

# How to start a business in 20 days

The practical guide to getting  
your business up and running ►

[informi.co.uk](http://informi.co.uk)



# The countdown begins here

You're in an exciting place. You've got a business idea and you're raring to go.

## So what's next?

While you could dive straight in, that's a certain route to disaster. Equally, you could over-plan, and lose that all-important momentum.

This ebook is a manageable 20-day action plan to help you launch your business.

No shortcuts, no 'quick-wins', just a solid, focused set of daily activities that will provide you with a firm foundation for business success.

Ready. Set. **Go.**



[Don't have a business idea? Here's some food for thought..](#)




# Contents

Over the next 20 days we'll focus on one activity per day.

You'll find an overview of what you need to do and why it's important, plus links to related Informi articles at the bottom of the page.

We've ordered the activities as logically as we can, but feel free to jump around.

 Follow links that look like this to find out more...

## DAYS 1–6

- ▶ DAY 1: Business idea
- ▶ DAY 2: Target customers
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- ▶ DAY 4: Competitor research
- ▶ DAY 5: Business plan
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# DAYS 1-6

## Doing your homework

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There was a lightbulb moment. It was the moment my parent's dog walker said to me "my friend is looking at starting a drone company and taking pilots on and training them, do you want me to pass on your details?" I said no and started looking into starting my own company the next day.



**Will Glover**  
Founder  
Fleye

”



# DAY 1 Business idea

## Take a step back

That might seem like an odd first step. We'll explain...

Before you spend any money, or waste any time, you need to focus on what it is you're trying to do.

Every business needs the answer to these fundamental questions:

1. **What problem do you solve?**
2. **Why are you the right person to solve that problem?**
3. **What will you do differently to the current options?**

Think about your answers to these questions. Write them down. Practice them on friends and family. Refine them until they hit the right notes.

And when you're done...

You can say you've just perfected your elevator pitch.

### Example...

Dan runs a grilled cheese shop. He provides high quality comfort food with a street van experience. He's great at this because no one else in his area does it and his passion for unique, unusual and gourmet cheeses sets him apart. He brings a background in working for startups and knows how to speak to his key audience (millennials) in a way that they resonate with.



[How to come up with good startup business ideas](#)

Your business builds a story at every point in its existence.

Your origins – people love stories of origins – are a powerful way of shaping your story.

Your challenges are part of what humanise your brand and engage your audience.

Your losses are what endear your customers and inspire your fans. Your testimonials are what validate your claims and attract new buyers.

**Karen Sturrock**  
Co-founder  
SixtyEightFeet



## DAY 2 Target customers

# Who are your people?

You've worked out what problem you solve. Now, let's try and understand who might have that problem. Today, you're creating a profile of your ideal customer.

And we're not just talking about age, gender or location. We want to know all your ideal customers' wants and desires. By going this deep you'll unearth unexpected insights that just might turn your whole business model on its head.

"Get so close to your customer that you know what they want before they do."

Steve Jobs

- ✓ What makes them tick?
- ✓ What do they lose sleep over?
- ✓ What frustrates them?
- ✓ Where do they get the service/product you're offering?
- ✓ How does your business make their lives easier?
- ✓ How does it make or save them money?



[How do I target the right customers?](#)



“

There's a familiar saying in marketing:

'When you market to everyone.  
You market to no one.'

Refining your audience into segments will  
make all your efforts more effective.

**Huw Moxon**  
Marketing Manager  
Informi

”

## DAY 3 Research

# Are they hungry for it?



Today you're going to do some market research – on the cheap.

Find out about your target audience and the appetite for your business in the following places:

Reddit

UK Business  
Forums

Facebook

LinkedIn

Survey  
Monkey

Face-to-face

Amazon  
reviews

TripAdvisor

Google  
reviews

Ask questions and write down everything that you find out. Those insights will help you position and tweak your product to the market.




