

**Emma Jones**

**THE**

**START UP**

**KIT**

**OPEN**

Everything you need  
to start a small business



**Enterprise  
Nation**

# Publishing details

An Enterprise Nation book

[www.enterprisenation.com](http://www.enterprisenation.com)

*With*

HARRIMAN HOUSE LTD

18 College Street

Petersfield

Hampshire

GU31 4AD

GREAT BRITAIN

Tel: +44 (0)1730 233870

Email: [enquiries@harriman-house.com](mailto:enquiries@harriman-house.com)

Website: [www.harriman-house.com](http://www.harriman-house.com)

First published in Great Britain in 2013. This edition published in 2016.

Copyright © Emma Jones

The right of Emma Jones to be identified as Author has been asserted in accordance with the Copyright, Design and Patents Act 1988.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A CIP catalogue record for this book can be obtained from the British Library.

All rights reserved; no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise without the prior written permission of the Publisher.

This book may not be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise disposed of by way of trade in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published without the prior written consent of the Publisher.

No responsibility for loss occasioned to any person or corporate body acting or refraining to act as a result of reading material in this book can be accepted by the Publisher or by the Author.



# Contents

<b>Who This Kit is For</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>About the Author</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Let's Get Started</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>How to Access Your Offers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>PART I. Prepare</b>	<b>4</b>
1. Coming Up With an Idea	5
2. Research the Market	13
3. Write a Plan	19
4. Register the Company	24
5. Protect the Brand	34
6. Take Care of Household Admin	36
7. Your Tech Setup	42
8. Working 5 to 9	51
9. Starting on a Budget and Straightforward Finance	56
<b>PART II. Launch</b>	<b>68</b>
10. Create a First Impression	69
11. Make Sales	94
12. Make Some Noise!	108
<b>PART III. Grow</b>	<b>132</b>
13. Attract Customers Back	133
14. Focus On What You Do Best and Outsource the Rest	135
15. Keep the Business in Balance	141
16. Support	146
<b>The Best of Luck</b>	<b>148</b>
<b>How Enterprise Nation Can Help</b>	<b>149</b>
<b>With Thanks</b>	<b>150</b>



# Who This Kit is For

**T**he *StartUp Kit* is for anyone considering or starting a business. You may have been thinking about how you can make a living from a particular passion, hobby or skill. Perhaps you're working a day job and already making sales on the side – now you want to take it to the next level. Maybe you haven't hit upon the right idea yet; you just know in your heart that you want to be your own boss.

This kit offers all the tools and tips you need to succeed. It'll help you find an idea, spot a gap in the market and start your own small business. Doing so will be one of the best moves you've ever made!



# About the Author

Emma Jones is a business expert, author and founder of small business network Enterprise Nation. Her books include *Working 5 to 9*, *Go Global: How to take your business to the world* and *Turn Your Talent Into a Business*.

Following a five-year career at an international accounting firm, Emma started her first business at 27. That business was sold 18 months later, and the experience led to Emma's next venture, Enterprise Nation.

Its website ([www.enterprisenation.com](http://www.enterprisenation.com)) was launched in 2006 and became the most popular site for home business owners in the UK, attracting over 100,000 visitors each month.

In eight years, Enterprise Nation has grown into a community of over 75,000 homegrown businesses that find help and support on its website, in its books and at live events. The company has launched a membership scheme, which helps members promote their business, take their venture to the next level and have their views represented to government.

In 2011, Emma was a co-founder of StartUp Britain, a national campaign to encourage more people to start a business.

Emma was awarded an MBE for services to enterprise in July 2012.



# Let's Get Started

There has never been a better time to start a business and in 2015 record numbers of people did just that. According to Companies House, 520,400 people formed a limited company in the space of 12 months. A survey called the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor revealed the highest number of people starting a business since research began in 1999 and this was then followed by data from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills showing the number of small businesses having increased to 5.3 million – another record high.

Why is this happening? Simple: because it's now perfectly possible to start and grow a successful business

- in your spare time
- from home
- on a budget
- with help from friends and others.

In this kit, I'll show you how it's done.

People in their thousands are spotting gaps in the market or turning their hobbies into a successful venture. They are embracing free or low-cost technology to promote themselves and make sales, with a good number of these sales coming from overseas customers. Having access to the internet means you can start a business on a Monday and be trading with the world by Wednesday.

The start-up companies profiled in this book discuss how they got going and how they accessed the invaluable support that's helped them along the way. They are selling everything from catering services to celebrity masks, homemade cards to handmade boats. Their products may be different, but the owners of these businesses all talk

about the opportunities available to them and the joy of having the freedom to work how and where they like. Many started in employment. A good number are already going global.

If you'd like to experience the same sense of independence and excitement, all you have to do is follow some basic steps: come up with an idea, do some research and marketing, offer good customer service – and you're in business!

In the following pages I'll walk you through everything that's involved in doing this successfully.

**Emma Jones | @emmaljones**



# How to Access Your Offers

Join Enterprise Nation as a StartUp member and benefit from a range of offers from top brands. These deals are on everything from accounting software, domain registration to website builders and business cards. They are ideal for your new start-up.

To find out more about the offers available to StartUp members, join via visiting [www.enterprisenation.com/join](http://www.enterprisenation.com/join)

You don't have to access all the offers at once if you don't want to; you can come back at any time.

We'll be adding new offers throughout the year and you'll be able to access those too.

And that's not all...

As well as accessing the partner offers, you can also use the above link to download templates, get hold of resources and stay bang up-to-date on the latest small business news!





# PART I. Prepare

With any undertaking, preparation is key. Whether baking a cake, going on a date or heading on holiday, time is given over to research and preparation. Starting a business is no different. Dedicate time to coming up with an idea, ensuring it's viable, and registering with the relevant bodies. These are the base ingredients required for a successful enterprise!



# 1. Coming Up With an Idea

**I**ngredient number one: a business idea! Many people tell me they would like to start a business but what's holding them back is not having an idea. It's easy to come up with one. Ask yourself these three questions:

## **1. Is there a gap in the market?**

Have you tried to buy something that you just can't find? Could others be looking for the same thing? If so, this presents a market opportunity. It was a gap in the market that encouraged Esther Thompson to leave a big job at the BBC for a life of self-employment.

## **2. What is my passion/hobby/skill?**

Many people are turning what they love into a way of making a living. Best of all, when you work on what you enjoy, doing it never really feels like work. Are you a dab hand at design? Have an eye for photography? A head for figures? These skills and hobbies can easily be turned into a business.

## **3. Is there something someone else is doing that I can do better myself?**

If you've bought something and been unimpressed, why not step in, set up a business, and provide a better offer? Many good ideas stem from spotting products and services that can simply be improved upon or offered for less.

\* \* \*

Your idea will develop over time. Don't be surprised if in 12 months' time it looks different to when you started out. This is okay. Business ideas tend to get refined over time; your offer will get sharper the more experience you gain in the marketplace. What's important is to get started with the beginnings of an idea – there'll be time to develop it as you get feedback from customers and input from others.

## CASE STUDY

Name: **Esther Thompson** | Business: **Tea Huggers**

Esther Thompson had been drinking herbal tea for 15 years and was becoming increasingly disillusioned with the products on the market.

“Often the tea smelt delicious but the taste didn't deliver. Over the years I noticed that other countries took tea-drinking much more seriously than the British, which didn't seem right to me. I became convinced there was a gap in the market for a high-quality herbal tea range that was packed full of flavour.”

After this, Esther – formerly head of communications at the BBC's commercial unit – spent a year researching and planning.

“Fortunately I have a few friends who have launched very successful businesses so I used them as a sounding board. When my business plan was in decent shape I managed to speak to some experts in the industry who helped me refine my ideas and strengthen the proposition. I went through so many different versions of the business plan, but each time it became stronger and stronger.”



The business, Tea Huggers, was officially launched in December 2013, when Esther hired a master tea-blender who helped design the tea range and source the ingredients.

“For the packaging I used a local website to track down a designer. Four people pitched for the work and luckily I found a highly experienced packaging designer with experience in the tea industry who lived in my neighbourhood. It's amazing the contacts you can find through your local online community!”

When it came to sales, Esther opted again to keep it local. She visited local food stores and supermarkets to talk them through her product and ideas.

“This helped me refine the product with advice from people who would ultimately be my customers, so when I had the finished product I had the confidence to walk into any shop, big or small, and pitch my products. I’ve been blown away by the positive reaction.”

Online sales currently make up the bulk of company revenue, but Esther is working towards selling more of her tea range through stockists. She’s also planning a stand at a trade fair to help generate leads with key stockists, whilst maintaining online promotion to attract new site visitors – and keep existing ones coming back.

“With all my online orders I’ve put in a little luggage label with a message asking people to take a picture of the tea they’ve bought with the luggage label. People have posted them on Facebook and it’s really helped create a buzz around the brand.”

As for what the future brings, Esther is keen to secure more routes to market and to look at elements of the business that can be outsourced so this hardworking mum of two can make the time she spends on Tea Huggers as efficient as possible.

After that, she’ll most certainly be needing a nice cup of herbal tea!

[www.teahuggers.co.uk](http://www.teahuggers.co.uk) | [@teahuggers](https://www.instagram.com/teahuggers)

**TOP TIP:** *“Write your idea down, talk to experts, refine and repeat.”*

## 50 ideas for businesses

These are all ideas and businesses we have seen and profiled on Enterprise Nation. Many of them started as ‘5 to 9’ businesses. In other words, a business started whilst the entrepreneur was in full-time study or employment. More on that later!

Blogger

Vlogger

Social media advisor

eBay trader  
Online store owner  
Giftware maker  
Giftware seller  
Artisan  
Cupcake maker  
Cosmetics producer  
Hair and make-up artist  
Origami artist  
Picture artist  
Furniture maker  
Jewellery designer  
Footwear designer  
Fashion designer  
Clothing producer  
Toymaker  
Party organiser  
DJ  
Musician  
Magician  
Beer producer  
Events organiser  
Wedding planner  
Mystery shopper

Image consultant  
Fitness advisor  
Personal trainer  
Photographer  
Accountant  
Lawyer  
Translator  
IT services  
App developer  
Software developer  
Print and web designer  
Network marketer  
Pet care & doggy treats  
Product manufacturer  
E-learning provider  
Facebook developer  
Magazine publisher  
T-shirt maker  
Papercrafter  
Dance instructor  
Perfumer  
Balloon decorator  
Streetfood caterer

There are so many possibilities. You might even have too many ideas. In which case, don't be afraid to spend some time on all of them and, wherever possible, let the customer decide – try them out in small ways and see what gets the warmest response.

## Niche is nice

When coming up with your idea, bear in mind that niche businesses are often ideal. Meeting the needs of a very well-defined audience helps keep your efforts focused and your offering clear in a crowded market. It also means success should naturally consolidate itself. So rather than just selling clothes, why not become the go-to place for men's blazers, and instead of offering food to suit all palates, how about re-inventing pizza so it offers a balanced meal to consumers interested in healthy eating?

With a niche business:

- **you keep marketing costs low**, as your audience is well-defined; you know where your audience are and understand the kind of marketing messages to which they will respond
- **customer loyalty remains high**, as you become the expert in your field or the only provider of certain products; customers will want to stay with you and benefit from the specialist product or service you offer.

**FRIENDS AND FAMILY FOCUS GROUP:** *Talk to family and friends and ask them where they think your talents lie. They might just help you discover your business idea in an area you hadn't thought of.*

## The niche list

Here are some businesses I've come across that have benefited from having a clear niche. A few of them are profiled in this guide:

- Tilly & The Buttons ([www.tillyandthebuttons.com](http://www.tillyandthebuttons.com)) | *Dress-making tips and tutorials for women who want to take control of their style*

- Guilt Free Gourmet ([www.jordanbourke.com](http://www.jordanbourke.com)) | *Healthy food for all occasions*
- Collie Wobbles ([www.colliewobbles.co.uk](http://www.colliewobbles.co.uk)) | *Border Collie/sheepdog-related products*
- Rock 'n' Roll Bride ([www.rocknrollbride.com](http://www.rocknrollbride.com)) | *For brides wanting a rock 'n' roll wedding*
- Cambridge Raincoat Company ([www.cambridgeraincoats.co.uk](http://www.cambridgeraincoats.co.uk)) | *Fashion raincoats for people who ride upright bicycles*
- Stow London ([www.stowlondon.co.uk](http://www.stowlondon.co.uk)) | *Irresistible luxury for stylish travel*

\* \* \*

Whatever the idea, good ones tend to be based on what you enjoy, what people will buy and something that improves on what's already available. Think about how you can fashion your idea so it has a clear purpose for a clearly defined audience.

## An idea as part of the package

If you're not able to settle on a viable idea of your own, consider buying into someone else's idea. You can do so through a franchise or signing up as a party-plan consultant and/or direct sales agent. Benefit from being your own boss whilst having the support of a central team and the proven idea that comes with it!

Here are a few top franchise or party-plan opportunities:

- My Secret Kitchen | [www.mysecretkitchen.co.uk](http://www.mysecretkitchen.co.uk)
- The Pampered Chef | [www.pamperedchef.co.uk](http://www.pamperedchef.co.uk)
- Girlie Gardening | [www.girliegardening.com](http://www.girliegardening.com)
- Avon | [www.avon.uk.com](http://www.avon.uk.com)
- Kleeneze | [www.kleeneze.com](http://www.kleeneze.com)
- Neal's Yard | [www.nealsyardremedies.com](http://www.nealsyardremedies.com)
- Maid2Clean | [www.maid2clean.co.uk](http://www.maid2clean.co.uk)
- Razzamataz | [www.razzamataz.co.uk](http://www.razzamataz.co.uk)



- Travel Counsellors | [www.travelcounsellors.co.uk](http://www.travelcounsellors.co.uk)
- Tatty Bumpkin | [www.tattybumpkin.com](http://www.tattybumpkin.com)
- Barrett & Coe | [www.barrettandcoe.co.uk](http://www.barrettandcoe.co.uk)
- Barking Mad | [www.barkingmad.uk.com](http://www.barkingmad.uk.com)
- Curves | [www.curves.co.uk](http://www.curves.co.uk)
- Raring2Go! | [www.raring2go.co.uk](http://www.raring2go.co.uk)
- PyjamaDrama | [www.pyjamadrama.com](http://www.pyjamadrama.com)
- Usborne Books | [www.usborne.com](http://www.usborne.com)
- Captain Tortue Group | [www.captaintortuegroup.com](http://www.captaintortuegroup.com)

## **Useful links**

- Direct Selling Association | [www.dsa.org.uk](http://www.dsa.org.uk)
- British Franchise Association | [www.thebfa.org](http://www.thebfa.org)



## 2. Research the Market

**Y**ou have your idea. Turning it into a business requires some research, followed by a straightforward exercise in building that research into a plan. Here's how to go about it.

First, research your potential customers, the competition and a price point by visiting competitors' sites, online trade sites/forums, reading reports, and seeking intelligence from experts.

Look for data and comments that will answer the following questions:

- What is the number of potential customers you can serve, and how do these customers like to be served?
- What are their core characteristics and spending patterns, and who are their key influencers?
- Who is currently serving your market?
- Where are your potential customers going for their goods and services?
- What do they like about what they're getting and, more importantly, what do they dislike (as this opens up opportunities for you to improve on the status quo)?
- In view of the above, what price can you charge for your product/service?

Price yourself at a rate that's competitive with other providers in the market, that takes into account the amount of time, personal service and added value you offer, and that will turn a profit at the end of the day.

**WHAT AM I WORTH?** *How much do you think customers or clients would pay for your product or service? Take a look at how similar offerings are priced and talk to people about how much they'd be willing to pay. Then talk to suppliers to check you can source materials and deliver at a price that covers your costs. Since starting a business from home (which I recommend you do!) will save you lots of money, you can pass some of these savings onto your customers. It will give you an edge over other businesses. But don't undercharge for the expertise and knowledge you offer. Only consider charging less for work that will reflect well on your business and boost your reputation, perhaps in the media or with a particularly important customer.*

You can also source primary, or firsthand, data by conducting a survey or posing questions on social media channels.

## Survey tools

- SurveyMonkey | [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)
- Wufoo | [www.wufoo.com](http://www.wufoo.com)

## Social media channels

- Twitter | [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)
- Facebook | [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)
- LinkedIn | [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)
- Instagram | [www.instagram.com](http://www.instagram.com)

Or, of course, you can hit the streets with a clipboard!

*Imran Merza is the entrepreneur behind Jealous Sweets and, for him, it was the London Business & IP Centre that gave the start he needed...*

## CASE STUDY

Name: **Imran Merza** | Business: **Jealous Sweets** | London BIPC: [www.bl.uk/bipc/resmark/index.html](http://www.bl.uk/bipc/resmark/index.html)

It was in trying to impress a girlfriend that Imran spotted a gap in the market and came up with the idea for his new start up.

“I started dating a girl who loved sweets and was vegetarian and at the start of our relationship I was trying to get into her good books by finding her vegetarian sweets. The best sweets contained gelatin which is derived traditionally from pig, beef and horse hoofs and parts of the animal that we don’t usually eat.

As I scoured the Internet and shops I realised no one was making gelatin free sweets and when I did come across the occasional brand of vegetarian sweets in health shops, they tasted awful! I also realised sweets are aimed, branded and marketed towards children. This is when I decided to start a grown-up candy company taking out the gunk and junk found in traditional sweets. I quit my job and one of my best friends Taz Basunia joined me to start the revolution of bringing credibility back to candy.”

Imran and partner Taz had no knowledge of the confectionery market and no idea where to begin, but whilst searching the web for sweets, Imran had found a link showing the British Library had reports on the confectionery industry.

“I went along to the BIPC (Business and IP Centre) and started to look at the various reports. The more I researched, the more engrossed I got in the confectionery world. I realised there was very little or no innovation in sweets and they were mass produced, cheap and inferior to chocolate. This research alone gave me confidence that my idea would have some merit and allowed me to build some credibility.

I wanted to know everything I could about the confectionery market; the size, competitors, trends, spending habits, the opportunities and threats of someone starting out with no prior experience. As an outsider, I felt I needed to know everything possible to see if I could really make a splash in the market.”

Imran feels this vital research phase gave him the confidence to talk about what he was planning to do and it helped build a blueprint and business plan.



“One brick at a time I built the foundation of knowledge. Without this it would be very difficult to sound credible when talking to retailers. It helped me target our audience market and their spending habits and I knew exactly where I would sell our products.”

This clear vision has been realised and the company is now selling in Selfridges, Somerset House and Harvey Nichols, as well as overseas.

“We are starting to export into Europe, Asia and the Middle East and we’re getting a lot of interest from other countries too.”

From dating a girl to going global, this is one entrepreneur who spotted a gap in the market after carrying out some serious market research that came absolutely free.

[www.thejealouslife.com](http://www.thejealouslife.com) | [@thejealouslife](https://www.instagram.com/thejealouslife)

## The name game

Coming up with an idea and carrying out research will get you thinking about what to name your business. If selling your knowledge, the company could be named after you – for example, ‘Emma Jones Advisory Services’. In which case, job done! But if you’re looking for something else, think of a name that:

- is easy to spell
- has an available domain name
- is not already registered with Companies House (use the free web-check service to access existing company names at [www.companieshouse.gov.uk](http://www.companieshouse.gov.uk))
- people will remember.

You might want to protect the name with a trademark. See later for information on how to go about that.

Most domain registration websites offer alternative name suggestions when searching for domain availability, which can offer inspiration:

- 123-Reg | [www.123-reg.co.uk](http://www.123-reg.co.uk)
- GoDaddy | [www.godaddy.com](http://www.godaddy.com)

- I&I | [www.1and1.co.uk](http://www.1and1.co.uk)

If you get stuck, visit Enterprise Nation ([www.enterprisenation.com](http://www.enterprisenation.com)) where you will find people who can help you: the site is buzzing with talented copywriters and wordsmiths.

## SWOT analysis

With your idea, and now your research in-hand that supports it, prepare a SWOT analysis. This stands for: **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities, **T**hreats and looks as follows:

### **Strengths**

What are my strengths?

What can I do better than anyone else?

What resources do I have?

What's my unique selling point?

### **Weaknesses**

What are my weaknesses?

What should I avoid?

Where do I lack skills?

What might hinder my success?

### **Opportunities**

What opportunities do I see?

Does my idea tap into any trends?

Are there any emerging technologies that could help my idea?

Has there been anything in the news related to my idea?

## **Threats**

What threats might I face?

Who's my competition?

Does changing technology affect my idea?



## 3. Write a Plan

A business plan will act as your map. It will guide the business from start to growth, with reference to milestones along the way.

The plan will include information about how you intend to get started and what your ultimate objectives are – and how you aim to get from one to the other. You might want to start a business and sell it in a few years' time, or grow to a point where you wouldn't want to grow anymore.

Of course, you'll need to refer to resources: what you have already, what you'll need and how you'll pay for it.

So, after coming up with an idea and doing your research, writing the business plan is your first practical step to starting your business. With it under your belt you can say, "I'm off!"

Or IMOFF. It's an easy way to remember the headings to include in your business plan: **I**dea, **M**arket, **O**perations, **F**inancials and **F**riends. Have these as headings in your plan and you've taken a big step closer to becoming your own boss.

### **Idea**

What's your idea?

### **Market**

Who will be your customers or clients? And who is your competition?

### **Operations**

How will you develop the idea, promote it and provide good customer service?



## Financials

Can you earn more than you spend, so that the business makes a profit? Do you need any funds to get started?

## Friends

Do you have a support network on hand for when you need business advice? Are there complementary businesses you've identified with whom partnerships are a possibility?

**REGULAR REVIEW:** *Return to your plan to check progress against targets or to make amends as you respond to new opportunities.*

## A business plan section by section

**Company ABC**  
**Business Plan**  
20xx-20xx

*[You could choose to do a 12-month plan, two years or up to five years.]*

### Contents

Executive Summary

The Idea

The Market

Operations

Financials

Friends & Family *[This title would be more like 'Advisory Board' if preparing the plan for a bank or funder.]*

## **Executive Summary**

*Summarise what's in the rest of the plan. Something like this:*

The vision for ABC is to become the leading company for selling abc to xyz. This plan sets out how the vision will be achieved in the period 20xx-20xx. It outlines the product on offer, provides data on the market and shows how the company will be operating profitably within the first three months.

Having identified a clear gap in the market, I'm excited about the opportunity to start and build a successful business that will offer a quality product [or service] to a well-defined market.

