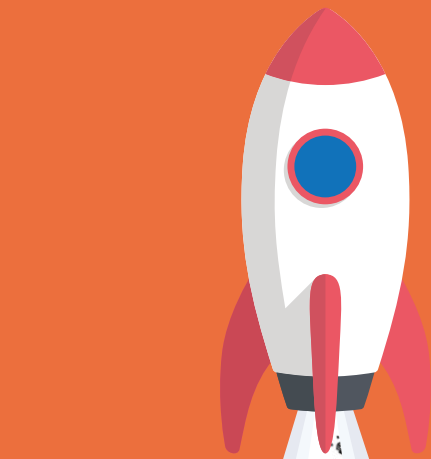


So, you're
preparing
to **launch**
a **business.**



SUCCESSFUL BRANDING BEGINS HERE

It's that simple.

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PART ONE

Your guide to starting a business

So, you want to know how to start a business?

That's awesome. There's a lot to learn, but there's plenty of information around to help. This guide is a great place to start.

We've done some research and have over 20 years' experience to help start you on your journey, but go out and speak to people. The insights of other business owners and accountants or bookkeepers can really make a difference.

This guide is intended as general information only. Always check with a professional for advice.

The secret to starting a business

Starting your own business is a process, not an event. People talk about 'taking the plunge' into small business like it's an adrenalin sport. And there will be some heart-stopping moments, like when you take a loan, sign a lease, or greenlight your first order of supplies.

But starting a business isn't one big decision. It's hundreds of small decisions. And if you want to succeed, you need to move through them systematically and with a cool head.

You don't have to think of everything right now.

Getting the show on the road

Figuring out how to start a business is just the beginning. Once you're launched, you'll need to run the ship. There are marketing and sales, accounts to keep, budgets to watch, taxes to file, wages to pay and so on.

As you go through this process think of these statements. They will help you keep it real.

1. Be prepared to work on your business for the same number of hours you work in it. This means letting the invoicing slide and not paying your bills are sure fire way to get into strife.
2. If you have calculated how much profit you could earn in a year, halve it – can you survive on this figure if things don't go the plan? Plan for the best, prepare for the worst.
3. The rate of new businesses that fail in the first year is 20% and 50% in the first 5 years. Don't go into this thinking its going to be easy – it's not - otherwise everyone would be self-employed. You have to commit to doing this long-term.
4. Run your own finances – you have to read your bank statements, understand what position you are in and take the appropriate action.
5. Have a vision – there are a lot of people that will tell you it can't work – most of them will still be working for someone else. Have the courage to step outside your comfort zone.

“*Plan to succeed or prepare to fail.*”

Investigation and analysis

This is the number one step – You may have a great idea but:

- Will people want to pay money for it?
- Are others doing it already?
- What's your point of difference?
- Price it out realistically, is there enough profit in it to justify your effort?
- Is business right for you? You may be buzzing about starting a business when you first come up with an idea, but think about the bigger picture. Most business owners work long hours and still end up wishing they had more time. They don't enjoy all the jobs they have to do either (like chasing late payments). Consider everything that small business entails before charging in.

■ How to plan business in seven steps

1. Assess your business idea - Check if your venture is sustainable. Can you get your stock quickly and at a good price? What is it going to cost for your start up? Do you have start up capital or will you have to borrow?
2. Write a one-page business plan outlining your goal and how you'll get there.
3. Do your market research. Learn about your customers. Is there a gap in the market you can fill? How many competitors in your area? What are others charging for the same product or service?
4. Build a sales forecast, get to a realistic number.
5. Create a budget. Use an excel spreadsheet to plan sales versus expenses, including marketing, rent, lease of equipment, purchase of equipment, your initial stock, wages, accounting/wage systems, insurance, vehicle expenses etc.
6. Organise finance working out how much you need, and how to get it. If you need to borrow finance you will need to write a substantial business plan showing projected sales and expenses. There are a lot of templates available to help you through this.
7. Are you going to start as a partnership, sole trader or registered company? Are you going to need to apply for GST immediately? Do you have an accountant, banker and lawyer?

Where do good business ideas come from?

Not many businesses start with a eureka moment. A hobbyist, for example, might just fall into business by doing what they love. You may have a trade and want to be self-employed. It may be an existing business that you can see potential in.

You just need to be able to spot an opportunity.

Brainstorming business ideas

For most people, a business idea forms slowly, in an unplanned way. But that shouldn't stop you

from brainstorming. In this digital age products and services are being made obsolete every day. Don't just think about the next twelve months, think of the next ten years. How can your idea grow?

What products or services would be costly to produce and sell? Common sense will tell you what products spoil, go out of date, or are hard to ship. Likewise, you'll have a sense of what services might become outdated or difficult to deliver efficiently. Run your idea through all of these scenarios.

Will yours be a service or product-based venture? Start by looking for a gap in the market, preferably one that you would enjoy filling. You tend to learn faster and network better when working on something that interests you.

Good business ideas can be bold or traditional

An idea that's really original will present different challenges to one that's been proven before. Where is your idea on the originality scale? Does your personality and skill set suit one type of idea more than the other?

