

## Start Up a Service-Based Internet Company

There have been many successful service-based Internet companies that have started up over the years. The appeal of a service based Internet company instead of having products to sell is probably the general low cost at start up. Unlike a company selling products, services require no pre-existing development.

This doesn't mean it is any easier to start up a company. It also doesn't mean just because you start your company that people will automatically flock to you. Like many companies, you need a plan, and know where to start.

### Have a Plan

It is well known that a business should have a plan. What most people forget is that the plan isn't for anyone else but you, the owner of the company. It is your plan from start to foreseeable future.

It starts by writing out what you want your company to be like. It is sort of like planning backwards. You write out what your company should look like, and then take a step backwards, what will it take to set this particular aspect in place? How do you get to this point? You work it all the way down to where you are. Then you have a path to follow to get all the way to where you want to be.

If you need examples of how to write a business plan, you can try the Small Business Association. The website is [sba.gov](http://sba.gov) and it has examples of business plans you can use as references. The SBA even has free courses to take to learn how to plan, start up and market your new business.

### Money and More Money

Yes, it costs money to start a business. You are well aware of that. In addition, you might need to cover the cost of being in business for several months or even up to a year before you begin to see profit and the business starts paying for itself.

This is something you budget for in your plan. Your plan should have included an outlook as to when you will be in business. You should also put in your budget how you will continue to pay for your business in the months ahead.

Your return on investment (ROI) should be in detail. When you have a plan in place, you'll know how much you are going to spend, when and how. You'll also know how much you'll need. Plan on having a little bit extra, in case of emergencies, so you are not scrambling around later for them.

### The Marketing Plan

Combined with your business plan and your financial plan, having a marketing plan in place is very important as well. You'll need to consider this along with your budget and your initial business plan. It is just as essential, as it helps you to generate business early on.

The best way to develop a marketing plan is to learn by example. Study your competitors. How do they market themselves? Do they send emails to potential clients? Do they post an advertisement in the newspaper? Find out the details and write a plan to mimic those ideas. Not every advertising avenue will work. Make plans to sample different advertising venues and then later on focus on ones that appear to be working.

### Hiring a Lawyer

One of the most forgotten steps of all is hiring a lawyer to take care of essential business start up tasks. You absolutely have to bring in a lawyer who understands business law. Hopefully you can find one that has handled service based Internet companies before.

A lawyer can do many things for you. A small business lawyer can help you set up your business, give you advice as to what corporate structure to set it up under, and prepare your paperwork properly so you don't waste time and money with small errors. You can also depend on your lawyer to write up contracts when dealing with clients.

Having someone on your side before you start will save you a lot of time and frustration. It will also protect you and your business. You want to get this important piece of your business in place early on.

## Get Your Accountant - Now

Best to start off things on the right foot. Like the lawyer, getting an accountant on your side is essential. Most people worry about the expense. An accountant isn't at all expensive!

It does take a little bit of set up. Once you are started, the weekly or monthly meetings with your accountant will save you tons of frustration and headaches, and will save you a lot of money. Talk to several accountants. Shop around for one.

Have the accountant look over your financial plan, and perhaps help you become realistic about your expectations. Next, an accountant can help you figure out your real budget and manage your money for you so you aren't overspending at first. Talk with your accountant about other small business services he can provide.

## Technology Needs

To work as a service-based Internet company, you will need technology. Here are some of the essential pieces of equipment for a start up business:

New computers

Internet connection

Phone system

New software

Printers

Fax machines or a fax service

Cell phones

Laptops

Copiers

Scanners

Photo or video equipment

That's just to start. You also might need more technical pieces of equipment depending on your service. You'll need to also plan for adding extra equipment in case you decide to hire help.

## Supporting Staff

You might be starting your own company, but that doesn't mean you have to do things alone. When you are overwhelmed, an assistant, a sales representative, or a customer service rep might help take a load off your shoulders. Sure, the first few months are lean, but you'll progress faster when you have professionals working on your side to help your business.

You don't have to hire every ideal person all at once. You could start with a general office assistant, who can help field calls and work with you to develop a system. Delegating tasks to others is what being the boss is all about. Make it part of your business plan to work on your business, not in your business.

It might take a few false starts before you get all the gears turning together. Maybe you might have to work on your own for a while in order to get the business up and running. Maybe you have to sacrifice getting too many new computers at once, or settle for a less expensive cell phone, or even work out of your home for a couple of years.

In the long run, as long as you have a plan, and are flexible with it so you can learn and change as you need, you'll be able to get off to a great start. If you ever need more help with starting your business, join your local Chamber of Commerce. You can also try SCORE at [score.org](http://score.org).

Remember that help is out there for you as you start your new business. Do a lot of research. Ask for help. It helps to talk more about your plans with people, and to write down your ideas. Commit to the idea that your business is possible, and follow the wisdom of others to get started on the right foot.

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#### About the Author

Metro Hi Speed is a leader in [Internet fax](#) and online email fax solutions. They provide a convenient and inexpensive alternative to a traditional bulky fax machines.