

**THE HULL**  
**STARTUP**  
**KIT**

Everything you need to start a  
small business

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# ABOUT HULL YOUTH ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP

The Hull Youth Enterprise Partnership is an informal public/private/community partnership set up to influence major partners in supporting Hull's enterprising young people. It is committed to the shared vision of growing the city's economy for the benefit of young people and facilitating opportunities to widen the entrepreneurial spirit in the city.

The primary purpose of the partnership is to support and encourage young people aged 8-25 to become more enterprising, enabling them to develop their enterprising ideas and skills thereby making a contribution to the city's target of developing a more skilled workforce and creating 1,200 new businesses.

The Partnership's vision is to secure a positive future for the city and its enterprising young people, which will be achieved through decisive leadership, partnership working and a commitment to empowering young people to develop their ideas either within school, youth centres or their wider communities.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Emma Jones is a business expert and author, and founder of small business support company Enterprise Nation ([www.enterprisenation.com](http://www.enterprisenation.com)). Her books include *Spare Room Start Up*, *Working 5 to 9* and *Go Global: How to take your business to the world*.

Emma is also a co-founder of StartUp Britain, a national campaign to encourage more people to start a business. She was awarded an MBE for services to enterprise in July 2012.

# WHO THIS KIT IS FOR

**T**he *Hull StartUp Kit* is for any young person 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, tips and templates 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!

## How to Access Your Offers

*The Hull StartUp Kit* comes with a range of offers from top brands. These deals are on everything from a website to a virtual office, business cards and accounting software. They are ideal for your new start-up.

To find out more about the offers available, and to take advantage of them, head to: [www.enterprisenation.com/startupkit2013](http://www.enterprisenation.com/startupkit2013)

Here you'll find details of all partner offers. To access these simply enter the code below, select the individual offers you want, and you'll be shown the links and offer codes you need.

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.

ACCESS CODE: supk13

And that's not all ... There are also lots of resources available to you from the John Cracknell Youth Enterprise Bank which you can access by visiting: [www.youthenterprise.co.uk/resources.html](http://www.youthenterprise.co.uk/resources.html)

# FOREWORD

## BY RUTH BADGER

**E**very year I come to Hull and see the amazing talent that this city has to offer. During Global Entrepreneurship Week every November, I see young people with a genuine belief that they can make a difference and start a business and success stories like I have never seen anywhere else in the country. With job opportunities on the decline, this is the time to create something for yourself.

The 12 case studies in this kit are real young people from Hull, many of which I have in some way worked with, supported or financed in the past. None of the businesses had huge start up budgets, proving how you can start a business without the multi-million pound investments seen on TV. All the young people in this kit are showing you their new found flexibility and freedom in being their own boss, something that you can also achieve.

I started my first business when I was 6 years old. I would spend my pocket money on colourful erasers and sell them on the school playground. I'd pick my time to sell carefully because I knew that the other children would be given £1 to put into a savings account on a Monday afternoon, so I'd sell rubbers at the morning break. Back then, I was condemned for doing what I did, but that's what makes an entrepreneur; somebody who shows initiative, sees an opportunity, and grabs with both hands.

Even if you don't see yourself as an entrepreneur now, this kit is designed to give you the lessons to start your own successful businesses and learn from those who have already done it. The Hull Start Up Kit could be the start of something life changing for you. Read it, learn from it and take advantage of knowing the mistakes others have already made. Your entrepreneurial journey starts here.



**RUTH BADGER | @RUTHBADGER**

*Patron of Hull Youth Enterprise Partnership*

# INTRODUCTION

## BY SEAN ROYCE

**A**t KC, we're passionate about inspiring young people.

In 2011, KC donated £60,000 to the John Cracknell Youth Enterprise Bank to show our commitment to Hull's young people. As a large, responsible local business we believe we have an important role to play in supporting the region's economy and stimulating business growth. This is a way of doing that while also inspiring young people like you to make their careers in business.

We need Hull to be full of what Walt Disney called "Imagineers". The word combines imagination with engineering to describe what young entrepreneurs need to do. It is a name for this special group of enterprising people who not only come up with brilliant ideas to build on but then go and build on those ideas and turn them into reality. In visiting events like Global Entrepreneurship Week, you hear so many great ideas, but when the day ends, so does that idea. This is because people don't know where to turn next. The young people in Hull are some of the most creative and enterprising of any in the country. It is important that we nurture your talent and help you every step of the way. This kit is your step to turning your enterprising idea into a functioning business; bringing your imagination to life.

There are 12 examples in this book of just how possible it is to make something for yourself. You are tomorrow's future employers and this kit is designed to help you every step of the way to start a success that may one day provide employment to your city's population. What are you waiting for? The next page awaits!



**SEAN ROYCE | @SEANROYCE1**

*KC Commercial and Finance Director*

*Supporters of the John Cracknell Youth Enterprise Bank*

**Revised proof PDF April 2013**



# 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.

## 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.

This is what happened to Bronwyn Wilson, who turned a passion for arts and crafts into a cuddly little profit with her business, Crazy Critter World (see page 144).

## 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: Amanda's Blue Orchid

**NAME:** Amanda Hartley

**BUSINESS:** Amanda's Blue Orchid

**STARTED:** February 2008

Amanda Hartley's path to self-employment started when she was just 14 and worked as a Saturday girl for a florist whilst still at school. Having a real passion for floristry, when she turned 16, she was determined to open her own florist.

"Working from when I was 14 was great fun. I got a good understanding of what was required from me as a florist and I was prepared to enter the world of work. As soon as I left school, something changed in my mind and I decided that maybe the best route would be to try and make something for myself."



In 2008, Amanda opened "Amanda's Blue Orchid Florist" on Hessle Road in Hull. Amanda's Blue Orchid Florist creates bouquets, hand tied designs, funeral flowers, wedding flowers and gifts which can be collected from the shop or delivered to customers and corporate clients throughout Hull.

The shop can create bespoke flowers that are designed to personally suit the style and taste of the recipient and are designed for any occasion. Made in store, the product range includes modern and traditional bouquets, hand tied designs, basket arrangements, vase arrangements and much more. There are many other products available in the shop such as gifts and balloons which can also be delivered along with the flowers.

Amanda originally started her business with a loan from her parents, which allowed her to buy her first shop and begin trading. Amanda then applied for a grant from the John Cracknell Youth Enterprise Bank who were impressed with her bravery in opening a shop at such a young age and supported her through her roller coaster enterprise that now sees her running three businesses!

Amanda has provided lots of support to the city of Hull, providing flower arrangements for events such as Global Entrepreneurship Week and any other help that she can provide to her supporters. It was her kind heartedness, risk-taking and dedication to business that took her to win the award for Young Entrepreneur of the Year 2009!

What message does Amanda have for you?

“Now you’ve picked up this book, don’t give up. It takes true determination and hard work to get moving at first, but 5 years after I started, I’m still here. Everyone can make a success story one day, just don’t think because you’re not a millionaire next week, that you will never be able to tell a story like the ones in this guide.”

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

## 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                 | Clothing producer | IT services            |
| Vlogger                 | Toymaker          | App developer          |
| Social media advisor    | Party organiser   | Software developer     |
| eBay trader             | DJ                | Print and web designer |
| Online store owner      | Musician          | Network marketer       |
| Giftware maker          | Magician          | Pet care               |
| Giftware seller         | Beer producer     | Product manufacturer   |
| Artisan                 | Events organiser  | E-learning provider    |
| Cupcake maker           | Wedding planner   | Facebook developer     |
| Cosmetics producer      | Mystery shopper   | Magazine publisher     |
| Hair and make-up artist | Image consultant  | T-shirt maker          |
| Origami artist          | Fitness advisor   | Papercrafter           |
| Picture artist          | Personal trainer  | Dance instructor       |
| Furniture maker         | Photographer      | Perfumer               |
| Jewellery designer      | Accountant        | Balloon decorator      |
| Footwear designer       | Lawyer            | Street advertiser      |
| Fashion designer        | Translator        |                        |

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.

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.

Oliver Wilson owns custom computer company Xuro Limited. After he first set up his business, he realised he had to define his offer and stand out with a unique selling point. That point happened to be a specialism he loves:

“When I first set up, I didn’t think I needed a niche as I thought, since everybody uses computers, I could sell to anyone. Then I came on to marketing my business and had no idea where to start. Ruth Badger said that my best path would be to go niche and provide quality custom built computers for professionals and those in the gaming industry and then everything fell into place. I have a focus to my business, and a focus which I happen to love. Finding my niche hasn’t confined my business, it has specialised it.”

You can read more about Oliver’s story on page 92.

**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:

- Force-7 (local) ([www.force-7.co.uk](http://www.force-7.co.uk)) | *Marketing, research and digital agency specialising in youth and student communication*
- 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*
- WorkSnug ([www.worksnug.com](http://www.worksnug.com)) | *For mobile workers seeking connected spaces*
- Cambridge Raincoat Company ([www.cambridgeraincoats.co.uk](http://www.cambridgeraincoats.co.uk)) | *Fashion raincoats for people who ride upright bicycles*
- Peach Blossom ([www.peachblossom.co.uk](http://www.peachblossom.co.uk)) | *Stylish party products for the stylish party host*
- Bird and Bumble ([www.birdandbumble.com](http://www.birdandbumble.com)) | *A site for food suppliers and lovers across London*

\* \* \*

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.

Use this template to help come up with your idea ...

# TEMPLATE 1: WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?

**Have I spotted a gap in the market?**

**What is my passion/hobby/skill?**

**Is there something I've seen that I can do better myself?**

**What about buying into someone else's idea via a franchise?**



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## 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 20 top franchise or party-plan opportunities (from *50 Fantastic Franchises!*, Brightword Publishing, 2011).

- My Secret Kitchen | [www.mysecretkitchen.co.uk](http://www.mysecretkitchen.co.uk)
- Jamie at Home | [www.jamieathome.com](http://www.jamieathome.com)
- 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)
- Harmony At Home | [www.harmonyathome.co.uk](http://www.harmonyathome.co.uk)
- Shoes Glorious Shoes | [www.shoesgloriousshoes.co.uk](http://www.shoesgloriousshoes.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)
- Spanish Amigos [www.spanishamigos.co.uk](http://www.spanishamigos.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)
- *50 Fantastic Franchises!* eBook | [www.enterprisenation.com/shop/50fantasticfranchises](http://www.enterprisenation.com/shop/50fantasticfranchises)

## **CASE STUDY: LPF (Liddell Personal Fitness)**

**NAME:** Ashley Liddell

**BUSINESS:** LPF (Liddell Personal Fitness)

**STARTED:** February 2013

Ashley was just your average college student who had studied hard through the years to become a personal trainer. As the job market collapsed and Ashley was due to finish his final year of college, he knew he needed to do something so his years of study were not put to waste.