[How to conduct research for a new business](#)



# 8 steps to identifying a gap in the market

Bonus exercise

1. Identify your strengths
2. What problems do you see?
3. Is there a better business model?
4. Copy and improve
5. Make an idea travel
6. Study trends
7. Keep up with legislation
8. Look to the consumer

 [How to identify gaps in the market](#)

“

I like to take an idea and test it on social media – that’ll usually give you a fairly good idea of how people will respond to a product once you launch it.

Sometimes what I think is funny doesn’t have the reaction that I’d predicted and sometimes I have to admit defeat.

Watching and analysing data from my customers and people looking at my shop gives me a fair idea of what people are looking for and the latest trends.

**Andy Cordina**  
Founder  
Bettie Confetti

”



## DAY 4 Competitor research

# Going undercover

Every business will face some form of competition.


Knowing what makes your business different and – ultimately better – will help you stand out. Spend a day going undercover to check out the competition. This will help inform strategic decisions like **pricing**, **customer targeting** and your **marketing tactics**.

“The weakness of an enemy forms part of your strength.”

Anonymous

What do they offer?  
Where are they based?  
Who are their customers?  
What are their prices?  
What promotional activity are they doing?  
What do they do well and not-so-well?

1. Walk around the area in which your business operates.
2. Look through local directories.
3. Read industry magazines and press advertising.
4. Talk to customers.
5. Look for upcoming exhibitions and trade fairs.
6. Search on the internet.
7. Collect flyers, brochures and marketing literature.
8. Check information on Companies House's website.

 [10 ways to beat competitors in business](#)



“

In the business world, anything goes.

While some people like to think of scoping out and spying on the competition as a bad thing, I love looking at everything they are doing through a spy glass.

This gives me insights into what's working and I should focus my time on and what isn't working and I shouldn't waste my time.

**John Rampton**  
Entrepreneur

”




## DAY 5 Business plan

# Putting it all together

You've done your research...now it's time to create your business plan. Don't be overwhelmed by this – it's not about what it looks like, it's about what it means to you.

1. Tackle your business plan in sections. Identify areas you need cover such as financing, customers and marketing and work on one at time to avoid feeling overwhelmed.
2. Imagine that you are describing your business to someone who knows nothing about it. Don't assume that a reader has any information about you or your industry.
3. It is important that your plan is simple, accurate and easy to follow if you are going to ask others to look at it.
4. Try to avoid jargon or terms that only people in your type of industry will understand.

Remember, your business plan is a working document – there will be activities later on in this ebook that may mean you need to revisit your plan.

 [Download: Free business plan template and guide](#)



“

The term “business plan” is often met with fear and the assumption that once you’ve agreed the plan, it’s set in stone. But that is not the case.

A good business plan is the result of time spent focusing on the idea, mapping out the vision and summarising how best to achieve it by asking what you need to execute the plan (finance, people and so on) and having a clear method for measuring progress and success.

A brilliant business plan is all of the above but with the room for creativity, innovation and evolution.

**Jo Malone**

Founder

Jo Malone London and Jo Loves

”

informi



## DAY 6 Funding

# The dreaded F-word

We made it to day 6 without mentioning the F-word; Funding. Some startups just need a laptop and a mobile. For others, upfront investment is vital. Today's homework assignment is to research your funding options.

### Use your own money

It not only provides funds, but can also help you attract funding; you can't really expect others to invest in your business if you're not willing to do so yourself.

### Family and friends

People lending might only want to earn a small amount of interest on their loan, or none at all.

### Arranging an overdraft

This should only be seen as a very short-term funding option not a permanent source of finance.

### Bank loan


Banks are supported by government schemes to increase lending to businesses, so they will lend if they think they're making a good investment.

### Start Up Loan

A government backed scheme that provides loans and other support to new businesses.

### Crowdfunding

Pitch your business to investors on platforms like Kickstarter and Crowdcube.

 [Use our startup costs calculator](#)

 [How do I get funding for a new business?](#)

Remember, all the work you've done in the last week will prove crucial once when you proceed with your chosen funding route.



I assumed that the most cost effective place to go for finance was the bank.

I wish I had done more research as we could have saved thousands a year by using alternative finance.

You can now get products where there are no hidden fees, the interest rates are comparable to the banks and they don't demand personal guarantees.