**A. Person**

Founder, Company ABC

## **The Idea**

*Include here your 'elevator pitch'; what is your product and how will it benefit the customer?*

*This is the opportunity to explain the idea of the business in a few sentences.*

## **The Market**

### **Customers**

*Who will be your customers? Include the quantity, their demographic profile, geographic locations, social backgrounds; essentially any strong data that shows you know your audience.*

### **Competition**

*Who is selling a similar product/service? How do you differ from them? What is your unique selling point?*

*You can do this by producing a table that lists the competition. Outline what makes you stand out in the market: is it that your service will be online, that you'll charge a different price, have an innovative marketing approach or offer the service with a special extra twist?*

## **Operations**

### **The CEO**

*You have come up with the idea for the business and you've done your research on the market. Now it's time for the reader to know a bit about you! Note your background, skills, experience and any credentials for running this business. Plus information on other key members of staff (if there are any).*

### **Sourcing**

*If this applies to your business, refer to how you'll source your product/service. You may be making it yourself!*

## **Sales & Marketing**

*How will you promote what you offer to your customers? Include a brief sales and marketing plan with headings like this:*

**Press** - how many press releases do you plan to distribute each year and to which press channels: newspapers, magazines, radio, etc.?

**Online** - will you have your own blog/website? Mention other sites that you'll approach for reciprocal links.

**Partners** - what about marketing tie-ups with other companies selling to the same audience?

*You know where your customers are, so let your marketing plan show that you'll reach them in print, online and even in the streets!*

## **Systems**

*You've sourced the service/product and told customers about it. Refer here to the process customers will go through to buy from you and the systems you'll have in place to deliver in time and on budget. Systems that may include online ordering and payment, a professional call-handling service to take orders or maybe some specific software.*

## **Friends & Family**

*In starting and growing your business, will you call on friends and family for advice? If so, refer to this here; mention your board of advisors, your experts-on-call, your support network!*

*[See 16. Support for details on how to access expert advisors and find a mentor whose details you can also include here.]*

## **Financials**

*Last but not least come the figures. Make this as clear as possible and it's probably best to do it in table form:*

	<b><u>Year 1</u></b>	<b><u>Year 2</u></b>
<b><u>Revenue</u></b>		
<b><u>Overheads</u></b>		
<u>Office rent</u>		
<u>Salary</u>		
<u>Stock</u>		
<u>Technology</u>		
<u>Marketing</u>		
<u>Travel &amp; expenses</u>		
<b><u>Projected profit</u></b>		

*Drawing up a simple financial forecast will highlight any need to borrow money.*



## 4. Register the Company

When you set up in business, there are a couple of organisations you need to contact: Companies House and HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC). Before registering with either, have a think about the company status that suits you best.

### **Self-employed**

This status means you are working for yourself. You keep records and accounts of your own activities and, in acting alone, get to keep all the profits – but are also solely liable for any debts.

### **Limited company**

Limited companies exist in their own right, with the company's finances kept separate from the personal finances of its owners, so your liability is limited.

### **Partnership**

If you'd like to be self-employed but want to work with a friend or colleague, consider a partnership. It means that two or more people share the risks, costs and workload.

Many of the companies featured in the following pages have formed a partnership. They all comment on how a mix of skills and experience is helping the business to grow.

*Mark Bestford's business partner also happens to be his wife...*

## CASE STUDY

**Name:** Mark and Julie Bestford | **Business:** Boatwork

A glorious 22-year naval career set married couple Mark and Julie Bestford afloat on their journey towards becoming their own bosses.

The seafaring pair took a lifetime of experience on the waves, added new skills including digital know-how and built specialist boat restoration and repair firm Boatwork in their 50s.

This year the Chesterfield-based couple, both now 54, are taking their company to the next level and appearing at the Southampton Boat Show where they hope to pick up more new commissions for their careful work.

Julie says:

“We’ve identified the most important way of marketing for us is face-to-face and networking. Being at the Boat Show is huge for us – and we’re really looking forward to it.”

Both Masters at Arms in their Navy days, Julie left in 2000 and held down a number of jobs including managing a charter business in the Caribbean while Mark continued in the forces until 2003 when he joined her there as technical manager.

Until 2010, the pair lived in Spain, Mark worked in online gaming while Julie took Open University qualifications in Health and Social Care.

Dissatisfied with his lot, Mark left, but found it difficult at 50 to find another job.

They moved back to Britain, and Mark rolled up his sleeves and took a City & Guilds in Lyme Regis and in 2012 qualified as a professional boat builder.

Mark says:

“We set up Boatwork in 2012, but knew we need to add other skills before we could really build a business. So we went



on a Preparing to Run Your Own Business course, wrote a business plan and used free consultations with registered accountants to scrub up on the finances.

The plan is to slowly grow from strength-to-strength.”

To keep the finances ticking as they build, they had a grant from the British Legion and Julie works three days a week as a senior carer before picking up the Boatwork admin for the rest of the week.

Now Boatwork has been accepted as part of the British Marine Federation – and there are already some interesting projects on the horizon – like restoring an 80-year-old ‘one design’ sailing yacht belonging to the Royal Corinthian Yacht Club in Burnham on Crouch for its 80th anniversary.

Mark said:

“It’s a really fantastic challenge. The boat was damaged in the 1987 storms and has been decaying since then. It will need dismantling and I will need to make new parts from scratch – it’s fascinating to see how they made things back then without the super-strength glues and equipment we have today.”

[www.boatwork.co.uk](http://www.boatwork.co.uk) | [www.facebook.com/boatworkltd](https://www.facebook.com/boatworkltd)

Mark and Julie’s top tips:

- “Be prepared to make sacrifices”
- “Take any feedback on board”
- “If you say you are going to be there – be there”
- “When we started we bought a small van – we now need a much larger one!”

See later for details on how to form a partnership agreement.

**IF YOU’RE UNSURE, ASK:** *The status of your company will affect how much admin you have to do and the kind of financial records that you need to keep and file. Take advice from your accountant or local tax office on which one to choose. See later for details on how to access free consultations with qualified accountants.*

## Being social

Should you decide to start a social enterprise – a business trading for social and environmental purposes – there are additional legal structures to consider, including:

- community interest company (CIC)
- industrial and provident society
- charitable status.

To find out more about launching a social enterprise or creating a CIC visit:

- Social Enterprise UK | [www.socialenterprise.org.uk](http://www.socialenterprise.org.uk)
- CIC Regulator | [www.cicregulator.gov.uk](http://www.cicregulator.gov.uk)
- ‘Setting up a social enterprise’ via GOV.UK | [www.gov.uk/set-up-a-social-enterprise](http://www.gov.uk/set-up-a-social-enterprise)

*Graham Gardiner started Our Camden as a social enterprise after recognising Camden’s high number of people living on their own and increasing levels of social isolation...*

## CASE STUDY

**Name:** Graham Gardiner | **Business:** Our Camden

Our Camden was founded by four local charities and launched as a social enterprise to imbue an entrepreneurial mindset and approach from the outset.

Camden Council had carried out research amongst the over 50s in the area who wanted to be more connected and felt a membership approach was the best one to take. The Council went out to tender for an organisation to apply and build the membership and Our Camden was successful in winning that tender.

“My approach was to design a service that tried to look beyond people using existing services and appeal to a wider demographic. We offer the opportunity for anyone who lives, works or plays in Camden to join us. Members get the change to MEET new people and try new things to do, SAVE money with local businesses and DISCOVER what the borough has to offer.”



The company operates a full calendar of events as well as deals from local businesses. Events have included Fencing (the en garde not the B & Q type!), Scuba diving, Champagne Afternoon tea in a Mayfair hotel, theatre trips, being part of a Reggae Choir and Nordic walking on Hampstead Heath. The company tries to keep a third of events free and a third under a tenner.

Having launched in April 2014, Our Camden now has over 650 members ranging in age from 30 to 84.

“We have worked hard to create a brand that appeals and promoted it through the voluntary sector network and Camden Council marketing channels such as Libraries and Tenants associations. We have also tried paid for advertising with local papers but have not had much success via that route.”

Graham’s goal, following initial investment from Camden Council is to become financially self sufficient from membership sales. It costs £3 a month or £30 a year to be a member. Financial sustainability will take a couple more years, so the company is now looking for corporate sponsorship and grants to keep going until the point where the enterprise is fully funded from membership.

New members are joining almost every day and the plan for expansion involves encouraging existing members to recommend their friends, building up business deals to a point where joining is a ‘no brainer’ and appealing to employers who could offer membership as an employee perk.

“What better thing to do than give employees the benefit of a card that enables them to save money and be more connected to the community in which their business is based?!”

[www.ourcamden.org](http://www.ourcamden.org) | [@ourcamden](https://twitter.com/ourcamden)

## Companies House

When registering with Companies House, there are three options from which to choose. You can buy a ready-made company from a company formation agent, incorporate a company yourself by sending documents and a registration fee to Companies House or register online via GOV.UK. If you decide to complete registration yourself, see

form INor – application to register a company. It can be easier to go with a formation agent as they do the work on your behalf.

- **GOV.UK** | Incorporate via GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk/register-a-company-online](https://www.gov.uk/register-a-company-online)) and pay £15.
- **Self-incorporation** | Visit the new company registration page of the Companies House website: [www.gov.uk/topic/company-registration-filing/starting-c ompany](https://www.gov.uk/topic/company-registration-filing/starting-c ompany). Complete form INor. Post to Companies House with relevant fee. Standard service fee of £40 (documents processed in eight to ten days). Same-day service fee is £100.
- **Company formation agent** | Register with a formation agent such as Companies Made Simple ([www.companiesmadesimple.com](https://www.companiesmadesimple.com)). Prices start at £16.99 for standard company registration.

## HM Revenue & Customs

The rules on registering a new business with HM Revenue & Customs are pretty clear-cut. You are required to register as soon as you start earning from any business activity. As stated, you can choose to register as self-employed, as a partnership, or as a limited company. Each category has its own filing requirements, as we'll explore now.

### Sole trader/self-employed

The calculation of tax and National Insurance owing is done through self-assessment. You either need to complete a form CWF1, or simply call the newly self-employed business helpline. It should be done by 5 October after the end of the tax year in which you started your business to avoid a fine.

- Form CWF1 | [www.hmrc.gov.uk/forms/cwf1.pdf](https://www.hmrc.gov.uk/forms/cwf1.pdf)
- Helpline for the newly self-employed | 0845 915 4515

It's not onerous to complete the form and, once registered, you'll be classified as self-employed and sent a self-assessment tax return each year, which you complete,

showing your income and expenses from self-employment as well as details of your employment elsewhere (if that applies).

You will be subject to tax and National Insurance on any profits you make, but the good news is that any losses incurred can be offset against your employed income (if you have any), which could even result in a tax rebate.

Depending on your turnover and how straightforward your tax affairs are, you may be able to simply fill out the short tax return (SA103s). However, this cannot be self-selected, nor is it on the HMRC website or orderable; HMRC will send it to you automatically if they think you qualify, based on information given in the previous year's return. If you have turnover below £77,000 (at the time of writing), it's likely that you will qualify. As ever, though, it will depend on individual circumstances, and the law (and various criteria it uses) may change!

## Deadlines

Self-assessment tax return deadlines are as follows:

- paper tax returns should be received by HMRC by 31 October
- online tax returns should be completed by 31 January (giving you an extra three months).

## Useful links

- Leaflet SE1 – ‘Thinking of working for yourself?’ | [www.hmrc.gov.uk/leaflets/se1.pdf](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/leaflets/se1.pdf)
- Helping you understand self assessment and your tax return, HMRC | [www.hmrc.gov.uk/sa](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/sa)

## Partnership

According to HMRC, a partnership is where:

“Two or more people set up a business. Each partner is personally responsible for all the business debts, even if the debt was caused by another partner. As partners, each pays

income tax on their share of the business profits through self-assessment, as well as National Insurance.”

In terms of filing requirements, each partner should complete a partnership supplementary page as part of their individual self-assessment tax return. This is in addition to a partnership return, which has to be submitted by one nominated partner and show each partner’s share of profits/losses.

## Deadlines

The deadlines for partnership tax returns are as follows:

- paper tax returns should be received by HMRC by 31 October
- online tax returns should be completed by 31 January (giving you an extra three months).

## Limited company

Limited companies exist in their own right, with the company’s finances distinct from the personal finances of the owners. What this means is that the company is liable for any debts, not the individual owners, as is the case if you are self-employed or in a partnership.

In April 2008 it became legal to form and run a limited company with just one person, without the need to involve anyone else (prior to this you also needed a company secretary). As noted, you can form a new limited company by registering with Companies House via GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk/limited-company-formation](http://www.gov.uk/limited-company-formation)) or by using a company creation agent.

As well as registering with Companies House, you also need to let HMRC know you are operating as a limited company. And you will need to set up and register a PAYE scheme, as you are an employee of the company.

- Register PAYE scheme | [www.hmrc.gov.uk/newemployers](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/newemployers)
- New employer’s helpline | 0845 60 70 143

In terms of filing requirements, you should complete a self-assessment company tax return at the end of the accounting period. The return will show the company's taxable profits and whether any corporation tax is owed, and can be filed online at [www.hmrc.gov.uk/ct](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/ct).

The return should also be filed with Companies House to comply with the Companies Act 2006. This can be done free of charge, using the online WebFiling service at Companies House: [ewf.companieshouse.gov.uk](http://ewf.companieshouse.gov.uk)

On your returns, you can claim an element of your expenses for working from home. You can also claim travelling expenses, subsistence and a proportion of your phone calls.

## Deadlines

Whereas filing deadlines for self-assessment and partnership tax returns are specific dates, that is not the case with company tax returns, which must be filed 12 months after the end of your company's corporation tax accounting period.

**IN GOOD ORDER:** *Keep records of your business dealings – this will make it much easier to complete tax returns when the time comes. Keep hold of **receipts** of business-related **purchases**; **copies of invoices** to customers; **bank statements**, especially if you don't yet have a separate account for the business (it is worth starting one); **utility bills** (if you are starting the business from home and using part of the house for business), which can be claimed as a business expense and so reduce your tax bill.*

For advice from HMRC on good record keeping, visit: [www.hmrc.gov.uk/startingup/keeprecs.htm](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/startingup/keeprecs.htm)

## VAT

Whichever company status you choose, if your business turns over more than £82,000 (in the 2015/16 tax year), or you think your turnover will soon exceed this amount, you should also register for value added tax (VAT).

You can voluntarily register at any time. Being VAT-registered can bring credibility with certain customers, but adding VAT to your invoices may make you more expensive than competitors and you will have to file a VAT return four times a year.

- ‘How and when to register for VAT’, HMRC | [www.hmrc.gov.uk/vat/start/register](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/vat/start/register)

## Accountant accompaniment

Talk to a qualified accountant about the structure that is best for your business. And consider employing their services to complete your tax returns. Even if your accounts are very simple, it is well worth seeking professional advice, particularly as the rules and regulations can change frequently and without warning.

You can access up to three free consultations with an accountant through the Institute of Chartered Accountants of England & Wales (ICAEW)’s Business Advice Service: [www.businessadvice.service.com](http://www.businessadvice.service.com)

### Useful links

- ‘Starting a Business’, HMRC | [www.hmrc.gov.uk/startingup](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/startingup)
- ‘Tax Help – and advice for small business’ | [www.businesslink.gov.uk/taxhelp](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/taxhelp)



## 5. Protect the Brand

You have now registered with Companies House and HM Revenue & Customs. Your final consideration should be your intellectual property. You may decide to register a trademark to protect your company name or brand or, if you've come up with a unique invention, a patent. Registering either means that companies can't come along and use your name or invention without your permission.

### The four forms of IP

There are four different kinds of intellectual property that you can protect:

1. **Patents:** These protect what makes things work. For example, says the Intellectual Property Office (IPO), “what makes a wheel turn or the chemical formula of your favourite fizzy drink”.
2. **Trademarks:** These are “signs (like words and logos) that distinguish goods and services in the marketplace”.
3. **Designs:** What a logo or product looks like: “from the shape of an aeroplane to a fashion item”.
4. **Copyright:** An automatic right that comes into existence for anything written or recorded.

Register and protect your intellectual property by visiting the UK Intellectual Property Office website ([www.ipo.gov.uk](http://www.ipo.gov.uk)). Charlie Ashworth is founder of Venture Proof ([www.ventureproof.com](http://www.ventureproof.com)) a company that helps small businesses protect their IP. Charlie says:

“It doesn’t matter what product your business makes, or what service it provides, every enterprise is regularly generating and applying a considerable amount of intellectual property. This is a prized and valued possession – and one you should aim to protect to secure your venture.”





## 6. Take Care of Household Admin

When starting out, you'll likely be starting from home – your own, your parents' or maybe a friend's. It's the best way to start, keeping costs low and the commute short. In other words: more time and money for the business.

You'll probably be outsourcing work as opposed to employing staff, so there's no need for lots of people to come into the office each day. And you can meet clients and contacts in the local hotel or serviced work space. It's also good to know you're not alone in starting at home – over 70% of businesses do. You may have a few questions around household admin and who you need to tell. Here are the answers.

### **Q: Do I need planning permission?**

**A:** You'll only need planning permission to base the business at home if you answer 'yes' to any of these questions:

- will your home no longer be used mainly as a private residence?
- will your business result in a marked rise in traffic or people calling?
- will your business involve any activities that are unusual in a residential area?
- will your business disturb the neighbours at unreasonable hours or create other forms of nuisance such as noise or smells?

If your house is pretty much going to remain a house, with your business quietly accommodated within it, then permission won't be required. If you're unsure, contact your local council to seek their views ([www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk)).

**Q: Do I need to tell the local authority I'm working from home?**

**A:** Depends on whether you pass the planning test. If you need planning permission, you'll have to inform your local authority. If not, you won't! As a home-based business, you will be covered by small business rate relief so there's no requirement to pay rates on the part of the house you're using as an office unless the business forms part of a shop or you've converted part of the house into a business premises. Check out the GOV.UK guide to business rates at [www.gov.uk/introduction-to-business-rates/working-at-home](http://www.gov.uk/introduction-to-business-rates/working-at-home).

**Q: Do I need to tell the landlord?**

**A:** Yes, it's best to let them know that you will be working from home. Good news is, the government announced a model tenancy agreement in August 2014, making it much easier for people in social and private housing to use living space as work space. Since then we've seen some social landlords such as London & Quadrant ([www.lqgroup.org.uk](http://www.lqgroup.org.uk)) organise business training for tenants. A welcome sight.

**Q: What about my insurance provider? Do they need to know?**

**A:** Yes, do inform your insurance company. Tell them about the equipment and stock you have at home. An upgrade from domestic to a business policy is not expensive so don't be put off in making this call. Your insurance provider is likely to recommend that you also take out public liability insurance in case anyone who comes to visit suffers an injury in or around your home office. See the next page for a guide to all kinds of insurance.

**Q: Do I need protection for when customers and contacts come to visit?**

**A:** Yes, carry out a health and safety check, which is easy to do by following the steps set out by the Health and Safety Executive ([www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)) in their *Homeworking* guide (available at [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg226.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg226.pdf)).

**Q: Should I tell the neighbours?**

**A:** Yes. When working from home, it's worth keeping your neighbours firmly on side. You don't want them getting annoyed by any deliveries or distractions. If you know

of a time when there'll be an unusual amount of activity in your home office, let them know in advance and perhaps send a bottle of wine or gift to compensate.

## Insurance ins-and-outs

There are different categories of insurance which you need to know about to secure the policy that's right for you. The main ones are:

- 1. Professional indemnity** – relevant to businesses offering services and knowledge. Provides protection if you receive a claim alleging a negligent act, error or omission committed by you in the course of the conduct of your professional business.
- 2. Public liability** – advisable to have if clients are visiting your home office and/or you are supplying goods to consumers. This will protect you in the event of potential injury to business visitors and/or damages arising from the supply or sale of goods which have caused injury to a third party or their property.
- 3. Business interruption** – covers your potential loss of revenue following a material damage loss.
- 4. Employer's liability** – only applies when you have employees. Offers protection in the event of death or injury to them sustained in the course of their employment.
- 5. Motor insurance** – this is different to standard car insurance, which does not include business use. If you have a vehicle dedicated for business, you should buy motor insurance or get a business extension on your car insurance policy when using your existing car for business travel.
- 6. Home insurance** – you are likely to already have a home insurance policy but this will generally not cover business activities carried out at home or business equipment within the home. Speak to your insurance provider and upgrade to a business policy. This is not usually costly but it will ensure you're protected.

## Creating the perfect work environment

Wherever you've chosen to set up shop, create the perfect work environment by following this quick checklist to ensure you're working profitably and productively.

### **Find dedicated space**

Try to create an area at home that functions as your dedicated workspace. That way you can better adjust into business mode. It's also useful for making clear to friends and family that when you're in your home office, you're working.

This dedicated space could be a spare room, in the attic, under the stairs, or even the garden shed.

### **Invest in a good desk and chair**

You could be spending a good few hours each day at the desk and in your chair, so be sure they're both sturdy and comfortable. Buy a chair that's designed for computer use – and try it out first. The back experts say your feet should be flat on the floor and your back straight.

When it comes to computers, the top of your monitor or laptop screen should be at eye level and about an arm's length away from you. There are all sorts of docks that can help with this, but there's also no harm in using a sturdy pile of books and an external mouse/keyboard to achieve the same end.

### **Have a vision**

Put a vision board up on the wall and stick pictures on it that represent your personal and business ambitions: places you want to visit, targets for the company, and people you enjoy spending time with. Glance at it each day. Remind yourself of everything you're working for.

**A SPRING CLEAN:** *Wondering what to do with all the stuff in the room that you want to use as your home office? Rent storage with a company like Bizspace*

*([www.bizspace.co.uk](http://www.bizspace.co.uk)), Access Self Storage ([www.accessstorage.com](http://www.accessstorage.com)) or Big Yellow ([www.bigyellow.co.uk](http://www.bigyellow.co.uk)) and have your goods accessible but out of the way, or give them to a recycling company so that your unwanted items can go to a home that does want them!*

## **Roam free**

Install Wi-Fi so it's possible to work from anywhere on the property. To get started you need a wireless router. You may have received one free from your internet service provider. If not, check out respectable suppliers such as Netgear ([www.netgear.co.uk](http://www.netgear.co.uk)). See *Getting connected* in the next chapter if you need support.

**PETS AND PLANTS:** *Having plants in your home office can reduce work-stress, experts say. Seeing a growth in greenery can also help you feel less alone, and it helps with humidity levels, dust and productivity. Likewise, pets are known to reduce stress and can be an excellent source of company!*

## **Support on tap**

And finally, surround yourself with supporters. Friends or family, peers in online forums, contacts met at events; they can all help when it comes to celebrating your success or raising your spirits on a day that doesn't quite go as planned.

Eleanor Stuart, profiled in *II. Make Sales*, found a wealth of support in her own industry sector from people who were also illustrators:

“At the outset I turned to other illustrators and designers whose work I really loved. I found so many helpful people who were only too happy to share their wisdom and support a fellow illustrator up the ladder.”