“I had always liked the idea of owning my own Personal Training business, which is why I studied a business course alongside my physical education qualifications. I studied and studied and there was a point when I just knew the time was right, and I launched all my effort into starting up my business, LPF.”

Liddell Personal Fitness currently provides a professional standard of personal training to people of all ages within Hull and the surrounding area. Ashley realised that personal training services were very expensive and affordable PT services for the working class, students and pensioners remained untapped. Ashley’s aim is to provide high quality, low cost personal training services to this customer base to give everyone the chance to reach the level of fitness that they desire.

Liddell Personal Fitness is currently a Mobile PT business, which means that Ashley will train with the customer wherever they wish to train. Ashley plans to one day put a gym into the back of an ex-ambulance and be able to be a truly Mobile-PT provider, as well as having his own bigger, centrally placed gym facility where customers can



train. LPF also offers a large range of sports products including vests, supplements and running shoes as well as fitness advice that customers can purchase for a one-off fee.

Ashley sought the advice of local businessman Graham Jenkinson who referred him to the John Cracknell Youth Enterprise Bank. After his grant, Ashley also went onto apply for a Start-Up Loan to expand his business as fast as possible, using the funding that was available to him at the time.

So how is Ashley feeling after finally following his dream?

“My journey has only just begun, but already I can feel LPF is going to be a success. It takes a lot of faith to make the leap to start your own business but if you have the idea, then the support is there to make it happen! Don't let a great idea die by the wayside.”

- [www.liddellpersonalfitness.co.uk](http://www.liddellpersonalfitness.co.uk) | @LPFHull



## 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)

Or, of course, you can hit the streets with a clipboard! Work on your own market research plan by completing Template 2.

## CASE STUDY: Hair by Amy

**NAME:** Amy Taylor

**BUSINESS:** Hair by Amy

**STARTED:** June 2012

Amy is a fully qualified hairdresser with four years' experience working in salons. During this time, she has supported a number of cancer patients and saw a gap in the market for bespoke services for people who need wigs and other specialist hair treatments delivered at home.

“I’ve seen family, friends and customers go through cancer treatment and lose their hair. By speaking to them and by doing my own research, I found that for a lot of people who are



losing their hair, going to a normal salon isn't a great experience for them. Those that do offer private consultations are really expensive."

Amy wanted to be able to put her customers at ease and make them feel comfortable by offering specialist services in their own home, such as sourcing and styling of wigs and supporting customers when their hair grows back. Amy also wanted to offer clients a standard length wig that she could cut and style as they would their own hair, so that the experience is more personal. As far as she's aware, nobody else is delivering these services.

"Running a business is all new to me but my goal is to be well-known for the specialist services I can provide and the excellent service I give to customers. But more than that, I'd like to be helping people to feel more confident about themselves and be able to support them through their cancer and hair loss treatments."

Funding and support from the John Cracknell Youth Enterprise Bank has meant Amy was able to make her business dream a reality. She said: "I have never run my own business so I needed funding as well as some training in the financial side of managing a business.

"I had a meeting with Charles Cracknell and Mike Notarantonio from the Youth Enterprise Bank and explained my idea and the current gap in the market. They helped me to put it my application and I was given a start-up grant of £800 to purchase my equipment, supplies and advertising materials.

"If you have a business idea just go for it! The Youth Enterprise Bank is a great help and Charles Cracknell is very supportive. I'd also say to people to take every opportunity you get to better yourself and follow your dreams."

## **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 on for information on how to go about that.

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.

## TEMPLATE 2: MARKET RESEARCH

### **How big is the market?**

What is the number of potential customers I can serve and how do these customers like to be served?

What are their characteristics, spending patterns and who are their key influences?

### **Who is currently serving my market?**

Where are my potential customers going for their goods and services?

What do they like about what they're getting, and, more importantly, what do they dislike?

## What price can I charge for my product/service?

What's competitive and takes into account the amount of time, personal service and added value that I offer?

## 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?

# TEMPLATE 3: SWOT ANALYSIS

## Strengths

*What are my strengths?*

## Weaknesses

*What are my weaknesses?*

## Opportunities

*What opportunities do I see?*

## Threats

*What threats might I face?*





## 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?

### 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 2013-2015. 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.

\* This title would be more like 'Advisory Board' if preparing the plan for a bank or funder.

## **Company ABC Business Plan**

2013-2015

*(This business plan is for a two-year cycle. You may choose to do a 12-month plan, or up to five years.)*

### **Contents**

Executive Summary  
The Idea  
The Market  
Operations  
Financials  
Friends & Family\*

### **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!

### 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:

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

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

**RETURN REGULARLY** to your plan to check progress against targets or to make amends as you respond to new opportunities.

# TEMPLATE 4: BUSINESS PLAN

Use these headings to write your own business plan ...

## Executive Summary

## The Idea

## The Market

### Customers

### Competition

## Operations

### The CEO

### Sourcing

## Sales & Marketing

### Press

### Online

### Partners

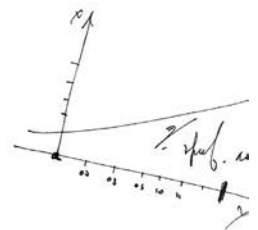
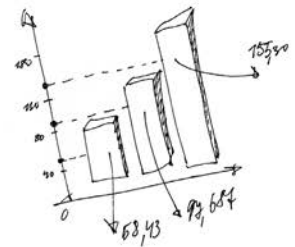
### Systems

## Friends & Family

## Financials



Revised proof PDF April 2013



## 4. REGISTER THE COMPANY

**W**hen 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.

**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.

### 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)

## 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 IN01 – 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](http://www.gov.uk/register-a-company-online)) and pay £15.
- **Self-incorporation** | Visit the new company registration page of the Companies House website: [bit.ly/dw1xcJ](http://bit.ly/dw1xcJ). Complete form IN01. 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 kit partner Companies Made Simple ([www.companiesmadesimple.com](http://www.companiesmadesimple.com)). Prices start at £16.99 for standard company registration.

**IN THE KIT:** Companies Made Simple is a *Hull StartUp Kit* partner, offering company formation for £16.99 and formation guaranteed in three hours.

## 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 shown below.

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

It is 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 (SA200). 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 £68,000, 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 wear-and-tear allowances (capital allowances) on any equipment you buy, and 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)

## CASE STUDY: Green Queens

**NAMES:** Ellie Louise Taylor, Ellie Taylor, Alice Fletcher and Jenna Ibbertson

**BUSINESS:** Green Queens

**STARTED:** November 2011

Having attended a school's enterprise event at Hull's Guildhall in 2010, the girls, who all go to Malet Lambert School, set about planning a business that would teach the children of Hull about the importance of reducing their carbon footprint to protect the world we live in for future generations.

Jenna explained: "The human race is doing so much damage to the environment that we need to do something about it and that means educating the children of today, so that they won't continue these damaging activities in future. Unfortunately, most children don't think about reducing their carbon footprint but if you tell them that they are helping to save our earth then that really means something to them, so we came up with an idea to educate children about their carbon footprint in a fun and creative way."



The team's idea was to go into local primary schools and give a presentation explaining what they do, what they wish to achieve, and how they can help. The children are then asked to design a foot, on a template. They chose the theme of feet to represent and show the importance of reducing their carbon footprint. After all of the entries are in, two winning designs in each school are chosen to make a 4ft wide, 3 dimensional papier-mâché foot. These feet are then decorated with recycled materials and can be displayed in the school.

The Green Queens compiled a business plan and took their idea to the John Cracknell Youth Enterprise Bank. Jenna explained: "We knew that we needed money to get started as we had to buy the materials for each session (paper, pens, pencils etc.) and to create a website, not to mention paying for transport to get us to and from each school."

The John Cracknell Youth Enterprise Bank provided £1,000 to enable the Green Queens to get up and running.

The Green Queens are initially focusing their efforts on Hull but are confident that they will soon expand to the surrounding region and beyond.

“We are starting off by running 4 sessions at each of 10 local schools which will take up most of the school year. We hope that they will be well received and that word will spread quickly so that we can take the initiative to many schools across the region and even the country next year!”

- [www.greenqueens.co.uk](http://www.greenqueens.co.uk) | @GreenQueens1

## **VAT**

Whichever company status you choose, if your business turns over more than £77,000 (in the 2012/13 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.

Find an accountant by visiting:

- ICAEW [Institute of Chartered Accountants for England and Wales] | [www.icaew.com](http://www.icaew.com)
- Accountant partners of online software tool, FreeAgent | [www.freeagent.com/partners](http://www.freeagent.com/partners)

**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

**Y**ou 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

**W**hen 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 60% 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 you don't, then the only benefit of telling them is that they'll charge you business rates (rather than council tax) on the part of the house being used for business purposes – not really much of an incentive! Business rates are different in each area and something that should be agreed with

your local authority. Check out the GOV.UK guide to business rates at [www.gov.uk/introduction-to-business-rates/working-from-home](http://www.gov.uk/introduction-to-business-rates/working-from-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, it was announced by the government on 1 November 2010 that social landlords should review any contracts prohibiting people from working from home, making it much easier for people in social 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 [bit.ly/aGDc8N](http://bit.ly/aGDc8N)).

**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.

## 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)) 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' later on 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.

Later we cover where to go to find support and access mentors. For Oliver Sidwell, support was close to home when he started his business, RateMyPlacement:

“When we launched RateMyPlacement, my two co-founders and I worked from separate home offices. Mine happened to be my old bedroom back in the family home. I graduated from Loughborough University where the business had started, moved back in with my folks and the business of building the company started from there.

“As my dad also ran his business from home we often met in the kitchen at lunchtime and I shared progress from the day. Dad offered advice and guidance which, in the early stages, proved invaluable. I'm now living in London and the company is 20 people strong but I still hark back to those early days of sage advice, mum's welcome cups of tea and a top-notch laundry service!”



# 7. YOUR TECH SETUP

**P**utting 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 £300, but when buying a computer it sometimes pays to buy the best you can afford in order to prepare for the future.

### 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. Mine sits neatly on my desk and is handy when I want to email sketches to my designer. He uses his to archive printed documents. When he receives important letters, for example, he scans them into his computer and recycles the hard copy! We're both on our way to paperless home offices.

### **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 (or Entourage, as it's called in the Mac version), which is Outlook Express's big sister. It includes calendar and address book features, but it's not free (or cheap). 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.

- 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)

## Support

If you're in need of assistance with anything from hardware set-up to software installation, call in the help of a local IT expert. You may know a neighbour who's a dab hand at technology. If not, check out one of a growing number of companies who send a 'geek' direct to your door.

