

WHAT TO DO WHEN STARTING A NEW BUSINESS CHECKLIST

The checklist below shows some of the many things that have to be done when starting a new business – before the start-up, once the business is in operation and on an ongoing basis thereafter.

BEFORE START-UP

- ☐ Choose management advisers – an accountant, an attorney and a banker.
- ☐ Develop a business plan, including cash flow projections
- ☐ Using the business plan, establish a relationship with a banker. Possible bank services include:
 1. Credit-card merchant account
 2. Business checking account
 3. Working capital loan
 4. Equipment loan
 5. Lock-box services
- ☐ Select the legal entity and yearend
- ☐ Find a location for the business
- ☐ Negotiate a lease
- ☐ Design the layout of the facility
- ☐ Prepare all the necessary legal documents, as applicable:
 1. Partnership agreements
 2. Articles of incorporation and first organizational minutes
 3. Bylaws
 4. Federal identification number (SS-4)
 5. State and local license applications
 6. Sales tax identification number
 7. State unemployment number
 8. Industry-specific license
- ☐ Obtain quotes for and then order office furnishings and equipment
- ☐ Order office supplies
- ☐ Order business cards and business stationery
- ☐ Order office telephone number
- ☐ Purchase adequate insurance:
 1. Health
 2. Malpractice
 3. Liability
 4. Workers' compensation
 5. Life
 6. Fidelity bond
 7. Computer and equipment
 8. Umbrella
 9. Employee dishonesty
- ☐ Register the business name with local and state authorities

START-UP

- ☐ Establish prices for your goods and services
- ☐ Promote the business' opening through:
 1. Press releases to local and national media
 2. Advertising
 3. Direct-mail announcement
 4. Other: (This depends on the target market defined in the business plan. For example, a restaurant or store might send special coupons for discounts to local residents or present a grand opening event and send invitations to prospective customers, or a manufacturer or supplier of office supplies might offer special discounts to local businesses.)
- ☐ Seek, interview and make offers to job candidates
- ☐ Select and implement a financial recordkeeping system. (While this can be either manual or computerized, it must be implemented consistently. If the business records a particular type of transaction one way at the start, such transactions must continue to be recorded in a similar manner to avoid confusion.) Aspects of recordkeeping include:
 1. Accounts payable
 2. Accounts receivable
 3. Inventory Tracking
 4. Order entry

ONGOING OPERATIONS

- ☐ Develop personnel policies and procedures
- ☐ Prepare quarterly payroll returns and verify timely tax deposits
- ☐ Prepare quarterly or monthly financial statements
- ☐ Perform yearend tax planning, at least one month before the yearend
- ☐ Prepare annual federal, state and payroll returns
- ☐ Develop employee job descriptions
- ☐ Review existing insurance coverage at least one a year
- ☐ Prepare and maintain personnel files
- ☐ Establish a petty cash fund and policy
- ☐ Establish answering mechanism for after hours
- ☐ Join industry associations and groups
- ☐ Verify listing in the yellow pages of area phone directories
- ☐ Register trademarks (word, name, symbol or device) that indicate a unique identity on which your business is building