## **Leaving home**

For those days when you'd rather work outside the four walls of the home office or if an external office is right for you from the start, find available space in enterprise hubs, co-working spaces and serviced offices. All needs and budgets catered for!



## 7. Your Tech Setup

Putting together a tech setup for your new business needn't mean starting from scratch or spending lots of money. Once your business starts to grow, you can upgrade your tech as and when money becomes available.

To start with, there are affordable and free solutions that can get you up and running in no time at all. Chances are, you have some of them already.

So, let's take a look at what you might already have and what you might need to buy. We'll separate them by hardware and software.

### Hardware

#### Computer

When starting out, using a shared computer will be just fine. Bear in mind, however, that in the first few months of starting your business, you may find yourself working more hours than usual trying to put it all together. So let your friends and family know you may be hogging the computer!

Also, when your business starts to grow, the information you collect – info on your customers, clients and contacts; including financial details – will become more and more valuable. You might then start to think twice about sharing your computer with other people.

You may already have your own laptop. If you don't, when you've got a bit of money behind you, look into buying one for your new business. Budget laptops start at around £200, but when buying a computer it sometimes pays to buy the best you can afford in order to prepare for the future. Look out for these key features:

## Processor

The processor is the speed of your computer. The higher the number, the faster your computer can run.

## Memory

More memory (RAM) improves performance and enables your computer to run more programs at once. A common frustration amongst computer users is how long it can take to launch programs and switch between them. More RAM equals less waiting.

## Hard drive

The hard drive gives you space for data and programs. This can easily be expanded with an additional, external, hard drive. You may be surprised at how quickly it will fill up, if your laptop is your only computer and you're also storing personal data, like music and photos, on it.

## Peripherals

### Multifunction printer

Even though I find myself using it less these days, I still think it's too early to pronounce the printer dead, especially if you use a multifunction printer like I do. It's a real space-saver – imagine keeping a printer, scanner, photocopier and fax machine in one office.

### External hard drive

External hard drives are great for adding more storage capacity to your computer but they're especially useful for backing up your machine. This is an important process, which you should do regularly – imagine what would happen if your computer crashed and wouldn't restart, or if it was dropped or stolen.

Macs have backing-up software built-in; as do the latest PCs. If not, try SuperDuper! for the Mac and True Image for the PC.

- SuperDuper! | [www.shirt-pocket.com/SuperDuper](http://www.shirt-pocket.com/SuperDuper)
- True Image | [www.acronis.com](http://www.acronis.com)



## Keyboard and mouse

If you're going to use a laptop, you probably won't get an additional keyboard and mouse. But you should think about it. Lots of time hunched over your laptop screen is no good for your neck and back. With an additional keyboard and mouse, and a stand that raises your laptop to eye-level, you can prevent a lifetime of aches and pains.

Some companies produce keyboards/mice which are ergonomically designed to prevent repetitive strain injury (RSI).

## VoIP phones

You can make serious savings on your phone bill by using a VoIP phone. VoIP stands for 'voice over internet protocol' and basically means making calls over the internet rather than your phone line. As such, it's a much cheaper way of making calls (it's sometimes free). And it's the easiest way to set up a second line. The VoIP phone I use is made by a company called IPEVO.

- IPEVO | [www.ipevo.com](http://www.ipevo.com)

## Software

You may already be using many of these programs, so there's no need to splash out when setting up your business. Once it grows you can upgrade to more advanced versions if required. To start, here are the basics. Later we'll look at software (much of it free or very affordable) for when your business is up and running.

### Office software

The industry standard in office software is Microsoft Office. If you're trying to save money, try these free alternatives:

- OpenOffice.org | [www.openoffice.org](http://www.openoffice.org)
- Google Docs | [www.google.com/docs](http://www.google.com/docs)

Both do pretty much everything that Microsoft Office does, and can open and save Microsoft Office files as well.

## Web browser

Internet Explorer and Safari both do a good job when it comes to web browsing, as does Firefox. But there's a browser I use that I think is better. It's called Google Chrome and it's faster, more secure and more customisable.

You can add features that will help you do your work and manage your lifestyle. These include features to control your music (without having to switch programs), comparison shop and even change the way your browser looks. It's a free, small download, and it works on Macs and PCs. Its speedy and uncluttered nature makes it particularly good for netbook use.

- Google Chrome | [www.google.com/chrome](http://www.google.com/chrome)

## Email

If you've got Microsoft Office you might use Outlook, which includes calendar and address book features. On Macs, Mail is standard.

An alternative is provided by the people who make the Firefox browser. It's called Thunderbird and can do pretty much everything that Outlook can. You can also use it with web-based mail, like Gmail.

- Microsoft Office | [www.office.com](http://www.office.com)
- Gmail | [www.gmail.com](http://www.gmail.com)
- Thunderbird | [www.getthunderbird.com](http://www.getthunderbird.com)

**SIGNATURE TOUCH:** *Make the most of the opportunity every time you click 'send' on an email. Include a professional email signature or sign-off that has your basic contact details (company name, website, postal address, telephone, etc.). And consider including a discreet mention of any seasonal or product offers, and your social media sites.*

## Instant messaging and VoIP

Lots of instant messaging programs also allow you to make video and voice calls. Skype integrates text, voice and video chat. With it you can make free calls to other Skype users and to landline or mobile phones for a small fee, deducted from pay-as-you-go style Skype credit.

You can assign a landline-esque phone number to your Skype account in order to receive calls at your computer, using a VoIP handset, or divert calls to your mobile when out and about.

- Skype | [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com)

## On the move

Now that you've found the right technology for your office it's time to take it outside. If you ever get tired of your four walls, it's good to know that it's possible to work elsewhere. With a few simple tips and tricks you can enjoy total flexibility, and work from almost anywhere.

### **With your computer**

If you have a laptop, you pretty much have all you need to work on the move. Almost all laptops come with built-in wireless receivers, so you can hop onto Wi-Fi in public places like coffee shops and libraries. But if you're not sure whether there'll be ample power supply where you're going, a spare battery is well worth considering.

### **Should I buy a tablet computer or a laptop?**

Like the rest of the world, you've probably been tempted by gorgeous tablet computers like Apple's iPad. But should you buy one instead of a laptop? Can you really get as much business-work done on a tablet?

Well, it really depends on the nature of your business. If you'll be out and about a lot, visiting clients and customers, then buying a tablet becomes a serious consideration. But if your work will involve lots of sitting at a desk or writing long documents, you may find that a tablet PC is not for you. The iPad is constantly improving as a business machine thanks to the App Store, but be prepared to buy an external keyboard to cope with long writing sessions.

The future of computing could lie somewhere between tablets and laptops: ultrabooks. Ultrabooks are really thin, fast laptops. They have traditional features, like a full-size

keyboard and trackpad, but usually no DVD drive and limited hard drive storage. That's okay, though, as a lot of your work will take place in the 'Cloud' (more on that later!). Because of their size and weight, ultrabooks are really portable.

## Getting connected

You'll need broadband right from the start: during your research, while you're setting up your business, through to when it grows and takes over the world!

Your two main options are ADSL broadband, which is offered by companies like BT, Orange and Sky, and cable broadband from Virgin Media. The biggest difference is that ADSL requires a phone line, while cable broadband does not.

The advantage of cable broadband is that if you don't have a landline phone, and always use your mobile, you can save money by not having to pay line rental on your phone as well as on your internet connection. It's often faster, too, but you'll need to check whether it's available in your area. ADSL broadband is more commonplace and there are lots of companies offering it. As always, read the fine print before you sign anything. Here are some things to look out for:

### Price

Some broadband prices seem really cheap but often the prices advertised are for the first few months of an 18-month contract, so make sure you know what you're getting into.

### Usage

Some broadband companies will set restrictions on the amount of data you can download in a month and sometimes even charge you extra if you go over your agreed limit. These limits rarely affect most users, but if your business is the kind that needs to send and receive lots of information, look for deals with generous monthly download allowances. Or, better still, unlimited downloads.

## Customer support

If you're installing broadband for the first time, you might need some help setting up and, once you're up and running, for what to do when your connection suddenly drops. For these sorts of queries it's handy to have good customer support, so check to see what's on offer and, crucially, how much it should cost to call for help.

## Network

Setting up a network used to be the work of professionals and, I suppose, in big companies it still is. But setting one up for your home by yourself is much easier these days.

There are two types of wireless router: one for ADSL internet service providers, like Sky and BT, and another for cable internet, like Virgin Media. Check with your internet service provider to find out which is the best router for your type of connection.

If you didn't get a router from your provider, check out Netgear.

- Netgear | [www.netgear.co.uk](http://www.netgear.co.uk)

## The Cloud

If you already use web mail, you'll be accustomed to the idea of your messages and contacts being available from any computer or device connected to the internet. So, how about running your entire business from any computer or device anywhere?

The Cloud refers to web apps. You run them through your web browser and all the data is stored online, so in effect you can use them from pretty much any computer anywhere!

The best example is provided by Google, whose Google Apps ([www.google.com/a](http://www.google.com/a)) offering includes email, instant messaging, a calendar, word processor, spreadsheet and presentation software, as well as a website builder. It's free and easy to use.

All the work you do is stored in ‘The Cloud’ so you can log in and out from anywhere and see the same information. Also, if your computer crashes or you buy a new system you won’t lose any data or have to reinstall it on a new machine.

## 10 free cloud apps for your business

Cloud apps are not only fantastically useful, they don’t take up room on your computer and you don’t have to worry about backing up your data. They’re also, more often than not, free to use.

Here are ten of our favourite free cloud apps for business.

1. Office 365 ([www.office365.com](http://www.office365.com)) | This online productivity toolkit includes email, calendars, Skype for Business and Office productivity applications; everything you need to run your business in the cloud.
2. Dropbox ([www.dropbox.com](http://www.dropbox.com)) | Dropbox is like a thumb drive in the sky. It’s a folder that sits on your computer, but its contents are stored remotely and synced across other computers and devices that are signed into your Dropbox account. No-nonsense sharing, if you’re working with others, and peace of mind that all your work is backed up.
3. Evernote ([www.evernote.com](http://www.evernote.com)) | Evernote is a bit like Dropbox, but for your brain. It helps you “remember everything” by allowing you to capture notes and ideas, photos and screen grabs, sounds and links, sync them automatically to the cloud and access them from practically anywhere – great for the planning stages of your business.
4. OneNote ([www.onenote.com](http://www.onenote.com)) | A digital notebook that synchronises your notes across PCs, Macs, tablets and smartphones. You can even access your notes on the web.
5. Google Docs ([docs.google.com](http://docs.google.com)) | Google Docs includes apps for word processing, spreadsheets, presentations, drawings and forms – except all the apps run inside your browser rather than on your desktop. All of your work is stored in the cloud and it’s easy to collaborate with others in real time on the same document.

6. Google Analytics ([www.google.com/analytics](http://www.google.com/analytics)) | When your website is up and running, you'll want to know how many people are visiting. Google Analytics is free, and helps you understand your website statistics, including where your visitors are from, which pages they visited the most, and how they found your website in the first place.
7. HootSuite ([www.hootsuite.com](http://www.hootsuite.com)) | If social media is part of your marketing plan – and it probably is! – there's no better way to manage your social media presence than with HootSuite. It keeps you on top of your Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn accounts, as well as what your customers and potential customers are saying about your business.
8. Trello ([www.trello.com](http://www.trello.com)) | There's so much to do when starting a business, but you can keep on top of all your tasks with Trello. This is like a Pinterest for tasks and ideas and can be shared with others.
9. Basecamp ([www.basecamp.com](http://www.basecamp.com)) | If some tasks involve other people and form part of larger projects, check out project management software, Basecamp. It allows you to share files, deliver projects on time and keep communication organised and out of your inbox.
10. MailChimp ([www.mailchimp.com](http://www.mailchimp.com)) | To make sure your business message is in other people's inboxes, put together a newsletter with MailChimp, send it out to your customer mailing list and track its success. Just make sure people have signed up to your mailing list before hitting 'send'!

**THE EASE OF FREE:** *many cloud apps offer free trials so you can see which ones work for you without having to spend any money.*



## 8. Working 5 to 9

**Y**ou don't need to give up your studies or throw in the day job to get all this done. Nor do you need to for the next two stages – launch and growth. You can plan the business, register the business and continue to run the business successfully by 'working 5 to 9' – this is the term I apply to the five-million-plus people in the UK who are working or studying by day and building a business at night and weekends.

It's a sensible way to start and grow. If you're working a day job, you give yourself the time to build confidence and cash flow in the business, and can keep putting money aside until you're ready to go full time in your own venture.

Here's what you need to do regarding your current job and boss in order to make this as smooth as possible.

### The contract

If you have written terms and conditions of employment they are likely to contain reference to the pursuit of personal business ventures outside your contracted working hours. The clauses to look out for include 'the employee's duties and obligations' and what is commonly known as 'whole time and effort'. These clauses require the employee to devote the whole of their time, attention and abilities to the business of the employer.

If your contract contains these or similar clauses, don't despair, as it doesn't necessarily mean you can't pursue your business. Many employment contracts are drafted using standard templates with little consideration to personal circumstance. You know your job better than anyone, so if you don't think your business venture will affect the way you do your job, it probably won't – and your employer will recognise this. Having



checked how things stand in the contract, it's time to talk things through with your boss.

## The conversation

Treat it as an amicable and informal conversation to gauge your employer's initial reaction. I asked Patrick Lockton, a qualified lawyer, for his take on the matter and advice on how employees should go about having this conversation:

“When you approach your employer, be prepared to negotiate, be flexible and compromise. If you think it appropriate, make it clear your business venture will in no shape or form affect your ability to do your job or affect your employer's interests. If anything, it will make you a better, more confident and experienced employee and it will not cost your employer a thing.”

Patrick goes on to say:

“After having such a conversation, you can do one of two things:

1. if your employer has not expressed any concerns about your intentions and you have no concerns of your own, disclose your intentions to your employer anyway. Treat it as something you want to do for the sake of clarity and for the record, as opposed to something you want their permission for; or
2. if your employer has expressed concerns, try and negotiate a package that you are both happy with. Address their concerns, agree some ground rules and get their permission in writing. Give your employer as much helpful information as possible. If you are going to need some time off or to change your hours then this is the time to bring it up.

Always take written notes so that you don't forget what was said and so you can remind your employer what was agreed.”

So long as you're not competing with your employer or breaching their trust, you shouldn't have any problem at all in pursuing your 5 to 9 ambitions. After all, as Patrick says, your employer benefits from all the new skills you're picking up, and it doesn't cost them a penny in training or resources!

*Tilly Walnes, in our next case study, started her business by working 5 to 9 before easing out of the day job into being her own boss full-time...*

## CASE STUDY

Name: **Tilly Walnes** | Business: **Tilly and the Buttons**

DIY dressmaker, blogger and author Tilly Walnes started her popular blog, Tilly and the Buttons ([www.tillyandthebuttons.com](http://www.tillyandthebuttons.com)), as a New Year's Day dare in 2010.

"I knew absolutely nothing about blogging, apart from the fact that I found blogs, written by real people, so much more authentic and inspiring to read than magazines. At the time I had a day job that I loved, in which I was responsible for nearly all the professional training for independent cinemas and film festivals that took place across the UK and Europe. The reason I started blogging (aside from the fact that I couldn't resist the dare) was that I'd just started making my own clothes for fun and didn't know anyone in real life who shared my passion, so I wanted to connect with the virtual sewing circle I'd discovered online."

In the beginning, Tilly found her first readers by contributing to group blogs and commenting on other sewing blogs.

"As my experience grew, my blog became less random and more purposeful, less about what I was making and more about inspiring and helping other people to start sewing. Thinking from your reader's point of view and providing strong content is key to ensuring people come back for more. Now Tilly and the Buttons is one of the most popular craft blogs in the world, with around half a million views a month."

Tilly's blog started as a 5 to 9 occupation, with Tilly writing away in the evenings and weekends while working full-time.

"It's very labour intensive to make clothes, design projects, photograph tutorials and write posts. Bloggers can get a lot of emails too, so you have to be clear with yourself about which types of enquiries are and aren't worth your time. Many bloggers burn out; it's important to stay inspired, schedule posts in advance, and have a strong understanding of your blog's point of difference so you can stay focused and keep coming up with great content."



As the blog became more of a commitment for Tilly, she started to consider decreasing time in the day job in order to increase time on the blog.

“At first it seemed crazy to leave my film industry career behind, but I was becoming increasingly passionate about making stuff. I was itching to spend more time on Tilly and the Buttons and loved the idea of becoming my own boss. I’m a cautious person so I began by going part-time in my day job and didn’t jump ship until I was making the equivalent of a full-time salary each month from the blog and related opportunities. Making the transition gradually meant that handing in my notice at work wasn’t at all scary. Oh, and it’s the best thing I’ve ever done!”

Tilly is now generating income from a range of sources.

“I don’t keep all my eggs in the same basket. My readers love to discover fabric shops, sewing schools and related businesses, so I have a sponsorship programme on the blog that advertises hand-picked businesses that fit the interests of my audience. Following reader requests to share my garment designs, I launched a small line of stylish dressmaking patterns which are supported by refreshingly clear instructions aimed at beginners. I wrote my first book, *Love at First Stitch* (Quadrill), and the advance on royalties provided a nice cushion for a while. Plus I teach workshops in partnership with sewing schools and do the occasional paid public speaking gig.”

This maker and blogger has also successfully turned her hand to press and promotion, including an appearance on a popular TV show.

“I’ve had some great press coverage, from being named “Best for DIY Fashion” by **Channel4.com** to mentions in the *Guardian* and a regular column in *Crafty* magazine. In 2013 I was a contestant on BBC2’s *The Great British Sewing Bee*, which awakened the nation’s interest to what was previously a very niche hobby. While these incidents have all helped increase the blog’s visibility, the most effective form of marketing for me has been to blog strong content regularly – to create posts that I know my readers will love, and to stay on their radar.”

Tilly has much to look forward to, with ambitious plans for growth.

“My current priority is to get my sewing patterns printed into lovely packages. I initially launched them as digital downloads for customers to print at home, since I had no idea how popular they’d be and didn’t want to invest too much cash in their production before beta testing them and seeing if there was a demand. At the time of writing, I’ve

sold thousands of patterns and research tells me that printed patterns will sell so much better than digital, so that's what I'm focusing on now. I've already had a few retailers contact me out of the blue to ask if they can stock them, which is a promising sign.

I'm not turning my back on digital, though, as it allows a very cost-effective and scaleable business model, and has so much potential for engaging people interactively. I'd love to create more digital products this year, probably an e-course or eBook. It's becoming more and more clear that I can't do this all on my own, though, so I'm also plotting how to get more help!"

If you're reading this and think you can lend a hand to this successful and likeable entrepreneur, you know where to find her!

[www.tillyandthebuttons.com](http://www.tillyandthebuttons.com) | [@TillyButtons](https://www.instagram.com/TillyButtons) | [pinterest.com/TillyButtons](https://www.pinterest.com/TillyButtons)

**TOP TIP:** *"Know your audience and their needs so you can cater for them better than anyone else can, and so they keep coming back for more. This is one of the reasons blogging is so great – my readers also feel like my pals!"*



## 9. Starting on a Budget and Straightforward Finance

It has never been more straightforward to build a business on a shoestring of a budget and keep on top of finances with basic spreadsheets or software. You probably already have a computer and a mobile phone, so you might not need to buy much more equipment (depending on your business). Here are some tips for keeping costs low.

### **Start the business from home**

Why take on the cost of an office when the spare room/attic/garden shed will do just as well? Think of the money you'll save: no premises, no commute, no overpriced sandwiches at lunchtime...!

### **Embrace social media**

Make the most of free or low-cost technology tools to raise your profile and make sales. *12. Make Some Noise!* offers details of the major social media tools and how they can best be used to your benefit.

### **Beg, borrow and barter**

When starting out, access all the free and discounted resources you can.

**THE BEAUTY OF BARTER:** *Many start-up businesses barter their goods and services, e.g. “I’ll produce a sales brochure for you, in exchange for a handmade cushion for my living room.” This works well – both parties get what they want. But take heed of the tax implications. Bartering means money doesn’t show up in your accounts, but there has been an exchange of goods and services which implies a taxable activity. The taxman could view bartering as a way to avoid tax. Nevertheless, with so many beneficial arrangements underway, maybe it’s time they revised the tax situation?*

Skills swapping is an approach that’s worked well for marketer, Paula Hutchings:

“My first experience of skills-trading was in Sydney when I first set up Marketing Vision Consultancy. I wanted a website for my new business but I was short of funds so I didn’t really want to pay for it! I was lucky enough to find a web designer who was willing to build the site for me in return for marketing support with a side business of his. This trade worked out really well. I went on to trade for graphic design work, photography and even hair-cuts! It helped me to get things I needed for the business when funds were tight, but it also helped me to gain valuable experience when I was just starting out. I still skills-trade now if the right opportunity arises. To me it is important to support small business and start-ups in the same way that people supported me when I first set up. It is also a great way to make new contacts.”

## **Make the most of offers**

One last tip for keeping costs low at the start: don’t forget to join Enterprise Nation as a StartUp member so you can benefit from offers and access deals from top brands.

These tips and techniques will help your budgeting. When it comes to getting hold of funds, there are a number of places to look.

# Funding

## Friends and family

Friends and family are people you can trust – and asking them for money hopefully won't come with strings attached. Do consider having a written agreement, though, that covers the amount borrowed and a payback schedule.

## Start Up Loans

Introduced by the government in 2012, Start Up Loans are made to entrepreneurs across England and Wales. Alongside a loan, you also receive a mentor who offers help throughout your business journey.

Enterprise Nation works closely with Virgin StartUp, a StartUp Loans distribution partner. With Virgin StartUp, you will receive a loan, mentor, discounts from the Virgin group of companies and the opportunity to supply to them too!

- [www.startuploans.co.uk](http://www.startuploans.co.uk)
- [www.virginstartup.org](http://www.virginstartup.org)

*Melissa Mailer-Yates turned to StartUp Loans when she needed some capital to get going and growing...*

## CASE STUDY

Name: **Melissa Mailer-Yates** | Business: **Shakespuss**

A former portrait artist to the Queen, Melissa Mailer-Yates, has received a £6,000 start-up loan from the government's funding programme Start Up Loans to take the first step towards igniting children's interest in literature via animation – and her iconic character Shakespuss.

Melissa said:

“Applying for the seed-funding was daunting and very comprehensive and meant I had to do detailed forecasts and come up with a business plan for the first time. It took me about six months from beginning to end, but by the time I’d done it, I felt much more confident about the business itself and the direction I wanted to take it.”

The idea for Shakespuss & Co Ltd stemmed from a time when Melissa adapted her favourite Shakespeare plays – including *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *Twelfth Night* – to read to her three children, now 22, 19 and 17.



She has designed a soft toy of the central character and narrator of the animation Shakespuss, which will now go into production, funded by the loan, and herald the launch of the cartoon concept. Other planned soft toy characters include a dog called Bottom.