- Xuro – The Custom Computer Company (local) | [www.xuro.co.uk](http://www.xuro.co.uk), [support.xuro.co.uk](mailto:support.xuro.co.uk)
- HWS Hosting (local) | [www.hwshosting.net](http://www.hwshosting.net)
- Geeks-on-Wheels | [www.geeks-on-wheels.com](http://www.geeks-on-wheels.com)
- KnowHow | [www.knowhow.com](http://www.knowhow.com)
- Geek Squad | [www.geeksquad.co.uk](http://www.geeksquad.co.uk)

## 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.



**CHECK OUT WI-FI HOTSPOTS** close to you via WorkSnug: [www.worksnug.com](http://www.worksnug.com)

## **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 it still needs 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.

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. 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.
2. 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.
3. Google Docs ([docs.google.com](http://docs.google.com)) | As broadband gets quicker and more reliable, Google Docs is becoming a bit of a threat to Microsoft Office. It 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 super easy to collaborate with others in real time on the same document.

4. Gmail and Google Calendar ([mail.google.com](mailto:mail.google.com), <calendar.google.com>) | I've mentioned Gmail before, but did you know Google also make excellent calendar software? Both are really useful if you plan to work on the move.
5. 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, like most of Google's services, 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.
6. 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.
7. Delicious ([www.delicious.com](http://www.delicious.com)) | Delicious is a bookmarking service that keeps all of your important links in the cloud so you can get to them from any computer.
8. Toodledo ([www.toodledo.com](http://www.toodledo.com)) | There's so much to do when starting a business, but you can keep on top of all your tasks with this free app. Get tasks out of your inbox by forwarding them to your Toodledo email address, organise them by folders, tags, context and subtasks, and sync them with your smartphone.
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'!

## 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!

## **CASE STUDY: KH Smilers Ltd and Garbera Enterprise Ltd**

**NAME:** Dave Garbera

**BUSINESS:** KH Smilers Ltd and Garbera Enterprise Ltd

**STARTED:** October 2004

Dave became MD of KH Smilers Ltd at 15 years of age. The company evolved from a Year 10 business from Kelvin Hall School competing in the Young Enterprise Company Programme that reached the Final in 2004. Garbera Enterprise Ltd was incorporated in 2009 to publish and distribute the trilogy of ‘Smilers’ books.

“KH Smilers had been so successful during the YE Competition that I couldn’t let it disappear. Even though I was still at school I knew it could be grown in to a profitable local business. On the other hand Garbera Enterprise Ltd was incorporated so that the uniquely impressive KH Smilers story could be shared with a wider audience.”

KH Smilers Ltd grows and sells summer and winter bedding plants, as well as filled hanging baskets and containers. Starting from a base of 3,000, the company now produces some 50,000 plants and 200 hanging baskets each year. Garbera Enterprise Ltd is a publisher. Having now published and sold over 2,500 ‘Smilers’ books, Dave is researching the possibility of offering the company’s expertise to a wider audience.

Both companies sell from websites. KH Smilers’ customers can view all the plants and services on offer and place an order with free local delivery. Garbera Enterprise website also offers free delivery and video and audio clips are available to enhance the customer experience.

Initially supported by the John Cracknell Youth Enterprise Bank and Hull Training, both businesses have continued to flourish through some harsh economic times. But teaming up with Sage UK on two occasions, becoming Hull’s Young Entrepreneur in 2010, featuring in ‘The Parents’ Guide to Raising CEO Kids’ (published in the US) and being asked to participate in a Webinar for graduates thinking about starting a business, all suggest a wider, more objective recognition of the companies’ success.



Does Dave regret going in to business?

‘Not for a minute. Running a business whilst studying for GCSEs, A Levels and a medical degree has been fantastic. My academic career has been enhanced by the business skills I have acquired and it helped me to fund 7 weeks’ work experience in New Zealand and a week’s holiday in Hong Kong. My advice to everyone is to have a go, but to remember it doesn’t always have to be an ‘either/or’ choice. You can run a business and study at the same time. I have proven that you can do both.’

- [www.khsmilers.co.uk](http://www.khsmilers.co.uk) | [www.garberaenterprise.co.uk](http://www.garberaenterprise.co.uk)

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## 9. STARTING ON A BUDGET AND STRAIGHTFORWARD FINANCE

**I**t 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. Chapter 12 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?

## Access deals

*The Hull StartUp Kit* comes complete with tons of deals and offers from leading brands. You can view all of them at the back of the book and activate them online at [www.enterprisenation.com/startupkit2013](http://www.enterprisenation.com/startupkit2013). Source other deals on the StartUp Britain marketplace ([www.startupbritain.co](http://www.startupbritain.co)) or daily deals site Huddlebuy ([www.huddlebuy.com](http://www.huddlebuy.com)).

These tips and techniques will help your budgeting, but if you think you’ll need more funding, here are a few 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.

### Grants and loans

There are grants available from a number of sources, including the government, European Union, local authorities and some charitable organisations, such as the John Cracknell Youth Enterprise Bank.

Find out more about grants and other help that may be available to you at:

- John Cracknell Youth Enterprise Bank (local) | [www.youthenterprise.co.uk](http://www.youthenterprise.co.uk)
- Start-Up Loans Humber (local) | [www.startuploanshumber.co.uk](http://www.startuploanshumber.co.uk)

- The Badger's Sett Enterprise Challenge (local) | [www.hullbadgers.co.uk](http://www.hullbadgers.co.uk)
- Acorn Fund (local) | [www.hullbdf.com](http://www.hullbdf.com)
- Sirius (local) | [www.sirius-hull.co.uk](http://www.sirius-hull.co.uk)

## 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. Check out the following links for sites that offer this service.

- CrowdCube | [www.crowdcube.com](http://www.crowdcube.com)
- Kickstarter | [www.kickstarter.com](http://www.kickstarter.com)
- Seedrs | [www.seedrs.com](http://www.seedrs.com)
- PleaseFund.Us | [www.pleasefund.us](http://www.pleasefund.us) (with a focus on creative projects)
- IWOCA | [www.iwoca.co.uk](http://www.iwoca.co.uk) (for online retailers only and for working capital as opposed to start-up funding)

## 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.

## 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 on 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)
- Springboard | [www.springboard.com](http://www.springboard.com)
- UK Business Angels Association | [www.bbaa.org.uk](http://www.bbaa.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 as in the following. See later for an example invoice and how to keep a record of invoices raised and amounts paid.

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

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# 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.

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# 10. CREATE A FIRST IMPRESSION

**Y**ou 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 Chapter 11 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](http://www.enterprisenation.com) and my email address is [emma@enterprisenation.com](mailto:emma@enterprisenation.com). Both use the [enterprisenation.com](http://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.

Some example companies include:

- HWS Design (local) | [www.hwshosting.net](http://www.hwshosting.net)
- 1&1 Internet Ltd | [www.1and1.co.uk](http://www.1and1.co.uk)
- 123-reg | [www.123-reg.co.uk](http://www.123-reg.co.uk)
- Easily.co.uk | [www.easily.co.uk](http://www.easily.co.uk)

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 site

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. See below for 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. After the following table we'll look at the main ones.

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <b>ACTINIC</b><br>( <a href="http://www.actinic.co.uk">www.actinic.co.uk</a> )    | Actinic Express. £1 set-up fee and £15 per month thereafter for the bronze and basic package.                                | Company has been established in UK since 1996 and has built a solid reputation. Free 30-day trial on offer.  |
| <b>BIG CARTEL</b><br>( <a href="http://www.bigcartel.com">www.bigcartel.com</a> ) | It's free to present five products, with monthly packages increasing to \$29.99 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. |
| <b>CREATE</b><br>( <a href="http://www.create.net">www.create.net</a> )           | Packages start from £2.99 per month. 30-day free trial available.  | Set up your site in minutes and benefit from email support plus online forums.   |
| <b>CUBECART</b><br>( <a href="http://www.cubecart.com">www.cubecart.com</a> )     | From free to £110, depending on the features required. Free 30-day trial on offer.   | E-commerce shopping cart used by more than one million store owners – so they must be doing something right!   |

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <p><b>MOONFRUIT</b><br/>(<a href="http://www.moonfruit.com">www.moonfruit.com</a>)</p>    | <p>A basic site is free to build, moving up to £22.50 per month for premium options.</p>  | <p>The company launched its most recent product Moonfruit Shopbuilder in October 2011, which automatically creates a store on Facebook and a mobile version of your site. The company has created 4.8 million sites.</p>                 |
| <p><b>MRSITE</b><br/>(<a href="http://www.mrsite.com">www.mrsite.com</a>)</p>             | <p>Three packages: £24.99 Beginner, £39.99 Standard, £99.99 Professional</p>  | <p>You can buy the product in boxed or email format. Helpful tips on how to start via the site.</p>  |
| <p><b>OSCOMMERCE</b><br/>(<a href="http://www.oscommerce.com">www.oscommerce.com</a>)</p> | <p>Free</p>   | <p>An open source solution with, to date, over 6,800 add-ons available for free to customise your store and increase sales.</p>  |
| <p><b>SUPADUPA</b><br/>(<a href="http://supadupa.me">supadupa.me</a>)</p>                 | <p>Price packages start free and then move through Plankton (\$19 per month), Cod (\$29 per month) and Caviar (\$99 per month).</p> | <p>'Boutique e-commerce for creative minds' comes with the promise these sites will be easy to use and stylishly display your goods. You could spend a while on the main site browsing through what are beautiful looking boutiques.</p> |
| <p><b>WIX</b> (<a href="http://www.wix.com">www.wix.com</a>)</p>                          | <p>A free build-your-site service with the ability to upgrade to premium plans that start at £10 per month.</p>                     | <p>Hundreds of designs to choose from and a drag and drop system to get you started.</p>   |

## 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 ([bit.ly/blxrUn](http://bit.ly/blxrUn)). 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.

**IN THE KIT:** Pay just £1 per month for your website for the first three months – and no PayPal fees for the first 30 days – with EKM. Once the three months expire, you pay only £19.99 per month with no contract.

## Google Checkout

Google Checkout ([checkout.google.co.uk](http://checkout.google.co.uk)) is a global payment system. There are no set-up charges and fees depend on the volume of your sales. With monthly sales of less than £1,500, the fee is currently 3.4% plus 20p per transaction. This transaction fee decreases in line with sales volumes increasing.

## Sage Pay

Sage Pay ([www.sagepay.com](http://www.sagepay.com)) is a card payment service that allows you to accept payments by PayPal and major debit and credit cards. It is simple to manage and easy to integrate within your website. The fee is £20 per month for merchants processing up to 1,000 transactions per quarter and 10p per transaction for merchants processing more than 1,000 transactions per quarter, with a minimum charge of £20 per month. There are no set-up fees, no percentage fees and no annual charges.

# 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 2012 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.

- Distance Selling Regulations | [tinyurl.com/distancesellingregs](http://tinyurl.com/distancesellingregs)

### 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

**IN THE KIT:** Benefit from a verified search service from Alibaba.com.

#### 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 30 million users 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. Learn how to do this step by step in the free guide *Boost your Business with Facebook*, which also shows how to connect with new fans and make the most of Facebook ads.