New ideas often involve more:

- Trial and error
- Difficulty finding suppliers
- Hand-holding with lenders and investors
- Educating the market
- Uncertainty

Tried-and-true ideas involve more:

- Convention
- Supply chain politics
- Price competition
- Difficulty standing out
- Limits to expansion

How to start a business using someone else's idea

Franchises can be a good way to get into business. Some come with a very specific manual on how to operate and succeed, plus guidelines for your forecasts and budgets. It takes away a lot of the trial and error that you'd go through if you were

starting from scratch. Franchises differ a lot in the level of support they give you and the expectations they have of you. Do plenty of homework. Beware, sometimes the franchise fee makes it difficult to make a profit

Testing business ideas

To help organise your earliest thoughts, think about starting a business from three angles;

1. **Customers** - Who are they? How will you reach them? Why will they choose you, and what will they pay?
1. **Supplies** - Can you get the supplies you need? What tools will you need? Will you need contractors or staff?
2. **Finances** - How much will you have to charge? What will it cost to launch? Where will that money come from?

Keep an eye on the future too. When will you break even? Could competitors undercut you in the meantime? Will there be enough after-tax profit to reinvest in the business? Don't focus solely on how to start a business.

Think about what comes next.

Customers are the most important thing

Unless someone will pay money for your goods or services, then the rest doesn't really matter. It's vital to find out if there's a market.

Check out these guides on [How to do competitor analysis](#) and [How to do market research](#).

Why you're not the best judge of your idea

Coming up with an amazing idea for a business might feel like you've hit the jackpot, but beware of overconfidence. We're all naturally attached to our ideas and we have a hard time accepting their flaws.

Find yourself:

- **A mentor** - Meet someone who's already in business. They can help you avoid the mistakes they made.

- **An accountant or bookkeeper** - Get a professional to check your numbers and help with things like finance. Learn about all the things an accountant can do for you.

PART TWO

Starting a business

Business plan

Think about your business plan as a road map. You know where you want to go, you just need to write down the directions to get there. The good news is it doesn't have to be super detailed straight away. That's because there are two types of business plan:

- The lean one-page plan, which is a great way to get going and build ideas
- The more formal long plan, which you'll need if and when you're looking for business funding

How to do a fast, one-page business plan

The key to a one-page plan is to start out simple, and grow it as you go. You can begin with a few headings and some bullet points mapping out your vision, goals, milestones and financial forecasts.

Things will keep changing, and new information will come in, so think of it as a living document. Keep tweaking it as things evolve. Sections for a one-page business plan:

- **Value proposition** - Make sure the reader understands the unique value you'll provide in a few clear, simple sentences. Cut the jargon and fluff, and get to the point.
- **The problem you're solving** - Expand on the problem that you're solving. Imagine you are talking to someone who has never heard your idea before. What is it about your solution that hasn't been done well before?
- **Target market and competition** - Who are you selling to, and what other choices do they have? How are you going to serve them better? This is where you need to show you've done some market research.

- **Sales and marketing** - How will people learn about you? Will you use social media? Do your customers read trade publications? Or will you sell to them in person? Figure out where your target audience is, and go there.
- **Budget and sales** - Do some forecasts of sales and outgoings. What will your margin be on each sale? Will it be enough? How many sales will you need to make a profit? Use these figures to define 'success'.
- **Milestones** - Milestones will help you keep an eye on the big picture. For each milestone, say why it's important. Note what (or who) you need to make it happen, and put a due date on it. This helps break everything you need to do down into manageable pieces.
- **The team** - Who's part of your business and why? Write a couple of lines for each person, including their goals and responsibilities. Do this even for roles you haven't yet filled.
- **Funding** - Identify how much you need (or already have) and what it's for. When will repayments be made, and when do you expect to have paid it all back? When writing a business plan that's just one page, you need to keep things short and to the point

For some, one page is enough. Some people start a business with little more than a one-page plan. Rather than doing a whole heap of research, they launch their service or product quickly and watch the reaction of paying customers. After gathering feedback, the business adjusts and improves their offering as fast as possible.

Struggling to get started? Try a SWOT analysis

It's a great way to organise your thoughts and kickstart the planning process.

What is a SWOT analysis? SWOT stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. It's a way of thinking about your business from the inside out, and from the outside in.

- **Strengths** - Things that are great about the idea
- **Weaknesses** - Things about the idea that could be better or are a challenge
- **Opportunities** - Things about the environment or market that will help the idea take off

- **Threats** - Things about the environment or market that will work against you

A SWOT analysis gives you talking points for your business plan, and concrete action points for getting launched.

1. **Strengths** - How will you build on your strengths? Is there more you could do, such as other opportunities to go after? How can your strengths help you deal with threats?
2. **Weaknesses** - Which weaknesses are the most glaring? Can they be fixed? Will it take more money, more people, or more knowledge to do that?
3. **Opportunities** - Set goals for each opportunity. Ensure that the goals are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and have a timeline (also known as SMART goals).
4. **Threats** - Threats tend to attack your weaknesses first, so use this as another opportunity to remedy your weaknesses and reduce the risks.