Melissa said:

“I have extensive international interest in my product, the funding has given me the opportunity to bring it to market. Hopefully it will lead to children all over the world dragging their parents to the UK to visit the birthplace of Shakespuss, and subsequently result in a younger generation keen to explore the wonders of Shakespeare and the English language.”

Once the merchandise is on the shelves, the company will move into the next phase of the business – producing a series of animations which it hopes to syndicate to children’s TV channels globally. This will be followed by a comic book designed for iPads – and more funding rounds.

### Melissa’s funding tips

1. “First and foremost, never give up, even when you get rejected on any level, believe in yourself and your product and keep going, it is that belief which will sell you better than anything else.
2. Producing business plans, cashflows etc may look extremely daunting and beyond you, but the reality is if you just take each step and address them one by one. Anything you are not sure about just Google it and there will always be someone who has had the problem before and found the answer.



3. Understand your market. Take the time to identify those things that are essential to achieve your aim, put them in order of importance and work out the timeline for when things should be done. If your plans go awry or out of step accept it and work with it, but expect it too. Doing a business plan and your cashflow will help you considerably to see things constructively.”

[www.shakespuss.com](http://www.shakespuss.com) | [@shakespuss](#)

## **Crowd funding**

Crowd funding is fast becoming a popular route to secure start-up and follow-on funding. It involves sourcing funds from a crowd of others and there are three main types of it:

### **1. Reward**

This is where people fund your business (or product) in exchange for rewards. Possibly the most well-known site to offer this form of funding is Kickstarter ([www.kickstarter.com](http://www.kickstarter.com)). Be sure to also check out Crowdfunder ([www.crowdfunder.co.uk](http://www.crowdfunder.co.uk)).

### **2. Equity**

This is where people invest in your business in exchange for equity, i.e. a percentage of the business.

### **3. Loan**

This is where you raise a loan and repay with interest.

In raising funds from the crowd, not only do you secure the capital you need, you can also attract attention and an audience of potential customers. As crowd funding has become more popular, the number of crowd funding platforms has increased. The next two pages detail the main platforms and their key terms of business.

## **The bank**

Ask to speak to a small business advisor at your local bank. Take a copy of your business plan with you and be prepared to talk it through.

**A CLEAR DIVISION:** *Open a bank account early on so you don't mix up your business and personal finances, which may complicate record keeping.*

## Crowd funding platforms A–Z

### **Buzzbnk.org**

**Max investment level:** Suggested amount between £5,000 and £30,000.

**Equity/loan/reward:** Loan and reward

**Fees:** 5%

**Keep funds if don't hit target:** No – money returned to backers.

**Sector focus:** Social enterprises

### **Crowdcube.com**

**Max investment level:** No maximum amount

**Equity/loan/reward:** Equity

**Fees:** 5% plus £1,750 to cover legal and admin fees.

**Keep funds if don't hit target:** No – money returned to backers. Automatic deadline of 60 days is set from the day the investment pitch is uploaded.

### **Crowdfunder.co.uk**

**Max investment level:** No maximum amount

**Equity/loan/reward:** Reward

**Fees:** 5% + VAT [VAT is 20% on the fees (1%) so the overall fee is 6%]

**Keep funds if don't hit target:** Two types of funding: Flexible Funding (“keep what you raise”) and Fixed Funding (“all or nothing”)

## **Indiegogo.com**

**Max investment level:** Not stated

**Equity/loan/reward:** Reward (referred to as ‘perks’)

**Fees:** Flexible funding package: pay 9% and receive 5% in return if successfully hit target, i.e. overall fee of 4%. Or fixed funding: pay 4% only if hit target.

**Keep funds if don’t hit target:** Yes – but pay higher fee of 9%.

## **Kickstarter.com**

**Max investment level:** No maximum but company states: “the average project is raising around \$5,000, but many projects have raised significantly more”.

**Equity/loan/reward:** Reward

**Fees:** 5% plus payment processing fees of 3–5%.

**Keep funds if don’t hit target:** No – money returned to backers.

## **Spacehive.com**

**Max investment level:** No maximum amount

**Equity/loan/reward:** Reward

**Fees:** 3.75% on first £500,000, 2.5% on the next £500,000 and 1.5% thereafter.

**Keep funds if don’t hit target:** No – money returned to backers.

**Sector focus:** Community projects and public spaces

## **Unbound.co.uk**

**Max investment level:** No maximum amount

**Equity/loan/reward:** Reward

**Keep funds if don’t hit target:** No – money returned to investors if target not met.

**Sector focus:** Publishing

For more detail on crowd funding and other forms of funding, download the free eBook *50 ways to find funding for your business* in the bookshop at Enterprise Nation: [www.enterprisenation.com/books/50-ways-to-find-funding-for-your-business](http://www.enterprisenation.com/books/50-ways-to-find-funding-for-your-business)

*Carol Lovell chose Kickstarter to source funds for her new business...*

## CASE STUDY

Name: **Carol Lovell** | Business: **Stow London**

Stow London was officially launched as a luxury leather travel gifts company at the end of September 2013. When it came to raising funds, Carol opted for crowd funding as she didn't want to take a loan from the bank, nor was she eligible for any government grants or loans.

"I wanted to not only raise funds for a first production run but also raise awareness of the brand in its early stages of development. I knew about Kickstarter and had backed a couple of projects to see how it worked.



I set the target level at £3,500 to raise – just enough for an initial small production run. We spent four weeks developing the pitch which, at the time, was quite stressful as we were so keen for it to be a success. We didn't want to be a 'failed' project on Kickstarter and it didn't help that many of our own contacts didn't know what crowd funding was. People assumed we were asking for equity investment when what we were actually asking for was a pledged sum in exchange for a reward of one of our products at a discount, if we hit the target.

I'm delighted to say we raised £4,700 in 3 weeks and people are now much more aware of crowd funding!"

[www.stowlondon.co.uk](http://www.stowlondon.co.uk) | [@stowlondon1](https://twitter.com/stowlondon1)

**TOP TIP:** *"If you want to do it, if you believe in it – say yes and don't let anyone tell you it can't be done. Find a way."*

## Shelling out the funds

Apply to the Shell LiveWIRE Grand Ideas Awards to be in with a chance of winning £1,000. Four awards are made each month to anyone aged 16 to 30 who is starting a business in the UK or within their first 12 months of trading.

- [www.shell-livewire.org/awards](http://www.shell-livewire.org/awards)

See later for more details on Shell LiveWIRE and other awards to enter.

## Investors

Angel investors and venture capitalists can help raise large amounts of start-up funding or development capital for businesses looking to grow. It might be an idea to consider this route further down the line. It doesn't have to be a gruesome experience (à la *Dragons' Den*), though, as there are plenty of funds and investors out there who are eager to part with their money and back good ideas. What's more, the government has made it financially attractive for angels to invest through the Seed Enterprise Investment Scheme which offers individual income tax relief of 50% and exemption from capital gains tax (CGT) on any proceeds of sale of a SEIS investment.

Visit the dedicated SEIS website ([www.seis.co.uk](http://www.seis.co.uk)) for details and the Business Finance For You site ([www.businessfinanceforyou.co.uk](http://www.businessfinanceforyou.co.uk)), which offers a listing of available grants and funds, searchable by your local area.

### In the words of an Angel

Andy Yates is an experienced angel investor and serial entrepreneur. In terms of what he looks for, he says:

“Great businesses are created by great people. I always look out for the three Ps – passion, personality and perseverance. I also back entrepreneurs who really listen and learn. The ability to be flexible, take on board advice and feedback and adapt a product or service to win customers is the real key to unlocking success.”

- Angels Den | [www.angelsden.co.uk](http://www.angelsden.co.uk)
- Funding Circle | [www.fundingcircle.com](http://www.fundingcircle.com)

- Find Invest Grow | [www.findinvestgrow.com](http://www.findinvestgrow.com)
- Angel Investment Network | [www.angelinvestmentnetwork.co.uk](http://www.angelinvestmentnetwork.co.uk)
- UK Business Angels Association | [www.ukbusinessangelsassociation.org.uk](http://www.ukbusinessangelsassociation.org.uk)

See later for details on accelerator programmes that will take your business from start to growth at speed, and often come attached with funding.

## Straightforward finance

When planning a business you'll want to be sure earnings are higher than outgoings. Earnings are also referred to as revenue, turnover or income and this should be a greater figure than outgoings, overheads or costs. Let's look at the items that come within each category.

### Incoming

Earn from selling your product or service and any associated income opportunities. For example, you set up a business selling unique handmade cushions. From the outset, earn income from:

- Selling 24 x handmade cushions at £25 per cushion = £600 income per week
- Speaking at events to teach others how to make cushions = £150 per event
- Custom requests, e.g. a unique and one-off production = £75 per item
- Developing a blog on the topic of cushions that attracts cushion-istas as readers and paying advertisers as your customers – £priceless!

### Outgoings

Here are the costs; some payable at start-up stage and others ongoing:

- **Salary** – how much do you need to pay yourself? (You will be pleasantly surprised at how thriftily you can live when not commuting.)
- **Property** – start the business from home and avoid the cost of a pricey office.

- **Raw materials and equipment** – what are the materials you need to deliver and promote your finished cushions? And do you need any equipment to make that product; a sewing machine, computer, printer, smartphone or camera?
- **Insurance** – be insured from the start and choose a policy that covers all your needs.
- **Website/promotion materials** – we will cover in Chapters 10–12 how you can build a home on the web and promote the business on a shoestring of a budget.

Keep records of ‘Incoming’ and ‘Outgoing’ in a basic Excel spreadsheet or accounting software as in the following. See later for an example invoice and how to keep a record of invoices raised and amounts paid.

INCOMING	
<i>Product sales</i>	<i>£xx</i>
<i>Sponsorship/Advertising</i>	<i>£xx</i>
<i>Other contracts</i>	<i>£xx</i>
OUTGOINGS	
<i>Salary</i>	<i>(£xx)</i>
<i>IT</i>	<i>(£xx)</i>
<i>Office</i>	<i>(£xx)</i>
<i>Raw materials/equipment</i>	<i>(£xx)</i>
<i>Insurance</i>	<i>(£xx)</i>
<i>Marketing &amp; promotion</i>	<i>(£xx)</i>
<i>Other</i>	<i>(£xx)</i>
<b>PROFIT</b>	<b>£xx</b>





## PART II. Launch

You have your idea. It's supported by research and a plan pointing you in the right direction. You've sorted out all the technology you need to get going. And with the company registered, it's time to get into business by making sales and some noise.



# 10. Create a First Impression

You may have started out by making sales to friends and family who know and trust you to deliver. To attract new customers, it's important to create the right first impression, whether that customer meets you at an event or visits your home on the web. Here's guidance to getting it right and offering a professional welcome.

## Your home on the web

You have the tools and connection to get online. The first thing to do is build a presence through a blog, website or store. Not only is a website your window to the world and home on the web, it has become an essential requirement for any new business. Your site can be used as a powerful marketing tool and a way to make money. Having the right technology and knowledge allows you to build, develop and maintain your site. And you can do it all in-house.

Let's look at the three main ways to develop a professional-looking online presence.

## 1. Blogging

Blogging is a website or part of a website that's regularly updated by an individual or a group of bloggers. There are blogs on any number of topics and the fact that anyone can start blogging for free makes the medium diverse and exciting.

It's an easy way to get online, as you write posts on your topic of choice, upload images and video, and become the go-to place for customers looking for your advice/

tips/services/products. Search engines love blogs and the more you write, the higher up the search-engine ranks you will go. Writing regularly is likely to lead to a loyal readership and it's an effective way to communicate your news with existing and potential customers. Readers can add their comments to your entries if you allow them, and you can use your blog to answer questions and establish yourself as an expert in your field.

It's free and easy to get blogging:

- Blogger | [www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com)
- Typepad | [www.typepad.com](http://www.typepad.com)
- WordPress | [www.wordpress.com](http://www.wordpress.com)

*See 11. Make Sales for details on how to make money from your blog.*

## **Now you see me**

After getting to grips with blogging, why not try your hand at vlogging? This stands for video blogging and is an effective way to interact with customers who want to see you, your products and other happy customers. Vlogging expert, Niamh Guckian, offers tips on how to vlog like a pro:

## **Vlog how-to**

“Vlogging can help you tell people your story: a demonstration of your skills, an atmosphere piece, or an interview.

**The gear:** Become an expert on your chosen camera, whether a phone or something fancier.

Where possible use manual control with your camera – this applies to white balance, exposure and focus. Learn the rules and then have fun breaking them.

Use focus and depth of field to add style to your shooting. Using a tripod sets your work apart from amateur shooting and allows for good steady shot composition.

**Safety:** Using a small camera can make you feel like you can take risks that you wouldn't otherwise. This has advantages at times but don't take unnecessary risks. Don't shoot from rooftops or get into water!

**Light:** As a video-blogger, you will mostly be working with available or natural light. Try to get the most from what's available at the time.

**Sound:** Audio recording is a specialist art form. What we need to achieve as self-shooters is clean and non-distorted sound. Distorted audio is not fixable, and can usually be prevented.

**Interviews:** If your piece is interview-based, engage with the contributor, communicate with them and let them know clearly what you want them to do. Create an atmosphere where the contributor is comfortable, and make sure they know they can stop and start again, or ask questions.

Make sure the interview is a sequence, that it has a beginning, middle and end, and can stand alone if necessary.

**Export and upload:** Learn about the optimum settings and platforms for your finished piece."

## 2. Your own website

Build your own website that you can spec to your own requirements or invest in a template website. Let's look at both options.

### DIY

You have decided to build your own site or have a developer take care of it for you.

The first thing to do is buy a domain. A domain makes up a part of your website and email address. So, for example, the domain name I own is enterprisenation.com. My website address is **www.enterprisenation.com** and my email address is **emma@enterprisenation.com**. Both use the enterprisenation.com domain name.

A domain isn't only your address on the web, it's also a big part of your brand, so think carefully when choosing one. There are domain registration companies whose websites allow you to check for available domain names and often suggest available alternatives.

Registering a domain name doesn't give you a website, just an address for it (and an email address). Think of it like reserving a car parking space. You've got the space, now you need to buy the car!

A hosting company will sort you out with the web space to host your site. This is measured in megabytes and gigabytes, just like the information on your computer.

In terms of how much web space you will need, basic hosting packages offer about 250 MB of space, but anything over 1 or 2 GB is more sensible and will also allow you to handle more traffic as your website grows more popular.

With a domain name and web space, potential customers should be able to type your website address into their browser and find out all about your business – just as soon as you've built your site. Finding a hosting company shouldn't be hard. Most domain registration companies, including those mentioned above, offer web space as a package; and hosting companies usually offer domain registration, too.

When it comes to hiring a designer, have a think about what you'd like your website to do for your business. The easiest way to start is to think of your website as a brochure, but remember to include the following pages at the very least.

## **Pages to include**

- About us: the story behind your business and its mission.
- News: the latest and greatest of your products, business developments, maybe a topical focus if relevant to your business.
- Products or services: punchy with the detail, using images of your best work, and text and video testimonials from satisfied customers.
- FAQs: questions which you get asked. A lot.
- Contact us: email and social media details.

Choose a designer who has carried out work you like the look of and for companies in a similar kind of sector to your own. That way, the designer will understand what site you're after – and what your kind of visitor will be looking for, as well as how they like to browse and buy.

## Brief a web designer/developer

Here's Emily Hewett's ([www.birdsontheblog.co.uk](http://www.birdsontheblog.co.uk)) advice on how best to brief a web designer/developer:

“Who are you? Give a short summary of who you are and what you do. This will help the designer tune in to your particular sector. You'll also need to tell them about your market and how you fit into the larger scheme of things – e.g. competitors, local and national.

What do you want to achieve? For example: data capture, sales generation, footfall increase, etc.?

Who are you talking to? Outline a profile of your customer. Who are you targeting? Break it down in terms of sex, age, average income and location.

What tone are you using? Deciding on how you speak to your audience is important. You may be writing the copy yourself or you may have a copywriter to do this for you. In this section of the brief tell the designer if it's a laid-back chatty tone or formal. The tone of the copy needs to be reflected in the design.

What are your likes and dislikes? Provide examples wherever possible. It might be a certain colour palette or illustration style or it could be a format. Any of these things help the designer understand what you're looking for.

Are there any mandatory elements? Fonts, colours, logos, legal text, images, etc. This way they can make sure they produce something on-brand, adhering to your corporate image.

What's your budget? A good designer won't take a large budget and fit a job to it. They should find the most cost-effective way of producing exactly what you want. But if you have a small budget, the designer will have to make decisions based on that.

When do you want it? Make sure the deadline is clear.

Have you covered everything? Show the brief to a colleague or friend to see if they understand it. Once happy, send or talk it through with your designer and invite questions so they are aware you are approachable and that you are both working from the same list of requirements.”

## **Template sites and payment systems**

If DIY feels and sounds too much like hard work, there are a number of companies offering template websites that come with domain registration, hosting, e-commerce and a basic level of design as part of the package – over the page there’s a comprehensive list of template site providers offering websites that can be set up today and trading tomorrow. Many e-commerce platform sites come with an in-built payment system; here are the main ones:

### **PayPal**

PayPal has more than 100 million active registered accounts and is available in 190 markets, meaning you can successfully trade in all these markets!

The company offers three main products: website payments standard, website payments pro and express checkout. To enable your customers to buy multiple items, use a free PayPal shopping cart. To put the ‘Add to Cart’ button on your website you simply copy and paste the HTML code from PayPal to the coding of your own site ([www.paypal.com/uk/webapps/mpp/merchant](http://www.paypal.com/uk/webapps/mpp/merchant)). Your customers then click the button to make a purchase. With PayPal, there are no set-up charges, monthly fees or cancellation charges, and fee levels vary depending on the volume of sales.

### **Stripe**

Accept payments from major international debit and credit cards with Stripe ([www.stripe.com](http://www.stripe.com)), which charges 1.4% + 20p per successful charge, or less based on volume. Anything you earn via your website is transferred to your bank account on a daily basis. Setting up a Stripe account takes only moments, allowing you to start trading with immediate effect.

- Actinic ([www.actinic.co.uk](http://www.actinic.co.uk)). Packages start at £35 + VAT per month.
- Big Cartel ([www.bigcartel.com](http://www.bigcartel.com)). It's free to present five products, with monthly packages increasing to £21 per month for displaying up to 300 products. With its strapline 'Bringing Art to the Cart', US-based Big Cartel has a focus on providing online stores for clothing designers, record labels, jewellers and crafters.
- Create ([www.create.net](http://www.create.net)). Packages start from £5 per month. 30-day free trial available. Set up your site in minutes and benefit from email support plus online forums.
- Moonfruit ([www.moonfruit.com](http://www.moonfruit.com)). A basic site is free to build, moving up to £18.75 per month for premium options. Moonfruit Shopbuilder automatically creates a store on Facebook and a mobile version of your site.
- osCommerce ([www.oscommerce.com](http://www.oscommerce.com)). Free. An open source solution with, to date, over 76,000 add-ons available for free to customise your store and increase sales.
- Shopify ([www.shopify.co.uk](http://www.shopify.co.uk)). A range of packages are on offer, from 'Lite' at £6.30 a month through to 'Unlimited' at £125.50.
- Squarespace ([www.squarespace.com](http://www.squarespace.com)). A standard package is £8 per month, increasing to £49 per month for the business package.
- SupaDupa ([supadupa.me](http://supadupa.me)). Price packages start free and then move through £6 per month for a StartUp, through to £99 per month for unlimited capacity.
- Weebly ([weebly.com](http://weebly.com)). A free package offers all you need to create a site, including free hosting, or you can opt for the £17-per-month business option with e-commerce built in. Manage your site on the go via the Weebly app.
- Wix ([www.wix.com](http://www.wix.com)). A free build-your-site service with the ability to upgrade to premium plans that start at £10 per month. Hundreds of designs to choose from and a drag and drop system to get you started.



# Make your website legally compliant

*These tips are offered by Joanna Tall, founder of [www.OfftoseemyLawyer.com](http://www.OfftoseemyLawyer.com)*

## 1. Display terms of use

“Think of your website like a board game you are about to play with your visitors. They arrive and are ready to play and you need to state the rules or else it will be chaos! So, for example, state what they can and cannot do – e.g. may they copy your materials? May they link to you? May they rely on the information you provide without double-checking with you or elsewhere? What liability are you prepared to accept? Provide a link to your terms of use, ideally on every page of your website or under a ‘Legals’ section.

## 2. Display your privacy policy

Most websites collect personal data on their visitors either by getting them to register on the site or sign up for a newsletter. By law you must tell visitors what you will be doing with this data and the best way to do this is to set out the information in a privacy policy. Again, a link to it on every page is best. More complex rules apply if you plan to collect sensitive information or information from children, or want to pass the information to third parties; for this you should consult a lawyer. Additionally, you are likely to need to register as a data processor under the Data Protection Act. Simply go to [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk) for more information.

## 3. If selling goods or services online, display your terms of sale

Just as with the board game example, you need rules for selling your goods or services. Most importantly, you need to get your visitors to acknowledge that they accept them. So ideally get them to tick a box stating that they accept them before they proceed to check out. You also need to draw their attention to their rights under the Distance Selling Regulations, e.g. cancellation rights amongst others.

## 4. Protect your copyright in the website content

Although you automatically own the copyright in the content that you create, best practice is to remind your visitors! Say, for example: “Copyright 20xx Lawyers R Great

Ltd”. And if your logo or name is trademarked, broadcast the fact! After all, you will have spent money in getting it that far and it will enhance your brand in the market.

## 5. State who you are!

By law you need to state a full postal address and contact number and if you are a limited company, the company’s registered address, number and country of registration. This also applies to your emails.”

## Distance Selling Regulations

One thing to bear in mind when selling goods or services to consumers via the internet, mail order or by phone, is compliance with the Consumer Protection (Distance Selling) Regulations 2000. The key features of the regulations are:

- You must offer consumers clear information including details of the goods or services offered, delivery arrangements and payment, the supplier’s details and the consumer’s cancellation rights before he or she buys (known as prior information). This information should be provided in writing.
- The consumer has a period of seven working days from delivery of the items to cancel their contract with you.

These regulations only apply when selling to consumers, as opposed to businesses. In the event of a contract being ceased, you have to refund money, including delivery charges, within 30 days of the date of cancellation.

## 3. A presence on other sites

Maybe you’d prefer to start raising your profile and making sales via other established platform sites, as opposed to your own. Whether selling homemade crafts or business concepts, there are a number of options.