- *Boost Your Business with Facebook* | [www.enterprisenation.com/facebook-book-offer](http://www.enterprisenation.com/facebook-book-offer)

## 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. As of July 2011 over 15 billion apps had 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 Directory

Business support company Enterprise Nation has launched its own business directory to help its members promote their products and services. Premium members at Enterprise Nation get extra exposure in the directory, on the Enterprise Nation website, on Google, Twitter and Facebook. It's a great way to announce your start-up to a friendly business community – and connect with other small businesses too.

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

**IN THE KIT:** Readers of *The Hull StartUp Kit* can become premium members of Enterprise Nation for just £10 per year (half the normal price), and that includes one free business eBook per month and 25% off business events. Find out more at [www.enterprisenation.com/premium](http://www.enterprisenation.com/premium) – and make sure you activate your kit to redeem your half-price offer.

# 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](http://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 run 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.

## **Not On The High Street – [www.notonthestreet.com](http://www.notonthestreet.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. It costs 20p to list an item for 180 days or until the item is sold.
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 5% 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 5% commission on all sales but does not charge for listing products. Once your fees reach €5, DaWanda will email you an invoice with instructions on how to pay.

### **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.

## **ArtFire – [www.artfire.com](http://www.artfire.com)**

*“The Premier handmade marketplace to buy and sell handmade crafts, supplies, vintage and art”*

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

Set up your shop and list as many items as you want, with up to 10 photographs per item.

The customer will browse your shop and place an order. You receive the customer’s payment and also their delivery details in order to ship the product.

### **Getting started**

You can set up your shop for free at – [www.artfire.com/ext/register/account](http://www.artfire.com/ext/register/account).

You then pay nothing for 30 days, and after that the rate is a £7.56 a month for unlimited listings. ArtFire do not take a commission on sales.

### **Paying fees**

Fees will be taken from your nominated payment card on the same day each month (the one on which you originally signed up). For example, if you joined on the 5th December, you would be charged your monthly fee on the 5th of every month.

### **Community**

ArtFire has a range of different community options for you to get involved in and interact with other members. There are forums where you can communicate and share ideas with other crafters, as well as ArtDaily, which is an opportunity to learn new crafts and get sound business advice, plus there’s the chance to join a guild and earn a guild badge, as well as listen to the weekly podcast from John Jacobs and Tony Ford, giving tips on how to promote your business and use ArtFire to its full potential.

## **MISI (Make It, Sell It) – [www.misi.co.uk](http://www.misi.co.uk)**

*“The home of buying and selling handmade in the UK”*

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

Create a shop with MISI and list your items for free. When you sell a product you will receive an email notification from MISI which will prompt you to log in to see the full details of the sale. Payment can either be by cheque or PayPal, and once payment is received, you ship the product direct to the customer.

### **Paying fees**

MISI charges 20p per listing, which will be added to your account as soon as you start listing items. MISI also take a 3% commission fee on every sale and this is also added to your account. Fees are then payable on a monthly basis.

### **Community**

The MISI community section is broken down into several areas including: a blog where crafters write about their latest ideas, materials and events; a forum for sharing tips and ideas; and a Meet the Maker section where shop-owners and crafters are encouraged to share their experiences with the community.

## **ShopHandmade – [www.shophandmade.com](http://www.shophandmade.com)**

*“Rewarding Creativity”*

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

You can sell your items in five easy steps! Once you have listed your products, customers can browse them and begin buying right away. When an item sells, you're notified by email, and payment is made to your registered PayPal account. You then ship the item using easy-to-print labels from PayPal.

### **Getting started**

List your item for a small fee of 25 cents, and then upload up to five photos per item. Then you need to decide if you are participating in Sales and Galleries and activate your listing.

When you are listing items, there is also the opportunity to get the listing sponsored, which means a third-party sponsor will pay for listing your item, costing you nothing. There are several sponsors to choose from and their sponsorship simply means that a non-intrusive advertisement will appear on your product page.

## **Paying fees**

ShopHandmade only charge a percentage of an item's final selling price. The payment is taken when an item actually sells.

## **Community**

ShopHandmade features blogs from various sellers so that you can see what other crafters are up to and keep track of developments and new ideas in the crafting world.

**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.qype.co.uk](http://www.qype.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 home page 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)

## CASE STUDY: T Arran Photo

**NAME:** Thomas Arran

**BUSINESS:** T Arran Photo

**STARTED:** August 2011

Since starting in photography, Thomas has always had an ambition to work for himself and develop his own business out of his skills. Thomas initially started off with a minimum set of clients but as his experience grew, Thomas undertook a greater range of work.

“I started my business after completing a variety of commercial work whilst still at college; I then built a wide variety of commercial clients and soon established my own business offering freelance services to a wide range of clients.”

Thomas’s business provides photographic services to businesses and clients throughout Hull and the UK. This can range from product photos to wedding photography, with the ability to undertake any product a client may request. Additionally Thomas has begun undertaking video work for clients to which he is currently working with numerous clients to produce.

Thomas personally manages all aspects of his business. This involves providing quotes and organising various commissions which would then result in taking photos for the client. Thomas then would overview and re-touch the images so that the resulting products are the highest quality and then provides the images through both online link and hard disk. Other products to display images can be purchased separately.

Thomas’s biggest success has been working with high profile clients such as Hull FC & Mark Hill Hairdressing, where the images that Thomas has created have been displayed to a mass market. Gaining these recognisable clients allowed him to produce and display a high quality portfolio and demonstrated the quality that his business can provide.

The NET 315 Gateway at Hull College provided him with business workshops and networking events as well as a business mentor. In addition, John Cracknell Youth Enterprise Bank has provided him with a great deal of support and funding. Through



their support, Thomas has been provided with funding to purchase equipment for his business to allow him to provide new services and expand.

What are Thomas's thoughts since he started his own business?

“Take any opportunity that you can as it can give you new experiences and lead to possible new ventures, clients or work. Having the confidence to develop your idea can be quite difficult, but with the support that organisations provide, somebody can help you develop and support your idea.”

- [thomasarranphoto.dpg.cc](http://thomasarranphoto.dpg.cc) | @tarranphoto

## Spread the word

Make it easy for visitors to spread word of your site through social sharing. Have your site Stumbled, Dugg and Tweeted 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.

The most popular are:

- Delicious | [www.delicious.com](http://www.delicious.com)
- Digg | [www.digg.com](http://www.digg.com)
- StumbleUpon | [www.stumbleupon.com](http://www.stumbleupon.com)

## 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.

**IN THE KIT:** Get 50 Classic or Green Business cards from [moo.com](http://moo.com) for free.



## 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 Directory | [www.enterprisenation.com/business-directory](http://www.enterprisenation.com/business-directory)
- CrowdSPRING | [www.crowdspring.com](http://www.crowdspring.com)
- 99designs | [www.99designs.com](http://www.99designs.com)
- BuildaBrand | [www.buildabrand.com](http://www.buildabrand.com)
- Concept Cupboard | [www.conceptcupboard.com](http://www.conceptcupboard.com)
- oDesk | [www.odesk.com](http://www.odesk.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:

- Lee Creamer Enterprise Suite (local) | [www.youthenterprise.co.uk,youthentclub.html](http://www.youthenterprise.co.uk,youthentclub.html)

- The University of Hull Enterprise Centre (local) | [www2.hull.ac.uk/administration/enterprise.aspx](http://www2.hull.ac.uk/administration/enterprise.aspx)
- Hull City Council Managed Workspace (local) | [www.hullmeansbusiness.com](http://www.hullmeansbusiness.com)
- Regus | [www.regus.co.uk](http://www.regus.co.uk)
- Bizspace | [www.bizspace.co.uk](http://www.bizspace.co.uk)

The Lee Creamer Youth Enterprise Suite is a FREE hot-desking facility in the Hull City Centre with everything you need to start your business. At the facility you will get access to an enterprise advisor, a range of support materials, computer access and you will also be able to have your correspondence delivered to this address for collection. You will also have the opportunity to book a room to use as a meeting space. Always consider using professional meeting space to keep your business activity as formal as possible.

**IN THE KIT:** Get one month's free virtual office or one month free in any Bizspace unit. Get a value business start-up package from Regus, including impressive business address, call answering, mail-handling, business mentoring, drop-in business lounges and more. Get 'Three Days, One Club' Membership at Kennington Park, Enterprise House or Barley Mow reduced to £150+VAT pcm for the first three months from Club Workspace.

## 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:

- Money Penny | [www.money Penny.co.uk](http://www.money Penny.co.uk)
- Regus | [www.regus.co.uk](http://www.regus.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.

**A MEMORABLE EXCHANGE:** Richard Moross, founder of [moo.com](http://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

**W**ith 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, founder of Pitcher House, is 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!”

**PITCHUP!** Apply to StartUp Britain’s PitchUp project to have your products placed in front of national buyers. Shortlisted contenders get the opportunity to meet with retailers such as John Lewis and be in with a chance of securing a contract. [www.startupbritain.co/highstreet](http://www.startupbritain.co/highstreet)

## **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 ([www.popupbritain.co.uk](http://www.popupbritain.co.uk)) was created to give new British brands an opportunity to get onto the high street and fill empty shops with small business activity. The flagship PopUp store in Richmond opened in July 2012 and has since welcomed start-ups and small businesses who trade in the shop for a 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. Following success in Richmond, the scheme is expanding across the UK.

The project has delivered a national 'PopUp Lease' (thanks to Nick Darby at SNR Denton) which makes contractual arrangements with landlords a whole lot simpler. And with support from Minister for Housing and High Streets, Mark Prisk, a PopUp should be coming to a town near you soon.

## 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!

## 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 ([tinyurl.com/goglobalguide](http://tinyurl.com/goglobalguide)) which offers all you need to know on topics from customs documentation to website translation and perfecting the art of cultural etiquette.

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

## **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 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 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: [bit.ly/ikf832](http://bit.ly/ikf832)

## CASE STUDY: Xuro Limited

**NAME:** Oliver Wilson

**BUSINESS:** Xuro Limited

**STARTED:** September 2010

In 2010, Oliver was looking for a part time job for the summer break and something to do alongside his studies at college. Having always had a keen interest in business, and seeing the struggling state of the jobs market, he decided that this was his time to create something for himself.

“I had a friend who needed help with his computer that he bought from a computer superstore. It was only 2 months old yet broken, and the retailer refused to help fix it



without extortionate repair costs. I decided the PC market needed to change and I was determined to do something about it.”

Constantly doing favours for friends and family with computer problems, Oliver set up Xuro, The Custom Computer Company, with the aim of providing 100% customisable, quality computers with a friendly after sales service, specialising in gaming and PCs for professionals.