**Anne Cantelo**  
Managing Director  
Onyx Media and Communications





That feels good.  
The homework bit is over.

And the dog didn't eat it.

## DAYS 7-10

### Building business relationships



The starting point was a childhood memory of the silky and refreshing drink, which is called a 'living water' locally. The lightbulb moment came at one of sporting events where I still struggle to find a healthy and hydrating drink for my son. I have always found it astonishing to see the abundance of artificial and sugary drinks being sold and marketed to the public and especially the young generation, so TreeVitalise was born!



**Anna Skopets**  
Founder  
TreeVitalise



## Day 7 Suppliers

# We are your friends

Spend today researching these main types of supplier. Things you'll want to compare include price, quality, delivery times, order and payment terms.



### Services

Electricity, water, telephones, IT, email, website hosting, stationery, facilities, transport. Don't forget insurance too.



### Sub-contractors

Tradespeople, consultants, designers, marketing.



### Manufacturers/producers

The earliest point of the supply chain – usually, the least expensive option.



### Distributors

Brokers and wholesalers who buy large quantities from a range of manufacturers.



### Importers

They act like a domestic distributor, only the items they buy are from overseas.



[How do I find the right suppliers?](#)



“

Treating suppliers like partners is critical to a company's startup success. As much as possible, figure out how you can work with your suppliers to make their lives better, whether saving them money from their vendors or saving them time with your order. By understanding their business model, you can make orders in an efficient manner, which should lower costs for everyone.

**Aaron Schwartz**  
Director of Player Personnel  
Modify Watches

”



## Day 8 Pricing

# The price is right

Today, you're going to use the market and supplier data you've gathered to set your prices.

Here are the three key factors you'll need to account for.

### **Your costs**

It may sound obvious, but you've got to cover your costs and also make a profit.

### **Your competitors**

What do your competitors offer and how much do they charge?

### **Your customers**

How much are your customers prepared to pay? This isn't as simple as covering your costs. You need to understand how much your customers value your service.



[How do I set my prices?](#)



# 5 pricing techniques you can use



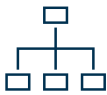
## Psychological

Having a 99p or 95p price tag is a very well-known technique for giving the customer a more favourable impression of the price.



## Bundling

This is combining several products or services into a single package that's offered at a lower price than would be the case if all the items were priced separately.



## Tiers

This involves having different levels of service. For example, a car valet business may have three offerings: premium, standard, and economy, each of which comes at a different price.



## Loss leaders

This involves pricing some products or services for less than they cost to provide, to encourage customers to enter a store or online site or to look at what else a business has to offer.



## Payment structuring

This is where you offer different pricing options for the same service. For example, a website design business could charge an up-front fee for creating a site and hosting it for a year, but also offer the option of a smaller initial fee, followed by monthly or quarterly payments. The second option would come at a higher price, but provide the customer with the advantage of a smaller initial outlay.

“

When starting out, the temptation can be to offer a deal that undercuts your competitors so that people will try you out. While this can work, there are drawbacks.

Looking back, I wish I'd known not to undervalue, and thus underprice myself or the skills of my team. It sounds simple but it's all too easy to try and compete on price, especially in a commodity market like web design, digital marketing or accounting.

We found a better way was to differentiate ourselves from the crowd. Now we've done so, we command higher fees which are commensurate with the value we deliver.

**Tim De La Salle**  
Managing Director  
Fly Marketing

”



## Day 9 Premises


# Where the magic happens


Minimising your costs should be a key aim at the outset, hence why many new businesses are run from home. The less money you spend on rent, the fewer sales you'll need to break even and generate a profit.


If your new business needs premises, think carefully about location and space; shop around for the best value and negotiate firmly with landlords.

Today, evaluate your requirements, based on:

- Your preferred location/s
- Your space requirements
- Your service requirements
- Your access requirements
- Your security requirements
- Your image requirements: Will your premises need to project a certain type of image to your customers?
- Your special requirements: Will you need special permissions or licences?

