# The Business Startup Checklist

*Five phases ordered by risk, not by paperwork. Each has an exit condition.*

> Work in order. Each phase exists to stop you spending time or money on the next one before you should.

## 01 Decide: is this the right thing to build?

- [ ] Write the one-sentence version
- [ ] Check it against yourself honestly
- [ ] Decide the shape: side hustle or main thing
- [ ] Name your three numbers
- [ ] Set a decision date

MY ONE SENTENCE

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## 02 Validate: does anyone actually want it?

- [ ] Talk to ten people in your target market
- [ ] Find out who else already does this
- [ ] Set a price and say it out loud
- [ ] Get one person to pay, or commit in writing
- [ ] If nobody will commit, change something

| WHO I SPOKE TO | WHAT THEY SAID | WOULD THEY PAY? |
|---|---|---|
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## 03 Set up: make it legal and real

- [ ] Choose your structure
- [ ] Get your EIN
- [ ] Check licenses and permits
- [ ] Open a business bank account
- [ ] Set up bookkeeping before the first transaction
- [ ] Get insured
- [ ] Set aside tax money from the first payment

## 04 Build: make it deliverable

- [ ] Build the smallest deliverable version
- [ ] Write down how you deliver it
- [ ] Get a simple web presence up
- [ ] Set up payments and contracts
- [ ] Pick a deliberately short tool stack

## 05 Sell, and keep going

- [ ] Go back to your Phase 2 conversations

- [ ] Choose one acquisition channel and work it
- [ ] Ask every customer for a referral and a testimonial
- [ ] Track the few numbers that matter
- [ ] Set up the support you will need in month six
- [ ] Plan the next 90 days

MY ONE ACQUISITION CHANNEL

> Start with the next step, not the whole list.