

As an entrepreneur, you probably have an amazing and unique business idea. And ideation is important. But it is vital to find ways to execute your idea into an actionable and profitable business. You need to find the right way to start a business and then consistently work towards making it better. You must plan and make quick decisions about when and how to start, register, and incorporate your business.

Here is a checklist you can use!

## **1. KNOW YOUR WHY BEFORE YOU START A BUSINESS**

Remember why you want to start this business in the first place. Being in touch with your passion will help you figure out the right way to start a business in Singapore.

- What is the passion behind this business?
- What is the customer problem you are solving?
- Who are you serving/creating this solution for?
- Why should the customer choose you over the competitor?

## **2. HAVE CAPITAL AND FUNDS BEFORE YOU START A BUSINESS**

In Singapore, all you require is \$1 as paid-up capital to register your business. But you have to make sure you have enough funding before you start your business and to help you survive the first few months until you start earning revenue or even profits!

- Find a funding source
- Prepare a pitch/business plan/business model canvas
- Create cashflows
- Maintain profit and loss statements/balance sheets

## Where can you get funding from?

- Funding rounds
- Venture capitalists and investors
- Singapore government aid
- Family and friends
- Bank loans

## HOW TO INCORPORATE A BUSINESS IN SINGAPORE?

- Company Name
- Business Structure
- Company's Principal Activities
- Members of the Team
- Registered Office
- Bank Account 7 Capital
- Documentation & Singpass

### 1. COMPANY NAME

You will need to think of a few names (have a buffer stock, just in case) and [check with the Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority of Singapore \(ACRA\)](#).

- Brainstorm names
- Check [BizFile+](#) to see if the name is unique
- Register the unique business name for \$15
- After the application is approved, register your business within 120 days of registering the name

**Remember:** Your company name cannot be identical to an existing business OR contain words that are prohibited. Adding a "The" at the beginning or a "Corporation" at the end of your name will not suffice if the main nouns are the same as another business.

## 2. BUSINESS STRUCTURE

To start your business, you will need to know what kind of structure it will have. You can choose from a variety of options depending on the number of founders, directors, or members you have when registering the business in Singapore.

- List out all your stakeholders and shareholders
- Figure out who are the founding members and partners
- Choose a structure that matches your business

### What are some of the structures?

- **Sole Proprietorship**: The owner trades under their own name with just them having control over the business. So, you must register your business knowing that it will be a part of your identity, instead of having its own.
- **Limited Partnership**: This partnership includes two or more partners that work together and form the root of the business. When you register your business, you will have to include all the names involved.
- **Limited Liability Partnership**: Like a private limited company, this partnership provides the business with its own separate legal identity. Foreigners who wish to register limited liability partnerships in Singapore must appoint resident managers (citizen, permanent residents, work pass holders) in the city.
- **Company**: This kind of company gives the business a separate legal identity. The types of companies can include Exempt/Unlimited/Unlimited exempt Private companies, Private/Public companies limited by shares, Unlimited public companies. When you register your business, you must know what kind of company you have as well as include it in the necessary paperwork.

### 3. COMPANY'S PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES

Your company will need to include its principal activities when you register your business in Singapore. This will be related to the industry you are about to operate in.

- List out all your business activities
- Choose one main and one secondary category
- [Use the Singapore Standard Industrial Classification \(SSIC\) code to figure out your activity](#)
- [Search a keyword](#) (based on your business) and get system generated SSIC categories
- Choose a category
- Select the code that matches the category

### 4. MEMBERS OF THE TEAM

This will include all the team members you are required to have before and during the registration of your business in Singapore. Some may be included in this list because they are government requirements.

Directors of the company:

- List out all your company directors
- Make sure at least one director is locally based / legal resident of Singapore

Shareholders of the company

- Shareholders
- Investors
- Partners
- Companies
- Others

## Corporate Secretary

- Hire a corporate secretary within 6 months of incorporating the company
- Make sure the person hired has at least 3 years of work experience as a company secretary

## 5. REGISTERED OFFICE

To register your business, your company will require a registered address and office space to work out of. So, when you start a business in Singapore, you will need to operate from a designated workspace.

- Get a physical address located in Singapore
- Make sure it is not just a P.O. (Post Office) Box
- Keep the space open for at least five hours every working day

### What are some options for offices?

- [Coworking spaces](#)
- Renting an office space
- Getting a license for a home office

## 6. BANK ACCOUNT & CAPITAL

As an entrepreneur in Singapore, you will have a variety of options with the multiple banks present here. You will need to choose one and open a bank account to operate here.

- Look at banks and interest rates
- Choose an account type and bank branch
- Complete KYC (Know your Customer) identification checks in person

## 7. DOCUMENTATION & SINGPASS

Make sure to have all the documentation ready and ensure that the information on your national identity cards/work passes matches with the documents.

- Set reminders for document submission dates
- Create a Singpass Profile

## 8. PAY YOUR TAXES

If you earn in Singapore, you will also have to pay your taxes on the amount you earn to the [Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore \(IRAS\)](#). As employees, you will need to earn personal tax while companies will need to worry about [corporate tax](#).

- File the [Estimated Chargeable Income form](#)
- File the annual Income Tax Return
  - Fill out [Form C](#)
  - Check if you also need to fill out [Form C-S](#)
- Get the IRAS' Notice of Assessment (NOA)
- Pay the corporate tax

This list is not exhaustive to starting a business in Singapore. It should be used as a guideline to help you get the basics right when wanting to start and incorporate your services here.