 [How to choose business premises](#)

 [How to run a business from home](#)

 [How to set up your home office for success](#)



“

We have a great relationship with the landlord from one of my other business' and it came up in conversation that I was starting a new venture and going down a pop-up route. They had a small site with basic electric, no running water, drainage and had no windows or doors.

“Perfect,” I said. Because what it did have was location, location, location. After many sleepless nights, we figured a way around all these issues and starting trading. Within six months we took the unit next door and doubled in size.

**Dan Place**

Founder

Northern Soul Grilled Cheese

”



## Day 10 Budgeting

# How tight are your purse strings?

With the research you've done, today you can start to build your budget. Here are some things to consider.

Be realistic with how much time you have available. Clearly you want to make a success of your new venture but be careful that you aren't working yourself too hard.

Use your competitor research and consider the types of products they're selling.

Think about how many units you are expecting to sell each month, using your available capacity.

Research the equipment you need and shop around. Consider when you buy based on when you require it and factor this into your budget.

Don't forget you need to pay yourself ([here's a quick guide on that](#)).

[How do I build a budget?](#)

“

It's vital that you're completely clear from the outset as to how much you will need to get the business up and running, both for initial requirements and for initial trading.

As well as things mentioned in this section such as equipment and supplier costs, you also need to budget for your personal income as well.

**Henry Cooper** FMAAT  
Founder  
Birch Cooper Accounting Services Ltd

”



I never want to see a  
calculator again.

Just as well, it's time for the fun stuff.

# DAYS 11-14

## Selling the sizzle

“

In 2013 we took on a project called Run For Love – a 1,000 mile run across Eastern Europe. It was after this that we talked about building a crew of runners, putting on races and making the trail mixes and energy bars that we had fuelled our own adventures with. In the end, we decided to go for all three, with the goal of building a community of runners – our own TRIBE.



**Rob Martineau**  
Co-founder  
TRIBE

”



## Day 11 Brand identity

# You've charmed me

Creating a positive first impression is everything in business. And one of the best ways to win over new customers is by having a strong brand identity.

Not a designer? No problem...Cheap design tools like Canva have made it so anyone can create the visual bits that make up your brand identity. Or, alternatively, you can outsource it out to a professional designer.

But before you get started, go back to week one and think about your elevator pitch, market research and competitor analysis. Your brand identity is more than just a logo. How will your brand identity communicate the message you want?

"Your brand is a story unfolding across all customer touchpoints."

Jonah Sachs

1. What is your 'why'?
2. What beliefs drive your company?
3. If your brand was a person, what would their personality be like?
4. How are you different from the competition?
5. If your brand was a person, how would they talk?



[How to create a small business brand](#)

I remember driving down Highway 85. We're on the freeway, and Steve mentions: I've got a name: Apple Computer. We kept thinking of alternatives But we couldn't think of anything better.

**Steve Wozniak**

And also, remember that I worked at Atari, and it got us ahead of Atari in the phone book.

**Steve Jobs**



## Day 12 Website

# Claiming the internet

In this day and age, you need an online presence. What you absolutely don't need to do is spend a lot of money on a snazzy website when you're starting out. DIY website builders like Squarespace or Wix allow you to easily create a great looking website on the cheap.

**Navigation**

A visitor should always be able to find what they're looking for; key pages and information should be accessible from every page.

**Contact us**

This page should provide clear and up-to-date contact information, with a map or satnav details if relevant.

**Subscribe forms**

Capture potential customer data by offering something in return – e.g. a free consultation or a newsletter.

**About us**

This page is important for establishing the character and credibility of your business.

**Products and services**

This page will list your products and services. Remember to describe the benefit and not just the product – what difference will this make?

**Blog**

Engage website visitors with useful and engaging content that is relevant to your business.

**Top tip:** We said you needed a website but that's not strictly true. If you want to test the waters, you could try selling via an online marketplace such as Amazon or Etsy with a readymade audience.



[28 website design tips for small businesses](#)



**Bonus exercise**

# What could you blog about?

Here are some ideas for blogs to get your creative juices going:



**Food business**  
7 lunchbox recipes for the Summer

**Trades business**  
Video blog – how to fix a blocked toilet



**Marketing business**  
8 low-cost marketing ideas

**Cycling business**  
Best bikes under £500



Or you could just blog about your experience running a business?

