



NEW BUSINESS GUIDE TO STARTING YOUR OWN BUSINESS

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BEFORE STARTING UP

It is the ambition of many people to run their own business. In recent years this dream has become a reality for some made redundant, whilst others may decide to start up in business to be more independent and to obtain the full financial reward for their efforts.

Whatever the reason for considering setting up in business, a number of dangers exist.

A major concern must be the risk of business failure despite considerable effort and finance having been put into the venture. Time spent in making the decision and thinking through your plans will minimise the risk of failure.

Think carefully about ceasing to be someone else's employee. Certainty of income, both in terms of quantity and regularity, disappears, whilst fixed outgoings, such as mortgage repayments, remain. Similarly, other benefits of employment may be lost, such as life assurance cover, a company pension, medical insurance, a company car, regular hours and holidays.

Consider the views of your family and friends. Their support is essential. It is important they understand that the administrative and financial requirements of running a business can be time consuming and stressful.

Success in business depends on many factors; most important is the need to critically review all aspects of the business proposition before progressing too far.

This guide highlights many of the practical points that require consideration before trading begins. It cannot cater for every possibility and decisions should be supported by appropriate professional advice.



SELECTING A LEGAL ENTITY FOR YOUR BUSINESS

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One of the first major decisions you will have to make as you start your new business is the form of legal entity it will take. To a large degree this decision may be dictated by the way you have organised your operations and whether you intend to work on your own or in conjunction with others.

The form of entity you choose can have a significant impact on the way you are protected under the law and the way you are affected by taxation rules and regulations. There are three basic forms of business organisations. Each has its own benefits and drawbacks and is treated differently for legal and tax purposes.

SOLE PROPRIETORSHIP

A sole proprietorship is typically a business owned and operated by one individual. A sole proprietorship is not considered to be a separate legal entity under the law, but rather is an extension of the individual who owns it. The owner has possession of the business assets and is directly responsible for the debts and other liabilities incurred by the business. The profit or loss of a sole proprietorship is combined with the other income of an individual for income tax purposes.

A sole proprietorship is perhaps the easiest form of business to own and operate because it does not require any specific legal organisation, except, of course, the normal requirements such as licenses or permits. A sole proprietorship typically does not have any rules or operating regulations under which it must function. The business decisions are solely the result of the owner's abilities.

PARTNERSHIP

In a partnership, two or more individuals join together to run the business enterprise. Each of the individual partners has ownership of company assets and responsibility for liabilities, as well as authority in running the business. The authority of the partners, and the way in which profits or losses are to be shared, can be modified by the partnership agreement. The responsibility for liabilities can also be modified by agreement among the partners, but partnership creditors typically have recourse to the personal assets of each of the partners for settlement of partnership debts.

The rights, responsibilities and obligations of partners are typically detailed in a partnership agreement. It is a good idea to have such

an agreement for any partnership. A partnership is a legal entity recognised under the law and, as such, it has rights and responsibilities in and of itself. A partnership can sign contracts, obtain trade credit and borrow money. When a partnership is small, most creditors require a personal guarantee of the general partners for credit.

Partnerships are obliged to prepare accounts.

LIMITED COMPANY

A limited company is a separate legal entity that exists under the authority granted by the Companies Acts. A limited company has substantially all of the legal rights of an individual and is responsible for its own debts. It must also file tax returns and pay taxes on income it derives from its operations.

Typically, the owners or shareholders of a limited company are protected from the liabilities of the business. However, when a limited company is small, creditors often require personal guarantees of the principal owners before extending credit. The legal protection afforded the owners of a limited company can be useful. A limited company must file accounts at the Companies Registration Office.

Incorporating a business allows a number of other advantages such as the ease of bringing in additional capital through the sale of share capital, or allowing an individual to sell or transfer their interest in the business. It also provides for business continuity when the original owners choose to retire or sell their shares.