These action points will be a great starting point for your business plan and your marketing plan – both documents tend to take shape together. Start with the one-page version.

PART THREE

Finance & budgets

Finance

Starting a business can be expensive, but what if you don't have the cash? What sources of business finance are available? How do you get access to them?

Right from the outset, talk to a reliable banker, one that has your best interests at heart. They want you to succeed and will guide you realistically through the financial process.

There are a myriad of terms and conditions when organising a loan and it largely depends on what assets or capital you already have to protect that loan.

Look into funding from partners such as local business support groups. They often have start up grants if you meet a certain criteria.

If you find you are lacking the start up capital, either yours or borrowed – delay.

Getting into monstrous debt from the get go puts an enormous amount of strain on the business owner.

Saving more, or selling some unwanted assets will put you in a better position for launch.

Budgeting

Budgets show how money will come and go from your business over a period of time (usually a year). That money will come in as revenue from sales. It will go out on things like stock, rent, advertising and wages for you and your staff.

Most budgets try to keep spending down to less than what's coming in, but that might not be the case at first.

The purpose of budgeting

Budgets help you plan to make a profit. For example, they'll show:

- How much money you need to start the business
- How many sales you need to cover costs
- How much you can afford to reinvest in the business
- When you can afford to hire help

The main purpose of a budget is to help you see where you're making money, and where you're spending it. Once you know that, you can try to do more of the making and less of the spending.

If you do not know the basics of bookkeeping, e.g monthly profit and loss, costs versus sales, cost plus mark up, how to develop a spread sheet, you better get along to a course that shows you the basics quick smart.

It's no good waiting until the end of the year for your accountant to tell you any bad news. You need to keep an eye on your progress monthly.

When thinking about what to include in your budget make a list of the things that you believe you are

going to have to pay for, then look at some samples on-line. They will show up things that you may have missed initially.

Common things that are omitted are:

- Subscriptions - will you have to join a trade organisation?
- Office expenses: - little things like paper, stamps, coffee, staples etc, they all add up.
- Fees for accounting packages
- Annual company fees (if you are a registered company)
- Vehicle expenses - tyres, petrol, WOF
- Repairs and maintenance: - on equipment, building etc
- Accident compensation payments

It's better to have these items in your budget and not spend them, than have unexpected bills to pay.

You will need to check the actuals and compare them to the budget each month. There will be swings and round-about, but generally you should be spending less than you are earning every month.

PART FOUR

Sales forecasting

The working-backwards method (setting a sales target)

You could start the forecasting process by seeing how many sales you need to sustain a viable business. This isn't a sales forecast so much as a (minimum) sales figure.

Once you know the minimum your budget will allow, some market research can help you see if that's a realistic sales target. You could start by asking other businesses that serve the same market. Or you could go directly to customers and ask about their buying habits.

If it seems feasible to hit the target, you might make (or buy) the corresponding amount of product and set out to sell it. This method is more likely to be used by someone who's turning a hobby into a business. It allows them to start small, build slowly, and control costs.

The ask-an-expert method

You know who's seen a lot of business ideas, budgets and forecasts? Accountants and bookkeepers, investors, too. Go and speak to them. They love to hear about new business ideas.

Some advisors will give you the first chat for free. Even if they charge you, you'll gain a lot of useful information in one short visit. Use one of the sales forecasting methods above to generate your own set of rough numbers and ask them for a sanity check.

Find an accountant or bookkeeper who has clients in your industry. It sometimes helps if they're local too – though that's not always vital.

Do several sales forecasts when starting a business

You can't always predict success so explore a few options. Run a scenario with really soft sales, one with strong results, and another in the middle.

That's how to start a business with confidence. You will be prepared for all eventualities.

PART FIVE

Pricing vs Cost

Pricing strategies and the cost of goods sold

Setting prices is one of the most important things you'll do as a new business owner. A lot of factors play into the value you put on your products or services. But none is more important than covering your costs.

The first rule of price setting

Not every sale will make you money. Sometimes you'll sell stock at discount to get rid of it. You may even have to redo a job for an unhappy client. As a general rule, you need to get more money out of a sale than you put in to it. To do that, you need to know the cost of the goods sold.

What is cost of goods sold (or services sold)?

Cost of goods sold, often abbreviated to COGS, tells you what your business spends to deliver products or services to customers. These direct costs are distinct from general operational costs like rent or power.

A good way to figure out if something is a COGS is to ask:

- Does this expense occur only when a service or good is sold?
- Does this expense go up and down as sales go up and down?

If either of these answers is "yes", then it's probably a COGS. There are many types of COGS and some are hidden, or hard to estimate.

For example, if your business is service related, the cost of sales will be your employees time, plus travel, materials and anything else that is required to get the job done. If you are a printer it's not just the cost of paper and ink, it's the cost to run the machinery or to pay the lease on the machinery.

If an item costs \$50 per unit from the supplier and transport to get it to you is \$2, the COGS = \$52

If you repair a light fitting for a client, the COGS is \$20 for the time it took, \$10 for travel and \$75 for materials, coming to a COGS of \$105

Remember you're only trying to capture costs that happen when you make a sale. That's why admin wages, rent, power etc are not included.