Stories activate our brain like nothing else. Use your About Us page to make it personal and tell your story.

Whilst it's important to know how long the business has been running, who you are and why you started is what will help people connect with you.

Tell your potential customers what matters to you, how you got started, and what your hopes are for the future.

**Karen Sturrock**  
Co-founder  
SixtyEightFeet



Day 13 Marketing

# Getting out there

Everything in this ebook will be a waste of time if nobody knows your business exists.

That's why you'll need to put a fair amount of energy into promoting your business during the early days. The good news: that doesn't mean you need to spend loads of money on marketing.

Today, explore the low-cost ways to increase your visibility, attract prospective customers, generate sales, and drive repeat business.

## Social advertising

Target people who've been to your website, share similar interests or fall into your target demographic.

## Google Ads

Get your ad listings at the top of Google search results.

## SEO

Build free traffic by improving your webpage rankings in Google.

## Media coverage

Press releases, free samples, working with influencers – just some of the ways to get people talking.

## Networking

Both online and offline, get on the front foot and start connecting.

## Email

Generate sales by sending out regular updates to your database of prospects and customers.



[43 free and low-cost marketing ideas](#)

“

About a month into starting my business I received a phone call from a local magazine telling me they'd love to feature my business and I could purchase a half page advert to promote myself to their readers. I was so flattered (and naive!) that I dropped a couple hundred pounds on the ad space. The results? Crickets. Nobody contacted me as a result of that ad (and yes I asked!).

I'm not saying print advertising isn't a good marketing channel but it's expensive and when cash flow is so important, you could spend a fraction of that on some highly targeted Facebook ads instead.

**Jen Smith**  
Founder  
Jen Smith Social Media

”

## Day 14 Social media Not just fluff

The days of people dismissing social media as a waste of time are long gone. Harnessed in the right way, your social media channels are a powerful tool for building your brand online.

The key thing in the early days is to figure out where best to focus your energy. For example, if your target audience is most likely to be on LinkedIn, there's no point wasting your energy on TikTok or Instagram if you know it's unlikely to drive results. Better to do one channel well than spread yourself thin.

Today, put a schedule in place that will save you time and make your activity more considered and effective.

Here's an example of how you could plan your social media content on one channel e.g. Facebook.

|           | WEEK ONE                        |
|-----------|---------------------------------|
| MONDAY    | Old blog post                   |
| TUESDAY   | Question / Conversation starter |
| WEDNESDAY | Promotional / Offer             |
| THURSDAY  | Live video / Video              |
| FRIDAY    | New blog post                   |
| SATURDAY  | Share someone else's content    |
| SUNDAY    | Behind the scenes photo         |



[How to nail your social media marketing strategy](#)

“

Social Media is a cost-effective and impactful way to build your brand online. Don't expect it to drive sales overnight, but do expect it to build up a strong, loyal following that will provide the best path to business growth.

**Nikki Cochraine**

Co-founder  
Digital Mums

When we launched in 2008 there were a million things to organise and social media was not an immediate priority. It took us about 18 months to properly get our head round it. Once we did, business rocketed as awareness grew, and we found ourselves kicking ourselves that we hadn't tackled it earlier. If I was starting again from scratch, social media marketing would be our number one priority.

**Neil Westwood**

Managing Director  
Magic Whiteboard Limited

”



Right, I'm officially a marketing guru. Let's do this.

Hold on there, just a few more tasks to go.

## DAYS 15-20

### Getting ready for lift-off

We were overwhelmed with how many small businesses needed help to build and manage their social media presence. We knew we needed to take on more people and realised that mums would be the perfect solution. So we stopped working for clients and started training up mums in social media instead. Digital Mums was born in 2014 and our first course officially started in January 2015.



**Nikki Cochraine**  
Co-founder  
Digital Mums





## Day 15 Accounting

# A helping hand

In order to keep costs down, there's going to be a temptation to do it all yourself. That's understandable. However, you can't be expected to know and do it all.

