

Starting a Business

Starting your own business can be a rewarding experience; your dreams are fulfilled but with so many issues to face, it can also seem a minefield.

As so many small businesses fail in the early stages, it is essential to plan your business proposition carefully. You should start by discussing your plans with us to give you the help you need to succeed.

Before you begin

Before you begin, you'll need to consider such questions as:

- Are you the sort of person who can succeed?
- Have you thought carefully about the impact of ceasing paid work?
- What are your key objectives within the next 2/3 years?
- Have you any funds you can put in the business?
- Do you need any help in raising finance?
- Have you considered your earnings in the first year?
- Are you familiar with the legal requirements?
- Have you considered your tax position?
- Have you considered the thoughts of family & friends?
- Have you carefully planned all aspects of the business, including your long term objectives and especially your exit/end strategy?

There are many other matters you may need to consider both before you start in your business but also in your first year.

With our help and careful planning you can get your new business off to a confident start.

The Business Plan

Preparing your business plan

Some people believe that only business start-ups need funding and that only large companies need business plans. But the truth is that every business needs a `blueprint` - not just for the benefit of potential investors, but so that the people who work in the business can have a clear idea of its direction and can commit to a plan.

The essential ingredients are:

A business description and mission statement - declaring why you exist and a basic description of your business.

Management and people profiles - investors want to know that you can deliver the results.

A financial portrait and strategy - include data such as sources of finance, cash flow projections and profitability. Don't cut corners here and please ask for our assistance. Particularly demonstrate you understand the key `drivers` in the business.

Sales and marketing objectives - detail an up to date strategy for bringing your products or services to market and describe your intended markets. Include competitor intelligence and demonstrate how you can better serve your markets.

An executive summary - a concise, readable executive summary is necessary to get your readers interest and should show the highlights of each section of the business plan, providing a clear synopsis of who you are, what you do and where you're heading.

A SWOT analysis - highlight your **W**eaknesses and **T**hreats as much as your **S**trengths and **O**pportunities.

And then - like keeping a `To Do` list, writing a business plan is an **ongoing process**. It must adapt to changes in your company, its market and the economy - and that means regular reviewing and updating.

Be honest and realistic in preparing your business plan. Ensure the presentation is professional and clear, with graphics and charts. The plan should be detailed but short enough to maintain interest. Why not use our extensive business experience in helping you put together your business plan?

Financing

Raising finance

Having thought about your plans you may find that you need to raise finance from external sources including possibly banks. Like everything else, this requires careful planning.

Essential considerations:

Choose the right financier - ensure you obtain the most appropriate funding source for the project or objective.

Consider a number of finance sources - for example bank overdrafts, loans, commercial mortgages, share issues (for a limited company), grant or other public funded assistance (nationally, regionally or locally), lease finance, venture capital and business angels.

Provide the financier with the right information - anticipate what the financier wants which often means much more than simple financial projections. A carefully prepared business plan will always help the lenders' understanding of the business.

Security - this is often a requirement which can be in the form of specific assets or a fixed or floating charge over your business assets, but be cautious where personal guarantees are required.

Presenting to a carefully chosen lending source will have a greater chance of success. We can also help you with comparative considerations of each source of finance, including tax implications.

Minimising your tax liability

One other way of maximising your finances is through minimising your tax liability. Ensure you discuss your plans in full with us to ensure your business tax liability is as low as possible from the very start.

For example, from a tax viewpoint, the choice of a year end for an unincorporated business is important as it often means that an increase in profits is more slowly reflected in your tax bills.

Other Thoughts

Our Services

Which business structure?

Choose the business structure which best suits your needs: **sole trader**, **partnership** or **limited company**.

There are advantages and disadvantages for each trading structure, for example, in terms of privacy and flexibility, risk, credibility, administrative obligations and taxation. We can help you make the right decision.

Registering your business

We can help with the registration of your business for tax purposes and if you decide to form a limited company. You should also consider whether your business requires a PAYE scheme and if you need to be VAT registered.

Other thoughts

Ensure you also consider the following in your plans:

- **Type of premises and location**
- **Patents and trademarks protection**
- **Equipment needs**
- **Insurance cover including product liability, disaster cover, asset loss and key staff loss cover**
- **Managing your finances including cash flow management and debt collection**
- **Keeping adequate business and accounting records for legal and tax purposes**
- **Getting the right information to help run your business**
- **Installing a reliable and useful accounting system**

Why not contact us now to request a free Quick Start Pack for your new business and to arrange a free one hour planning review at your offices?

Let us help you to get off to the best possible start.

Business Planning

Business start-up planning and advice
Strategic and business planning
Cash flow forecasting
Financial management
Financial information systems
Computer & financial systems advice

Taxation Advice

Self assessment
Personal tax
Business tax
Company tax
Capital gains tax
Inheritance tax
HM Revenue and Customs investigations
Value Added Tax
PAYE and national insurance compliance

Accounting

Preparation of annual accounts
Preparation of management accounts
Book-keeping services
Maintaining PAYE and VAT records and associated returns

Company Secretarial

Preparation and filing of statutory returns
Preparation of minutes and resolutions
Company formation
Company searches

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