Shared costs

Some of your costs are shared across jobs or products. For example, you'll probably have combined transport costs for the products in your shop, one energy bill for your entire workshop, or one piece of equipment that is used on most of your projects. You can distribute a shared cost in one of two ways. You can either:

- Share it evenly across each product or project or service you sell; or
- Divide it in proportion with other inventory costs (so more expensive products or services carry more of the shared cost).

The more accurate you can get to the cost of sales, the more confident you will be when quoting a job, particularly if you are in competition with others for the same work.

Mark-up versus margin

The difference between margin and markup is that margin is sales minus the cost of goods sold, while markup is the amount by which the cost of a product is increased in order to achieve the selling price.

Working out your margin

Once you know your COGS, you can start thinking about a sell price. The difference between your sales price and COGS is your margin.

Some types of business, like supermarkets, can thrive on a margin of just 5% because they make so many sales. Other businesses, such as restaurants, might need a 100% or 200% margin.

Margin isn't profit. You still have to pay for overheads like energy bills and office supplies. You can only bank what's left after you've cleared up those types of expenses.

Overheads are expenses you incur to run your business, regardless of making any sales.

Pricing factors to consider

- **Value versus cost:** You've heard people say something is worth more than the sum of its parts. A lot of products and services are like that. If you transform a customer's life or business, then you have a licence to charge them more – even if it didn't cost you much to do it.
- **Supply and demand:** If no one else does what you do, and you have a lot of customers, you can get away with charging more. Just be wary of pushing it too far. People don't like to be price gouged and competition will turn up eventually.
- **Price-taker versus price-maker:** Customers have price expectations around certain types of everyday products, and they won't pay more. If you're selling an everyday product, you'll probably have to match the competition. If however your product or service is unique, you can influence or set the price.

- **Volume versus margin:** If your business only makes five sales a week, you want a handsome markup each time. If you make 5,000 sales in a day, you're probably happier to live with a thin margin.

Pricing methods

You will already have an idea of how much you can sell your products and services for. It's wise to ask advice from your accountant before committing to your price strategy.

Cost of sales plus mark-up – what margin does this achieve? Is it sustainable after your overheads are paid?

Find out what competitors charge for similar products and services, then decide how you want to compare.

Your pricing strategy will influence customer expectations, so make sure you can deliver for them. For example:

- **Go high**, with premium pricing. You can aim to be a brand of choice that customers accept paying more for. You obviously need to sell top-end products or services to be able to do this.
- **Match the market** by setting your prices at market level, you're less likely to turn away price-sensitive shoppers. That becomes more important when you're selling functional everyday goods or services.
- **Go low**, with economy pricing. You can aim to always match or better your competition on price and become the go-to destination for bargain hunters. Just be aware that you're committing yourself to surviving on thin margins.
- **Cost-plus pricing** after working out your COGS, you can simply add a standard markup to everything you sell.
- **Rule-of-thumb** pricing After decades of trying different things, many industries have settled on standard markup rates. You could start by adopting the relevant rate for your business.
- **Custom markup** If your industry doesn't have a standard markup rate, or your market conditions are very different to your competitors, you could pick your own rate. But check your calculations with an accountant before locking it down.
- **Sweetener deals** allow you to entice customers

with a deal without permanently devaluing your products in their eyes.

- **Price bundling** by packaging a few things together at a slight discount. Their margins come down but they bring in more revenue as a result. It's like giving a bulk-buying deal. You need to do some market research to see what combination of products or services people like.

Pricing methods and COGS are key to profitability

- Whatever you do, don't take pricing lightly. You have two levers for making money in business – margin and sales volume. They're both affected by price.

As an ongoing task, continue to look at your cost of sales and how to reduce them. There may be new suppliers cutting a better deal than you are currently getting, but ensure you do not compromise quality and jeopardise your product.

PART SIX

Promotion

How to promote your business

"Build it and they will come" just doesn't ring true in business. You'll need a sales and marketing strategy to bring customers to you. There are hundreds of things you could do. The trick is to pick the right ones.

Do not scrimp on this process either in ideas or finance. A lazy or amateur logo in year one is not going to represent your business in year ten.

Strategy vs tactics in marketing

It's important to get strategies and tactics the right way around. Your strategy is the master plan that guides all your marketing activity. Tactics are the activity. They're the things that people see like ads, emails, videos, sales promotions.

Start with a strategy

It's important to come up with your strategy first. Go back to your business plan. Look at the SWOT analysis and your market research. Once you know who you're talking to, where you need to reach them, and what you need to say, you can make smart marketing choices.

A couple of cost-effective initiatives are:

- Create a free listing with Google. Set yourself up at *Google My Business* to improve results when people Google businesses like yours.
- Get active on social media. You can try to build a following by putting out interesting content, or you can pay to push ads and posts to specific audiences. Be careful not to spam.

For more substantial marketing ideas you will need to know:

1. Who is your target market?
2. Where can you reach them?
3. Why would they buy from you in particular?
4. What problem do you solve for them?

Once you have researched these questions you will be able to come up with an effective strategy.

Question 1

For a plumber, it's not everyone with a home. It's people planning to build a home or with older homes that may need a lot of maintenance.