It is worth sparing some money to bring in the professional advice of an accountant. An accountant does more than make sure you file your expenses on time. They can help you make key business decisions that improve your profits.

Initial advice your accountant will provide:

- Choosing your business structure
- Setting up your accounting records
- Whether you need to register for VAT
- Support with budgeting

Ongoing support once you're up and running:

- Budgeting
- Cash flow
- Strategic decisions
- Bookkeeping services
- Management accounts
- Year end accounts
- VAT returns



[Find a local accountant or bookkeeper](#)



“

When I first launched my business my biggest fear was whether I'd be able to pay the mortgage.

So I spent hours doing necessary but non revenue-generating admin at the expense of focusing on building a good client base.

After a while, I invested in someone to do that job for me so I could concentrate on the things I love, that I'm great at – and that is bringing the money in.

**Lynn Scott**  
Founder  
Lynn Scott Coaching

”



Day 16 Legal structure

# Weighing it up

The legal structures you can choose for your business have various advantages (and disadvantages). While your accountant can advise on what's best for you, here's a quick overview.

## Should I set up my business as a sole-trader?

- You're the boss
- Simple and cheap
- Low set up costs
- Simple accounting
- Claim allowances

## Should I set up my business as a partnership?

- Joint responsibility
- Shared risk
- Usually more capital
- Split rewards
- Claim allowances

## Should I set up my business as a limited company?

- Liability for shareholders is limited
- Shareholders can be employed by the company
- Taxation rates can be more favourable
- Access to a wider capital and skills base
- Improved status externally



“

I've seen many businesses who are working through an inappropriate structure. For instance, a window cleaner, who has become a limited company to make some tax savings, whilst not considering the additional compliance costs.

Make sure you take appropriate advice from an accountant, a lawyer, or a HR specialist if you are thinking of employing people.

Whilst you might be reluctant to pay for this advice, it will usually save you money and compliance issues in the future.

**Henry Cooper** FMAAT  
Founder  
Birch Cooper Accounting Services Ltd

”



## Day 17 Planning

# What's that on the horizon?

A well-run business is always a step ahead. That means being aware of key dates and timescales for your business operations – and planning accordingly. Today, you're going to get on the front foot and plan your diary.

### Trading

Are there key trading dates you need to plan for?

Christmas, Black Friday, Valentines Day – your business income may be heavily dependent on these busy trading times.

### Marketing

How do you tie in marketing activity with your key trading dates?

This might be emailing subscribers with an exclusive seasonal offer or planning social media activity on awareness days like #SmallBusinessSaturday.

### Suppliers

What are their lead times for delivering a service or product?

If your business relies on international suppliers you'll need to account for longer delivery times.

### Compliance

What are the key financial and legal dates you need to have in the diary?

Missing the Self-Assessment or Companies House filing deadlines can lead to unnecessary fines.

### Resource

Are there times you'll need extra resource, in terms of staffing and funding?

Planning when you'll need extra money and staff will mean you're not underequipped for your key dates.



[How to schedule your time effectively](#)

“

Running a business from home can be hugely rewarding and potentially harmful at the same time. While it's great to just be able to run upstairs and sort out orders, it's really easy to let the business interfere with your everyday life.

For me it's become really important to make sure you're set up in a way that means you can close a door or cupboard or drawer and all your business stuff is out of sight.

Otherwise you just end up living in a mess of business admin and life admin all together at once. It's really important to try and keep those two things separate.

**Andy Cordina**  
Founder  
Bettie Confetti

”



Day 18 Financial documents

# The not-so-fun stuff

Yippee, it's time to learn all about delivery notes. Said no one ever.

But the boring admin stuff is essential to make sure you're paid on time, your cash flow is positive and you're not making a loss.

Today, you're going to familiarise yourself with key financial documents and get yours in order before the big launch.