The upside is that these sites attract customers on your behalf, and some of them attract customers from all over the world. Here are seven sales platforms that enable you to sell:

## Alibaba

Having a presence on this site enables you to buy and sell with, and source supplies from, companies across the globe. The site has visitors from 240 countries and regions, with over 1 million registered users in the UK. Through the site you can locate suppliers or make sales of your finished product direct to customers. Alibaba is a champion of international trade; carrying out research on the topic, providing a platform for traders to interact, and promoting overseas sales as a form of business that is wholly viable, regardless of company size.

- [www.alibaba.com](http://www.alibaba.com) | [@AlibabaTalk\\_UK](#)

## Amazon Marketplace

You may be used to buying from Amazon, but have you considered the site as a platform from which to sell? Have your products appear before millions of customers all around the world by signing up to Amazon Marketplace. It offers two sales options: a package for casual sellers who expect to sell less than 35 items a month (a fixed fee per sale plus a referral fee), and, for more seasoned sellers, there is the 'sell a lot' package, which has a monthly charge plus a referral fee for unlimited sales that do not have to be in the Amazon catalogue.

- [www.amazon.co.uk/marketplace](http://www.amazon.co.uk/marketplace)

## eBay

In 2012 there were 190,000 registered businesses trading on eBay in the UK, generating billions of pounds-worth of sales. Having a store on eBay means you are opened up to an international audience and a lot of potential customers.

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

## eBay expertise

Dan Wilson ([www.wilsondan.co.uk](http://www.wilsondan.co.uk)) is an eBay author and co-editor of Tamebay, the highly popular eBay blog. Dan offers five tips on how to make the most of the mega marketplace:

## 1. Start small

“Go slow until you’ve found your way. Start with a few, easy-to-post items and learn about eBay before boosting your range and prices. Don’t stake too much on your first eBay bet.”

## 2. Sell like you mean it

“The eBay marketplace is competitive and you’ll lose out unless you have top-notch listings. Craft fabulous item titles, make impeccable pictures and write descriptions that tempt buyers. Be truthful and honest and look professional from the start.”

## 3. Be quick off the mark

“Buyers have come to expect great service. Dispatch orders quickly — preferably within 24 hours of payment — and well packed, and make sure you reply to emails and other communications swiftly, too. The quality and speed of your replies and dispatches has an impact on customer feedback.”

## 4. Put a lid on postal costs

“Understand postage and packaging costs and make sure you factor it in to your costs where necessary.”

## 5. Loyalty means profit

“When you’re building your eBay business, encouraging repeat buyers is important. Once a buyer trusts you as an online seller, they’re likely to keep coming back. Offer discounts and incentives with every dispatch and cross-market complementary products.”

## **Etsy**

With its tag line ‘Your place to buy and sell all things handmade’ this is still the mother of all craft sites. Since the company launched in June 2005, more than 500,000 sellers from around the world have opened up Etsy shops and buyers of Etsy-listed products span more than 150 countries.

To start selling on Etsy you need to register for an account (this requires a credit card and valid email address for verification purposes) and then it costs 20 cents to list an item for four months. When your item sells, you pay a 3.5% transaction fee. For anyone who makes handmade items, the power of this global platform cannot be denied. Head a few pages on for a listing of handmade marketplaces you can try today.

- [www.etsy.com](http://www.etsy.com) | [@etsy](#)

## Facebook

With more than 1 billion users across the globe and 30 million in the UK, a significant number of your present and potential customers spend time on Facebook every single day. If your business isn't there, it's missing out. Countless small business owners in the UK use Facebook to quickly and cost-effectively grow their company. The easiest way to start is through having an effective Facebook Page.

- [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

## iTunes

If you are a creator of audiobooks, a publisher of podcasts or developer of apps, then the iTunes platform is your route to market. For apps, Apple gives 70% of revenues to the seller. Over 60 billion apps have been downloaded from its App Store, making it the world's largest mobile application platform. Become a registered Apple developer for the iPhone ([developer.apple.com/iphone](http://developer.apple.com/iphone)) submit audio books to iTunes via Audible.com ([www.audible.com](http://www.audible.com)) and create iBooks for the iPad through the iBookstore. Apple is opening up a world of opportunity for content creators and app developers.

- [www.apple.com/itunes](http://www.apple.com/itunes)

## Enterprise Nation Marketplace

Small business network, Enterprise Nation has launched its own marketplace to match small businesses with talented professionals and advisors. If you're a supplier of advice on sales and marketing, making the most of digital technologies, access to

finance etc., create a profile and be matched with small business owners looking for the advice you offer. Over 13,000 advisors now use the marketplace as their route to market.

- [www.enterprisenation.com/marketplace](http://www.enterprisenation.com/marketplace)

## Handmade marketplaces

A growing number of sites are dedicated to helping the young artisan and handmade business owner sell goods across the globe.

### Etsy – [www.etsy.com](http://www.etsy.com)

*“The world’s handmade marketplace”* (and a great place to start your selling).

#### **How does it work?**

1. You list the item on Etsy for a fee. It costs 20 cents (roughly 12p) to list an item for four months.
2. Shoppers then find your item, and purchase it from you directly, using your payment system which you have set up with Etsy. Etsy takes a 3.5% transaction fee from the total price of each sale.
3. You then ship the item directly to your customer.

## Getting started

Setting up a shop on Etsy is easy and should only take a few minutes: [www.etsy.com/join](https://www.etsy.com/join)

You will need to enter your Etsy username here, which will be displayed to customers looking at your products. Remember to think about your branding and how you want to present yourself to potential customers when entering these details.

## Paying fees

All of your fees will be paid using the credit card you list when you register, or the PayPal account you link to your Etsy account. Etsy will calculate your fees on a monthly basis and email you with a list of payments that are due. You can also pay your bill manually through your account.

## Community

Etsy has a thriving community where sellers, artists and creators all come together to share their work and ideas with one another. Etsy also runs events such as Craft Nights, which could be a great way to meet other crafters and promote your products to a receptive audience.

The site has a blog which highlights new product launches and new initiatives, plus featured sellers and debates on various topics. Forums feature strongly on the site.

*Tracey Marshall turned to Etsy to give her business the very best start...*

## CASE STUDY

Name: **Tracey Marshall** | Business: **Thread Squirrel**

When Pudsey-based mum and former call centre advisor Tracey Marshall was made redundant for the second time, she took the bold step to take control of her career – and turn her embroidery hobby into a blossoming home business.

Spurred on by her daughter Kathy, Tracey set up Thread Squirrel in 2013 after first taking six months out to learn new skills and work out how she was going to monetise her skills.

Eighteen months later, this Yorkshire lass doesn't regret a thing – because her map-inspired embroidered cushions and gifts are selling like hotcakes around the world on online craft platform Etsy and nearer to home on Not on the High Street.

“Our main sales are in the UK, then USA, Canada, New Zealand and Australia – we also have customers around Europe. It's really taken off.”

Before she set up at home, Tracey took the wise decision to get some training in book keeping, as well as taking a start up course to take in the basics to get started.

Meanwhile Kathy mastered the embroidery software and Alyssa, her daughter in law, did the website-building and maintenance skills needed to maintain a good online presence.

“When you run your own business, you have to be master of everything. We've had to approve designs, commission photography, do the marketing, book keeping, tax returns – and we're now expert packers and know a lot about postage and delivery specifications and costs around the world!

I never expected to be doing all of these things when we started out – but you just get on with it. I'm pretty sure I would have flipped out in my 20s with some of the things I have to deal with now!”

**TOP TIP:** *“Think long term from the beginning. In the early days I spent a lot of time sourcing cheaper, but good quality fabric – and then ran out. What I needed to do was to find one consistent long-term supplier.”*

**www.threadsquirrel.co.uk | @threadsquirrel**



## Not On The High Street – [www.notonthehighstreet.com](http://www.notonthehighstreet.com)

*“One basket, hundreds of unique shops”*

### **How does it work?**

Not On The High Street offers you the chance to promote and sell your product under the umbrella of their brand and be supported by their in-house team. They look after all of the e-commerce, administration and marketing elements of selling through the site, so all you need to worry about are the products.

Not On The High Street differs from a number of other platform sites in that they are very selective about who sells with them and decline over 90% of applications. Membership packages vary but the basic package allows you to add 30 products to your own store, with your own logo, company name and URL.

### **Getting started**

If you're interested in getting set up with NOTHS, you will need to take some photographs of your products and submit these using the online application form.

Applications can take up to seven working days to be processed. After that time you will be contacted by a member of the team.

## Folksy – [www.folksy.com](http://www.folksy.com)

*“Folksy is a place to buy handmade things, and for makers to sell their work and find supplies. Based in the UK, Folksy aims to reclaim craft and showcase talented makers and their work.”*

You can sell craft supplies on Folksy as well as handmade goods, so long as they are listed as 'supplies' and not in the 'handmade' category.

## **How does it work?**

1. There are two packages available; the basic package which costs 15p to list an item plus 6% sales commission, and Folksy Plus, which is £45 per year and comes with no listing fees and 6% sales commission.
2. Shoppers purchase from you directly, using your payment system which you have set up with Folksy, for example PayPal, or you can accept other payments, such as cash or cheques at your own discretion. Folksy takes a 6% commission fee from the total value of each sale.
3. You then ship the item directly to your customer.

## **Getting started**

The first thing you need to do is decide on the username for your shop. This can't be changed so think carefully about your branding and how you want to appear to prospective customers.

Once your item is listed, customers can start viewing and purchasing. When an order is received you will get an order from Folksy with all the buyer's details and the information about the product ordered. You will also receive notification to say payment has been completed. You then ship the product directly to the customer.

## **Paying fees**

You settle fees through the Your Account section of the website. The total shown will be made up of billed and unbilled fees as well as the 5% commission on sales.

## **Community**

Folksy features a blog which gives updates on important news and events. The site also has a forum where members can discuss craft tips, as well as events, ideas for your shopfront and anything else that takes your fancy!

## DaWanda – en.dawanda.com

*“DaWanda is the place for unique and individual products and people. Buy handmade and hard to find goods, share your discoveries with your friends and create your own collections.”*

### **How does it work?**

List your items on the site and set up your own shop which gives you the option of a direct URL – nice and easy to promote to your customers!

People will browse your listings and when someone orders a product you receive an email. You check the details of the order, making a note of any special requests from the buyer, and once happy to go ahead you click to confirm the order, so the buyer can see the final price and pay you. You then ship the item directly to the customer using the method you have specified in the listing.

### **Getting started**

With DaWanda you can set up your own shop for free – all you need to do is provide a name and set up shop categories. You can create your own shop window at this stage to show off the key items in your shop. As soon as this has been established, you can start listing your items and selling to customers!

DaWanda also features something called the DaWanda widget, a tool for displaying your shop on your own website or blog.

### **Paying fees**

DaWanda charges a 10% commission on all sales but does not charge for listing products.

### **Community**

The website features the News Bulletin Board as well as a blog, ideal for getting all the latest information on what DaWanda offers and what’s popular on the site. The

forums are a great place to chat with other crafters and there are also video, social media and Gift Detective areas.

**A TOP QUALITY IMAGE:** *Whether you decide to start online with a blog or a full e-commerce site, place high quality images on your site and printed materials so that on first click or at first glance, a customer is inclined to buy. Take professional images yourself or consider subscribing to a stock image library such as **www.istockphoto.com**. Other image libraries include: **www.imagesource.com**, **www.photos.com** and **www.gettyimages.com**. Search for Creative Commons licensed images you can use commercially from Flickr at **www.compfight.com**.*

## Rise up the search engine ranks

Promote your business and website through search engine optimisation. Commonly referred to as SEO, this is the process by which you can improve rankings for your website in the top search engines such as Google, so that your site appears on the first few pages of results rather than on page 75.

Google is a search engine that uses software known as 'spiders' to crawl the web on a regular basis and find sites to add to their index. There are steps you can take to make it easier for the spiders to find and add your site.

**THINK LIKE A BUYER:** *When thinking of the keywords to use in PPC (pay per click) ad campaigns (and in search engine optimisation) think of the words your buyers will be using when searching for your product or service. Use the Google AdWords Keyword Tool to find out the most popular search terms. Apply these words in the campaign and include them in the text on your site.*

## Start with the homepage

Provide high-quality, text-based content on your pages – especially your homepage. If your homepage has useful information and good quality, relevant text, it's more likely to be picked up by the spiders. Beyond the homepage, write pages that clearly describe your topic/service/product. Think about the words users would type to find your pages and include them on the site.

## Make contributions

Identify influential bloggers and sites in your trade/industry, contact them and offer to write posts. You can also improve your visibility by writing helpful comments in forums and on other people's posts.

## Be well-connected

Improve the rank of your site by increasing the number of other high-quality sites that link to your pages; these are referred to as inbound links. For example, if you're running a competition, go to sites that promote competitions and add yours.

Register your site with the major search engines.

- Google | [www.google.co.uk/addurl](http://www.google.co.uk/addurl)
- Yahoo! | [search.yahoo.com/info/submit](http://search.yahoo.com/info/submit)
- Bing | [www.bing.com/webmaster/submitsitepage.aspx](http://www.bing.com/webmaster/submitsitepage.aspx)

**SEARCH ENGINES LOVE LINKS:** *Another way to increase your ranking in the search results is to link to other sites and vice versa, but think quality here as opposed to quantity. Sites offering the best 'link juice' are trusted domains, such as news sites, and very popular sites. You could post comments on such sites and blogs and include a link back to your site. Try these handy hints: approach sites complementary to your own and suggest reciprocal links; ensure that your website link is included in all your social media profiles; register with the major search engines (see above); add your domain to local search services such as Google Maps, Qype, Yahoo! Local and BView.*

- [www.google.co.uk/maps](http://www.google.co.uk/maps)
- [www.yelp.co.uk](http://www.yelp.co.uk)
- [www.uk.local.yahoo.com](http://www.uk.local.yahoo.com)

## Tagging

A webpage's title, referred to as a 'title tag', is part of the SEO mix and can make a difference to your search rankings. It is also the text that appears in the top of the browser window. Include in your title tag the main key phrase you'd like the search engines to associate with your webpage and keep it to 60-90 characters in length. Duncan Green of Moo Marketing is an SEO expert and explains: "the title tag on the homepage for Moo Marketing reads: 'Moo Marketing – Search Engine Marketing – PPC Management – Search Engine Optimisation'. As you can see the title element is 85 characters long, contains three key phrases and identifies the subject of the webpage."

## Pay per click advertising

The results from your efforts in SEO will appear on the main engines as a natural or 'organic' search result. But have you spotted results on the right of the page when searching for items yourself? These are paid-for results and referred to as pay per click or PPC advertising. PPC is where you pay to have ads displayed when people type in certain words, in the hope it will attract more visitors to your site.

Google AdWords is a form of PPC advertising. Think of the key words or phrases you reckon your customers will be searching for and apply them in your Google campaign. Link to your homepage or other pages on the site where you're running a promotion and make the most of geotargeting, which lets you target your ads to specific territories and languages. You are in full control of the budget and campaign duration.

- [adwords.google.co.uk](http://adwords.google.co.uk)

## Spread the word

Make it easy for visitors to spread word of your site through social sharing. Have your site Tweeted, Pinned and Liked and make the most of this viral effect. You can add these social bookmarking tools by visiting AddThis ([www.addthis.com](http://www.addthis.com)) and choosing the icons you'd like to have displayed on your site.

## Your business in print

Print is far from dead, so get yourself some business cards, postcards and promotion flyers to hand out at business events, social occasions, and to just about anyone you meet! Have fun with designing your cards at [www.moo.com](http://www.moo.com) and get a range of designs printed in each batch. Sell vintage fashion? Upload pictures of your products to the reverse of each card. Offer web design services? Have a portfolio of sites you've designed there.

## Look at my logo!

When you contact potential customers you'll want them to read about you and get a sense of your style. You can do this very effectively with a nice-looking logo or company design that's repeated across all your promotion materials, from business cards to brochures.

Think about what you'd like as your company font, colours and layout. Have a go at designing this yourself or hire the services of a designer/neighbour/friend. Good presentation can make a world of difference. This may just be the difference you need to clinch a contract.

Find a professional to design your logo via these sites:

- Enterprise Nation Marketplace | [www.enterprisenation.com/marketplace](http://www.enterprisenation.com/marketplace)
- CrowdSPRING | [www.crowdspring.com](http://www.crowdspring.com)
- Fiverr | [www.fiverr.com](http://www.fiverr.com)

## Office address

If you are running the business from home there are a couple of reasons why you might not want to put the home address on your business card: it might sound too domestic, and you might not want people turning up on your doorstep!

You can solve this with a P.O. Box number, which starts at £185 per year and is easily set up with Royal Mail ([www.royalmail.com/pobox](http://www.royalmail.com/pobox)). Alternatively, you could invest in a virtual office, which gives you a more tailored and personal service than a P.O. Box – plus you get a nice-sounding address and a place to use for meetings. Having a virtual office enables you to choose the address that suits you best, have post delivered to that location, and then forwarded on to you. Companies providing this service include:

- Regus | [www.regus.co.uk](http://www.regus.co.uk)
- Bizspace | [www.bizspace.co.uk](http://www.bizspace.co.uk)
- Mail Boxes Etc | [www.mbe.co.uk](http://www.mbe.co.uk)

When holding meetings, consider hiring professional meeting space. Many offer serviced addresses and secretarial services too, so there could be great continuity for your clients if they only have to remember one address.

## On the phone

When running the business from home, consider who will be picking up the phone! It's cheap and sometimes free to get an 0845 local rate number or an 0870 national rate number for your business. This will hide where you're based and divert your calls to wherever you specify. But beware: sometimes having such a number – especially with national rates – might put customers off ringing you.

If you use a landline number it's best to have a separate line for your home and your business. These days you don't need to invest in an actual second line. You can use a VoIP (voice over internet protocol) phone, which uses a broadband internet connection to make and receive calls, something we looked at earlier.



- Skype | [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com)

Another idea is to get some help from a call-handling service. They will answer your calls with your company name, text urgent messages to you and email the others, giving you a big business feel for about £50 per month. Services on offer include:

- Moneypenny | [www.moneypenny.co.uk](http://www.moneypenny.co.uk)
- MyRuby | [www.myruby.co.uk](http://www.myruby.co.uk)
- Answer | [www.answer.co.uk](http://www.answer.co.uk)

You might consider a ‘follow-me number’ to ensure you’re available when you need to be and able to deliver the right impression to clients. A follow-me number involves choosing a number and directing calls from it to your landline or mobile. The beauty of choosing a number is that you have the option to select either a freephone or a geographical number so, say you’d like to have a Manchester area code, simply buy a number starting with 0161. The same goes for hundreds of other locations.

Offer virtual phone numbers where the caller pays a local rate, regardless of where you are, through Vonage ([www.vonage.co.uk](http://www.vonage.co.uk)) or direct calls to you from a chosen number using internet technology and a virtual receptionist at eReceptionist ([www.ereceptionist.co.uk](http://www.ereceptionist.co.uk)).

## In person

You are about to attend your first networking event or trade show and want to create a good first impression. With an attractive business card in hand, directing prospective customers to a good-looking online presence, all you have to do is follow the rules of effective networking!

### The art of networking

- Wear your name tag (if you have one) on your right side. It’s easy to catch sight of when you are shaking hands.
- Deliver a nice firm handshake and make eye contact.

- Say your name clearly and, in under ten seconds, tell the other person who you are and what you do.
- Listen carefully. Ask the other person plenty of questions about their line of business, their hobbies, etc.
- Be positive and energetic.
- Swap business cards.
- Send a thank-you email after the event, confirming any actions you and they have promised.
- Keep in regular and meaningful contact.

See 12. Make Some Noise! for information on how to host your own event or attend a trade show to promote your business.

**A MEMORABLE EXCHANGE:** *Richard Moross, founder of moo.com, says: “The point of having a business card is to make a connection, create a relationship and leave something with the recipient that reminds them of you. Have cards that tell a story. Use that card as a sales tool, for sure, but also show appreciation by having cards relating to your customer.” Richard achieves this by having images on his cards showing places he’s visited and meals he’s eaten. With 70% of moo.com’s business being outside the UK, Richard travels a lot and the cards act as the ice-breaker in meetings as he tells the story behind the pictures.*



# 11. Make Sales

With a professional image established, you are ready to start making sales. This chapter will help you achieve that first sale, plus provide tips on how to make money from your website or blog.

## 1. Make a list (check it twice)

Draw on your existing resources, grab your address book and select the friends, family, colleagues and acquaintances you think might be interested in your product or service. Add to the list with details of local people and businesses, too.

## 2. Pitch up

Contact the people on your list and announce your new business venture. Consider this an opportunity to make your pitch, but don't be too pushy. Remember to address each recipient personally. No one likes a group email!

## 3. Follow up

Follow up in a few days time, either with another email or, better still, a phone call. Take some soundings as to the success of your pitch and react accordingly. If the potential customer or client sounds keen, go for it! Arrange to meet him or her to show your product or explain more about your service.

## 4. Meet up

Arrange a time and place to meet that's convenient for your potential customer or client. Be professional, but also likeable. These are equally important characteristics when making a sale.

If the customer agrees the deal, bring the meeting to a fairly speedy end. Your job is done – for now. It's time to head home and deliver on the promise you made with your first customer.

## **5. Make some noise**

Once you've made your first sale – shout about it! If your new customer or client agrees, include them in a press release or write about them on your website or blog, so other potential customers or clients can see that you're well and truly in business!

**SALES ARE FLYING HIGH:** *Have promotional flyers made to take to events or deliver through doors. Increase chances of turning flyers into firm sales by:*

- having a design that is memorable, possibly quirky and, ideally, that your potential customers will want to keep on their desk/in their bag/atop the kitchen shelf
- making the offer clear and confirming the benefits of buying
- including a call to action, i.e. a way in which the interested customer can contact you.

## **Warm up for a cold call**

*Sales and marketing pro Jackie Wade ([www.winningsales.co.uk](http://www.winningsales.co.uk)) offers tips on how to make winning calls to customers...*

**“Ready:** Preparation and focus is key. Start with a call list and clear objectives; which business or household and who specifically are you calling (decision maker)? Are you clear on your message? What benefits do you offer?

**Steady:** Feel confident, think positive. What's the worst thing that can happen? They may say no... so what! Not everyone out there will want you, but someone will! Tone is more important than words so feel and sound confident and positive.

**Go:** Be natural, be you. Have a good opening 'hook' to grab attention – something interesting, new or different and make it relevant to the person you're calling. Avoid rambling – focus on a two-way conversation, not a fixed script. Develop a list of open

questions which will allow you to engage with the person at the other end of the line, e.g. what do you currently do, how does it work, what might you like to improve? Listen for opportunities. Engage!

**Grow:** Agree action and follow up promptly or agree a call back, if no interest for now. A NO today may be a YES tomorrow; tenacity counts. Things change.

Remember, smile and then dial. Your aim is to spread the word about you and your business.”

*When making a sales call, do so standing up and smiling. To the person on the other end, you will come across as positive and confident.*

## Selling into physical stores

Maybe you’ve started by selling products direct to customers at shows and fairs, but what about making sales via local shops?

