



Starting and running a small business

Lesson code: 122I-R6CB-DLCB

Upper-intermediate (B2-C1)

 American English

1 Warm-up

Do you run a small business or did you ever think about running one?

2 Reasons to start a small business

Working with a partner, rank the reasons to start a small business in order of importance, with 1 being the most important. Then compare your answers with another pair.

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| to pursue your passion | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| to fill a niche in the marketplace | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| to create jobs for others | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| to have a more flexible lifestyle | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| to create the business culture you want | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| to become an expert in something | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| to be your own boss | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| to increase your earning potential | <input type="checkbox"/> |

3 Key vocabulary

Match the words on the left with the definitions on the right.

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1. capital | a. an agreement between two or more people to run a business together |
| 2. start-up cost | b. an official, usually temporary document which gives you permission to do something |
| 3. trademark | c. identifying and pursuing new opportunities for a company to grow |
| 4. business development | d. money you use to start a business or invest to earn more |
| 5. a partnership | e. the amount of money needed to start a business |
| 6. profitability | f. the situation where a company is making more money than it loses |
| 7. a permit | g. to legally claim the name or symbol of a product so other companies can't use it as their own |



4 Starting a small business

Match the steps for a starting a small business with the advice.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Do your research | a. Check if this name is currently in use or trademarked. |
| 2. Make a business plan | b. Choose a system that gives you a balance between legal protection and benefits. |
| 3. Plan your finances | c. Choose carefully as this will affect how you file taxes. |
| 4. Choose a business structure | d. Explore small business marketing ideas. |
| 5. Pick and register your business name | e. Figure out how and what you need to apply for. |
| 6. Get licenses and permits | f. Identify what the market needs. |
| 7. Select your accounting system | g. Make sure the place works for your type of business. |
| 8. Set up the business location | h. Prepare thoroughly to help make your business a reality. |
| 9. Organize your team | i. Put together a spreadsheet for start-up costs. |
| 10. Promote your business | j. Work out how many employees you need to hire. |

Which five steps do you think are the most important?

5 Skills for running a small business

Choose the best word to complete each of the sentences below.

communication
leadership

delegation
negotiation

financial management
problem solving

- Having some _____ skills will help you run your business profitably.
- Effective _____ skills will help you build good work relationships with coworkers and clients.
- _____ is about give and take. Both parties should feel like they're winning something at the end of the day.
- Strong _____ is needed to motivate your staff and get the best from them.
- Learn the art of _____. Knowing who to give certain tasks to is a key business skill.
- You'll need _____ skills as there will be many complex issues to deal with when running a business.

What other skills do you think you might need to run a small business?



6 Keeping the business running

Match the statements with the advice.

1. "Business trends always change so fast, but as a smaller company we are able to adapt much more quickly."
 2. "I'm answering emails, preparing invoices, doing the marketing. We need to hire someone to do these things so I can focus on business development."
 3. "Running a small business is harder than I thought. We're still a long way from turning a profit."
 4. "My husband is a great businessman. He would be the ideal person to run a company with."
 5. "I'm spending all my time running the business, but I was supposed to be spending more time with my family."
 6. "Having a fountain in the reception area is a waste of money. We need to be sensible about how we spend our capital."
- a. Don't forget why you started the business in the first place.
 - b. Don't rush into a partnership.
 - c. Don't try to do everything yourself.
 - d. Keep evolving.
 - e. Put profitability first.
 - f. Try not to get discouraged.

7 Small business ideas

Look at the small business ideas below. Work with a partner and discuss what you think about each one. Which ones would you consider?

Phone cases	Personal training	A plant nursery
Smartwatches	Photography	A restaurant
Event planning	Pet grooming	Cake making

8 Talking point

Look at the questions below. Discuss them in pairs or small groups.

1. What do you think the most difficult things are about running a small business? What do you think the rewards are?
2. Do you think that the government in your country does enough to help small businesses?
3. What do you think the future looks like for small businesses?



1 Warm-up

Encourage a short discussion. Ask students why they do or don't want to run a small business.

2 Reasons to start a small business

Students should work in pairs and then compare answers with another pair. Clarify any new vocabulary.

3 Key vocabulary

1. d 2. e 3. g 4. c 5. a 6. f 7. b

4 Starting a small business

Students can work in pairs and check answers with the teacher.

1. f 2. h 3. i 4. b 5. a
6. e 7. c 8. g 9. j 10. d

5 Skills for running a small business

1. financial management 2. communication 3. negotiation
4. leadership 5. delegation 6. problem solving

6 Keeping the business running

1. d 2. c 3. f 4. b 5. a 6. e

7 Small business ideas

Get feedback from the class after they have spoken in pairs.

8 Talking point

Monitor the activity. Write down any typical mistakes and put useful vocabulary on the board.

