



6 MONTH BUSINESS PLANNING CHECKLIST

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6 months before

- Determine viability of business by researching current market and trends
- Research competition
- Save at least 6 months worth of "salary" for business startup costs and salary
- Create a business plan
- Choose a business name
- Check name against current trademarks
- Find a lawyer to file for any copyrights, trademarks, or patents
- Start a filing system to organize all your business papers

5 months before

- Learn about your industry by subscribing to trade publications, newsletters, and finding a business mentor
- Describe products and service offerings
- Determine selling points
- Determine pricing structure
- Develop marketing materials
- Buy a domain name

4 months before

- Find a web developer
- Develop a web site (4 weeks)
- Compare small business bank accounts at local banks
- Sign up for a corporate checking account
- Order business checks and deposit slips
- Get a corporate credit card
- Set up accounting software
- Set up financial and record keeping systems

3 months before

- Find an accountant
- File for incorporation (about 4 to 6 weeks)
- Decide on a legal structure for your business (with accountant)
- Apply for a federal identification number
- File a fictitious business name statement

2 months before

- Obtain a business license
- Obtain necessary permits from city and state
- Determine if you will have to charge sales tax
- Check the zoning laws and other ordinances
- Register your web site in the search engines
Note: It can take 6 to 8 weeks to get indexed
- Print business cards
- Purchase stationery
- Sign up for a merchant account

1 month before

- Sign up for business insurance
- Purchase office supplies
- Sign up for local and long distance phone service
- Sign up with an Internet service provider
- Set up extra phone line
- Build business network by contacting business associates
- Prepare any advertisements
- Prepare any publicity pieces such as a press release or news articles

LAUNCH DAY:

- Celebrate with a Grand Opening!