Before you approach any shops, make a list of appropriate places where you think your product could work well. For example, does your town have gift shops or an art gallery, are there lots of boutiques that stock a range of different items? Think outside the box. Could your local coffee shop stock some of your items?

### Five top tips for market placement

Laura Rigney is the author of *Pitching Products for Small Business* and offers five top tips for pitching your product effectively:

#### 1. Be confident with pricing

“Selling in wholesale is a whole new ballpark as far as pricing is concerned. Make your product attractive to buyers with your pricing. A great way to show you’re trying to help retailers is to setup a structured pricing system, i.e. 100 units or less £xx per unit, 101-500 units £xx per unit and 501 units or more £xx per unit. This system could also encourage shops and buyers to place larger orders.

## 2. Understand your product inside out

This means technical data as well as knowing why someone would buy it. When you get a meeting with a buyer or approach a shop owner, talk with confidence about where the product is made, by who, and using what kind of materials. Remember there is pressure on large retailers to “go green”, so the more you can offer that as a potential supplier the more attractive you will be.

## 3. Be prepared

If a buyer places an order, how quickly will you have manufacturing, distribution and storage in place? Buyers won't expect a new small business to have a giant factory sitting waiting for someone to press the 'go' button but they will want a realistic estimate of how long it will be until your product is in their warehouses/on the shop shelf. Once you have given your timings, stick to them. Even if this means exaggerating the time it will take for them to be delivered. Better to be early rather than late!

## 4. Pitch perfect

If you're pitching in person, make it informative, exciting and interesting and where possible have evidence of past sales and customer satisfaction. You need to know your figures without having to look through paperwork and be prepared to haggle a little on prices. If someone likes your product enough and you have sold it well enough they will buy it, even if it's a few pennies more than they would like to pay. In the other direction, sometimes it may be worth offering a larger than normal discount as a trial for a first order.

## 5. Stay listed

When a company takes on your product it's called being listed. Once you are listed the work is just beginning! It is now time to stay listed for as long as possible and the way to do this is through marketing and PR. The more you promote your product and the shops/galleries/boutiques that are selling them, the more they will be bought by consumers thus encouraging buyers to place more orders with you!"

Lucy Woodhouse and business partner Meriel successfully pitched their frozen-yoghurt lollies to Sainsbury's as part of StartUp Britain's PitchUp competition. As a

result, their lollies launched exclusively with Sainsbury's. Lucy says the secret to their success was:

- “a genuinely new product”
- “identifying our target audience”
- “really knowing the market”
- “being very aware of food trends and incorporating them into the products so we were ahead of the game, newsworthy and desirable”
- “a passionate pitch that didn't use Powerpoint”.

## PopUps

Want to hone retail skills, meet customers face to face and make sales? Why not try a high street PopUp and test new markets in the flesh?

PopUp Britain was created to give new British brands an opportunity to get onto the high street and fill empty shops with small business activity. A first PopUp store opened in Richmond in July 2012 and, 12 shops later, the project has welcomed hundreds of start-ups and small businesses that trade in the shop for a week or fortnight before moving on to allow new businesses to move in.

The PopUp tenants are all online businesses that don't normally have the budget to take on a shop single-handedly and full time. PopUp Britain brings tenants together to share the cost and workload.

The project has delivered a national 'PopUp Lease' (courtesy of Nick Darby at Denton's) which makes contractual arrangements with landlords a whole lot simpler. The PopUp scene in the UK is now flourishing with two platforms on the market that enable small businesses to easily find and book retail and PopUp space. They are We Are PopUp ([www.wearepopup.com](http://www.wearepopup.com)) and Appear Here ([www.appearhere.co.uk](http://www.appearhere.co.uk)).

## The art of the pop

Here's how to ensure your PopUp experience is a profitable one.

- Place – choose a shop in a location that suits your products and is populated with people who represent your target market.
- Offer – ahead of moving into the shop, prepare sufficient stock at a price that's right for the particular area. Present the produce in a way that will attract customers' attention. Consider your own presentation and body language when approaching and dealing with customers.
- Promote – now you're in the shop, tell people you're there! Promote your presence to existing customers through social media. To attract new trade, consider partnerships with neighbouring retailers, flyers in the train station, releases to the local press and PopUp parties, lock-ins, cook-offs and fashion shows, to deliver a retail experience that customers will never forget!

Get the POP right and you'll see sales and profile on the UP!

*For Alexandra van Berckel a PopUp led to a permanent retail space, showing that PopUps truly are a route to testing the market before committing to a long lease and serious investment...*

## CASE STUDY

Name: **Alexandra van Berckel** | Business: **Pinucci**

Sketching since she attended her first Art class at school, Alexandra's career began as an Architect and developed into design, leading to the creation of her young footwear business, Pinucci.

"Starting Pinucci was a natural evolution for me. I've always been interested in designing shoes and love fashion so designing shoes allows me to combine my love of fashion with a passion for design. My mother owned a boutique so I think something in my background has played a part in the creation of Pinucci too."

Pinucci shoes are designed in Alexandra's London studio and handcrafted in Spanish and Italian Artisan workshops, which have been in the same families for generations.



“When deciding on which workshops we would partner with, this human element was very important. Keeping our carbon footprint low and producing ethically and sustainably within Europe is as important to us as producing shoes that are high quality.”

The shoes are sold online and have been sold via PopUp shops in prime London locations including Piccadilly, Kings Road and Victoria.

“Every store is compellingly curated and each one offers a diverse merchandise mix in which customers can browse and discover unique products and experience the brands selected from all over Britain.

Each week – and all in one place – there are usually between 6-10 brands featured, depending on the size of the store. What made the difference for us was the fact that the PopUp Britain team not only created the PopUp event, but also provided essential behind the scenes support such as PR, legal help, card payment facilities and insurance. Each brand was also paired with a Visual Merchandising expert who help setup products, making them look stunning, so all the brands have to do is focus on introducing the brand to customers.”

Alexandra benefited not only from selling shoes to customers but also in meeting fellow traders.

“Part of the ethos of PopUp Britain was that we all sell each other’s products as well as our own and in every store all the brands are encouraged to work together as a collaborative effort within the shared retail space – it is very much like how a department store works – and as we know, successful retail businesses depend on different teams working well with each other.

By meeting and building a rapport with other startup entrepreneurs from a range of business and cultural backgrounds we have increased our network and many collaborations have developed.”

The company used the opportunity of popping up in Piccadilly to introduce key pieces from their Spring/Summer collection, which had been shown in Milan at a trade show but not yet shown to the public.

“Being in Piccadilly was unique – where else can you get to speak with a Buyer from Fortnum & Mason who we’re delighted to say loved our Men’s shoes and also meet DTZ who suggested we were a great brand for Westfield all on the same day? Some

direct results from being in the PopUp Piccadilly store is that we are in discussions with a Bespoke tailors and have been approached by a UK wide Retail Menswear label to stock some of our new season's Men's collection.

For Pinucci, discovering our customers and being discovered by customers is always a delight. With British and international customers coming in the shop across the week we were able to gauge which models (and colours) will be most popular because of the instant customer reaction and feedback. It's very exciting for us that we have a growing waiting list with lots of pre-orders for our new collection and we're delighted that our website is seeing a rise in unique visitors. We handed out more than 400 cards, Lookbooks and postcards and it seems that people did then make the time to look us up."

Back in the studio, Pinucci continues to work on expansion plans including a partnership with STK in The Strand to showcase during London Collections, becoming a member of the British Footwear Association and, critically, opening its first retail unit.

"The vision is to develop and evolve men and women's collections whilst keeping true to our philosophy of creating footwear that is heritage inspired but contemporary in design, sustainably made in our Artisanal workshops."

**TOP TIP:** *"Be passionate and don't be afraid to fail and start again, not every idea leaves the drawing board."*

[www.pinucci.com](http://www.pinucci.com) | [@frompinucci](https://www.instagram.com/frompinucci)

## Going global

Of the 18 businesses profiled in this kit, 70% are trading overseas; making sales via the platform sites or selling directly into new markets through local contacts and/or assistance from UK Trade & Investment.

To discover more about the specifics of international trade and how to go global in five basic steps, download a free eBook ([www.enterprisenation.com/books/](http://www.enterprisenation.com/books/)



**the-go-global-guide**) which offers all you need to know on topics from customs documentation to website translation and perfecting the art of cultural etiquette.

- Go Global on Enterprise Nation | [tinyurl.com/goglobalEN](http://tinyurl.com/goglobalEN)
- UK Trade & Investment | [www.ukti.gov.uk](http://www.ukti.gov.uk)
- Alibaba | [www.alibaba.com](http://www.alibaba.com)

*In her first year of trading Sally Guyer sold more of her product overseas than in the UK. And promotion was all through social media...*

## CASE STUDY

Name: **Sally Guyer** | Business: **Cambridge Raincoat Company**

Sally Guyer has a part-time job teaching English to international students. The rest of the time she runs her business, Cambridge Raincoat Company, designing and selling coats.

The initial idea was a stylish solution for cyclists – beautifully designed fashion items that would be breathable, wind-proof, washable, water resistant and durable. But Sally saw items from both her men and women’s range become all-year-round fashionable pieces.

“Being made in Britain is still synonymous with quality and being classy. My first sale was to the USA, thanks to the reach of the internet. In the first year of trading I sold more overseas than I did in the UK. The coats weigh less than a kilo and I post them myself. Promotion has largely been through Twitter and Facebook. I also won £15,000-worth of local advertising, which has helped a lot with local promotion as you can imagine!”

Sally plans to continue with the international push and has been approached by potential agents in Germany and China who only deal with British-made goods. Her ultimate ambition is to have the business turning over sufficient income so that she can give up the part-time job and focus full time on what is already a global business!

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



# Make money from your website

As traffic to your blog increases, so does your chance of generating income. Make a profit from your posts with this top-ten list of options.

## 1. Display advertising

Offer advertising on your site. The more niche your audience, the more likely you are to attract advertisers.

The information you'll need to provide includes:

- number of unique visitors
- number of impressions
- average duration of visit
- visitor demographics.

Write a basic rate card (see a few pages' time), add it to your site and send it to corporate marketing departments and media-buying agencies.

## 2. Google AdSense

This tool from Google does the work for you by placing relevant ads on your site and earning you money when people click on them. You can customise the appearance of the ads so they sit well with the style of your site.

- [www.google.co.uk/adsense](http://www.google.co.uk/adsense)

## 3. Text Link Ads

These ads offer direct click-throughs from text on your site. You submit your site to Text Link Ads and then upload the ad code provided. It's your choice whether you approve or deny the supplied ads. Once that's done, you start making money as visitors click on the ads. Try this and Skimlinks, which converts words on your site to affiliate links so that you earn from those, too.

- [www.text-link-ads.com](http://www.text-link-ads.com)
- [www.skimlinks.com](http://www.skimlinks.com)

## 4. Sponsored conversations

Get paid for posts (and now tweets) with services like IZEA that match bloggers with advertisers. Some doubt the ethical stance of paying a blogger to write something about a product but there's no doubt that it's a money maker.

- [www.izea.com](http://www.izea.com)

## 5. Affiliate schemes

Sign up to affiliate schemes like the Amazon Associates Programme, where you can earn up to 10% in referrals by advertising Amazon products. The programme works by driving traffic to [Amazon.co.uk](http://Amazon.co.uk) through specially formatted links. You earn referral fees on sales generated through those links. Monthly cheques are sent to you from Amazon and it's easy and free to join.

- [affiliate-program.amazon.co.uk](http://affiliate-program.amazon.co.uk)

## 6. Sponsored features

This could include a host of options. Approach advertisers with suggestions of a sponsored eBook, e-news, podcast, webchat, poll or survey. These applications can be added to your site at a low cost yet generate good revenue.

For:

- eBook creation, try [www.blurb.com](http://www.blurb.com)
- a survey or poll feature, try [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)
- email marketing, try [www.mailchimp.com](http://www.mailchimp.com)

## 7. Expert help

Offer your expertise and charge people to log on and watch or listen. This could be made available through teleclasses where you invite customers and contacts onto a call where you offer your expertise on a one-to-many basis, or an email training course using email programs such as Mailchimp ([www.mailchimp.com](http://www.mailchimp.com)) or Constant Contact ([www.constantcontact.co.uk](http://www.constantcontact.co.uk)), or deliver a presentation to potentially thousands of paying customers via [www.gotowebinar.co.uk](http://www.gotowebinar.co.uk).

## 8. Deals with suppliers

Do deals with suppliers. Hosting a travel blog? Agree a percentage each time a booking is made via your site. Hosting a wedding blog? Create a directory of wedding suppliers such as venues, photographers, dressmakers and caterers with an enhanced listing for those who pay.

## 9. Turn a blog into a book

Follow the lead of Alex Johnson who turned his Shedworking blog ([www.shedworking.co.uk](http://www.shedworking.co.uk)) into a book – and then a second book – which are now selling across the UK and overseas, acting as an effective marketing tool for the site!

## 10. Please donate

If you'd rather just ask for a small donation from your visitors, this is possible too via a donate feature from PayPal. Add a PayPal donate button to your site: [www.paypal.com/us/webapps/mpp/get-started/donate-button](http://www.paypal.com/us/webapps/mpp/get-started/donate-button)

\* \* \*

Maybe you've decided to start selling products through your site. But if you only carry content, you'll need to add an e-commerce feature to make sales.

**JUST-IN-TIME PAYMENT:** *Add a PayPal payment button to your site and you'll be able to accept payment from all major credit and debit cards, as well as bank accounts around the world. You can set it up in less than 15 minutes.*

## Add an e-commerce plug-in

Want to open your site up to sales? Do so by plugging in an e-commerce tool such as:

- WordPress e-Commerce shopping cart – “suitable for selling your products, services, or fees online”: [wordpress.org/plugins/wp-e-commerce](http://wordpress.org/plugins/wp-e-commerce)
- PayPal Shortcodes – insert PayPal buttons in your posts or pages using a Shortcode: [wordpress.org/plugins/wp-paypal-shortcodes](http://wordpress.org/plugins/wp-paypal-shortcodes)

- View a complete list of WordPress e-commerce plugins: [wordpress.org/plugins/tags/ecommerce](https://wordpress.org/plugins/tags/ecommerce)

## Add a shopping cart to your site

Make it easy for your visitors to click and buy. Check out these shopping cart providers:

- GroovyCart | [www.groovycart.co.uk](http://www.groovycart.co.uk)
- RomanCart | [www.romancart.com](http://www.romancart.com)
- CubeCart | [www.cubecart.com](http://www.cubecart.com)
- Zen Cart | [www.zen-cart.com](http://www.zen-cart.com)
- ekmPowershop | [www.ekmpowershop.com](http://www.ekmpowershop.com)
- osCommerce | [www.oscommerce.com](http://www.oscommerce.com)

Research the product that suits you best, taking into account hosting provision, back-end admin, and built-in search engine optimisation.

**SHOW ME YOUR RATES!** *The purpose of a media rate card is to show potential advertisers what your site can deliver to them in terms of traffic and sales. To do this, include some key points:*

- A brief description of the site: What it does and for whom.
- Visitor demographics: Do you have data on the age of your visitors, their home region, gender, etc? If so, include it, as it helps build a picture of your audience.
- Site traffic: What are your unique visitor numbers and length of time spent on the site? Make a note if the figures are increasing.
- Costings: Do you have a cost-per-click (CPC) or cost-per-impression (CPM) rate? If so, include it here, along with the price of other sponsorship options. Offer a menu but leave some flexibility, with 'costed on a project basis' for sponsor features that would benefit from a more tailored proposal.

- Screen shots: Showing how and where adverts or sponsored features appear on the site.
- Media activity: Note where you've recently been covered in the media, online and off, so that potential sponsors can see how and where you're promoting the site.
- Testimonials: Positive comments from existing sponsors gives you credibility and gives confidence to the next potential sponsor.
- Team details: Who are the faces behind the site and what are their credentials? In other words, your background career and activities, etc.

Round this off with your contact details so that interested potential sponsors can get in touch and place an order!





## 12. Make Some Noise!

Sales are coming in, customers are happy and you want to tell the world about you and your new business. Profile brings new customers and new sales. Get yourself known in the press and online by making friends with the media, hosting events, entering awards and embracing social media.

Here's what to do.

### Plot the script

Imagine yourself as the star of your own Hollywood movie. Are you an action hero, battling against the odds (think James Dyson) or a brand leading lady (think Mary Portas)? Plot the action and write the script. It will help you define your message to the media.

### Find the right contacts

Research the journalists you think are interested in your field. Note their email addresses from the bottom of their articles, follow them on Twitter, get to know them and send them exclusive stories about you and your business.

**LINK REQUEST:** *If you're being featured online ask the journalist if they can include a live link to your site. That way, readers can be on your site with one click.*

## Write a release

Writing a press release costs nothing but your time, yet it can generate thousands of pounds' worth of publicity. If you're emailing a press release to journalists, write the text in the body of the email and include it in an attachment, too.

Your press release should have an attention-grabbing headline, the main facts in the first sentence, and evidence and quotes from as high-profile people and companies as possible in the main body of the text. Include great quality images wherever you can to lift the piece and put a face to the brand.

You could also use a press-release distribution service to secure wider exposure. My personal favourite is ResponseSource ([www.responsesource.com](http://www.responsesource.com)) but there's also PR Newswire ([www.prnewswire.co.uk](http://www.prnewswire.co.uk)) and PRWeb ([www.prweb.com](http://www.prweb.com)).

If you don't get a response, follow up!

**AN IMAGE SPEAKS LOUDER THAN WORDS:** *When a picture speaks a thousand words you can afford to talk less! Consider hiring a professional photographer to take pictures of you and your work. Maybe you can do this as a barter deal? Or pick up your own digital camera and do it yourself. Consider approaching a local college to suggest a photography student takes your images in exchange for including the end result in their portfolio. A journalist is much more likely to cover your story if you have great imagery to go with it. Use the images on your website and in promotion materials, and let your business speak for itself.*

### Example press release: what to include

1. Attention-grabbing headline, followed by bulletpoint summary of whole story
2. The first line is punchy and explains the what, who, why and where of the headline
3. Back up the headline and intro with more detail – facts and figures if you have them
4. Include a quote from you (or your business partner, if relevant)

5. Can you include a quote from someone else? A happy customer, industry expert or celebrity?
6. End with a call to action. Where can people go to find out more/how to download the report/which site to visit to claim a free gift, etc.?
7. Include 'Notes to Editors', with brief details on you and your company
8. Remember to include contact details – your email address and telephone number
9. Attach a relevant and interesting image

## **Example press release: in action**

### **[1] GROWTH VOUCHER MARKETPLACE GOES TO SMALL BUSINESS NETWORK**

- *Small business network wins competitive pitch to deliver Growth Vouchers*
- *£30m of vouchers for small business to spend on accredited business advice*
- *Enterprise Nation's winning proposal gathers private sector funding to build, oversee and administer voucher scheme advice*

**[2]** *A small business network has announced it has been selected to deliver the Government's £30m Growth Voucher marketplace. Enterprise Nation won the competitive pitch with its proposal to use only private sector funding to build, market and administer the vouchers marketplace, which will connect small businesses with accredited business experts.*

**[3]** *The single platform will offer strategic advisors in finance, marketing, PR, general business and planning with the expertise to help small businesses grow. The vouchers will provide a Government-funded contribution towards the cost of advice for selected businesses.*

*The typical value allocated to a small business will be £2,000.*

**[4]** *Emma Jones MBE, founder of Enterprise Nation and co-founder of national enterprise campaign StartUp Britain, said: "This is an exciting initiative which could help accelerate the growth of thousands of small businesses at a critical stage of development - helping them to build long-term sustainability.*

*“At the moment, access to business advice is sporadic and unregulated with no means available to understand the outcomes.*

*By bringing together accredited business advisors with the entrepreneurs that want to access good advice, we think the marketplace has the potential to deliver a significant boost to economic growth.”*

**[5]** *In his report ‘Growing Your Business’, the Prime Minister’s Enterprise Advisor Lord Young said firms who “seek and engage external business advice are more likely to grow. But much more needs to be done to encourage firms to invest in their capability.”*

*The Growth Vouchers scheme will be launched early next year and vouchers will be available until March 2015. The delivery of the vouchers will be part of a random-testing exercise to help the Government gain a better understanding of the effect of business advice on growth and the wider economic implications of Government intervention.*

*Enterprise Nation has a membership of over 75,000 small and start-up businesses. It delivers a comprehensive package of advice for entrepreneurs including tips and advice on starting and growing a business, expert events, and well-attended start-up courses across the UK.*

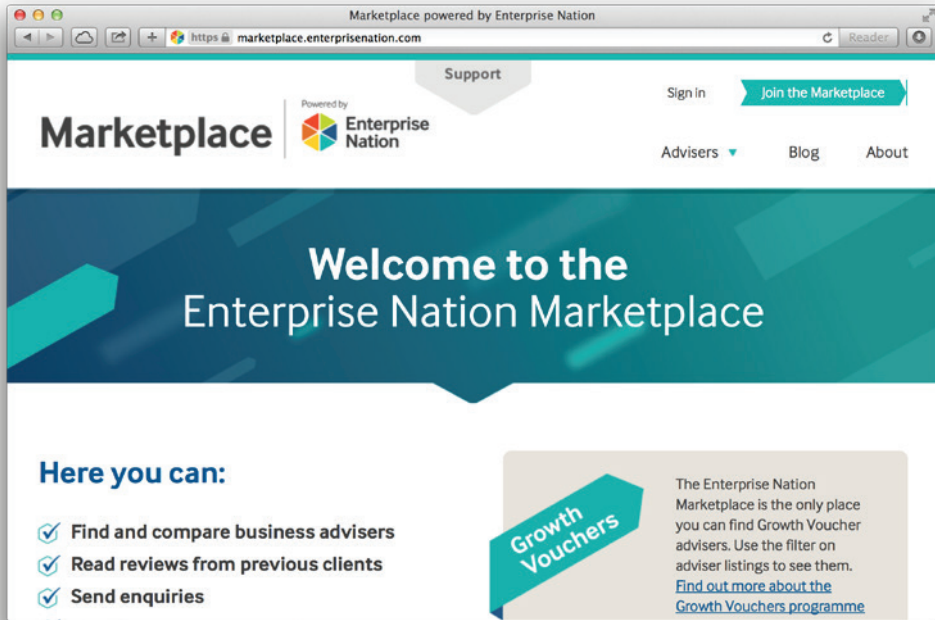
*The scheme comes in the context of record numbers of start-up businesses across the UK, with more than half a million new registered companies each year for the past three years.*

**[6]** *To register interest in the Marketplace, please visit [www.enterprisenation.com/marketplace](http://www.enterprisenation.com/marketplace)*

**[7]** *ABOUT ENTERPRISE NATION: Enterprise Nation is a small business network with more than 75,000 members. Its aim is to help people turn their good ideas into great businesses – through expert advice, events, networking and a modern membership. Enterprise Nation was founded in 2005 by Emma Jones MBE .*

**[8]** *For media enquiries, please contact Lizzie Slee (01234) 567 890 [liz@enterprisenation.com](mailto:liz@enterprisenation.com)*

[9]



## Tweet, Tweet

Follow media channels, journalists and personalities on Twitter so you're the first to pick up the news and media requests. View this post to start following the UK's top 70 small business journalists: [www.enterprisenation.com/blog/posts/top-small-business-journalists-to-follow-on-twitter-2016-edition](http://www.enterprisenation.com/blog/posts/top-small-business-journalists-to-follow-on-twitter-2016-edition)

**FREE PR CONSULTATION:** *Join Enterprise Nation and benefit from a free PR consultation with media pro, Liz Slee, who works tirelessly to place small businesses all across the press:* [www.enterprisenation.com/join](http://www.enterprisenation.com/join)

# Kick-starting with PR

Greg Simpson, founder and director of Press for Attention PR ([www.pressforattention.com](http://www.pressforattention.com)) gives his top 12 tips for building a successful PR campaign:

## 1. Have a 'cunning plan'

"Too many people rush into PR and marketing campaigns with no real plan. You need to consider:

- What are the goals of the campaign?
- How do you want to come across in terms of tone?
- Key messages – what do you want to get across?