Oliver sells his computers from his website where customers can see the offerings, customise computers to their needs, read about the PC that is right for them, buy accessories to match and get one-to-one customer support with a “Warranty Manager” who will look after the customer during their new computers life span. Aside from the core business, Oliver’s business also offers IT services for businesses, consultation on what is right for the customer, and upgrades for existing PCs and laptops.

Oliver was supported initially by the John Cracknell Youth Enterprise Bank who gave him support and finance to make his first steps and then applied for a Start-Up Loan to pay for a big national push into the marketplace.

As a result of this big marketing push, Oliver was approached by a number of international component manufacturers and offered a wide range of promotion and exposure in national magazines, online, and at some of the biggest gaming festivals in the country. Oliver doesn’t think it will be long before his company is THE face of quality computing.

So, what are Oliver’s thoughts on going solo?

“I’ve wanted to be self-employed for as long as I can remember. It’s a great opportunity, but it is a lot of hard work. If you get your head down, and make something of it, it can be incredibly rewarding and just think, you may not get this chance again in a lifetime.”

- [www.xuro.co.uk](http://www.xuro.co.uk) | @xurocomputers

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”: [bit.ly/fEgQHo](http://bit.ly/fEgQHo)
- PayPal Shortcodes – insert PayPal buttons in your posts or pages using a Shortcode: [bit.ly/KGNE5f](http://bit.ly/KGNE5f)
- View a complete list of WordPress e-commerce plugins: [bit.ly/eTEkwZ](http://bit.ly/eTEkwZ)

## 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)
- Froition | [www.froition.com](http://www.froition.com) [shopping cart and full website]

Research the product that suits you best, taking into account hosting provision, back-end admin, and built-in search engine optimisation. For more information on e-commerce, view the video series ‘10 steps to e-commerce success’ produced by Enterprise Nation in association with PayPal: [www.enterprisenation.com/e-commerce-videos](http://www.enterprisenation.com/e-commerce-videos)

**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!



## CASE STUDY: THELOUI

**NAME:** Loui Fowler

**BUSINESS:** THELOUI (Triple “R” Banners)

**STARTED:** November 2012

One Saturday night late November 2011, Loui and his family went to the KC Stadium to watch a rugby league game between England and New Zealand. On arrival at the stadium, they noticed A4-sized sheets on the seats that had “TRY” and “NO TRY” written on them.

Loui looked at the “TRY” sheets and said that he would like to make something a lot better than what he was given. Loui looked on the internet and started to ask questions on different websites about producing such designs and products and came up with the idea of a retractable banner.



From an early age, Loui had the gift to sell things. He started selling things around school that he would buy on eBay and everything he did buy he managed to sell for a profit. His ideas had been fuelled and with his desire to want his own business, his idea was planted.

At the start of the year, Loui had heard about the Badger’s Sett Enterprise Challenge at school and thought this was the ideal opportunity to be able to speak out and try to sell his ambition. On finding out the process, he sent an application form to Charles Cracknell. A few weeks later, Loui got a reply back inviting him for an interview ...

Loui progressed through the interviews and on to the final with his idea. This was where the realisation that his idea could be the beginning of what could be a great adventure occurred.

The final interview took place during Global Entrepreneurship Week hosted by Ruth Badger. With the result being announced the next day, Loui and his family were attending his awards evening at school. To his and his family’s total surprise, Ruth Badger turned up at Malet Lambert and revealed in front of the full school that Loui had won the competition and awarded a considerable amount of money to enable him to start his adventure.



Loui recently struck a deal with the local rugby team, Hull FC, who offered to sell the Triple 'R' Banners in the official store at their stadium. The big game between Hull KR and Hull FC was broadcast on Sky Sports and Loui's banners hit a national audience.

“The best thing about becoming your own boss is that you decide what happens and you are always in control of making decisions, making new and unique products, new ideas out on the market, the risks and responsibility and it is all under your name. It is your own piece of the market. Go ahead and have a go.”

- [www.theloui.co.uk](http://www.theloui.co.uk) | @THELOUIBANNERS

Revised proof PDF April 2013

## 12. MAKE SOME NOISE!

**S**ales 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 Nigella Lawson)? 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**

1. Attention-grabbing headline
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

1.

## STARTUP SATURDAY GOES NATIONWIDE TO HELP THOUSANDS MORE GET STARTED!

2.

Small business support company, Enterprise Nation, has announced the national expansion of its successful StartUp Saturday workshops with the 'start your own business in a day' event about to appear in new locations across the UK.

Until now, the one-day workshop that offers everything you need to know about starting a business has been delivered by Enterprise Nation founder, Emma Jones, in London. Based on feedback from small business owners around the country, we are now spreading our wings!

3.

The UK is witnessing record numbers of people starting a business with 488,000 new limited companies formed in 2011 and an all-time-high of 4.8 million small businesses operating.

StartUp Saturday was created to encourage yet more people to turn an idea into a successful venture. Enterprise Nation founder, Emma Jones, says:

4.

"We have spent 12 months perfecting the StartUp Saturday course content and format. Budding business owners who have attended the workshop have gone on to do deals together and many of them keep in touch to offer mutual support as their business journey unfolds. Wanting to increase the number of start-ups we can help, we realised the most natural people to deliver the workshops are existing businesses owners, so the clearest route to expand was through a franchise model. We're delighted to be working with new franchisees to realise a vision of seeing StartUp Saturdays happening every week of the year and in every part of the UK!"

Each StartUp Saturday session will be delivered in a fun and friendly way by talented and entrepreneurial StartUp Saturday trainers. One of the first on board is Rickie Josen, who will be hosting the workshops in Birmingham. Rickie says:

5.

"Many more people are looking to turn an idea, passion or hobby into a way of making a living and StartUp Saturday is the ideal workshop to attend to find out how to do this. In just under five hours we cover everything from business planning to sales, marketing, social media, finances, and how to create a home on the web. The workshop offers the content and confidence you need to get going and I can't wait to get started delivering it!"

StartUp Saturday takes place on a monthly basis in locations around the UK, running from 10am to 3pm. The cost to attend is £35, which includes light refreshments and a StartUp Kit.

6.

To register for a StartUp Saturday workshop, visit [www.enterprisenation.com/saturday](http://www.enterprisenation.com/saturday)

### Media Notes

7.

*Enterprise Nation is a small business support company offering online content, books/eBooks/Kits, events and funding to a community of over 76,000 people who are starting and growing their own venture. [@e\\_nation](http://www.enterprisenation.com)*

8.

*For media enquiries, please contact Louise Hitchen at [louise@enterprisenation.com](mailto:louise@enterprisenation.com) or (01234) 567 8910.*



9.

## **Tweet, Tweet**

Follow media channels, journalists and personalities on Twitter so you're the first to pick up the news and media requests:

- @BBCBreakfast
- @BBCOnthemoney
- @talktothepress
- @findaTVexpert
- @TheTimes
- @guardian
- #journorequest
- @TheoPaphitis, who runs Small Business Sunday #sbs every week between 5pm and 7.30pm where six lucky companies are re-tweeted. Full details at [tinyurl.com/smallbusinessunday](http://tinyurl.com/smallbusinessunday).

And finally ... please contact Enterprise Nation with your story. We are always profiling start-ups and small businesses on our website, in books (like this one!), in kits and in videos. Submit your story at [www.enterprisenation.com/contribute](http://www.enterprisenation.com/contribute).



## 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)).”

## CASE STUDY: Force-7

**NAME:** Philip Batty

**BUSINESS:** Force-7

**STARTED:** May 2006

Everybody knows that “revision-feeling,” exams looming over you and you’re actively searching for anything to distract you from fast approaching GCSEs. Well this was exactly the case for Philip Batty of Force-7. It was traditional at school to have the opportunity to take part in Young Enterprise Company Programme in the September following the Summer exam period; and Phil made the decision early on that if he was going to compete he wanted as much of a head start as possible.

“I didn’t have an idea at this point, I just knew I wanted to set up a business and make a success of it. Plus, I was fed up of spending hours revising every day. I needed something to take my mind off it, and this was the perfect solution. I spent afternoons talking to friends about potential products and services and mornings hitting the books.

“Don’t get me wrong, exams are important and I still got good grades, but for me my eyes were opened and I saw the potential that running your own company could give. I had a whole new perspective on how my future could unfold and from that point I never looked back.”

It took a while for Force-7 to really understand the range of services it was to offer and how best to position itself in the market place. Today, Force-7 is a specialist youth marketing, research and digital agency working with brands that want to target and engage the younger generation and help them to co-creations conversations with their potential customers.

This involves everything from focus group research to digital campaigns, graphic design and experiential activations using their in-house street team. It’s exciting, because



every client project is different and provides a new opportunity to push boundaries to reach this challenging demographic.

One thing that makes Force-7 unique is that the business is primarily staffed by 16-26 year olds! Force-7 is a company that recognises the importance of placing their target audience at the heart of everything they do.

Now, the business does of course have staff members from all age brackets to build on their experience and knowledge base, but the thing that makes them different, is that nothing leaves the company doors without having had the input from this key age bracket.

Force-7 is continually evolving and growing, just like any good new business. They recognise that change is part of evolution; and that nobody gets it right first time without making any mistakes. Each year brings new challenges and a new phase in the company's life, but each year it continues to go from strength-to-strength.

When asked about their biggest success so far, you could look at the work the company has done with the British Red Cross with their innovative campaign "Life. Live it." that took first aid directly to the youth market with the UK's first interactive live Facebook house party. Then again, you could consider how the company has stayed true to its local roots, working with young people in Hull to support their enterprising journey.

However, really the biggest success is the company's ability to learn from its mistakes and carry on. Any young person setting up in business will face setbacks, but Force-7 is a business that has taken these setbacks and come back stronger. Maybe that's why they are still here 7 years on!

Whilst everyone has an opinion on Hull, one thing that can't be denied is that it embraces enterprise like no other city. If you're a young person with a business idea then there are endless amounts of schemes, initiatives and organisations waiting to help. Phil wasn't naïve to this, and took advantage of the help available from his first day in business.

Force-7 benefitted from aligning itself with the Hull Youth Enterprise Partnership, a group of like-minded organisations who come together to support enterprising young people in Hull. The business was also taken under the wing of the local business community who offered advice, direction and leadership to keep the company on the right track.

So, did Philip make the right choice?

"It was a tough one weighing up the pros and cons of going to Uni and getting a degree

against carrying on a business I was really enjoying. In the end, I'm 100% certain I made the right decision, you only have to look at the current jobs market to realise you make your own luck in life. I think I've learnt that if you put the effort in, you will see the reward; and this has quite literally changed my life. If I was to do it all over again, would I? Without a doubt."

