

Registrations

Federal Registration

After you have decided on the type entity and established it, the next step is to determine if you need to register with the Internal Revenue Service. If you are going to have employees, you must register. If you are a partnership, any type corporation, or a limited liability company, you must register. If you are a proprietorship without employees, you can use your social security number provided your business name and your name are the same. If not, you must register.

You use form SS-4 to apply for a federal identification number. For a copy of the form and instructions go to www.irs.gov. Click on Forms and Pubs, then List of current forms. Enter SS-4 in find. Most of the information is self-explanatory. Make yourself the responsible party. Under type of entity mark Sole Proprietor if you are a sole proprietor or a single member LLC. Mark Partnership if you are a partnership or a multiple member LLC. Mark Corporation if you have incorporated or if you are any LLC which has elected to be taxed as a corporation. You will be filing corporation taxes on form 1120. If you are not a C Corporation, your year-end should be

December 31. If you had a previous business identification number for a different business, answer no to this question.

Once you have completed the form, now you need to file it. You can send it in by mail or fax but for immediate response you should do it online. (Go to www.irs.gov. In search type EIN). The information is basically the same as on the SS-4 paper form. You will obtain your ID at the end of the online process.

State Registration

There are 50 different states with 50 different laws. Just because you registered your LLC or Corporation with your Secretary of State office, it did not register you for payroll taxes and sales taxes. In addition, there may be special state taxes for selling gasoline, cigarettes, liquor, etc. Certain occupations may be subject to registration such as accountants, contractors, plumbers, etc. Start with your state website and find registering your business usually under the Department of Revenue. Each state will have a starting your business area. Visit www.aicpa.org. Click on research and then external links. Go to Department of Revenue, Department of Labor, and Sales Tax.

Local Registration

You should also contact the county clerk in the county where your business is located. If your business is a proprietor and is using a name other than your name, you will most likely have to register a trade name. In addition, you may require county health inspections or other county level requirements.

Your next stop should be the municipal clerk's office in the town where your business will be located. You may need a merchant's license or other registrations.

Trademarks and Service Marks

I am sure you have seen the symbols ® and ™. Basically, if you have a slogan or logo, which you wish to safeguard, you need to register it. The first level is usually at the state. You would normally register unique marketing tools, which you do not want anyone else to use. Contact your local state office to determine how to register your trademarks and service marks.

Trade Associations

Do not remake the wheel. There are trade associations for almost any type business. Join one and reap the benefits. These associations can help you with pricing and structure. In addition, they usually have made arrangements for liability, health, disability, and other industry specific insurance programs. I cannot overstate the importance to your success that your trade organization will provide. Search the web or ask some others in your industry to find your trade association.

Chamber of Commerce

This organization is a must as your first line on face to face marketing. Get active in their events and get to know the owners of the local businesses. This is where your networking begins.

Web Presence

To operate in the business arena today you need to have at least a domain name, a website, an email address, and a social media account. All should be in the business name not a personal social media account. I suggest starting your social media with LinkedIn if your referrals come from other business owners and Facebook if your customers contact you direct. Doing both will not hurt. You also need to understand SEO (Search Engine Optimization) and AdWords marketing. If you google websites, you will find a group that can help you with all the above.

For more resources visit www.rjclark.com.