BUSINESS STRUCTURE THE PROS AND CONS

COMPANY	SOLE TRADER/PARTNERSHIP
<p>A company must be formally incorporated with a written constitution. There is an initial setup cost, and the business name needs to be registered at Companies Registration Office.</p>	<p>The business name needs to be registered at Companies Registration Office, but otherwise there are minimal formation costs. However, a written partnership agreement is advised.</p>
<p>Companies are governed by the companies Acts. A company must:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep accounting records • Produce audited accounts, unless eligible for Audit Exemption. • File accounts and an Annual Return with the Companies Registration Office. This information is available to the public. • Keep Statutory Registers and Minute Books. 	<p>Sole traders and partnerships are not required by law to have annual accounts nor to file accounts for inspection. However, annual accounts are necessary for the Revenue self assessment tax returns.</p>
<p>Companies may have greater borrowing potential. They can use current assets as security by creating a floating charge.</p>	<p>Sole traders and partners are unrestricted in the amount and purpose of borrowings but cannot create floating charges.</p>
<p>Shares in a company are generally transferable, therefore ownership may change but the business continues.</p>	
<p>Incorporation does not guarantee reliability or respectability but gives the impression of a soundly based organisation. Personally, there may be prestige attached to directorship.</p>	<p>The unincorporated business does not carry the same prestige.</p>
<p>A company pension plan has greater flexibility.</p>	
<p>First year losses in a company can only be carried forward to set against future profits.</p>	<p>Losses generated by a sole trader or a partner can be set against other income of the year or carried back to prior years.</p>
<p>All funds withdrawn must be by salary or dividend and an immediate tax charge arises in the month.</p>	<p>Taxation is calculated on profits and PAYE/PRSI is not a factor.</p>



REGISTERING WITH THE AUTHORITIES

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A significant task for the new business owner is ensuring that the business is properly complying with the extensive tax and information filing requirements imposed by the various authorities. Problems and penalties could arise if the new business is not registered with the appropriate tax authorities in a timely fashion. While this chapter is not intended to be an all-inclusive list of filing requirements, it summarises some of the more prominent requirements common to most businesses.

REVENUE AND COMPANIES REGISTRATION

You should advise the tax office when you start a business as a self-employed person/sole trader. You must do this online using the Revenue Online Service – ROS, through the online eRegistration Service if you are:

- An individual who is currently registered for PAYE Anytime;
- An individual who is currently registered for Revenue's Online Service – ROS
- Represented by an Agent.

ROS is Revenue's internet facility which provides you with a quick and secure facility to register for tax, pay tax liabilities, file tax returns, access your tax details and claim repayments. The facilities are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year. You will also benefit from an extension to existing deadlines for paying tax and filing returns where you both pay and file using ROS. Further information on Revenue's online service can be found at www.revenue.ie.

There are a limited number of customers where paper registration applications are still accepted you will find details of those customers at eRegistration Service. **Paper applications received where the applicant is required to submit the application on-line will not be processed** and the paper application will be returned for completion on-line.

The TR₁ form can be used to register for any/all of the following:

- Income Tax
- Employer's PAYE/PRSI
- Value Added Tax
- Relevant Contracts Tax

Form RBN₁ needs to be completed by a sole trader (Form RBN_{1A} for a partnership) to register any business trading name and this is filed at Companies Registration Office with a fee of €40 (or filed online for €20).

If a company is being set up, you first need to register with the CRO. A form A₁ needs to be completed and sent with the Memorandum and Articles of Association and a fee of €100 to the Companies Registration Office (€50 if filed online). If the trading name is different from the company name then form RBN_{1B} needs to be completed and sent to Companies Registration Office with a fee of €40. Once you have received your CRO number you can then register on-line with ROS or a paper form TR₂ needs to be completed for the Revenue Commissioners.



ACCOUNTING AND BOOKKEEPING

ACCOUNTING AND BOOKKEEPING

Most operators of a new and growing business have a flair for the environment in which the business operates. They may be a great salesperson, an outstanding mechanic, carpenter, solicitor, or inventor. Unfortunately, most people don't like to keep the books. As an owner of a business you must remember that your company's books and financial statements represent a score sheet which tells how you are progressing, as well as an early warning system which lets you know when and why the business may be going amiss. Financial statements and the underlying records will provide the basis for many decisions made by outsiders such as banks, landlords, potential investors, and trade creditors as well as taxing authorities and other governing bodies.