- [www.force-7.co.uk](http://www.force-7.co.uk) | @force7tweets

## 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, visit: [www.startupbritain.co](http://www.startupbritain.co)

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.
- *Country Living* Magazine Kitchen Table Talent Awards ([www.kitchentabletalent.com](http://www.kitchentabletalent.com)) – if you're working on a talent or skill from the kitchen table and know it can be turned into a business, this competition is for you. Prizes include office equipment and profile in the magazine, which can be very good for sales!
- Social Enterprise Awards ([www.socialenterprise.org.uk/events](http://www.socialenterprise.org.uk/events)) – celebrates social enterprises of all ages.
- Nectar Small Business Awards ([nectar.com/business-sba2012](http://nectar.com/business-sba2012)) – 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.
- Smarta100 ([www.smarta.com/smarta100](http://www.smarta.com/smarta100)) – an annual award to find Britain's brightest businesses with a grand prize of £10,000 in cash to the winner decided by popular vote.

- 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.

## **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**

### **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!

**FREE CREDIT!** Access a £50 credit voucher from Eventbrite at [www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/template/81243](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/template/81243)

## **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. To see a full enterprise events listing visit [www.startupbritain.co](http://www.startupbritain.co) and click on Enterprise Calendar.

Across 2013 Enterprise Nation will be hosting a whole range of events designed to help you start and grow. We'd love to see you!

- StartUp Saturday ([www.enterprisenation.com/saturday](http://www.enterprisenation.com/saturday)) – offering all you need to know to start a business in a day. Held throughout the year and across the UK.
- StartUp Workshops – a mini version of StartUp Saturday and hosted in-stores from North to South.
- SetUp Weekends – join us for a full weekend and meet Enterprise Nation authors who can get you set up online, with a new company formed and a marketing strategy in place.
- Enterprise Live! – the national Enterprise Nation event attracting hundreds of start-ups and growing businesses, with inspiring talks and activities for the kids too!

Full details for all of these can be found at the ‘Events’ section of [www.enterprisenation.com](http://www.enterprisenation.com).

*In terms of events there’s also . . .*

- Global Entrepreneurship Week (November each year) | [www.youthbusiness.org](http://www.youthbusiness.org), @GEWHull
- 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)
- StartUp Britain Industry Weeks, national tour, and StartUp Day | [www.startupbritain.co](http://www.startupbritain.co)

## **Jump On Board!**

Rolling into its third year in 2013, the national StartUp Britain Tour sees a bright and buzzing bus travel to universities and colleges with entrepreneurs and experts on board. Register to receive the StartUp Britain e-news ([www.startupbritain.co](http://www.startupbritain.co)) and you’ll be first to hear about bus tour dates and locations.

## **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:

- Let’s Talk Business (local) – Humber-wide business networking and mentoring specifically designed for young entrepreneurs in the Hull and Humber region, run by Oliver Wilson (page 92) and Thomas Arran (page 79). [www.letstalkbusinesshull.co.uk](http://www.letstalkbusinesshull.co.uk)
- For Entrepreneurs Only (local) – Group of local entrepreneurs working to help create jobs in Hull and East Riding. [www.forentrepreneuronly.co.uk](http://www.forentrepreneuronly.co.uk)
- Women’s Enterprise in the Humber (local) – Network for women in business and those who are entrepreneurial in spirit working to unlock enterprise talent. [www.women-entrepreneurs.co.uk](http://www.women-entrepreneurs.co.uk)

- Enterprise Nation – friendly community of over 75,000 business owners who benefit from daily content with premium members receiving profile, free eBooks, and discounts on events. [www.enterprisenation.com](http://www.enterprisenation.com)
- 4Networking – national network of business breakfast groups. [www.4networking.biz](http://www.4networking.biz)
- Business Scene – hosts regional and national networking events as well as an online directory of over 10,000 events across the UK. [www.business-scene.com](http://www.business-scene.com)
- Jelly – casual gatherings of co-workers, with events held in people’s homes, the local coffee shop or co-working spaces. The idea is that you meet in relaxed surroundings and creative ideas are stimulated by the experience. [www.workatjelly.com](http://www.workatjelly.com)
- 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)
- School for Startups – headed by serial entrepreneur Doug Richard, School for Startups travels the UK hosting events for anyone considering starting a business. [www.schoolforstartups.co.uk](http://www.schoolforstartups.co.uk)
- Young Entrepreneur Society – founded by young entrepreneur Carly Ward, this is a network that offers education and monthly events to budding business owners. [www.youngentrepreneursociety.org.uk](http://www.youngentrepreneursociety.org.uk)
- Intuit 100Up – apply to be part of this group of 100 StartUps and receive access to finance bootcamps and mentoring via a partnership with NACUE. [nacue.com/2012/03/introducing-intuit-100up](http://nacue.com/2012/03/introducing-intuit-100up)
- Professional Contractors Group (PCG) – if contracting is the life for you, check out the free resources and events hosted by PCG. [www.pcg.org.uk](http://www.pcg.org.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)



There are also chambers, associations, trade groups and enterprise agencies who host regular events:

- Hull and Humber Chamber of Commerce (local) | [www.hull-humber-chamber.co.uk](http://www.hull-humber-chamber.co.uk)
- British Chambers of Commerce | [www.britishchambers.org.uk](http://www.britishchambers.org.uk)
- Federation of Small Businesses | [www.fsb.org.uk](http://www.fsb.org.uk)
- Forum of Private Business | [www.fpb.org](http://www.fpb.org)
- NFEA, the national enterprise network | [www.nfea.com](http://www.nfea.com)
- Professional Contractors Group (PCG) | [www.pcg.org.uk](http://www.pcg.org.uk)

**BECOME A STARTUP LOCAL CHAMPION:** Raise your profile and the likelihood of being approached for talks and coverage in national campaigns by becoming a StartUp Britain Local Champion. As a Local Champ, you'll be the face of StartUp Britain in your area and have opportunities to get involved in projects like High Street StartUp and StartUp Spaces. It's a route to making connections and, best of all, encouraging even more people to become their own boss.

## 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.com](http://www.slideshare.com)
- 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. Enterprise Nation’s 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 ([bit.ly/epymNm](http://bit.ly/epymNm)).
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).

“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* at: [www.enterprisenation.com/facebook-book-offer](http://www.enterprisenation.com/facebook-book-offer)

- **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) 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 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.”

## Flickr

Join [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.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; or, if you are a professional selling creative services, check out the Creative Portfolio Display application ([linkd.in/deDVX1](http://linkd.in/deDVX1)), which aims to “empower creative professionals by creating a one-stop solution for maintaining their work portfolio and broadcasting it to millions”.

- **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](http://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](http://www.google.com/analytics)

There are other analytics options:

- Alexa – web traffic metrics, site demographics and top URL listings: [www.alexa.com](http://www.alexa.com)
- Clicky – monitors and analyses your site traffic in real time: [www.getclicky.com](http://www.getclicky.com)
- Opentracker – gather and analyse web stats and monitor online visitors: [www.opentracker.net](http://www.opentracker.net)
- StatCounter – an invisible web tracker and hit counter that offers data in real time: [www.statcounter.com](http://www.statcounter.com)
- Marketing Grader – generates a free marketing report that compares your site with a competitor's: [www.websitegrader.com](http://www.websitegrader.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.

Use the following template to ensure you're making the most of all your marketing opportunities.

## TEMPLATE 7: MARKETING AND PROMOTION

### **Media**

#### **Press (local and national)**

*List relevant names and journalists*

#### **Radio**

*List programmes on which you'd like to appear*

## **Television**

*List programmes on which you'd like to appear*

## **Magazines**

*List target titles*

## **Online**

*List target sites*

## **Other**

### **Events**

*List events to attend; networking and trade. What about hosting your own event, too?*

### **Awards**

*List awards relevant to your business and their dates of entry*

## **Your social network**

*Plan of action for engaging with major social networks on ongoing basis*

**Revised proof PDF April 2013**

# 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.

Revised proforma April 2013

# 13. ATTRACT CUSTOMERS BACK

**Y**ou 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.

## CASE STUDY: HWSdesign

**NAME:** Nicola McMullan

**BUSINESS:** HWSdesign

**STARTED:** April 2010

After working her whole young adult life in retail-based business while looking for an opportunity to follow her heart, Nicola decided to take the risk of striking out on her own with the help of friends in the business

“I really needed to get back to my creative roots, however most of the techniques I had learned while studying in the field of multimedia were obsolete. I had a friend who set up his own design firm in America and he helped me learn the modern techniques I would need to start designing again on my own”

HWSdesign aims to provide a friendly, local service for people who need any kind of website, from small businesses to large high content websites which need managing all year around. Nicola, since forming HWSdesign, has designed, coded and managed



the websites for the Hull Youth Enterprise Partnership and the John Cracknell Youth Enterprise Bank

Nicola does all website work, from the first meeting with the client to assess their needs through concept work, data entry, coding and launch. HWSdesign also offers hosting and management packages so everything needed to have a successful website can be found in one place.

HWSdesign has operated on a part time basis for two years and has 7 active websites in their portfolio as well as several projects still on-going and some templates which still need a home.

Nicola kept on a part time job to fund the business as, at the time, she was not eligible for a John Cracknell Youth Enterprise Bank grant. Over the years, she has received a lot of help and support from everyone at the Hull Youth Enterprise Partnership.

Final words from Nicola?

“I’m happy I started my own design business, it has been a dream for many years now. It is an uphill struggle, but when you look after your customers’, word of mouth advertising is the best kind of advertising around.”

- [www.hwsdesign.net](http://www.hwsdesign.net) | @HWSdesign





# 14. FOCUS ON WHAT YOU DO BEST AND OUTSOURCE THE REST

**T**he 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:

- International Association of Virtual Assistants | [www.iava.co.uk](http://www.iava.co.uk)
- Society of Virtual Assistants | [www.societyofvirtualassistants.co.uk](http://www.societyofvirtualassistants.co.uk)
- VA Success Group | [www.vasuccessgroup.co.uk](http://www.vasuccessgroup.co.uk)
- Virtual Assistant Coaching & Training Company | [www.vact.co.uk](http://www.vact.co.uk)
- Virtual Assistant Forums | [www.virtualassistantforums.com](http://www.virtualassistantforums.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.

For online accounting and invoicing that makes life easier for you and your accountant, check out:

- FreeAgent | [www.freeagent.com](http://www.freeagent.com)
- KashFlow | [www.kashflow.co.uk](http://www.kashflow.co.uk)
- QuickBooks | [www.quickbooks.co.uk](http://www.quickbooks.co.uk)

**IN THE KIT:** Access free trials with FreeAgent and Intuit.

## 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)).

Or try:

- Force-7 - Youth and Student Marketing (local) | [www.force-7.co.uk](http://www.force-7.co.uk)
- Impression 11 – Web Marketing (local) | [www.impression11.co.uk](http://www.impression11.co.uk)

## 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. It 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)

## 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 or contact IT support teams connected to the large retailers.

- Xuro – The Custom Computer Company (local) | [www.xuro.co.uk](http://www.xuro.co.uk), [support.xuro.co.uk](mailto:support.xuro.co.uk)
- HWS Hosting (local) | [www.hwshosting.net](http://www.hwshosting.net)
- Geeks-on-Wheels | [www.geeks-on-wheels.com](http://www.geeks-on-wheels.com)
- Knowhow | [www.knowhow.com](http://www.knowhow.com)
- Geek Squad | [www.geeksquad.co.uk](http://www.geeksquad.co.uk)

## 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.

**IN THE KIT:** Get \$50 in oDesk Credits to hire online contractors and \$200 worth of recruiting services, with experienced oDesk recruiters helping you find the perfect contractor for your first job.