Question 2

If you are going to advertise, do so in trade appropriate media. Do not use the scatter gun method.

Question 3

Know your point of difference. What can you guarantee?

Question 4

People don't just buy your product, they want you to solve their problem. e.g. a new water cylinder does not only supply hot water but also lowers your power bill

The last thing you need is to waste cash on ineffective marketing. Talk to a marketing professional or designer. Usually these initial consultations are free and they have many years' experience promoting different industry groups.



Get on-line

One of the most important things in business is to be found. All those competitors with websites, a good site ranking and visible branding on vehicles are going to get the first call from a customer.

If clients can't find you, or contact you quickly and easily, they will soon give up and go elsewhere.

Talk to a web designer. There are options available for every level of websites. Being available to clients 24/7 is worth the investment and not as costly as you may think.

Networking

People don't buy from business, they buy from people. Become your customers new best friend. Educate them on your products and services, build trust and loyalty and they will refer you to others – FREE MARKETING

Put your best foot forward

As previously stated, a lazy or amateur logo in year one is not going to represent your business in year ten. This also goes for your overall branding, how your staff deal with customers, the reputation you build – its everything.

Talk to a graphic designer. You will never go wrong dealing with a professional. They don't do tacky. Look at their work, does their style fit with the look you envisage?

It's about building client trust and confidence. Ever been to a restaurant and been given a tatty menu? What is your expectation of the food? Not good eh?

Don't waste your marketing \$\$

There are hundreds of advertising opportunities out there. When given the reach statistics of a particular product you will think your phone is going to be ringing red hot.

Advertising need to be measurable otherwise you are just lining the advertiser's pockets.

Include a deal. "Bring in this voucher for 10% off your next purchase". This will tell you if it's working and reaching the right people.

Be creative

Don't just do what other people are do. Come up with some ideas that really grab people's attention. Even if they don't need your services now, they will remember a creative campaign.

Publicity

If you have a cool story, see if a local paper, radio station, or trade magazine wants to cover it. A public relations (PR) agency or freelancer could help.

Advertising advertisements can be anything from a poster on a bus stop, to a video on social media. Choose the right place for your audience and keep your message simple.

Flyers

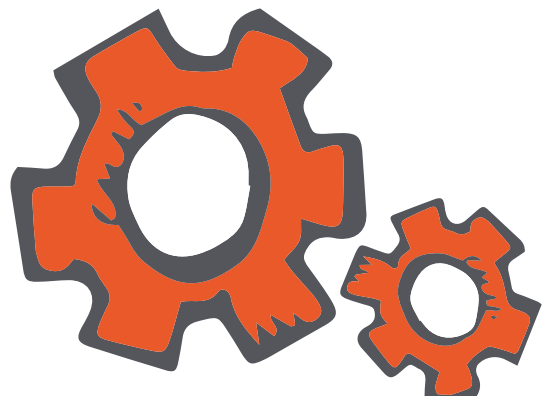
Stick them in residential mailboxes or hand them out in the street to promote a local business. It often helps to include a special offer, such as a discount or two-for-one.

Put in the time to promote your business

Schedule at least an hour a day on promotional activities. Spend some of that time reviewing what's working and what's not.

There's nothing wrong with trying something different and finding that it didn't work. It's important to cut your losses when something isn't performing well.

Don't forget to steer some of your marketing effort toward your existing customers. It's a lot easier to keep a customer than to attract a new one, but you have to show them some love. Demonstrate your appreciation for their business from time to time.



PART SEVEN

Marketing – thinking about your business

It's time to work on YOUR business

We know a lot of you don't have time to spend on your business, rather than in it, but it is important to always be thinking about it.

We have thrown a whole lot of thoughts out of our heads below to have a look over and see if it 'sparks' anything for you.



Marketing Ideas to Promote your Business

Once you know who you're talking to, where you need to reach them, and what you need to say, you can make smart marketing choices. Here are just some of the things you could do – but don't spread yourself too thin.

Try a couple at a time and see what works. If the results aren't there, experiment with something else. You're probably already wondering how you'll start a business with hardly any money; the last thing you need is to waste cash on ineffective marketing. You're better off doing just a few things really well.

Put in the time to promote your business.

Schedule at least an hour a day on promotional activities. Spend some of that time reviewing what's working and what's not.

There's nothing wrong with trying something different and finding that it didn't work. But it's important to cut your losses when something isn't performing well.

And don't forget to steer some of your marketing effort toward your existing customers. It's a lot easier to keep a customer than to attract a new one. But you have to show them some love. Demonstrate

your appreciation for their business from time to time.

Brainstorm as many ideas as you like, but only act on two or three things at a time or you'll run out of energy.

