FREE PRINTABLE CHECKLIST · LINKUN FOUNDATION

Business launch basics checklist

The core legal, money, and setup steps for starting a small business, in the order most owners need them.

Requirements depend on your city, county, state, and industry. A free advisor at your local Small Business Development Center or SCORE can confirm what applies to you.

Set up the business

- [ ] Choose a business structure (sole proprietorship, LLC, corporation) and register with your state if needed.
- [ ] Register a fictitious business name ("doing business as") with your county if you use a name other than your own.
- [ ] Get an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the IRS. It's free.
- [ ] Get the business licenses and permits your city, county, and industry require.
- [ ] Register for a seller's permit if you sell taxable goods (in California, with the CDTFA).

Set up the money

- [ ] Open a business checking account and use it only for the business.
- [ ] Get a business card for business expenses.
- [ ] Choose bookkeeping software or a simple spreadsheet and record every transaction.
- [ ] Open a separate savings account for taxes and another for your cash reserve.
- [ ] Decide how you'll pay yourself.

Protect the business

- [ ] Get the insurance you need. See the insurance basics checklist.
- [ ] Use written estimates and agreements. See the estimates and contracts checklist.
- [ ] Turn on two-step verification for your email and bank accounts.

Get found and get paid

- [ ] Claim your free Google Business Profile.
- [ ] Set up ways to take payment: card, bank transfer, and invoices. Our free invoice generator works on your phone.
- [ ] Plan your first 90 days of cash with the startup savings calculator.

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