

## HOW TO START A BUSINESS

*A Simple, No-Fluff Guide for First-Time Entrepreneurs*

---

### Who This Guide Is For

This guide is for anyone who:

- already has a business idea
- wants to start as a **sole proprietor** or **single-member LLC**
- wants a simple, fast, affordable setup
- wants a realistic way to start making income on the side
- doesn't want to get stuck in analysis paralysis

This guide takes you from idea → LLC → brand → bank account → systems, all in a clean, practical flow.

---

### SECTION 1 — COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

Most people never start a business because they believe things that aren't true. These are the biggest misconceptions that hold beginners back:

---

#### 1. “My LLC name has to be the same as my business name.”

False.

Your **LLC name is a legal name**.

Your **business name is your brand**, and it will likely change as you grow.

You simply file a **DBA (Doing Business As)** if your public-facing name is different.

#### **Example:**

Subway's legal company name was **Doctor's Associates Inc.**, not “Subway.”

---

#### 2. “I need my logo and branding done before I can start.”

No.

Branding comes **after** you start, not before.  
You can launch without a logo, color scheme, or aesthetic.

---

### 3. “I need a finished product before I open.”

This is one of the biggest traps.

You will go through **3–7 iterations** before your product is “final.”

If you wait until it’s perfect, you will never launch.

---

### 4. “It takes money to make money.”

False.

It takes **resourcefulness** to make money.

Starting a business costs a few hundred dollars.

Your focus should be:

1. Find an opportunity
2. Make money
3. Reinvest that money
4. Repeat

Spending money before you've earned any is how people fail.

---

## SECTION 2 — FORMING YOUR LLC

This is the legal foundation of your business. Keep it simple and efficient.

---

### 1. Choose Your LLC Name

This is *not* your brand name.

It’s just the name on file with the state.

Pick something simple and not emotionally important.

---

## 2. Choose the State

Most people should form their LLC in their home state.

If you choose another state for strategic reasons:

- get a P.O. box in that state
- don't use your home address for privacy
- understand you may need a registered agent

If in your home state, you can:

- use your address, or
  - open a local P.O. box for privacy
- 

## 3. Purchase the LLC (LegalZoom Method)

Use LegalZoom and select:

- **Basic package only**
- Pay your state fees
- Add the **EIN service** (around \$70)

This keeps everything simple, fast, and straightforward.

Avoid all upsells — you do not need them.

---

## 4. Watch for Mail Scams

After forming your LLC, you will receive a flood of “official” mail asking for payments.

They are scams.

LegalZoom leaks address information to mailing lists — so expect junk mail.

If you completed everything in LegalZoom, you owe nothing further.

---

## SECTION 3 — CHOOSING YOUR BUSINESS NAME (Your Brand Name)

Your business name is what customers see. This is separate from the LLC.

---

## 1. Brainstorm Names

Look for something:

- short
- easy to say
- easy to spell
- flexible enough to evolve
- not tied too tightly to one product

Don't overthink it — you can change your brand later.

---

## 2. Check for Trademarks (USPTO)

Go to **USPTO.gov** → **TESS**

Search your name and industry category.

If someone in your field has a similar or identical trademark, move on immediately.

---

## 3. Check Domain Availability

Ideally, you want the **.com**.

If it's taken, use simple variations like:

- hq
- co
- app
- official

Avoid:

- hyphens
- numbers
- confusing spellings

Buy the domain as soon as you find something clean.

---

#### **4. Check Social Media Handles**

Look for matching or clean variations:

- Instagram
- TikTok
- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- X
- YouTube

You want consistency, not perfection.

---

### **SECTION 4 — CREATE A SIMPLE, CLEAN BRAND (Fast + Cheap)**

*You do NOT need a professional brand to start — you just need something clean.*

---

#### **1. What Your Starter Brand Needs**

Just four things:

- 1. Simple logo**
- 2. Three colors**
  - Primary
  - Secondary
  - Neutral
- 3. Two fonts**
- 4. Consistency** across website + email + social media

That's it.

This is enough to appear professional on Day 1.

---

## 2. Use This ChatGPT Prompt to Generate Your Brand for Free

Copy + paste:

\*\*“Create a simple brand identity for a new business.

Business name: [INSERT NAME]

Industry: [INSERT INDUSTRY]

Target customer: [INSERT CUSTOMER]

Brand vibe/style: [e.g., minimal, bold, luxury, modern, friendly]

Please produce:

1. A 1–2 sentence brand description
2. Three logo concepts (describe visually)
3. A 3-color palette with HEX codes
4. Two recommended fonts
5. A simple brand voice guideline
6. Suggestions for consistent social media styling

Make everything simple and beginner-friendly.”\*\*

This gives you a full brand identity instantly — and then you can finalize it using Canva or Fiverr for \$50–\$150.

---

## SECTION 5 — SETTING UP YOUR OPERATIONS

Now that your LLC, business name, and basic brand are in place, it’s time to set up your infrastructure.

---

### 1. Open Your Business Bank Account

Start with a **big bank**:

- Chase
- Bank of America
- Wells Fargo

They give you a higher chance of:

- getting approved
- receiving your first business credit card (often ~\$2k limit)

Bring:

- LLC documents
  - EIN
  - ID
- 

## **2. Open a Stripe Account**

Stripe becomes your:

- payment processor
- invoicing system
- subscription engine
- digital checkout

Connect it to your business bank account.

---

## **3. Set Up Accounting Software**

Choose one:

- Wave (free)
- QuickBooks
- Xero

Connect your bank + Stripe.

This keeps your books clean and reduces tax headaches.