## 2. Consider how other companies get their messages across

What tactics can you use? PR stunts, press releases, controversy, photo opportunities, comment/opinion pieces, debates, flash mobs, press trips, celebrity endorsements, competitions. There are so many ways to get noticed. Blend them to your requirements and skills.

## 3. Research your customer/audience

There is little point getting a full article page in Dog Grooming Monthly if you sell organic ice cream to boutique hotels! Find out who your ideal customer is and research what they read, listen to and watch. Then, really take the time to read these publications and get to know what sort of stories they publish.

## 4. Find the news hook

Be honest, is your story really news? Examples include: new products, new staff, new promotions, new premises, anniversaries, company expansion, financial milestones and charity efforts.

You can also provide topical comment on a newsworthy subject. Keep an eye out for issues that affect your business or your customers. This takes practice and you need to establish credibility in your subject area first. Consider starting a blog that provides

regular, lively and informed comment in your area of expertise to build your profile. I use WordPress ([www.wordpress.org](http://www.wordpress.org)), which is free.

## 5. Got a story?

Got a story? Great! Now you need a simple press release for a journalist to refer to. People worry that their efforts don't sound flashy enough to warrant attention. But you aren't aiming for a Booker Prize. You're aiming for coherent and interesting news.

Use 'who, what, when, how and why?' as a framework and imagine yourself as the journalist. Is this definitely of interest to their readers? Is it simple enough to understand? Does it stand up on its own?

I would stick to a maximum of 300 words and keep the press release focused on the news angle.

## 6. Hit them between the eyes

Journalists get hundreds of press releases every day. Ensure that the headline and first paragraph sum up the entire story in a nutshell. Ideally, your press release should still make sense even if an editor dropped two or three paragraphs.

I call the journalist beforehand to outline my story. This helps iron out any creases and demonstrates that you are trying to work with them and their audience.

## 7. Don't be tempted to start hassling

I very rarely 'chase' a journalist once I have sent a press release. If it is good enough, they will use it. Hassling will not push it to the top of the pile and may see it heading towards the recycle bin. Be patient and able to help if the journalist does come back and don't go on holiday the day after you have sent a story out!

## 8. Think in pictures

Consider what makes you read a story when you flick through a newspaper. Headlines play their part but the impact of an interesting picture is greater still. People 'sell' stories, so ensure that anyone in your shot is clearly visible and captioned. Try to

show the impact of the news – product shots are okay, but a product in the hands of a customer is better.

## 9. Build a relationship

PR is not a ‘them v us’ war with journalists. It’s a working relationship, where both parties stand to gain. They get news/insight and you get free publicity in exchange for a fresh take on things or for your role in illustrating the impact of an issue.

## 10. Measure and evaluate

How do you know if your gym regime and new diet is working? You get on the scales (peeking between your fingers). Are you getting through to the right journalists? How many stories are you sending out? How many are getting coverage? How much coverage do they get? Do your pictures and even your key messages get included? Are you being invited to comment on topical issues?

## 11. Put your PR hat on and execute the plan

I know many small businesses that freeze when it comes to actually putting their plans into action. Schedule and commit some time every week to do something that contributes to your PR campaign.

## 12. A final tip

PR agencies spend vast amounts on media monitoring software for mentions of their clients or to keep in touch with specific debates. You can do a lot of it for free. Have a play with Google Alerts ([www.google.com/alerts](http://www.google.com/alerts)).”

# Enter awards

Enter awards and competitions and enjoy the press coverage that goes with it. Many award schemes are free to enter and are targeted at young start-up businesses. Writing the entry will help to clarify your goals and vision, and winning will bring profile and prizes. To find out about upcoming awards across the UK, follow Enterprise Nation as we blog and tweet about the best of them!



Here are some to get you started:

- Shell LiveWIRE Grand Ideas Awards ([www.shell-livewire.org/awards](http://www.shell-livewire.org/awards)) – up to four awards per month of £1,000 for anyone aged 16 to 30 and looking to get an idea off the ground.
- The Pitch ([www.thepitchuk.com](http://www.thepitchuk.com)) – enter regional heats and pitch to experienced judges for a place in the national finals and a £50,000 prize. Takes place across the UK.
- Social Enterprise Awards ([www.socialenterprise.org.uk/events](http://www.socialenterprise.org.uk/events)) – celebrates social enterprises of all ages.
- Nectar Small Business Awards ([www.nectar.com/dynamic/smallbusiness](http://www.nectar.com/dynamic/smallbusiness)) – offers cash prizes and plenty of Nectar points!
- Startups Awards ([www.startups.co.uk/startups-awards](http://www.startups.co.uk/startups-awards)) – celebrating small businesses of all shapes and sizes.
- Rise To ([www.riseto.co.uk](http://www.riseto.co.uk)) – an enterprise challenge developed by the Prelude Group (backed by The Supper Club and Red Bull) that attracts entries from teams of entrepreneurial students across the country, who each have to run a campaign championing a cause that's close to their hearts (previous winners have championed teachers, midwives and paramedics). The best teams and individuals are eligible for prizes and unique work experience shadowing successful entrepreneurs.


*Karen and Richard Kemp have seen at first-hand the benefits of entering Awards, having won the title West Midlands Caterers of The Year...*

## CASE STUDY

**Name:** Karen and Richard Kemp | **Business:** Kemp and Kemp Catering

Karen and Richard Kemp were both made redundant from their high-powered jobs as the recession was beginning to take hold in 2007.

Karen was a mortgage broker, but had started out her career in advertising, at one point working for Cosmopolitan magazine, then moving into estate agency before going into commercial finance.



Richard was an accomplished archaeologist, the man behind the successful remodelling of York's famous Jorvik Viking Centre, an author of scholarly books on archaeology – but who had taken a successful sidestep into the general management of stately homes including Castle Howard in Yorkshire and Shugborough in Staffordshire.

So when the axe fell as they hit their early 50s -neither of them felt ready to sit back and let the dust settle. They decided to put their collective wisdom to good use.

Karen says:

“Before we were made redundant we had been asking ourselves if we really wanted to be wage slaves for the rest of our working lives. I had always loved cooking, Richard was a successful project manager. We realised we had perfectly complementary skill sets which would lend themselves well to starting our own business.”

In 2007 they set up the Local Tart Company from their home kitchen in Stafford, selling home-cooked tarts, pies and sausage rolls at farmers markets and food shows across the country.

“It was a great to start small and to start from home. It meant we learned about health and safety, finance and the back room stuff – as well as marketing gradually and on a smaller scale. It sounds tiny – but in three years we made 85,000 tarts retailing at around £3.50 each. We were doing very well!”

After building up a strong reputation, Karen began to be asked to cater for friends' christenings and the odd director's lunch. This is when the business changed from pie-maker to outside caterer and Kemp and Kemp Catering was born.

Richard learned IT skills and built the website. Together, they went on courses to learn basic accounting.

In its first year Kemp and Kemp catered for eight weddings, in its second that increased to 26, in 2012 there were 43 and 60+ in 2015.

The couple now have five chefs and employ up to 35 people over busy weekends which can often see up to four weddings over a jam-packed summer.

“We have a great team of self-employed chefs and use the same local agency every time for our back room and waiting staff.”

They now have their own catering unit in nearby Stone where all their bespoke wedding menus are freshly prepared from locally-sourced ingredients. This is one tasty success story.

**[kempandkempcatering.co.uk](http://kempandkempcatering.co.uk) | [@kempandkempctrig](https://www.instagram.com/kempandkempctrig)**

### Karen's words of wisdom

- *“Don't borrow money unless you really need to. Build slowly and organically.”*
- *“When you start you are time-rich. Teach yourself the skills you'll need and tap into the rich vein of advice that's out there.”*
- *“Don't get fixated on that shiny new van or piece of equipment. We've only just invested in a van. Don't spend it before you've earned it.”*
- *“You have to be prepared to dig deep to be in business. No one else is going to make it happen for you.”*

## Host an event

Invite the press to come and meet you. This doesn't have to be an expensive affair; the secret is partnering with others who could benefit from being in front of your audience. Approach a venue and ask if you can host at no cost, in exchange for the venue receiving profile. Do the same with caterers. Then give invited guests a reason to attend – have a theme, an interesting speaker, a launch announcement, something that will grab their attention and encourage them to attend.

Make use of free online services such as Eventbrite (**[www.eventbrite.com](http://www.eventbrite.com)**) or Meetup (**[www.meetup.com](http://www.meetup.com)**) to send out invites and receive RSVPs.

# Successful events in 5 steps – by Eventbrite

## 1. Planning = winning

Plan your event so you don't forget anything important. When will the event be held? When do you need to find a venue? When will tickets go on sale? When will you find sponsors by? When do you need materials delivered?

## 2. Take it online

Create an event page on Eventbrite so you can manage sign ups and communicate with attendees in one place. You can create custom URLs, promo codes and even different ticket types, such as an early bird rate.

## 3. Partner up

Start-ups grow and thrive off the back of collaborations. Put your event idea to contacts in the same space or at a similar stage and make it a group effort.

## 4. Get people talking

Be remarkable! Get creative and find a USP – an unusual venue, theme or format – so people remember your event. Once that's sorted, make the most of Eventbrite's social media integration to share your event... everywhere! And don't forget to create a Twitter hashtag so attendees can spread the word for you. #Bonus!

## 5. Stay in touch

The event doesn't end when guests leave. Write follow up emails, newsletters, tweets, or connect on LinkedIn, and thank guests for attending. Encourage them to stay in touch and add them to your email list so they are in the loop about your next great event!

## Attend events

Be seen and heard by getting out and about – a lot!

There's a wealth of events for start-ups. Most are free or low cost and offer an opportunity to learn from experts, mix with peers, and find new customers and suppliers

Enterprise Nation hosts a whole range of events throughout the year designed to help you start and grow. We'd love to see you at some of them! They range from one day class StartUp Saturday, to international Go Global trade missions and monthly workshops on the topics that matter to you most.

There's also...

- Global Entrepreneurship Week (November each year) | [www.gew.org.uk](http://www.gew.org.uk)
- NACUE events at universities and colleges | [nacue.com](http://nacue.com)
- StartUp Weekend: hosted in locations across the UK | [www.startupweekend.org](http://www.startupweekend.org)
- The Business StartUp Show | [www.bstartup.com](http://www.bstartup.com)

## Join a society, group or club

Signing up to an enterprise society, a local business club or network is good for business (and your social life). Check out these national business and society networks to find your natural fit:

- Enterprise Nation – a friendly community of business owners who benefit from daily content with members receiving profile, free eBooks, member meet-ups consultations with advisors, online masterclasses and a voice to government. [www.enterprisenation.com](http://www.enterprisenation.com)
- 4Networking–nationalnetworkofbusinessbreakfastgroups.[www.4networking.biz](http://www.4networking.biz)
- NACUE – the national organisation that supports and represents student-led enterprise societies and young entrepreneurs in universities and colleges across the UK. [www.nacue.com](http://www.nacue.com)

- The Gazelle Group – 20-plus further education colleges focused on developing entrepreneurial students and environments. [www.thegazellegroup.com](http://www.thegazellegroup.com)
- Young Entrepreneur Society – founded by young entrepreneur Carly Ward, this is a network that offers education and monthly events to budding business owners. [www.yesnetwork.co.uk](http://www.yesnetwork.co.uk)
- IPSE – if contracting is the life for you, check out the free resources and events hosted by PCG. [www.ipse.co.uk](http://www.ipse.co.uk)
- Virgin Media Pioneers – create a profile and connect with others, plus have the opportunity to pitch to Sir Richard Branson himself via this vibrant network of young entrepreneurs. [www.virginmediapioneers.com](http://www.virginmediapioneers.com)

As your business grows, why not offer to go and speak to those younger than you who dream of following in your footsteps? Do so by linking up with:

- Peter Jones Enterprise Academy – started by *Dragons' Den* entrepreneur Peter Jones, the academy offers a full-time educational course and qualification in enterprise and entrepreneurship for 16–19 year olds. [www.pjea.org.uk](http://www.pjea.org.uk)
- Young Enterprise – a charity that helps 250,000 young people every year to learn more about business. [www.young-enterprise.org.uk](http://www.young-enterprise.org.uk)
- School Speakers – started by entrepreneur and *Apprentice* TV star Claire Young, this organisation matches enterprising and inspiring speakers with schools. [www.schoolspeakers.co.uk](http://www.schoolspeakers.co.uk)
- Inspiring the Future – deliver an enterprising talk at a local school and pass on lessons learned. [www.inspiringthefuture.org](http://www.inspiringthefuture.org)

## Attend trade shows

Promote your brand by attending the shows your customers attend. Research the best shows by reading industry magazines and visiting online forums where people in your sector are talking.

## Trade show tactics

### Before the event

- Negotiate a good deal – if you're prepared to wait it out, the best deals on stands can be had days before the event is starting. The closer the date, the better the price you'll negotiate as the sales team hurry to get a full house.
- Tell people you're going – circulate news that you'll be at the event through online networks (giving your location or stand number) and issue a press release if you're doing something newsworthy at the event, maybe launching a new product, having a guest appearance, running a competition, etc.

### At the event

- Be clear on the offer – determine what you are selling at the show and let this be consistent across show materials; from pop-up stands to flyers. Be creative with the stand to keep costs low. Pop-up banners can be bought for £45 each from companies like Demonprint ([www.demonprint.co.uk](http://www.demonprint.co.uk)). Consider offering a supply of mouth-watering refreshments and branded accessories like pens, bags and t-shirts which can be ordered from companies like Vistaprint ([www.vistaprint.co.uk](http://www.vistaprint.co.uk)).
- Collect data – find ways to collect attendees' names and details. Offer a prize in exchange for business cards or take details in exchange for a follow-up information pack or offer. Some events also offer the facility to scan the details from the delegates' badges (for a fee).
- Take friends/family – invite a supportive team. If you're busy talking to a potential customer, you'll want others on the stand who can be doing the same. If there's time, get to know the exhibitors around you.
- Be prepared – wear comfortable shoes, bring some spare clothes and pack your lunch; if you're busy there may not be time to spend buying food and drink!

### After the event

- Follow-up – within a couple of days of returning from the show, contact the people who expressed interest so that interest can be turned into sales.

- Plan ahead – if the show delivered a good return, contact the organisers and ask to be considered for a speaking slot or higher profile at the next event, and confirm your willingness to be a case study testimonial story in any post-show promotion.

## Become an expert

If you have a special set of knowledge or experience, set yourself up as an expert in your field and the media will come knocking on your door. Here are eight ways in which you can promote your expertise.

### 1. Publish a book

Become a published author on your special topic. Utilise the book as a business development tool, taking copies to events, and offering free and downloadable versions to potential customers. Being an author lends you credibility and gives customers information and insight. Get in touch with publishers and agents via *The Writer's & Artist's Yearbook*, or self-publish:

- Blurb | [www.blurb.com](http://www.blurb.com)
- Lulu | [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com)
- Ubyu | [www.ubyubooks.com](http://www.ubyubooks.com)

### 2. Present yourself

Put yourself forward to speak at events (consider asking for a fee and/or costs to be covered) or suggest being a satellite speaker, where you are beamed in via video link-up, so saving the effort and expense of travel. Invite customers and prospects and make the presentation openly available via SlideShare or Prezi.

- SlideShare | [www.slideshare.net](http://www.slideshare.net)
- Prezi | [www.prezi.com](http://www.prezi.com)



### 3. Host a webinar

Share your expertise or demonstrate a process by hosting a webinar or visual presentation where a live audience can see you and interact. Achieve this via platforms such as GoToMeeting, GoToWebinar and WebEx, and remember to host it at a time that suits your target audience.

- GoToMeeting | [www.gotomeeting.com](http://www.gotomeeting.com)
- GoToWebinar | [www.gotomeeting.com/webinar](http://www.gotomeeting.com/webinar)
- WebEx | [www.webex.co.uk](http://www.webex.co.uk)

### 4. Produce a film

Maybe the word ‘film’ is a little ambitious but why not create your own video content and have a sponsored series of guides (or other content) that can be uploaded to video sharing sites such as YouTube, Vimeo and eHow?

- YouTube | [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)
- Vimeo | [www.vimeo.com](http://www.vimeo.com)
- eHow | [www.ehow.co.uk](http://www.ehow.co.uk)

### 5. Broadcast a podcast

For customers who like to listen to what you have to say at a time that suits them, upload a podcast with top tips, interviews and your thoughts of the day. Make it available on your site, iTunes and Podcast Alley to be sure of a wide audience. Follow the advice below from podcast producer San Sharma on how to record a podcast on a Skype call.

- Submit a podcast to the iTunes store | [www.apple.com/itunes/podcasts](http://www.apple.com/itunes/podcasts)
- Podcast Alley | [www.podcastalley.com](http://www.podcastalley.com)

*You can produce a podcast interview using Skype, Pamela Call Recorder, and a little editing know-how. San Sharma shows how it's done, in five simple steps:*

1. “Sign up for a free Skype account ([www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com)) and download the Skype software.
2. If you’re using a Windows machine, download Pamela Call Recorder ([www.pamela.biz](http://www.pamela.biz)), which lets you record your Skype calls. If you’re on a Mac, you can download Call Recorder for Skype ([www.ecamm.com](http://www.ecamm.com)). Both have free trial versions, but only cost around £13 when that’s expired.
3. Call up your interviewee using Skype. If they’re a Skype user, too, that will be a free call but if they’re on a fixed or mobile line, you’ll need to get some Skype Credit ([secure.skype.com/en/calling-rates](http://secure.skype.com/en/calling-rates)).
4. Once you’ve made a connection and agreed with the interviewee the format of the conversation, hit the record button on your call recorder software and you’re off!
5. Edit using Audacity ([audacity.sourceforge.net](http://audacity.sourceforge.net)), which is free for Windows and Macs, or with GarageBand ([www.apple.com/garageband](http://www.apple.com/garageband)), which comes with most Macs (you can also buy it as part of the iLife package).
6. The easiest way to share your recording is by uploading it to AudioBoo ([www.audioboo.com](http://www.audioboo.com)), which lets people listen to it on the web, embedded on your website or via iTunes or a mobile phone.”

## 6. Deliver training

Whether your skill is in embroidering handmade shoes or developing stylish websites, your knowledge could be shared with others. Rather than seeing this as surrendering intelligence to potential competitors, offer instruction you’re comfortable with that will create fans and followers who will learn from you, buy from you and, critically, encourage others to do the same. Check out platforms GoToTraining, WebEx and Blackboard, encourage contacts to sign up and then after the demonstration you have a chance to follow up with a group of new contacts.

- GoToTraining | [www.gotomeeting.com/fec/training/online\\_training](http://www.gotomeeting.com/fec/training/online_training)
- WebEx WebTraining | [www.webex.co.uk](http://www.webex.co.uk)
- Blackboard | [www.blackboard.com](http://www.blackboard.com)

## 7. Develop an app

Take your content and make an iPhone app. Turn to browser-based platforms such as Appmakr; “AppMakr can be used by anyone with existing content and fans or customers to reach; bloggers/writers, business owners, website owners...”.

You can either set a list price to make sales via the App Store or make it available free of charge.

- AppMakr | [www.appmakr.com](http://www.appmakr.com)

## 8. Form groups

Encourage others to discuss, debate and contribute to your content by forming groups utilising social media platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Ning. Bonding interested people to each other will bond them ever closer to you, the content creator and group host.

- Facebook | [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)
- LinkedIn | [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)
- Ning | [www.ning.com](http://www.ning.com)

**BE EVERYWHERE:** *Keep in touch with existing customers via a newsletter and reach out to the new by making regular appearances at events, on other people's websites and blogs, in newspapers and magazines, and on radio and TV. Write to the magazines and radio stations that ask people to send in their story. It's a free way to get coverage. The more you're covered, the more you'll be invited to speak and comment, and before you know it, you'll be everywhere!*

## Price point

These options will raise your profile but you can also generate revenue from them. Your options are:

- make your content and knowledge available at no charge to customers, to build your reputation as the go-to person and place for a particular product or service
- charge for access/downloads/viewing and turn your micropublishing activity into a revenue stream in its own right.

This is something you can assess over time. Start with a mix of charged-for and free content, ensure you're providing good value and incentives for your community to remain interested and engaged, and the options to introduce charged-for content will increase.

## Embrace social media

Thanks to social media, there have never been so many tools to promote our businesses free of charge. According to research company Nielsen, the world now spends over 110 billion minutes on social networks and blogs per month. That's 22% of all time online, or one in every four and a half minutes. Embrace this and your business will become known. Here are the key tools to use and, crucially, how best to use them.

### Facebook

Facebook has over 1 billion users worldwide, so if you need to be where your customers are, there's a good chance some of them will be there!

You can list on Facebook for free and/or advertise on the site and select target audience based on location, sex, age and interests. As an advertiser, you control how much you want to spend and set a daily budget. The minimum budget is US \$1.00 (63p) a day. After designing your ad(s), decide for how long you want the campaign to run and whether you want to be charged for the number of clicks you receive (CPC – charge per click) or the number of times your ad is displayed. Visit [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com), create an account, invite friends and contacts to join your group and get promoting.

Download the free eBook *Boost your Business on Facebook* from the Enterprise Nation bookshop: [www.enterprisenation.com/books](http://www.enterprisenation.com/books).

- **Cost:** free (ads are charged-for)

## Twitter

Visit [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com), create an account, follow friends and contacts (and their followers) and get tweeting.

