

### Where to Start:

When starting up a small business you will first want to verify that the business idea is viable and marketable. To do this, you will want to complete your [Market Research](#) on the business concept.

Once you have completed your market research, decided on a [Business Structure](#), and have developed a business plan, your next step will be to register the business.

### Do I need to Register My Business?

If you decide to operate a business under a different name other than your own personal name, you will be required to register that business name. Even if operating a small, home based, or network marketing business, one should register the business name.

### Choosing a Name:

Choosing the right name for your business may be one of the most important decisions you will make before you even open the doors. There is much to consider about your business's identity. What do you want it to convey? Does it reflect your uniqueness? Does it project the right image of the business? Does it communicate what you do? Is it distinct from the competition? The right name can help promote you and your brand to your target market while choosing the wrong name can lead to failing to attract customers.

When researching names, we recommend also searching website domain names. Even if you choose to not establish an online presence in the beginning, you may think otherwise once your business starts to grow. At the very least you will be able to search for business names that are closely similar to those you are considering. For more information on naming your business, visit the Government of Canada website: <https://canadabusiness.ca/starting/naming-your-business/>

### Steps to Register a Business:

1. **Business Structure** - Before you register a business you will need to decide on the structure of the business. [Choosing a Business Structure](#)
2. **Business name approval** - It is recommended that you have a selection of three (3) potential business names prior to submitting your name request application. If the business name you want is already in use and you are not prepared to choose another name during the application process you will have to start the process over and re-apply at an additional fee. You can apply for a business name request online at: [bcregistrynames.gov.bc.ca](https://bcregistrynames.gov.bc.ca) or you can print your application request form from the site and submit it in person at a Service BC location. For Service BC information, go to [www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca](https://www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca) or call 1.800.663.7867(Enquiry BC)

3. **Registering the business** - Once a business name has been approved you can then apply to register the business. If the business is to be a Sole Proprietorship or a Partnership, you can apply through BC Business Registry at: [onestop.gov.bc.ca](http://onestop.gov.bc.ca) or call 1.877.822.6727

If you have chosen a corporate business structure you will have to register the business online at BC Registry Services - Corporate Online. Before registering a provincial corporation in British Columbia you will require 2 important documents. Make sure to have a signed Incorporation Agreement and a set of articles for the company you will be incorporating before applying to register. All the required information can found at: [corporateonline.gov.bc.ca](http://corporateonline.gov.bc.ca). If you wish to protect the business name or Trademark outside of BC then you will need to contact Industry Canada for more information on trademarks at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/business/start.html>

4. **Business license** – Finally, once your business is registered you can apply for a business license and any permits you may require in the municipality in which you will be operating the business. You will be able to submit most applications through OneStop Business Registry [onestop.gov.bc.ca](http://onestop.gov.bc.ca) or you may also contact your local municipality.

If you will be doing business in multiple municipalities you will require a business license for each district in which you will be operating. In the Fraser Valley, eligible mobile businesses can apply for an Inter-municipal business license through their local business licensing office. For more information go to: [City of Abbotsford - Inter-Municipal Business Licensing](#)