



# The 12-Step Entrepreneurial Checklist

# Becoming an entrepreneur

Becoming an entrepreneur and starting your own business, social enterprise or community organization is quite overwhelming.

Often aspiring and new entrepreneurs are not sure where and how to start. This free checklist is written to do exactly that — getting you started and helping you find **#strategicfocus!**

A new business or organization has four stages to go through in its start-up phase. These stages are identifying the business concept, developing an action plan, setting up the organizational model and managing the finances.

This checklist offers you a unique and practical approach to starting up by asking you key questions.

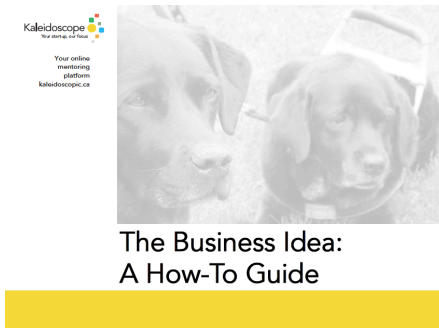
# A. Business Concept

## 1. Business Idea

The first key question to ask yourself is *"what will you sell and who will buy it"*?

Follow this up with the second key question *"is this product or service connected to my passion?"*

Both questions link a practical product or service you will sell every day to a long-term vision that makes you the person customers want to buy from.



The Business Idea: A How-To Guide

Available for download

<https://kaleidoscopic.ca/the-business-idea-a-how-to-guide/>

# A. Business Concept

## 2. Market Position

*Who and where are my customers?*

*Who are your (local) competitors and how are they different from you and your product or service?*

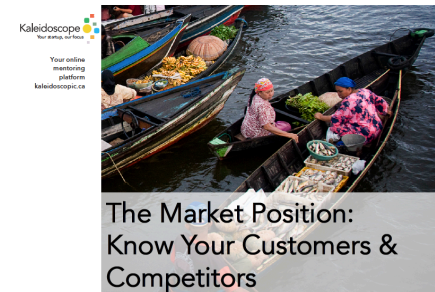
Understanding who you are up against helps you identify in what way they and you are unique. Every market research must cover pricing, supply & demand, segmentation of customers, and market trends.

In the next stage you will work on developing a basic marketing plan that is based on trends in the market, competition and opportunities.

The Market Position: Know Your Customers & Competitors

Resource for Perspective & Panorama Plan members

<https://kaleidoscopic.ca/the-market-position-know-your-customers-and-competitors/>



# A. Business Concept

## 3. Revenue Model

*What will you charge for your product or service? How else can you generate revenue from this?*

The basic bottom line is becoming a sustainable business or organization.

In other words, you need to find a balance between offering affordable products or services and quality as defined by the market position.

There are a variety of models, such as the add-on or the direct sales model.



The Revenue Model: Build Your Profit Margin

Resource for Perspective & Panorama Plan members

<https://kaleidoscopic.ca/the-revenue-model-build-your-profit-margin/>

# A. Business Concept

At the end of this stage, you have a basic understanding of your practical product or service and your customers who will buy them for a price that creates an income.

The questions in stage two help you to write a straightforward action plan.

# B. Customer Relations

## 4. Branding

*How will people in time recognize your business or service?*

This is not just about creating a logo; it is developing a strategic image that you want people to have when they think about you.

This image should be carried across all marketing and communication materials.  
(See how Kaleidoscope uses its colours for resources, images and membership plans?)



The Start-up Branding Plan  
Resource for Perspective & Panorama Plan members  
<https://kaleidoscopic.ca/startup-branding-plan/>

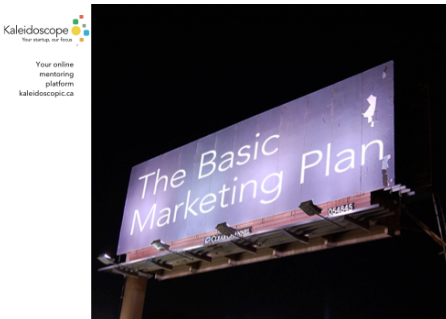
# B. Customer Relations

## 5. Marketing

*Where and how will potential customers find you? What is your key message?*

After answering whom your customers are, you can define their preferred communication channel and use this channel to market your product or service.

Remember the 80/20 rule: 80% of potential customers research and 20% only will actually buy.



Put differently, hone your communication till perfection!

The Basic Marketing Plan  
Available for download

<https://kaleidoscopic.ca/the-basic-marketing-plan/>



# B. Customer Relations

## 6. Sales & Services

*How can you encourage referrals?*

*How do you continue providing great value?*

Here are a couple of fundamental elements to think about:

- Create your unique sales funnel that has customers self-selecting
- Come up with a networking strategy that you are comfortable with
- Set up customer service standards and adhere to them
- Nurture the relationship with each customer

The Sales Standard

Resource for Perspective & Panorama Plan members

<https://kaleidoscopic.ca/the-sales-standard/>



## B. Customer Relations

Your basic and clear action plan includes developing your unique branding with key messaging along with using the best communication channels and the perfect sales funnel to connect with your potential customers.

This is where plan and reality meets each other.

You can test your key message during networking events and build your network that may well offer referrals in the foreseeable future.

Find out how you want to stay in touch with your customers and fans.

