START YOUR BUSINESS

One clear offer / The right paperwork / Your first customer

01 FIND SOMETHING PEOPLE WILL PAY FOR

- ☐ Name the customer, the problem and exactly what you will do for them
- ☐ Ask likely buyers what they use now and what they would pay to change
- ☐ Test interest with real conversations before buying a garage full of supplies
- ☐ Set a startup spending limit and list the costs you will have every month

02 NAME IT WITHOUT SPENDING THREE WEEKS ON IT

- ☐ Pick a name people can say, spell and remember after hearing it once
- ☐ Check business records, trademarks and existing uses before committing
- ☐ Check the domain and social handles, then claim only the ones you need

03 DO THE PAPERWORK THAT ACTUALLY APPLIES

- ☐ Choose your business structure and complete required formation or DBA filings
- ☐ Apply for an EIN if needed, free at IRS.gov; form an LLC or corporation first
- ☐ Check federal, state and local licenses, permits, zoning and tax registrations
- ☐ Arrange suitable insurance and calendar required renewals and filings

04 MAKE IT POSSIBLE TO GET PAID

- ☐ Open a separate business bank account with the documents your bank requires
- ☐ Choose one way to invoice and collect payment; check its fees
- ☐ Track income, receipts and expenses; plan for the taxes that apply
- ☐ Set a price that covers supplies, travel, fees, your time and profit
- ☐ Put the scope, exclusions, price, payment and cancellation terms in writing

05 GET A CUSTOMER BEFORE YOU ORDER THE HOODIES

- ☐ Make one clear page or message: what you do, who it is for and how to book
- ☐ Tell likely buyers about one specific offer and ask for the sale
- ☐ Deliver what you promised, ask for feedback and request an honest review
- ☐ Keep customer information secure and ask whether they want to book again

U.S. starter checklist | Requirements depend on your business and location
Official setup guides: IRS EIN application / SBA launch guide