## 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](https://docs.google.com)). You can edit on the move, choose who accesses documents and share changes in real time.
- Huddle ([www.huddle.com](https://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](https://www.gotomeeting.com)

Work with anyone, anywhere with this easy to use online meeting tool.

- Ketchup | [www.useketchup.com](https://www.useketchup.com)

Share and record meeting notes.

- Powwownow | [www.powwownow.co.uk](https://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.

Revised proof PDF April 2013



## CASE STUDY: Mosh News

**NAME:** Kallum Green

**BUSINESS:** Mosh News

**STARTED:** October 2011

Technology has changed the way that people access information and communicate. From PCs to smartphones and tablets, most people now have some form of internet-connected electronic device. Kallum believes the problem is that most newspapers haven't adapted to the internet age. Young people now expect to be able to comment on news, interact with it and even write their own news, and that's where the idea for Mosh News came from.



Mosh News is an interactive news-source for young people and on average receives 20,000 daily readers from across the world. They provide the top stories of the day ranging from general news, celebrity gossip, politics and more.

Mosh News aims to get as many exclusive interviews with celebrities each month. Although this is quite challenging due to the high demand by other publications, the service isn't just for the benefit of general readers; it's beneficial for budding journalists, photographers and website designers.

By doing this they can make a portfolio for themselves which they can use on a CV for future reference. People who have wrote, photographed and helped contribute to the designing of the website have used Mosh as references; some benefitting greatly by using Mosh News.

Kallum managed to gain enough sponsorship money to get started and to keep the website up and running for a year, but he quickly realised that more funds would be required to make it sustainable. He met with Charles Cracknell and Mike Notarantonio of the Youth Enterprise Bank and explained his ideas for Mosh News and its future expansion into different types of media. The John Cracknell Youth Enterprise Bank

provided £250 upfront, with a promise to match any further funding that Kallum could raise, up to a value of £800.

Kallum's vision is to expand Mosh News into different forms of media: "Our current focus is online news but we want to produce a print version of our newspaper and start Mosh FM, a radio station. We also want to increase our audience so I'm planning to set up a dedicated news website for primary school pupils. This would educate them about writing and publishing news stories that are of interest to them."

With Richard Branson as his business role model and funding from the Youth Enterprise Bank to support him on this journey, it looks like Kallum's on track to achieve his objective of building a diverse media business.

- [www.moshnews.co.uk](http://www.moshnews.co.uk) | @MoshNews

## **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.

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# 15. KEEP THE BUSINESS IN BALANCE

**A**s 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**

Earlier 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 accounts 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.



## 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).

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/

3.

4. Your company registration  
VAT no. 12345678910

4.

PROJECT TITLE: A. N. Other Small Business website  
PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Redesign of business website  
INVOICE NUMBER: 01  
TERMS: 30 days

5.

6.

8.

| Description       | Amount owed      |
|-------------------|------------------|
| 7. 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

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# 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 the sites below and join their active communities of business owners.

- Hull Youth Enterprise Partnership (local) | [www.youthenterprise-hull.co.uk](http://www.youthenterprise-hull.co.uk)
- Capability Mentors (local) | [www.capabilitymentors.co.uk](http://www.capabilitymentors.co.uk)
- Let's Talk Business - Young Entrepreneurs Network (local) | [www.letstalkbusinesshull.co.uk](http://www.letstalkbusinesshull.co.uk)
- Shell LiveWIRE (local) | [www.shell-livewire.org](http://www.shell-livewire.org)
- For Entrepreneurs Only (local) | [www.forentrepreneuronly.co.uk](http://www.forentrepreneuronly.co.uk)
- Enterprise Nation | [www.enterprisenation.com](http://www.enterprisenation.com)
- Business Zone | [www.businesszone.co.uk](http://www.businesszone.co.uk)
- Start Up Donut | [www.startupdonut.co.uk](http://www.startupdonut.co.uk)
- Smarta | [www.smarta.com](http://www.smarta.com)
- Startups | [startups.co.uk](http://startups.co.uk)
- Fresh Business Thinking | [www.freshbusinessstinking.com](http://www.freshbusinessstinking.com)
- School for Startups | [www.schoolforstartups.co.uk](http://www.schoolforstartups.co.uk)

## 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](http://Mentorsme.co.uk).

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.

## **Business advisors**

Consider approaching your local enterprise agency, university/college society, chamber of commerce or the Prince's Trust for additional support.

- National Enterprise Network ([www.nationalenterprisenetwork.org](http://www.nationalenterprisenetwork.org)) offers links to local business support agencies in your area.
- NACUE ([www.nacue.org](http://www.nacue.org)) represents enterprise societies in universities and colleges that could be your first port of call.
- In 2011, the Prince's Trust ([tinyurl.com/princestrustenterprise](http://tinyurl.com/princestrustenterprise)) helped almost 13,000 young people through its Enterprise Programme.
- Local Enterprise Partnerships ([www.bis.gov.uk/policies/economic-development/leps](http://www.bis.gov.uk/policies/economic-development/leps)) have been set up to encourage enterprise and will be interested in hearing any success story.
- British Chambers of Commerce ([www.britishchambers.org.uk](http://www.britishchambers.org.uk)) offer specific services relating to export. Some have Junior Chambers for younger members.

## CASE STUDY: Crazy Critter World

**NAME:** Bronwyn Wilson

**BUSINESS:** Crazy Critter World

**STARTED:** October 2009

Bronwyn was just 14 years old when she started her business. Having always been interested in arts and crafts, she borrowed a book from the local library that she didn't realise would lead to an exciting business venture.

"I started to create these sock characters out of any fabric I could find. Before long, I realised they were taking over my house and I knew I needed to get rid of them somehow! I approached a local craft shop owner who fell in love with them and took her first order of stock."



Crazy Critter World, Bronwyn's craft business, now sells handmade, quirky fabric characters and creations including bags, badges, cushions and canvas pictures. Her business has diversified a lot since she started out, now selling her cuddly characters to businesses as mascots as well as her work creating weird and wonderful things for the home.

Bronwyn runs her business from her own workshop where she manages her business and creates her Crazy Characters. Her numerous designs are sold at shops, stalls and art galleries in Hull, Beverley, South Cave and even as far out as Pocklington and York. Because of the huge success of her products, Bronwyn has gone on to design hundreds of product concepts for Crazy Critter World, all of which are unique in their own way.

In 2011, Bronwyn was voted as Hull's Young Entrepreneur of the Year during Global Entrepreneurship Week in the city by some of the city's biggest names. As a result, she gained advice and support from local company Claughtons with mentoring that has helped to move her business forward.

The John Cracknell Youth Enterprise Bank were quick to snap up Bronwyn's clear talent and give her the finance and support she needed to get off the ground. In various



business competitions including The Badger's Sett, Bronwyn has also received £1000 of investment as well as support from BBC Apprentice Ruth Badger and local Dragon's Den star Sarah Longthorn of WedgeWelly.

So how did Bronwyn start at such a young age and what is her advice?

“I used all of my spare time to design from my imagination and to put into my business at a young age, knowing it would take determination. Keep trying new things and find what is best for your business. I'm always experimenting with new ideas, which is how I found my success.”

## **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)
- School for Creative Startups | [www.schoolforcreativestartups.com](http://www.schoolforcreativestartups.com)
- Iris Ventures | [www.irisnation.com/irisnews/uk\\_europe/iris-launches-business-incubator-iris-ventures](http://www.irisnation.com/irisnews/uk_europe/iris-launches-business-incubator-iris-ventures)
- Accelerator Academy | [www.acceleratoracademy.com](http://www.acceleratoracademy.com)
- New Entrepreneurs Foundation | [www.newentrepreneursfoundation.co.uk](http://www.newentrepreneursfoundation.co.uk)
- Entrepreneur First | [www.entrepreneurfirst.org.uk](http://www.entrepreneurfirst.org.uk)
- Springboard | [www.springboard.com](http://www.springboard.com)
- Microsoft BizSpark | [www.microsoft.com/BizSpark](http://www.microsoft.com/BizSpark)
- GrowthAccelerator | [www.growthaccelerator.com](http://www.growthaccelerator.com)

# CONCLUSION

## BY MARK JONES

... and there you have it. I hope you've taken a lot from this book, been signposted in the right direction and learnt lots about what it takes to be an entrepreneur.

If you take anything from this book, I would like it to be the support mechanisms that exist in Hull to help you as a young person in the world of business. Hopefully, you will now know:

- About business networks like Let's Talk Business, where other young people are there to support you, just as they were supported in their start up.
- About enterprise organisations like the Hull Youth Enterprise Partnership that work furiously every day to help people like you start a life changing journey.
- About other people who have made it, and how your story could, one day, be no different to theirs.

In tough economic times, it is great to see young people coming together. Networks like Let's Talk Business, that we at Hull City Council are supporting, have been set up showing that there is a real understanding of the need for people to work together in business. Nothing shows a passion more than helping your peers succeed with you.

The passion in Hull's young people is extraordinary. We are now seeing more businesses run by young people than ever before, and you can now be part of that growing population. Take your idea one step at a time and don't rush it! Take it at a speed that you feel comfortable with, but as big or as small as your plans may be, you're now personally contributing to your city's economic health. Young people like you are moulding the city as our employers of the future.

Best of luck, "boss",

**MARK JONES**

*Head of Hull City Council Economic Development and Regeneration*



# HOW ENTERPRISE NATION CAN HELP

**E**nterprise Nation provides support for UK homegrown businesses through its eBooks, events and on its website.

Whether you're dreaming of becoming your own boss, turning a talent into a business or taking over the world from your kitchen table, Enterprise Nation can help.

There's lots of free business advice on our website, events where you can learn about starting up or 'going global', and books for any kind of business in our bookshop. We can even help you with your marketing. Add your business – whatever stage it's at – to our free business directory, and we'll help you get found on the web.

Become a premium member and get even more for your business, including free eBooks, discounted tickets to events, and more ways to promote your business. Find out more at [www.enterprisenation.com](http://www.enterprisenation.com).

**IN THE KIT:** Readers can become premium members of Enterprise Nation for just £10 per year (half the normal price), and that includes one free business eBook per month and 25% off business events. Find out more at [www.enterprisenation.com/premium](http://www.enterprisenation.com/premium) – and make sure you activate your kit to redeem your half-price offer.