- **Cost:** free

## How to be a success on Twitter

Twitter expert Mark Shaw ([@markshaw](https://twitter.com/@markshaw)) shares his four top tips that will have you tweeting like a pro:

1. “Be committed. Add a good photo, perhaps a bespoke background, your URL and an interesting bio. Try and differentiate yourself and make sure the bio contains keywords so that others can find you.
2. Be consistent. Show up each day and tweet, even if time is short. It’s more important to do a small amount each day than lots one day and then nothing for a week or so.
3. Be interesting. Try and tweet three types of messages: social chit-chat; the sharing of resources, links, tools, info, ideas and opinions; and tweets that answer questions which demonstrate your knowledge. Aim for a good balance.
4. Be interested. Engage with others by answering questions and joining in. Find conversations to enter into via [search.twitter.com](https://search.twitter.com) and retweet (RT) other people’s messages if they are of interest to you and your followers. It’s not about selling things but it is all about building your brand and credibility.”

## Instagram

Join [www.instagram.com](http://www.instagram.com) and promote yourself visually by uploading photos of you and your products or service, and maybe even a few shots of happy customers. The site also carries video clips so you can show:

- events you host, speak at, or attend
- products you make (the finished product) as well as images of the production process

- happy customers wearing/using/enjoying your products and services
- your workspace
- your family (if you – and they – feel comfortable showing your personal side).

You can also easily pull the photos into your blog and social media pages.

- **Cost:** free (option to upgrade to a pro account which is a paid-for package)

## LinkedIn

Referring to itself as “the world’s largest professional network”, LinkedIn has over 100 million members in 200-plus countries. Visit [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com), create an account and start connecting with contacts and finding new ones. Form LinkedIn groups around your specialist subject.

- **Cost:** free (option to upgrade to a business account, which is a paid-for package)

## YouTube

YouTube is the world’s most popular online video community, with 24 hours of video uploaded every minute. Start your own business channel for free, and upload videos profiling you and your work.

Create an account ([www.youtube.com/create\\_account](http://www.youtube.com/create_account)), start a channel (advice via YouTube video!), and start broadcasting to the world. You can give each of your videos a name and assign keywords to it to help with searching, plus you can have a short description of your company on your profile page. Again, these clips are very easy to add to your website, and they help keep the content fresh and interesting.

- **Cost:** free

## Pinterest

Pinterest is a virtual pinboard that lets users organise and share the beautiful things they find on the web. Big brands and small businesses have taken to Pinterest to pin pictures of their products to virtual ‘pinboards’. More powerfully, customers are pinning their favourite products – and doing some of the marketing work for them!

The site has just over 2 million daily active users. Head to [tinyurl.com/ENPinterest](https://tinyurl.com/ENPinterest) to view other Pinteresting facts and figures.

- **Cost:** free

### **TOTAL BUDGET REQUIRED FOR ONLINE PROMOTION: £0**

## Measure the results

Time to measure what's working and what's not. Measure media and press mentions through signing up to Google Alerts – and you'll be pleased to know there's a whole host of tools that are free to use and will show real-time results for what's working on your site.

Google Analytics offers intelligence on your website traffic and marketing effectiveness: [www.google.com/analytics](https://www.google.com/analytics)

There are other analytics options:

- Alexa – web traffic metrics, site demographics and top URL listings: [www.alexa.com](https://www.alexa.com)
- Clicky – monitors and analyses your site traffic in real time: [www.getclicky.com](https://www.getclicky.com)
- Opentracker – gather and analyse web stats and monitor online visitors: [www.opentracker.net](https://www.opentracker.net)
- StatCounter – an invisible web tracker and hit counter that offers data in real time: [www.statcounter.com](https://www.statcounter.com)

Hopefully what you will see is an upward curve of visitors and time spent on the site.

If you're selling anything, then hopefully this means more sales. If your site is the business, this means you're in a strong position to attract advertisers and begin doing affiliate deals.

**MONKEYING AROUND:** *Run a poll with, for example, Wufoo ([www.wufoo.com](http://www.wufoo.com)) or Survey Monkey ([www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)). Both are free to use, then publish the results via a press release and online. The media loves good polls!*

Look out, in particular, for the sources of your traffic (which are your highest referring sites) and your most popular pages. You can see days where your site receives spikes in visitor levels (and track this back to marketing) and measure if visitors are spending longer periods on the site and which times are popular, e.g. weekends, evenings, lunchtimes, etc.





## PART III. Grow

With marketing and sales underway, you are getting known and making money. Now it's time to grow your profits by outsourcing, keeping the business in balance, staying on top of cash flow and getting some good support.



## 13. Attract Customers Back

You are making sales via your site and developing a strong community of fans and followers. Give visitors and customers a reason to return with content that is regularly updated.

If you have a blog, try to post regularly, and if you're selling, keep the product range updated. Give your site some TLC each day, as fresh content will attract visitors who want to see what's new and will also appeal to the trawling web spiders who determine search engine results.

### **User-generated content**

Encourage your site visitors to get to know each other through a forum or comment boxes. Before you know it, a sense of community will develop and visitors will log on each day to find out who's saying what and what's happening with whom.

### **Exclusive offers**

Extend offers to your existing customers, readers or members that will tempt them back. This offer could be conditional on customers referring a friend: that way your customer returns to the site with others in tow. Add to this with a badge of honour; design an icon that visitors can display on their own site to show their affiliation with you.

## **Guest appearances**

Invite special guests to appear on your site via guest blog posts, hosting a webchat or a featured interview.

## **Keep in touch**

Communicate all these good and sticky things to your users through a regular e-newsletter powered by sites such as MailChimp ([www.mailchimp.com](http://www.mailchimp.com)), Constant Contact ([www.constantcontact.com](http://www.constantcontact.com)) or AWeber Communications ([www.aweber.com](http://www.aweber.com)).

## **Email marketing: keep it clean, keep it simple, keep it relevant**

Email marketing works best when it is targeted. This means keeping your lists clean and organising them according to previous customer contact. A well-segmented list means you can send more frequent campaigns, ensuring a steady flow of business, without worrying about clogging up inboxes. Keep your email designs clean and simple – making it easier for your customer to make informed buying decisions in a snap.



## 14. Focus On What You Do Best and Outsource the Rest

The business is growing, time is your most precious resource and you are in need of help. The quickest and most affordable place to get it is from other companies with whom you can partner to get projects done, as well as from expert advisors and mentors who will offer advice on how the business can continue to grow.

With outsourcing you can free yourself up to dedicate your attention to sales, strategy or whatever the business activity is that you do best. My advice to all businesses is always: *focus on what you do best and outsource the rest.*

### What can be outsourced and to whom?

#### Admin

Hire a VA (virtual assistant) to do the admin tasks you don't want or don't have the time to do. Find skilled VAs via sites such as

- Worldwideror | [worldwide101.com](http://worldwide101.com)

and

- Time Etc | [www.timeetc.com](http://www.timeetc.com)

## Accounts

Unless you are in the accountancy business, this is almost a must to be outsourced. Monthly payroll, accounts, VAT returns and corporate tax returns all take time and it's time you can't afford or simply don't have. A cost/benefit analysis is likely to show that it's cheaper to outsource to a qualified accountant. Ask around for recommendations of accountants in your area who deliver a quality service at a competitive cost and are registered with the Institute of Chartered Accountants for England and Wales (ICAEW). As mentioned earlier, you can benefit from up to three free consultations with ICAEW accountants via the Business Advice Service ([www.businessadvice.service.com](http://www.businessadvice.service.com)).

## PR, marketing and design

Outsource your PR to a specialist who can be pitching and promoting the business whilst you're at work. Find skilled professionals on directory sites such as Enterprise Nation ([www.enterprisenation.com](http://www.enterprisenation.com)), oDesk ([www.odesk.com](http://www.odesk.com)) and PeoplePerHour ([www.peopleperhour.com](http://www.peopleperhour.com)).

## Sales

Hire a sales expert to make calls, set up appointments and attend trade shows. Find these professionals online, contact telemarketing companies that offer outbound sales calls as a service, or look at sales specialists such as Winning Sales ([www.winningsales.co.uk](http://www.winningsales.co.uk)).

## Customer service

Looking after customers is vital, but even that can be outsourced. Get Satisfaction's tagline is "people-powered customer service" – it provides a web-hosted platform, much like a forum, where customers can ask questions, suggest improvements, report a problem or give praise. This and other online customer satisfaction tools can save you time and money by having the power of the crowd take care of customer questions!

- Get Satisfaction | [www.getsatisfaction.com](http://www.getsatisfaction.com)

- Zen Desk | [www.zendesk.com](http://www.zendesk.com)

## IT

Spending too many hours trying to fix a single IT problem? Outsource the hassle and save your time, money and blood pressure. Find IT professionals online via the Enterprise Nation marketplace. [www.enterprisenation.com/marketplace](http://www.enterprisenation.com/marketplace)

## Steps to successful outsourcing

### Do the groundwork

Spend some time working on the task yourself so you've built foundations before handing it over to someone else. For example, if you outsource sales then have a ready-made contacts list and some open doors that the specialist can build on, rather than starting from scratch. This will make it more cost-effective for you and means that they hit the ground running.

### Be clear on the brief

Having spent some time doing the task yourself, you will have a clear idea of the brief. Back to the example of outsourcing sales, if you've spent 6–12 months sourcing leads and making contacts, you'll have a much clearer idea of the type of work the specialist should do.

The clearer the brief, the better the results.

### Take your time

And take references. Spend time evaluating the specialists in the market and, if you can, talk to their existing clients. Do they have the industry experience you're after? Will they represent your brand in a professional manner? Have they delivered a good job for other clients? When an outsourced arrangement works well, the partner becomes part of your team – so choose them as carefully as you would choose an employee.

## Let go!

Outsourcing means having to let go a little. Someone else becomes accountable for these results. Embrace this rather than resist it. As the business owner you remain in ultimate control but the expert will need their own space in which to flourish. Outsourcing can save you time and help make you money. Finding the right partner, on the right terms, will make you feel like a new and liberated person.

## Form teams

Once you've chosen your outsourced partner(s), it's important to keep in regular contact and work together as a team. There are a number of online project management and collaboration tools to help you stay on top of projects and in control of the company.

- Basecamp ([www.basecamp.com](http://www.basecamp.com)) is the project management tool we rely on at Enterprise Nation. This is a top-class product that allows you to create projects, invite people to view them, upload files and make comments. It's effective online project management that can be accessed from anywhere.
- Share documents via Google Docs ([docs.google.com](http://docs.google.com)). You can edit on the move, choose who accesses documents and share changes in real time.
- Huddle ([www.huddle.com](http://www.huddle.com)) offers simple and secure online workspaces. Huddle is hosted, so there's no software to download and it's free to get started.

## Solutions to enable group-talk

- GoToMeeting | [www.gotomeeting.com](http://www.gotomeeting.com)

Work with anyone, anywhere with this easy to use online meeting tool.

- Ketchup | [www.useketchup.com](http://www.useketchup.com)

Share and record meeting notes.

- Powwownow | [www.powwownow.co.uk](http://www.powwownow.co.uk)

Free conference calling at 'open access' level. Priced packages available.

- OmniJoin | [webconferencing.brother.co.uk](https://webconferencing.brother.co.uk)

Hold secure and reliable meetings in high definition video and high quality VoIP (Voice over IP) audio with up to 50 people.

## Form partnerships

If relationships develop, you may decide to form a partnership. Consider writing a partnership agreement as your pre-nup in business. At the outset of a relationship, all is good and you're excited about the potential, but it's best to be safe; have the terms written and agreed so that all parties are clear on expectations.

The following should not be taken as concrete legal advice, more of a guideline on how to draw up an agreement.

### Scope of agreement

What is your partnership working to achieve? For example, "This agreement is made between Company A and Company B. The agreement is related to the generation of online advertising revenues/hosting of an event/development of a new product."

### Respective responsibilities

Set out the expectations on who does what. For example, Company A will be responsible for promotion and business development and Company B will take on technical development and client care. Also include a note of how you'll keep each other briefed, maybe through the use of an online project management tool.

### Finances

What will be the split in revenue, and is this before or after costs? And who owns the intellectual property of the product/service/activity? Consider including a clause that states the agreement will be reviewed in six months so that both parties can check on progress and have the right to cease the agreement if it hasn't gone as planned.



## **Be fair**

Agreements where both parties feel that they're receiving their fair share are likely to be longer-lasting than those when one party feels embittered. Talk about this before writing and concluding the agreement. Make sure there's no resentment or sense of being exploited on either side.

## **Sign it!**

After making the effort to produce an agreement, be sure to sign it! And then store it so that you can access it easily if the need arises.

When writing the clauses in your agreement, think about all the things that could go wrong and safeguard against them. It's a practical exercise and won't harm your newly formed business relationship but will get it off on a firm footing. If you're looking for a template agreement, check out sites such as **[www.clickdocs.co.uk](http://www.clickdocs.co.uk)**.

**BUSINESS OWNER PLUS ONE:** *When the business is at a stage to take on its first new employee, visit the 'Growing your business' section of the GOV.UK site (**[www.gov.uk/growing-your-business/hire-and-train-staff](http://www.gov.uk/growing-your-business/hire-and-train-staff)**), which offers details on how to employ and your obligations as an employer over time.*



# 15. Keep the Business in Balance

As the business continues to grow, you will want to maintain momentum and grow at a comfortable pace. Achieve this by following what I call ‘the golden triangle’, which will keep you and the business in balance. This requires spending roughly a third of your time on three key things:

## 1. Customer care

Look after your customers by delivering a quality product or service, on time and within budget. And remember... the customer is always right!

I ask clients for feedback so that I can keep a check on what they’re thinking and changes they’d like to see. It’s good to know some personal details about your customers, too. (Maybe their birthday, their favourite hobby.) As you gather these details, make a quick note so you can send a birthday card on the right date, etc. Don’t go overboard, but showing that you care certainly won’t harm your relationship.

Offer customers good service, regular communication and an innovative line of products and services. It will stand you in good stead.

## 2. New business

Taking care of customers means taking care of sales. Why? Because it costs less to win business from existing customers than it does to find new ones. If customers

are happy, they'll say good things about you to new and potential customers. This is called word-of-mouth marketing and achieving it is every business owner's dream!

Secure new clients through marketing, encouraging recommendations, and direct-sales calls and pitches.

### 3. Admin

Not as enjoyable as the first two, but it still has to be done. Keep the books in order by raising invoices in good time, being on top of cash flow, and filing tax returns and company documents on time and in order. In short, keep the finances in check and the books up-to-date.

#### **Cash is king**

In *9. Starting on a Budget and Straightforward Finance* we looked at the topic of straightforward finance and how to plan income and outgoings.

Keep an eye on the accounts so you can see how much money is in the bank, how much is owed and whether this covers your outgoings.

This is a vital part of running your business and something you will need to keep close tabs on especially at the start. Monitor this using your accounting software and online banking. It's a very well-worn phrase in business, but cash is most definitely king.

#### **Getting paid and paying others**

A key part in managing your cash flow is making sure you get paid and get paid promptly. How you get paid will depend quite a lot on the type of business you have and whether you are selling direct to customers or to other businesses. If selling directly, you will mostly be paid immediately. If you are dealing with other businesses, the chances are most will expect to pay on invoice (more on this below) and will expect a credit period in which to pay. Be prepared to offer credit terms, but be careful about how long you give, how much credit you'll allow and who you offer this to.

If you need to buy in products or services from others as part of your business it's always worth seeing if you too can arrange credit terms with suppliers. This should help you balance payments in and out. This isn't always easy at the start and you may have to pay upfront to begin with, but it is something to ask for. Having built up a good relationship with your supplier it should be a natural next step.

## **Invoices**

Be on time with invoicing and keep a record of amounts outstanding. I have a simple spreadsheet with five columns labelled 'client', 'invoice amount', 'invoice number', 'date submitted' and 'date paid'.

- Your invoices should be a simple document with basic details. The less cause for question on the invoice, the faster it will be paid.
- Always find out in advance who should be named on the invoice, where it should be sent and whether you need to include any sort of order reference number. When dealing with large companies in particular, this sort of thing can make a big difference to how quickly you get paid.
- Settle invoices as promptly as you can. Your suppliers should be grateful and repay you with good service.

*See the next page for an example invoice.*

Hopefully your clients and customers will always pay promptly, but occasionally you might need to remind them. Do this politely and clearly. It's often sensible to send a monthly statement to a client detailing any outstanding invoices, and usually that's enough to spur them into action.

You can balance the budget with a piece of accounting software.

## **Receipts**

Keep business-related receipts in a place where they're easy to find. I have a big wicker box that I use as a collecting place for receipts. It's helpful that they're all in one place when it's time to do the VAT return.

## Track your time with time-tracking software

- Cashboard | [www.getcashboard.com](http://www.getcashboard.com)
- Four Four Time | [www.fourfourtime.co.uk](http://www.fourfourtime.co.uk)
- TraxTime | [www.spudcity.com/traxtime](http://www.spudcity.com/traxtime)

## Sample invoice

1. Name of your contact
2. The date
3. An address to which the cheque shall be sent or bank details for accounts in which monies should be deposited
4. Company registration and VAT number (if applicable)
5. Invoice number and client's purchase order (PO) number
6. Payment terms (e.g. payable within 30 days of receipt), and by cheque, transfer, etc.
7. A brief product description or summary of services
8. Amount owing (inclusive or exclusive of VAT, depending on whether you're registered).
9. I think it's good practice to include a cover note, too, that confirms what's being invoiced and thanks the client for their custom.



YOUR SMALL BUSINESS

# Invoice

1. Attention: Joe Smith  
Managing Director  
A. N. Other Small Business  
321 First Street  
Anytown, County AB1 2CD  
Date 29/01/2012

2.

3.

Your small business address  
123 Second Street  
Anothertown, County AB2 3CD  
T 01234 567 8910  
F 01234 567 8911  
you@youremailaddress.com  
http://www.yourwebsite.com/

4.

Your company registration  
VAT no. 12345678910

PROJECT TITLE: A. N. Other Small Business website  
PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Redesign of business website  
INVOICE NUMBER: 01  
TERMS: 30 days

5.

6.

8.

7.

Description	Amount owed
Graphic design	£1,500.00
Programming	£2,000.00
Hosting	£500.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£4,000.00</b>

Please make cheque payable to Your Name and deliver to the address printed on this invoice.

Sincerely yours,

Your Name



# 16. Support

All of the success stories in this kit have spoken of the valuable support received from friends, family, advisors and experienced entrepreneurs.

Ask questions at every opportunity and build a support network. Here's where to look for people who are happy to help.

## Peers

Who better to turn to than those going through the same experience as you? Visit Enterprise Nation to join the UK's most active small business community.

## Mentors

Find a mentor through making a direct approach to experts, professionals and business owners you admire and respect. Or source one via government website [Mentorsme.co.uk](https://mentorsme.co.uk) or head out to events to find them in person.

And don't restrict yourself to one mentor! I have learnt from many people as my businesses have passed through different stages of development. My approach was to get in touch with the person I felt best placed to have the answer, take on board their views, consider my options, and then act.

In my view, the ideal mentor is someone who possesses four things:

1. experience of your industry/sector
2. the ability to listen
3. the technical skills to advise
4. a willingness to make introductions to useful contacts.

If you can find these in one person, you are very fortunate indeed.

One of the finest things a mentor can do is allow you to talk. By doing so, you often work out the answer. Sometimes you just need an experienced sounding board.

## Accelerate!

And finally... if you want to give your business an extra injection and growth spurt, check out some of the 'Accelerators' launched by companies to give you space, funding and access to mentors, technology and customers.

- Wayra | [wayra.org/en](http://wayra.org/en)
- Accelerator Academy | [www.acceleratoracademy.com](http://www.acceleratoracademy.com)
- The Bakery | [www.thebakerylondon.com](http://www.thebakerylondon.com)
- Collider 13 | [collider13.com/about](http://collider13.com/about)
- New Entrepreneurs Foundation | [www.newentrepreneursfoundation.co.uk](http://www.newentrepreneursfoundation.co.uk)
- Entrepreneur First | [www.entrepreneurfirst.org.uk](http://www.entrepreneurfirst.org.uk)
- TechStars | [www.techstars.com/program/locations/london](http://www.techstars.com/program/locations/london)
- Microsoft BizSpark | [www.microsoft.com/BizSpark](http://www.microsoft.com/BizSpark)
- GrowthAccelerator | [www.growthaccelerator.com](http://www.growthaccelerator.com)
- Level 39 | [www.level39.co](http://www.level39.co)
- The Grocery Accelerator | [groceryaccelerator.co.uk](http://groceryaccelerator.co.uk)





# The Best of Luck

**Y**ou've read the stories, devoured the tips and completed the templates. It's time to take your own idea, passion, hobby or skill, and turn it into a business.

I hope what you've picked up from this kit is that regardless of your age, background or sector, if you're starting out as your own boss there's support all around. In whichever direction you turn, you'll find people to cheer you along and answer your questions; you'll find loans on offer and resources on tap.

Make the most of this support and never be afraid to seek help or approach mentors. With guidance from those who've trodden the entrepreneurial path, you will find your own way and build a future that offers financial reward and freedom in your working life.

Start-ups are most definitely the new rock stars and I see no sign of this wearing out any time soon. Big companies want to be seen alongside you and customers want to buy from you. These are good conditions in which to start a new venture.

So, now it's over to you. And even though this farewell is entitled 'Best of Luck', one of my favourite quotes is one that's well known and came from golf pro Gary Player, who said: "The harder I practise, the luckier I get."

My advice to you: go practise and get lucky!

**Emma Jones | @emmaljones**



# How Enterprise Nation Can Help

Enterprise Nation helps thousands of people in the UK turn their good ideas into great businesses.

There's lots of free advice on our website and events, where you can get together with other start-ups and would-be entrepreneurs to learn from experience and from experts. You'll find essential business books too.

And when you join Enterprise Nation, you get 25% off everything, as well as free meet-ups and exclusive benefits.

Find out more at [www.enterprisenation.com](http://www.enterprisenation.com).



# With Thanks

To the following people who have contributed their expertise, story or tip in the compilation of this kit:

## The start-ups

Tea Huggers

Jealous Sweets

Boatwork

Our Camden

Tilly and the Buttons

Shakespuss

Stow London

Thread Squirrel

Pinucci

Vrumi

Kemp and Kemp Catering

## Experts

Tamsin Fox-Davies | **Constant Contact**

Katie McPhee | **Eventbrite**

Laura Rigney | **Pitcher House**

Mark Shaw | **Twitter expert**

Greg Simpson | **Press For Attention**

Jackie Wade | **Winning Sales**

Dan Wilson | **Tamebay**

Joanna Tall | **Off To See My Lawyer**

Andy Yates | **Angel investor**