



20 Steps to Starting a Business

https://www.incorporate.com/completing_startup_tasks.html

New businesses face many challenges, from planning and licensing to opening bank accounts and creating a company website. Regardless of where you are in the process, The Company Corporation can help. Follow each step on our checklist to stay on the right track.

1. **Write a business plan.** Form goals and objectives for your new company. A successful start to any business requires a detailed outline of what you plan to accomplish.
2. **Obtain start-up capital.** Whether you use your own savings or obtain loans, starting a business requires money. The loan process can take months to complete, so start early. Lenders often request a completed business plan prior to approval of funding.
3. **Set up a legal business structure.** Forming a corporation or LLC can protect owners' personal assets from business debts. Additionally, incorporating can provide credibility and tax benefits. Let The Company Corporation help you [incorporate or form an LLC online](#).
4. **Register "Doing Business As" names.** Will your corporation or LLC do business under a name other than its legal name filed with the Secretary of State? If so, it must file a DBA (Doing Business As) name. We can help you [file your DBA name](#).
5. **Appoint a Registered Agent.** Businesses must maintain an address for service of process where legal documents can be received. The Company Corporation provides Registered Agent service for all companies that we form.
6. **Protect your company's name.** Businesses file names on a per-state basis, so other companies may be using the same or a similar name in other states. Conducting a [trademark search](#) ensures that your unique company name isn't already in use.
7. **Obtain a Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN).** Incorporated businesses and companies that hire employees must obtain an EIN. The Company Corporation includes this service in our Premium formation package. You can also [order an EIN separately](#).
8. **Satisfy business licensing requirements.** The Company Corporation provides a [Business License Compliance Package](#) to identify typical requirements for your business activities. Most state, county, and local governments require businesses to obtain licensing before they begin to operate. We can provide you with the application forms and contact information for the appropriate agencies.
9. **Draft internal documents for the business.** Corporations are governed by their internal bylaws, whereas LLCs are governed by an operating agreement. The Company Corporation can [customize bylaws or an LLC operating agreement](#) for your business.

10. **Satisfy insurance requirements.** Incorporating or forming an LLC does not provide a company with business insurance. Most companies obtain general business insurance from an insurance provider. Corporations and LLCs that hire employees also typically obtain unemployment and workers compensation insurance.
11. **Establish a business presence.** Identify a location for the business and establish a business address. The Company Corporation offers regular mail forwarding service in either Delaware or Nevada.
12. **Establish a Web presence.** Not having an effective Website eliminates opportunities for new customers and more profit.
13. **Develop business collateral.** Businesses use customized letterhead, cards, and forms with their company name and logo to establish credibility. [Vista Print](#) makes "do-it-yourself" business cards, business identity products, advertising products, and signage a snap.
14. **Open a bank account and merchant account.** To protect their corporate or LLC veil, businesses must maintain separate business and personal accounts and records. Establish a separate business bank account so that your personal assets are not co-mingled with business funds. Banks may also require an [Employer Identification Number \(EIN\)](#) in order to open a business checking account.
15. **Establish proper accounting procedures.** The Company Corporation understands that paying your taxes is only part of the picture when it comes to setting up your business. Whether you need help setting up your chart of accounts, have questions about completing a specific tax form, or need answers to tax questions we can help. Request a [30 minute consultation](#) with a recommended accountant to discuss your unique situation and get the answers you need.
16. **Get a business credit card.** A business credit card helps separate your professional and personal expenses and can help you protect your personal assets from business liabilities.
17. **Identify where to get help.** Smart business owners know where and when to seek advice from other sources. Identify attorneys and accountants in your area who can assist you with specific questions about your business, or contact us to help identify a solution to meet your needs.
18. **Get started.** Schedule an opening day for your business. Giving yourself a goal helps keep things on track and can increase your productivity.
19. **Complete additional filings as needed.** Companies that expand to do business outside their original state of incorporation or LLC formation generally [register in the those additional states](#). The Company Corporation can assist with these registration filings, also called "qualifications." Amendments can also be filed if the information listed on the formation document, like the legal name of the company or address, changes. Contact us at 800-818-6082 (toll-free) or 302-636-5440 for assistance with additional state filings.
20. **Follow government rules.** Operating a small business means satisfying ongoing government and legal requirements to maintain the company's good standing. Stay aware of the steps needed to maintain your company's status, and take advantage of The Company Corporation's [\\$50,000 Corporate Veil Guarantee](#), provided at no cost with our Registered Agent service.