---

## **4. Set Up Calendly**

Use it for:

- consultations
- onboarding
- networking
- sales calls

This creates a clean, professional scheduling experience.

---

## **5. Create a Simple Landing Page**

Start on:

- Carrd
- Squarespace
- Wix

Your landing page only needs:

- Who you are
- What you offer
- A call to action
- How to book or pay

Do NOT try to build a full website yet.

---

## **SECTION 6 — THE SIMPLE ROADMAP (One-Page Summary)**

1. Form your LLC (LegalZoom basic + EIN)
2. Choose your business name (USPTO + domain + handles)
3. Buy the domain
4. Generate your simple brand (ChatGPT + Fiverr/Canva)
5. Set up your Microsoft business email
6. Open your business bank account
7. Open Stripe

8. Connect accounting software
  9. Set up Calendly
  10. Create your landing page
  11. Start selling
  12. Refine as you go
- 

## READY FOR NEXT STEPS

I can now convert this into:

- a clean **PDF digital product**
- a **Notion template**
- a **step-by-step workbook**
- a **checklist version**
- or help you create the **sales page** to sell it

Tell me which format you want next.

**You said:**

i need this with very little spacing

**ChatGPT said:**

Got you.

Here is the **exact same full guide**, rewritten with **minimal spacing**, tight formatting, and compact sections — ideal for a PDF, one-pager, or digital download.

---

## HOW TO START A BUSINESS

*A Simple, No-Fluff Guide for First-Time Entrepreneurs*

---

### Who This Guide Is For

Anyone who has an idea, wants to start a sole proprietorship or single-member LLC, wants a low-cost setup, and wants a clean, practical roadmap without fluff.

---

## 1. COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

### **Misconception 1: “My LLC name has to match my business name.”**

False. Your LLC name is legal. Your business name is your brand. Use a DBA if the public name differs. Example: Subway’s legal company name was *Doctor’s Associates Inc.*

### **Misconception 2: “I need my logo and branding done before launch.”**

No. Branding comes after you start, not before.

### **Misconception 3: “I need a finished product before I open.”**

Wrong. You will go through 3–7 iterations before your product is “final.” Start now.

### **Misconception 4: “It takes money to make money.”**

Not really. It takes **resourcefulness**. You only need a few hundred dollars. Make money → reinvest → repeat.

---

## 2. FORMING YOUR LLC

### **Step 1 — Choose Your LLC Name**

This is not your brand name. It’s only your legal entity name.

### **Step 2 — Choose Your State**

Most should file in their home state. If filing elsewhere, use a P.O. box there. If local, use your address or a local P.O. box for privacy.

### **Step 3 — Buy the LLC (LegalZoom Method)**

Choose the *Basic package only*. Pay the state fee. Add the EIN service (~\$70). Skip all upsells.

### **Step 4 — Expect Mail Scams**

You’ll receive official-looking mail demanding payment. Ignore them. If you paid LegalZoom’s fees, you’re done.

---

## 3. CHOOSING YOUR BUSINESS NAME (BRAND NAME)

### **Step 1 — Brainstorm Names**

Short, simple, easy to spell, flexible, not too niche.

### **Step 2 — Trademark Check**

Go to [USPTO.gov](https://www.uspto.gov) → TESS. Search your industry. If name is already in use, drop it.

### **Step 3 — Domain Check**

Aim for the .com. If unavailable, add “hq,” “co,” “app,” or “official.” Avoid hyphens and numbers.

### **Step 4 — Social Handle Check**

Look for clean versions across Instagram, TikTok, X, FB, YouTube, LinkedIn.

---

## **4. CREATE A SIMPLE BRAND (FAST + CHEAP)**

You only need:

1. A simple logo
2. 3 colors (primary, secondary, neutral)
3. 2 fonts
4. Consistency across website, email, and socials

### **Use This Prompt in ChatGPT:**

Copy/paste:

“Create a simple brand identity for a new business.

Name: [INSERT]

Industry: [INSERT]

Target customer: [INSERT]

Brand vibe: [minimal, bold, luxury, modern, friendly]

Provide:

1. 1–2 sentence brand description
  2. 3 logo concepts
  3. 3-color palette w/ HEX
  4. 2 recommended fonts
  5. Brand voice guidelines
  6. Social media style suggestions
- Keep everything simple and beginner-friendly.”

This gives you a full starter brand for free. Finalize using Canva or Fiverr (\$50–\$150).

---

## 5. SETTING UP YOUR OPERATIONS

### **Business Email (Microsoft)**

Buy Microsoft 365 Business Basic. Add your domain. Create a professional email (first@domain.com).

### **Business Bank Account**

Start with a big bank (Chase, BOA, Wells Fargo). Bring LLC docs, EIN, ID. You're more likely to get approved for a small business credit card (~\$2k).

### **Stripe Account**

Use Stripe for payments, invoices, subscriptions, digital product sales. Connect to your new bank account.

### **Accounting Software**

Choose Wave (free), QuickBooks, or Xero. Connect your bank + Stripe.

### **Calendly**

Use it for client calls, networking, sales, onboarding.

### **Simple Landing Page**

Use Carrd, Squarespace, or Wix. Include: who you are, what you offer, how to book, how to pay. No full website needed yet.

---

## 6. ONE-PAGE STARTUP ROADMAP

1. Form your LLC (LegalZoom basic + EIN)
2. Pick your brand name (USPTO + domain + social handles)
3. Buy the domain
4. Generate a simple brand (ChatGPT + Canva/Fiverr)
5. Set up Microsoft business email
6. Open your business bank account
7. Open Stripe
8. Connect accounting software
9. Set up Calendly
10. Create a landing page

11. Start selling

12. Refine as you go