- **Create a free listing with Google** - Set yourself up at Google My Business to improve results when people Google businesses like yours.
- **Get active on social media** - You can build a following by putting out interesting content, or you can pay to push ads and posts to specific audiences. But be careful not to spam.
- **Use SEO to attract prospects to your site** - To build a website that shows up when people search for the products or services you sell, you'll need to use the right keywords and get other sites to link back to you. But the payoff can be big.
- **Share your expertise** - Create articles, videos or podcasts with useful or interesting information and use them to bring people to your site.
- **Offer tutorials or webinars** - Offer to guide prospects through an issue or a problem for free. You can do it in person, on a video call, or via a webinar.
- **Create effective email marketing campaigns** - These are usually informational or promotional messages sent to people who asked you to keep them updated, such as prospects, clients, reporters, vendors, affiliates, etc. Marketing emails encompass a variety of content, but most are used to send newsletters, sales promotions, announcements, press releases, follow-ups, and surveys.
 - Build and maintain your subscriber list
 - Encourage readers to reply
 - Make it personal
 - Leave a 'cliffhanger' in your subject line - get them hooked
 - Utilise pre-headers effectively to get the readers attention
 - Use call-to-action buttons and links
 - Send when you have something valuable to share
 - Integrate your email campaigns to social media platforms
 - Think about your audience and be as relevant as possible
 - Limit relevant content, promotion and offers - keep it short

- Make sure your emails look clean and crisp
 - Include interesting links and calls to action
 - Make emails mobile-friendly
 - Track your data
 - Be aware of the Unsolicited Electronic Messages Act 2007 (Spam)
- **Turn your email signature into a call-to-action** - Build an attractive CTA (Call to Action), and include it in the signatures of your company's emails. This will expose it to a great number of people providing a great marketing opportunity.
 - **Ask for referrals or testimonials from happy customers** - Positive reviews from real people count for a lot. It's a perfect way for potential clients to trust a business more after reading a positive review.
 - **Giveaways** - Let customers see how good your product is by giving away free samples. If you're a consultant, make up a nice certificate for one hour of your time for free.
 - **Get networking** - Interact with prospects, in person or online. Don't forget to put time into old relationships too. There may already be people in your network who can help build your business.
 - **Publicity** - If you have a cool story, see if a local paper, radio station, or trade magazine wants to cover it.
 - **What works for you?** - Every business is different. What marketing have you done in the past? What has worked? What hasn't? How do you know - can you quantify it?
 - **Branding** - Make sure the brand you portray to clients and customers is up-to-scratch. Remember we live in a time when consumers are spoiled for choice. Make sure your brand and how you showcase your business is solid. Do you need to rebrand to keep things fresh and current?
 - **Advertising** - Advertisements can be anything from a poster on a bus stop, to a video on social media, newspaper or local magazines. Choose the right place for your audience and keep your message simple.
 - **Flyers** - Stick them in residential mailboxes, PO Box drops or hand them out in the street to promote your business. It often helps to include a special offer, such as a discount or two-for-one.
- **Video marketing** - Video marketing is one of, if not the, most important marketing trend today and likely will be for the next 5-10 years.
 - **Online advertising** - Via platforms such as Google and Facebook. These can be targeted to your perfect customer.
 - **E-commerce** - Sell your products online. It's available to everyone 24/7.
 - **Brain-storm ideas as a team** - Buy-in from your employees will be much greater if they have input with marketing ideas. They know your customers too.
 - **Invest in a quality website** - A website is a great way to provide value-added service to your customers and clients. It's also a great way to keep them coming back to you when they need your products or services. Consumer behaviour changes over time to adapt to modern technology.
 - Your business will gain credibility
 - Customers can be kept informed
 - You're always accessible - 24 hours per day
 - You can target a wider audience
 - Attract new customers
 - It allows you to hone your company's brand and image
 - It can help grow your business
 - Would consumers consider a business without a website?
 - People are searching for you online
 - Easy to find relative information
 - Stand out in your industry
 - Social media reach is limited
 - Affordable compared to ongoing traditional advertising
 - Up-to-date current information
 - Make sure good SEO (search engine optimisation) is covered for the best possible site rankings in search engines
 - Your competitors probably already have one
- Already have a website?** - Ask yourself if it is performing at its best possible state to attract customers. Is it up-to-date? Is it mobile and user friendly? If you were a customer or client looking at your site for the first time would it be appealing? Showcase your company and is easy to access quick, relative information.