# WITH THANKS

To the following people who have contributed their expertise, story or tip in the compilation of this kit:

## Case studies

Amanda Hartley | Amanda's Blue Orchid

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Loui Fowler | THELOUI (Triple "R" Banners)

Philip Batty | Force-7

Nicola McMullan | HWSdesign

Kallum Green | Mosh News

Bronwyn Wilson | Crazy Critter World

## Experts

Emily Coltman | FreeAgent

John Hayes | iContact

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

## **Enterprise Nation**

San Sharma

Simon Wicks

Chris Read

Chris Parker

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# IV. OFFERS & PARTNERS

To take advantage of the offers detailed in this section and many more besides, head to:

**[www.enterprisenation.com/startupkit2013](http://www.enterprisenation.com/startupkit2013)**

Enter the code below, select the individual offers you want, and you'll be shown the links and offer codes you need.

ACCESS CODE: supk13

Alibaba.com is a global e-commerce platform for small businesses operated by Alibaba.com International. The platform provides an online space that brings together buyers and sellers to communicate, collaborate and carry out global trade, helping small businesses worldwide expand to overseas markets. More than 1.4 million British SMEs are currently members of Alibaba.com.

Alibaba.com was established in 1999 by Jack Ma, a former English teacher from Hangzhou, China, and 17 other founders with a dream to help SMEs grow their business through the internet. Originally it was founded as a trading platform to help small manufacturers in China sell their wares. Since then, Alibaba.com has grown into a global online marketplace for small companies around the world to identify potential trading partners and interact with each other to conduct business online.

Alibaba.com has 29.4 million registered users from more than 240 countries and regions and showcases 2.5 million supplier storefronts. Alibaba.com International has offices across Greater China, India, Japan, Korea, the U.K. and the U.S.

Alibaba.com will be offering a new service, Verified Membership, to new and existing members in the UK, free for a limited time. The Verified Membership programme is aimed at helping suppliers establish trust with potential international buyers. Suppliers participating in this programme will undergo basic background checks to confirm that they are legitimate businesses, giving potential buyers much more confidence in doing business with them. Those who successfully pass the verification process will gain a special logo on their Alibaba.com profiles and enjoy significantly higher search rankings for their products than free members.

Join now to get higher search rankings for your business, meaning greater visibility for your products to an international audience of 29.4 million. To build trust with potential international buyers of your products/services, you just need to follow a few simple steps:

Go to [www.alibaba.com/vm](http://www.alibaba.com/vm) to initiate the Verified Member registration process. Existing members simply log-in and follow the instructions. For new members, first sign-up for a free account with Alibaba.com and during the registration process, tick the “Apply for Free Company Verification” and follow the simple instructions. Once the



background verification checks are complete, your account will be awarded Verified Membership status, giving you an increase in buyer inquiries and higher visibility around the world.

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

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# BIZSPACE



Founded in 2000 with one site, Bizspace has now been providing flexible, affordable business accommodation to both the SME and corporate markets for 12 years and has grown to 110 locations in both England and Scotland.

Bizspace provides the easiest, most flexible and cost-effective way to occupy business premises in the UK.

Finding ideal business premises for your organisation can be difficult, but with over 7m sq ft on 110 sites, Bizspace will be able to provide the right commercial units, offices, studio space, industrial premises or simple storage solution for your specific business requirements.

In order to help you start and grow your business, Bizspace are offering one month's free virtual office or one month free in any of their units, dependent on a six-month signed agreement.

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

# COMPANIES MADE SIMPLE



Companies Made Simple are part of The Made Simple Group, specialists in start-up and small business services. They are an award-winning company formation agent founded in 2003 by Howard Graham. Specialists in the formation of UK limited companies, they have now formed over 250,000 companies.

As the name suggests, they pride themselves in the simplicity of their company formation process that allows both seasoned accountants and first-time directors (and anyone in between) to form a company within just three working hours.

Companies Made Simple are proud to offer:

- three-hour company formation
- free unlimited support
- company admin portal to manage your company
- fast-track bank account with cashback
- free domain name.

Formation happens fast so you can apply online and be in business on the same day.

Form a company for £16.99 with the simplest company formation agent!

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

# FREEAGENT



FreeAgent is one of the top online accounting systems available to start-ups, small businesses and freelancers both in the UK and overseas.

With FreeAgent's award-winning software you can:

- send professional invoices and automatically chase payments
- forecast tax commitments
- import bank statements and sort transactions
- manage expenses
- send estimates
- view real-time cash flow and profit & loss position
- submit VAT returns direct to HMRC
- automatically import data from your PayPal.

FreeAgent are extending a special offer in *The Hull StartUp Kit* which gives you six months free trial plus 10% off subscriptions to their great online accounting system.

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

QuickBooks is the UK's No1 Accounting Software for small business. With no accounting knowledge necessary, QuickBooks easily organises everything in one place and saves you time on everyday bookkeeping tasks. With QuickBooks you can:

- easily create and personalise invoices
- monitor cash flow and keep on top of receivables
- file your VAT returns directly to HMRC – QuickBooks is always compliant with HMRC
- get the information you need with easy-to-use reports.

Getting started is a breeze too! You can quickly import your data from an Excel spreadsheet, and follow QuickBooks' guided set up – with step-by-step tutorials and coaching tips along the way.

Get started today and immediately begin to save time on your books, so you can focus on running your business – what really matters.

Call 0808 168 4256 today and we'll give you:

- 30 day free trial
- 20% saving on your software of choice
- 60-day money-back guarantee

That's a total saving of £103!

Quote "StartUp" and be up and running in minutes!

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

**MOO.COM**



[moo.com](http://moo.com)

## **50 free\* Business Cards from moo.com**

MOO is an award-winning digital printer with a difference. We make Business Cards, MiniCards, Postcards, Stickers and more – and we use premium quality paper as standard.

How is MOO different? Good question! We invented Printfinity, a unique technology that allows you to have a different image on every single card in a pack. It's a great way for new businesses to show off their work – upload product images or info and you can always carry your portfolio in your pocket. Or, choose from our exclusive range of MOO designs.

MOO offer short print runs (as few as 50 cards) so you can experiment with your cards in an affordable way, as well as avoiding waste. It's perfect for startups who still haven't decided on the perfect branding, or ecommerce companies using Printfinity as a product portfolio, with a constantly-rotating range of products.

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

\*visit [moo.com/en-startupkit](http://moo.com/en-startupkit) to claim your free pack, excluding P&P

oDesk ([www.oDesk.com](http://www.oDesk.com)) is where savvy businesses and talented contractors work together on demand, without geographic limits.

As the world's largest online workplace, oDesk gives businesses the flexibility to hire on their own terms and contractors the freedom to work where they want, when they want. More than 495,000 clients and 2.5 million contractors are registered on oDesk.

How oDesk Works

Hire on demand – build a flexible workforce based on skills, ratings, and reviews.

Manage the work – see work-in-progress snapshots, time sheets, and daily logs.

Pay with ease – rest assured with safe global payments and the oDesk guarantee.

Overview of oDesk Offer

To support UK entrepreneurs as they build their businesses, oDesk is offering free work credits and our Hire Up recruiting services to *Hull StartUp Kit* readers (\$250 in offer value).

oDesk credits – *Hull StartUp Kit* readers will receive \$50 in oDesk Credits to hire online contractors.

Recruiting services – Experienced oDesk recruiters will help find the perfect contractor for your first job. Our expert talent scouts will:

- find, screen and present up to five qualified contractors for the project
- get you up and running using oDesk's online work tools
- answer questions and provide one-on-one support.

Normally \$200, our Hire Up recruiting service is free to *Hull StartUp Kit* readers!

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



## PayPal

PayPal is a fast and secure way for customers to pay you online using all major debit and credit cards, as well as online bank transfers and PayPal balance. Customers don't even need a PayPal account to pay you.

With 26 million accounts in the UK and over 230 million worldwide, PayPal is a popular payment method with millions of online shoppers and one of the global leaders in online payments.

PayPal offers a range of products to suit your business needs and size. Whether you want to accept payments directly on your site (Website Payments Standard), through a hosted PayPal page (Website Payments Pro), over the phone (Virtual Terminal) or via email (Email Payments), PayPal has a solution to meet your needs. Benefits include:

- no set-up or monthly fees – you only start paying when you start selling
- no approval required – start accepting online payments today
- chargeback protection on qualifying transactions
- you manage the entire customer relationship: customers return to your site to confirm payment, giving you another opportunity to engage them and encourage repeat business.

PayPal is the perfect solution for businesses in a wide range of industries, which will boost sales and expand your business.

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





## **EKMPOWERSHOP.COM**

ekmPowershop.com is the nation's leading ecommerce provider, powering one in every five online shops in the UK.

Clients using their market-leading ecommerce solution range from multinationals like PGA Golf, Michelin Tyres, Lotus Cars and O2 – through to independent retailers and tens of thousands of SMEs.

Online based with no technical knowledge or software required, ekmPowershop.com makes it easy for any business to set up and run an online shop.

Choose from a huge selection of stunning templates – and add your own logo, colour scheme and branding to make the shop front your own. Should you require a bespoke look and feel, ekmPowershop.com's also fully customisable.

ekmPowershop.com is fully integrated with PayPal's leading payment solution, meaning you can offer customers the most popular payment methods on the internet, all on your very own online shop.

With free support and no minimum term agreement, ekmPowershop.com really is the quickest and easiest way to set up your own online shop. There's no downloads or installation to worry about – all you need is an internet connection and some products to sell!

As part of the *Hull StartUp Kit*, PayPal and EKM are offering £1 for the first three months, to launch your complete ecommerce solution with no PayPal fees for 30 days. Once the three months expires, you pay only £19.99 per month with no contract.

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

**REGUS**

The Regus logo features a stylized blue crown icon above the word "Regus" in a blue serif font. A small red dot is positioned above the letter "i".

Regus provides modern, flexible workspace that frees businesses of all sizes, all over the world, to work more effectively. Companies can take a fully-equipped office, desks to use part-time, come in to touch base or take advantage of a range of virtual office services.

Ready-to go: offices, meeting rooms and business lounges; the largest network of video communication studios in the world; reception facilities, virtual offices and a whole host of other business services. However you use Regus, you can get all the support a start-up or growing business needs.

That's space when you need it – but only when you need it; the room to expand as your business grows, with another fully-equipped office available overnight; elegant rooms for client meetings; a prestigious address and all the support that a business needs.

As part of their commitment to supporting small businesses, Regus are offering a great value **business start-up package** with savings of up to **£1,000**. The package includes an impressive business address, call answering and mail-handling services, professional business mentoring, business support services and discounts on meeting rooms. In addition, take advantage of access to drop-in business lounges offering an excellent place to meet and work with free Wi-Fi and tea/coffee.

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