create a comprehensive marketing plan using these actionable steps.

- [ ] Develop a social media strategy with a focus on platforms your target audience uses.
- [ ] Design a professional website to serve as your business’s online presence.
- [ ] Create a content calendar to consistently engage with your audience.