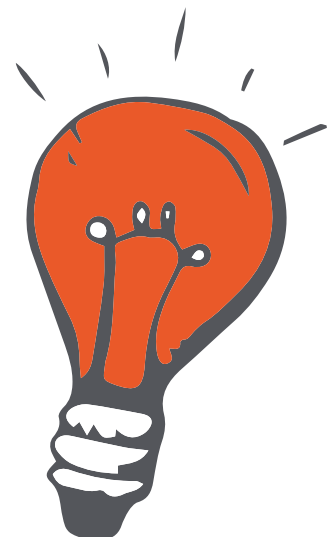
Your Clients

- **Do you have a client database?** - Simply download your clients information from your accounting system. The company, contact, email, address, phone, what they buy from you, can all be helpful. This way you can upsell them to your other products and services. A perfect solution to reach the masses is a regular Mailchimp (e-marketing) campaign to promote and inform your customers
- **Why do I need a database?** - In today's competitive business world, many businesses are increasingly using a customer database in an attempt to manage relationships, increasing both sales and customer satisfaction.
 - Identify your most profitable customers
 - Keep track of your customer information
 - Track customer sales information
 - Identify key trends in your field
 - Keep in regular contact
 - Promote yourself
- **Is your database up-to-date?** - A clean and up-to-date database is the basis for every good marketing campaign. A well maintained database enables you to send relevant emails that fit the personal needs of your recipients. Make sure your master database is up-to-date as clients change locations, phone numbers and emails.
- **Monitor results** - Always keep a close eye on your email results, process, opt-outs, and bounces. Clean up your database after every emailing you send. This is simple to find in the reports from every mailchimp (e-marketing) campaign. Clients, via mailchimp emails, update their own contact information, or you can give them a simple web-form so they can provide you with information if it changes.
- **How many of those clients are no longer dealing with you?** - Cull your database and list those clients so you can reconnect with them. Database sorting for clients who have not spent is simple through accounting systems. It can't hurt to give them a prod?

- **What products and services does your client not know about?** - Do you know what product and services your clients receive from you so you can target specific deals directly to them? Many clients may only use one or a few of your products or services. Would they use others if they were aware?
- **Who are your top twenty clients?** - It is an old business adage: about 20 percent of your customers produce 80 percent of your sales. We're all tempted to waste our time trying to please all of our customers instead of the most lucrative ones.
- **Do you know who your top twenty clients are and how much they spend?** - these clients should receive most of your attention.
- **Are you in regular contact with your clients?** - Regular contact ensures your customers feel comfortable with you, while opening doors for suggestions and feedback that could lead to more sales. Whether it's a one-time or repeat purchase, when customers buy your goods or services, you enter into a relationship with them.

Like all relationships, the key to success is effective communication. Engage in regular communication with your customers, via email marketing, E-newsletters and blog posts. This will keep customers apprised of your company's latest products and specials, with an air of exclusivity.

Communicate with your customers throughout the purchasing process and beyond. You will earn their trust while increasing positive word-of-mouth, which may result in greater sales.





Communication

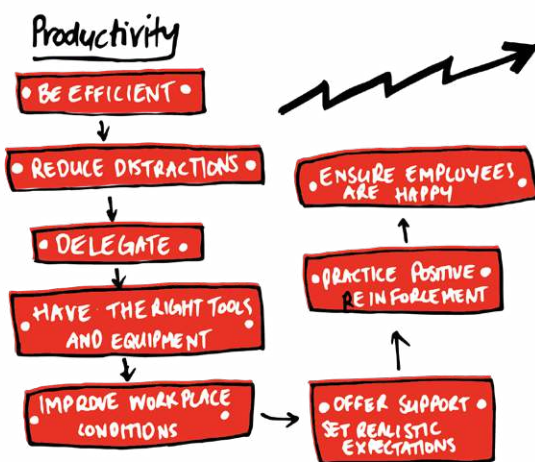
Effective business communication is how employees and management interact to reach organisational goals. Its purpose is to improve company practices and reduce errors.

The importance of business communication also lies in:

- Presenting options & new business ideas
- Making plans and proposals
- Executing decisions
- Reaching agreements
- Sending and fulfilling orders
- Successful selling
- Effective meetings

Technology is also a great way to interact with your staff. Have a look at Trello.com . This is a free to-do list with all the bells-and-whistles you may need to manage everything from simple tasks to entire projects. There are plenty more such as Monday and Biz-Hub for project management.

Regular meetings are essential to keep everyone on the same page, clarify information and make employees know what is expected of them.



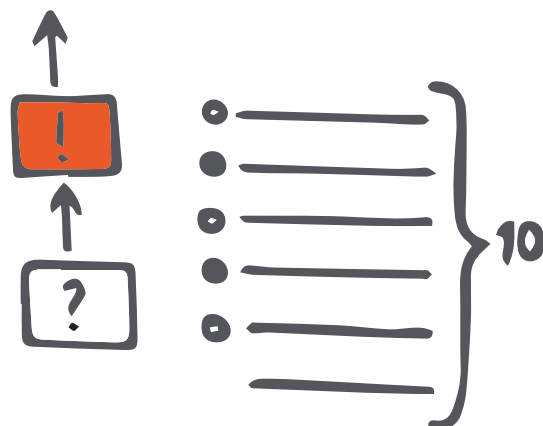
Productivity

There's nothing more important to a small business than its employees. If your employees are happy, their productivity will increase, and that's exactly what you need to help your business grow.

Some tips to increase productivity:

- Be efficient
- Delegate
- Reduce distractions
- Have the right tools and equipment
- Improve workplace conditions
- Offer support and set realistic goals
- Practice positive reinforcement
- Ensure employees are happy

Do you measure this?



Personal Development

In business, personal development improves effectiveness. It empowers staff to produce better results and meet their targets. For excellent results, an employer or a business owner must have an energetic and productive team. Business revenues are created by the people you employ and without them, little or no business would take place.

- Gives clarity to a personal vision
- Sharpens existing skills
- Gives your talents room to shine
- Improves effectiveness in business
- Drives motivation and satisfaction
- Builds client and employee confidence
- Reduces staff turnover and improves unity

Do you upskill your team? It is a great opportunity for more educated staff and the staff appreciate you investing in their future.

