CREATIVE STARTUP CHECKLIST

Taking your creative business idea to the next level

Before Startup

- Decide on a business name that does not infringe on another's trademark and that is currently available. You may use the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office search and (for Missouri specific search) Missouri Secretary of State Website search
- Research your business idea in detail including detailed product or service information
- Create your business plan for your business

Business Formation

- Contact an attorney to determine any legal liabilities for your business: Contracts, agreements, required formation documents, registration etc.
- Decide upon a business entity type: LLC, S-Corp, C-Corp, Sole Proprietorship, Partnership, etc.
- File the appropriate documentation with the Secretary of State
- Fill out an application with the IRS for an Employee Identification Number
- File any additional required forms based on entity type
- Prepare internal working documents such as Operating Agreement, Bylaws, and Employee Handbook if needed
- Apply for any state or local required business licenses. Hint: There may be business licenses required for your industry of business as well as local required business license
- Form specific business files and security passwords for all company documents
- Research the availability of and purchase, if available, your domain or website name Contact an attorney for legal advice or assistance with applying any of these practices to your business

Marketing and Branding

- Research your potential market
- Determine present services to the market: details about your competition including sales volume, reputation, location, years in business, products, etc.
- Create your marketing plan
- Solidify ways to attract your client base: how you are different or similar to competitors
- Research the types of ads that will attract customers
- Create your marketing content: brochures, website, marketing plan etc.

HAYMON
LAW OFFICE, LLC

Finance your business

- Open business checking and savings accounts at business friendly bank
- Calculate your financial requirements for the maintenance of the business: advertising, licensing fees, utilities, equipment, taxes, supplies, inventory, insurance, rent, wages, medical or benefits plans, 401k's, paid business partners etc.
- Estimate operating costs for your first year
- Determine if there are any personal investments that you can put into the company
- Estimate all first year financial projections
- Purchase business insurance
- Apply for a business loan if needed
- Hire an accountant

Protecting your business

- Obtain an employee handbook, employee agreements including non-disclosure agreements
- Require employees to complete IRS documentation: Form I-9 , Form W-4, and 1099
- Determine employee status: independent contractor or employee
- Register trademark with US Patent and Trademark Office
- Apply for design patent or utility patent, if needed with the IS Patent & Trademark Office
- Register copyright for your content with the US Copyright Office
- Contact an attorney or obtain Terms and Conditions and a Privacy Policy to place on your online content
- Contact an attorney for legal advice or assistance with applying any of these practices to your business

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