The necessity for good, well-organised financial records cannot be over-emphasised. One of the greatest mistakes made by owners of small businesses is not keeping good financial records and making improper or poor business decisions based on inadequate information.

Quality financial information does not necessarily translate into complicated bookkeeping or accounting systems. Far too often owners of businesses become overwhelmed by their accounting system to the point where it is of no use to them. An accounting or bookkeeping system is like any tool used in your business; it needs to be sophisticated enough to provide the information you need to run your business and simple enough for you to run it (or supervise the book-keeper). Questions you should ask in developing an accounting and financial reporting system are:

1. Who will be the users of the financial information?
2. What questions do I need answered to manage the business?
3. What questions should be answered for the Revenue Commissioners and other authorities?

As your business grows, you should work closely with your accountant to ensure that your accounting system is providing you with appropriate information.

CHART OF ACCOUNTS

The basic road map into any accounting system is the chart of accounts. It is this chart that helps establish the information that will be captured by your accounting system, and what information will subsequently be readily retrievable by the system. This tool, like the rest of the accounting systems, needs to be dynamic and should grow as the size and needs of your business changes.

To help establish a good working chart of accounts you need to answer some questions, in conjunction with your accountant, as to how your business will operate and what is important to you. Some of these considerations might be:

1. Will your business have stock to account for? If so, will it be purchased in finished form or will there be production costs?
2. Are fixed assets a significant portion of your business?
3. Will you sell only one product or service or will there be several types of business?
4. Will you have accounts receivable from customers, which you will have to track?
5. Are you going to sell in only one location or will you do business in several places?
6. Are the products you sell subject to value added tax?
7. Do you need to track costs by department?
8. What type of government controls or regulatory reporting are you subject to?

Each one of these questions can have several answers and will probably generate more questions. Each answer will have an impact on how the chart of accounts is structured. It may seem that developing a chart of accounts is not particularly high on your list of things to do as you start a new business; the amount of time and money which a well organised accounting system may save you can be significant as the need to generate information for various purposes increases. An example of a basic chart of accounts follows this section.

CASH OR ACCRUAL ACCOUNTING

One of the decisions to be made as you start a business is whether to keep your records on a cash or accrual basis of accounting. The cash basis of accounting has the advantage of simplicity and almost everyone understands it. Under the cash basis of accounting you record sales when you receive the money and account for expenses when you pay the bills.

Unfortunately, as we all know, the business world is not always so easy. Sales are made to customers and you sometimes must extend credit. Your business will incur liabilities which are due even though you may not have received the invoice or have the cash available to pay them.

Most users of financial statements such as bankers and investors are used to accrual-basis statements and expect to see them. Once you become familiar with them, they provide a much better measuring device for your business operations than cash-basis statements.

Whether you use the cash or accrual basis, it is possible to keep books for income tax purposes on a different basis than for financial statements. It may be more advantageous (less tax) for you to do so.

ACCOUNTING RECORDS AND RECORD-KEEPING

Another question that the owner of a business must answer is “Who will keep the books of the business?” Will you do it yourself, will the receptionist or a secretary double as a part-time bookkeeper, will you have a bookkeeper that comes in periodically, or will the volume of activity be such that a full-time bookkeeper will be required?

Very often the owners of a business decide to keep the books themselves and underestimate the commitment they have made to other phases of the operation and the time required to maintain a good set of financial records and books of account. As a consequence, the record keeping is often low priority and must be caught up later. This approach, though rarely planned, can require a substantial expenditure of time and money. While it is important for the owners of a business to maintain control and stay involved in the financial operations of the enterprise, this can be achieved by maintaining close control over the cheque-signing function and scrutinising certain records. Your company’s accountant can help develop a good programme of record-keeping duties for you, your employees and any outside book-keepers or accountants you may engage.

A WORD ABOUT COMPUTERS

The computer is probably the single, most valuable, invention for bookkeeping and accounting since the advent of double entry bookkeeping.

There are a number of very good and easy to use accounting software systems which are commercially available, but none of them will solve the problems of inaccurate or poor quality financial records. All they will do is generate bad information faster. This is one of the reasons that the computer has also probably caused more headaches for the owners of modern businesses than any other single cause. If

you want to use a computer-based accounting package, either in your own business, with a service bureau, or through your accountant, it is imperative that you generate accurate information to be entered into the system.