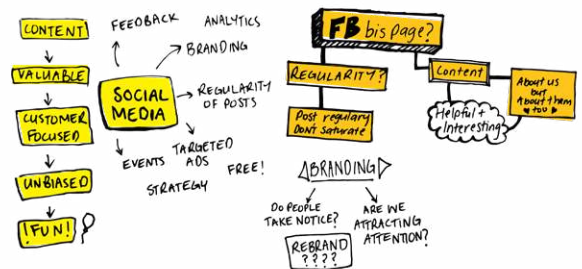
It doesn't have to be expensive courses and away from the workplace either - think about in-house training with senior to junior members or online courses.



Social Media

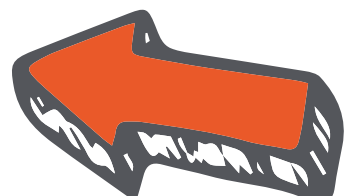
Social media offers many benefits to business owners, as it allows them to reach out to their customers and to gain the attention of more people/potential customers. Utilising social networks enables businesses to get exposure, traffic and gain market insights.

There are many benefits to having an online social media presence. Having a simple facebook business page allows your customers to gain valuable information fast such as location, contact details and open hours. Interaction and building relationships is easy with direct messaging and the ability to gain feedback/testimonials.



Some things to consider when managing your social media:

- Regularity of posts - be careful not to saturate
- Make use of affordable targeted advertising
- Valuable content
- Post with your customers in mind
- Expose your customers to your branding
- Create a strategy
- Make it fun – competitions and interactions
- Use different media – Photos, graphics, videos
- Utilize analytics to see how you're going
- Re-evaluate strategy





Pricing & Sales

Pricing isn't a static venture: it should and must slide with changing market considerations, new products and evolving business goals.

One of the secrets to business success is pricing your products properly. Price your products correctly and that can enhance how much you sell, creating the foundation for a business that will prosper. Get your pricing strategy wrong and you may create problems.

Here are some tips to consider:

- List your product's true costs
 - Analyze your customers and competitors
 - Consider your real business priorities
 - Consider using add-ons
 - Come up with tiered pricing
 - Have a plan to increase prices gradually
 - Analyze your conversions
 - Know your customer
 - Know your costs
 - Know your revenue target
 - Know where the market is heading
- Do you have a customer loyalty programme?
 - Would offering rewards or specials be beneficial?
 - Do you have a system for up-selling?



Research Competition

One of the most important factors towards the longevity of a start-up is continuous research and assessment of the competition. Gaining even the smallest edge on your business competitors can mean the difference between failure and success.

Knowing who your competitors are, and what they are offering, can help you to make your products, services and marketing stand out. It will enable you to set your prices competitively and help you to respond to rival marketing campaigns with your own initiatives.

Here are some tips:

- Assess your competitors
- Check their social media
- Mystery shopping
- Online business information sources
- Conduct a survey
- Check-in with your suppliers
- Ask your customers
- Continual research is vital



Start Up Packages

Come and see us to discuss what you need to kick-off your new venture. We have put some packs together below as samples.

To help you out, see us about a payment plan.

'Logo' package

\$450

- Up to four custom Logo designs to choose from
- Minor amendments to your chosen logo
- Logos supplied in various formats
- Logo usage guide

'Promote Me' package

\$1450

- Facebook cover and bio image setup
- Google my Business setup
- Rack Card Design
- 250x Rack Cards printed
- Flyer Design
1000x A5 colour flyers

'Brand Me' package

\$1787

- Logo Package
- Business Card Design
- 250x Printed Business Cards
- Digital Letterhead template
- Simple website (one page)
- One Year Domain name and Web Hosting

'Get me out there' package

\$3210

- Logo Package
- Mailchimp setup, template and tuition
- Facebook cover and bio image setup
- Google my Business setup
- Six page Wordpress website
- One Year Domain name and Web Hosting

'Get me Online' package

\$3710

- MailChimp e-marketing setup, template and tuition
- Facebook cover image
- Google my Business setup
- Six + page WordPress website
- Online Shopping function
- 6x designed Facebook adverts
- One Year Domain name and Web Hosting

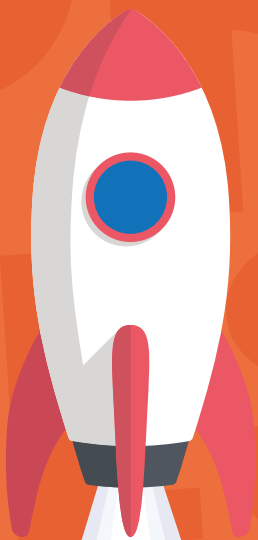
'Full' package

\$5837

- Logo Package
- Business Card Design
- 250x Printed Business Cards
- Digital Letterhead template
- MailChimp e-marketing setup, template and tuition
- Facebook cover image
- Google my Business setup
- Six + page Wordpress website
- Online Shopping function
- 6x designed Facebook adverts
- One Year Domain name and Web Hosting
- Rack Card Design
- 250x Rack Cards printed
- Flyer Design
- 1000x A5 colour flyers

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