# C. Organization Setup

## 7. Legalities

*Should you incorporate or not? What to do if you are a non-profit?*

There are three legal foundations possible for your new business. You can choose to operate as a sole proprietor, have a partnership with someone else or become incorporated.

It is always useful to consider liabilities, pros and cons of each foundation before deciding.

You may change the legal foundation anytime (with a price tag).

A community organization may stay informal or choose to incorporate as a non-profit organization.

Being incorporated translates into limited liability, ability to have property and receive (more) government grants.

# C. Organization Setup

The downside is that you will need to have a Board of Directors and must keep financial and governing records, and more.

In some cases, it might be more useful to wait a few years before incorporating.

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How To Legally Set Up Your Company  
Available for download

<https://kaleidoscopic.ca/how-to-legally-set-up-your-company/>

# C. Organization Setup

## 8. Business Processes

*What processes are useful to have from the get-go?*

A couple of key business processes are financial reporting, tax preparation, administrative and sales processes, and evaluation practices.

Find out what basic accounting software you prefer and start with putting in your bills and invoices weekly.

Part of sales is networking, sharing promotional offers and following up with people. It is of utmost importance to have a simple process to remind you to which events to go, what to bring and to email new connections the day after.

# C. Organization Setup

It is essential to evaluate how your business is doing every couple of months.

Ask yourself what successes and difficulties you encountered and what you learned.

Compared to what you originally set out to do, what would you do different next time?



The Must Have Business Processes  
Resource for Perspective & Panorama Plan members  
<https://kaleidoscopic.ca/the-must-have-business-processes/>

# C. Organization Setup

## 9. Risk Management

*What are your weaknesses and how will you overcome them?*

An easy exercise for identifying risks is to think about potentialities, such as kinks in your production cycle, employee knowledge, and financial dangers if sales targets are not met in the first few months. Divide these risks up into four groups to understand which risks need to be dealt with and how as soon as they occur:

- Minor consequences (ignore safely in case of low likelihood)
- Nuisance risks (require a change in behaviour)
- Insurance risks (insurance covering incidents)
- Major consequences (need immediate mitigation)

# C. Organization Setup

Understanding your key processes and potential risks helps you create a cost-effective business.

Efficiency comes from routine work, yet evaluating every couple of months may root up some processes.

This flexibility causes your business or community organization to stay on top of the game and change when needed.



RISK MANAGEMENT:



Overcoming Your Weaknesses

Risk Management: Overcoming Your Weaknesses  
Resource for Perspective & Panorama Plan members

<https://kaleidoscopic.ca/risk-management-overcoming-yor-weaknesses/>



# D. Operations

## 10. Production & Delivery

*What is your production and sales cycle? Do you need distributors?*

Whether you sell a product or a service, it is key to understand your production cycle and its timeline. This is so you know what is needed at each key point.

Once your products or services are ready to be sold your sales cycle influences your cash flow. Are people buying it immediately, or do they want a sample first, and what about a free consultation?

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The Best Sales Cycle

If you require distributors it is necessary to work out a contract with them.

The Best Sales Cycle

Resource for Perspective & Panorama Plan members

<https://kaleidoscopic.ca/the-best-sales-cycle/>

# D. Operations

## 11. Infrastructure

*Do you need a brick and mortar business? What IT set up is required?*

These are big questions are related to investment, loans and quality advice.

Make sure you are advised well by the outcome of the market research if you need a physical location and if yes, where.

Use reputable services and compare notes on what real estate agents and IT companies deem indispensable for you.

The Lean Infrastructure

Available for download

<https://kaleidoscopic.ca/the-lean-infrastructure/>



# D. Operations

## 12. Finance

*What resources do you have and do you need? When do you expect to break even?*

In order for you to manage your finances, you need to know the status of your current resources and what you will need in the immediate future.

Link the information about expenses and your sales cycle and a preliminary picture of your cash flow will emerge.

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Building Your Financial Growth

Resource for Perspective & Panorama Plan members

<https://kaleidoscopic.ca/building-your-financial-growth/>

# D. Operations

Lastly, depending on your cash flow you have a rough idea when you are expecting to break even and start creating a profitable business.

Keep in mind, that your resources will have to support you in the start-up phase, most probably for one to two years.

The last part of this checklist covered big questions around your finances.

Given your business or organization's needs, you may consider applying for loans or grants. To ensure a high quality application, it is relevant to understand the ins and outs of your business.

# Resources by Kaleidoscope

The checklist is broken into twelve steps with each having its own dedicated resource for download. All resources offer key questions to guide you in the right direction and find your #strategicfocus. These resources have been added throughout the checklist.

Other resources we wrote for you:

Action Plan For Entrepreneurs

Break-Even Analysis Template

Cash Flow Template

CASL: Anti-Spam

Evaluating Your Business: Measuring Progress

Goal Setting

Partnership Development

Project Management Tool

# About Kaleidoscope and Lisette

As business mentor, Lisette Andreyko provides **#strategicfocus** to small organizations through Kaleidoscope's online mentoring platform with practical advice from experts.

She also provides training sessions and is available for consulting and public speaking.

More information is found on the website, **kaleidoscopic.ca**.

Join her supportive community that gives small businesses and start-ups the chance to grow, to access expert advice and to enjoy peer learning!