Click on the links below to find guides on each of these essential documents, including readymade templates for you to use:

- ▶ [Delivery notes](#)
- ▶ [Purchase orders](#)
- ▶ [Invoices](#)
- ▶ [Cash flow](#)
- ▶ [Profit and loss](#)
- ▶ [Budget sheet](#)
- ▶ [Petty cash log](#)

# Know your numbers



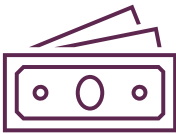
## Balance sheet

Shows your business's assets and liabilities at a given point. Bottom line is the last line on a balance sheet that shows total profit or loss.



## Profit and loss

An account compiled to show gross and net profit or loss during a specific time period – for example, a month, a quarter, or a year.



## Cash flow statement

Used by businesses to monitor cash inflows and outflows, including:

- how much you expect to spend in costs
- how much you expect to make in sales
- your cash position each month.

[5 critical things to look out for on your financial statements](#)

Financial statements are crucial to understanding the health of your business. They usually take the form of profit and loss report, balance sheet, and in some cases, your cash flow summary. If you are a limited company, you will receive your annual accounts from your accountant with a profit and loss report and balance sheet.

However, waiting for your annual accounts to be prepared usually means it is too late to take action – they often arrive a few months after your financial year end, and you are already well into your new financial year. Staying on top of your finances throughout the year has always been important – but even more so now.

Your business survival can hinge on you regularly checking and understanding your financial reports – or asking a professional to prepare and deliver the necessary services.

**Tamsyn Jefferson-Harvey**  
Seed Accounting Solutions

## Day 19 Technology

# Working smarter

We just talked about the boring admin stuff. Technology can make this and many aspects of running your business a lot easier. From managing your finances to delivering services and communications, you can streamline your workload by adopting the right tools.

Today, read through our buyer guides on the following tools...

Accounting  
software

Bank  
accounts

CRM


POS  
systems

Project  
management

Social media  
scheduling

Email  
marketing

Web  
analytics

 [The best business tools for working smarter, not harder](#)

Leveraging technology tools for the different areas of your business will not only optimise your operations into slick, effective processes that save you time, but they can also offer more profitable results.

While some of the tools out there aren't entirely free, they can make the funds you have work a lot harder towards your business goals. Smart, data-driven insight will help you work out the most effective places to invest your finances, as well as highlighting less lucrative areas that you can cut back on.

**Jenny Lambert**

Etsy shop owner and Informi blogger



## Day 20 Getting your first customers

## Let's go

Now, you've got everything in place, it's time to get the ball rolling.

|  |  |   |  |
|--|--|---|--|
| Go to networking groups  | Update your personal social media profiles     | Offer drop-in sessions in a relevant location | List your business on online directories |
| Join online forums, groups and communities where your customers hang out | Partner with a complementary business          | Write a press release                         | Give a free talk locally                 |
| Search social media for people who need your help                        | Reach out to family, friends and ex-Colleagues |   |  |



[100+ ways to get your first customers](#)

“

When I set up my business I really didn't realise how important contacts and networking skills were.

In fact, most of our clients have come from word of mouth referrals.

**Riena D'costa**  
Managing Director  
Bizlaw UK

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# You did it... time to party

Well, not quite, but still give yourself a massive pat on the back. Everything you've done in the last 20 days will put your business in a great position to succeed and flourish.

We'd be lying if we said that's it, but now's your chance to take some time off, unwind, before you get back to the daily grind of making your business a success.

Even if it's just for a day, enjoy a well-earned break.

- ✓ Book a holiday
- ✓ Binge watch a box set
- ✓ Hit the dancefloor
- ✓ Go to the cinema
- ✓ Book in a spa weekend
- ✓ Get some exercise
- ✓ Enjoy some retail therapy
- ✓ Go hiking
- ✓ Ride a horse
- ✓ Cook a fancy meal
- ✓ Listen to some records
- ✓ Join a yoga class
- ✓ See an exhibition
- ✓ Read an epic novel
- ✓ Switch off from work

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The space and quiet that idleness provides is a necessary condition for standing back from life and seeing it whole, for making unexpected connections and waiting for the wild summer lightning strikes of inspiration – it is, paradoxically, necessary to getting any work done.

**Tim Kreider**  
Cartoonist and essayist

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**Informi**  
30 Churchill Place  
London  
E14 5RE

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