The real value of the computer becomes apparent once it is running smoothly in your business. Your accountant can then function in the capacity for which he was trained, not as a “number cruncher”, but as your business advisor, consultant and strategist. Both of you can focus not on producing reports for various regulatory agencies but on analysing your business to make it more profitable.

INTERNAL CONTROL

What is internal control? It is the system of checks and balances within a business enterprise that helps to ensure that the company’s assets are properly safeguarded and that the financial information produced by the company is accurate and reliable. When you are operating as a “one man shop” or at least handling all of the company’s financial transactions, maintaining good internal accounting control is relatively straightforward.

However, when your company grows to the size where you must delegate some of the functions, it becomes more difficult to ensure that all the transactions are being accounted for properly.

No matter the size of your business, you should always be able to answer “YES” to the following questions:

1. When my company provides goods or services to our customers am I sure that the sale is recorded and the debt is recorded in accounts receivable or the cash is collected?
2. When cash is expended by my company am I sure we received goods or services?

The method used to ensure that these two questions can be answered affirmatively will be widely varied. They are essential stepping-stones to maintaining good control in your business. The solution in your particular instance may be as simple as numbering the sales tickets and being sure ALL TICKETS ARE ACCOUNTED FOR or reviewing all invoices and timecards before signing company cheques. These are fundamentals in a well-run business. As the company grows you will need to consider concepts such as segregation of authority or controlled access storerooms.

No matter what the size of your enterprise, you should consider controlling your business and safeguarding hard earned assets as a priority from the outset.



ILLUSTRATIVE CHART OF ACCOUNTS

Fixed Assets Tangible

0010	Freehold property cost
0020	Freehold property depreciation
0110	Leasehold property cost
0120	Leasehold property depreciation
0210	Plant and machinery cost
0220	Plant and machinery depreciation
0310	Fixtures/fittings cost
0320	Fixtures/fittings depreciation
0410	Motor vehicles cost
0420	Motor vehicles depreciation

Fixed Assets Intangible

0700	Investments
0900	Goodwill

Current Assets

1000	Stocks and work in progress
1100	Trade debtors*
1103	Debtors and prepayments*
1200	Bank current account*
1230	Petty cash*

Current Liabilities

2100	Purchase ledger control*
2109	Creditors and accruals*
2200	VAT control account*
2300	PAYE/PRSI creditor*

Long Term Liabilities

2600	Bank loans
2700	Hire purchase creditors
2800	Lease purchase creditors
2900	Other loans

Capital And Reserves

3000	Capital account balance brought forward
3100	Capital introduced
3200	Profit and loss account
3300	Drawings

* denotes control accounts

Sales

4000	Sales/work done
4009	Discounts allowed
4100	Export sales

Other Income

4200	Royalties received
4210	Commissions received
4220	Insurance claims
4230	Rental income
4240	Bank interest received

Cost Of Sales

5000	Purchases
5900	Opening stock and work in progress
5950	Closing stock and work in progress

Direct Costs

6000	Direct labour
6100	Goods outward costs
6200	Goods inward costs
6300	Packaging
6400	Duty paid
6500	Transport insurance
6600	Sales commission payable
6700	Royalties payable

Overheads

7000	Motor expenses
7100	Telephone
7200	Wages
7250	Wife's wages
7300	Rent
7400	Rates
7500	Heat and light
7600	Postage, stationery and advertising
7700	Repairs and renewals
7800	Insurance
7900	Bank charges and interest
8000	Hire purchase interest
8050	Mortgage interest
8100	Accountancy fees
8200	Legal charges
8300	Use of home as office
8400	Protective clothing
8500	Cleaning
8600	Sundry expenses
8700	Subsistence
8800	Profit on asset sales
8900	Depreciation
9000	Bad debt write off

VALUE ADDED TAX

VALUE ADDED TAX

VAT is a tax on consumer expenditure and is ultimately paid by the final customer. Most business transactions involve the supply of goods or services and VAT is payable if they are made:-

- In the Republic of Ireland;
- By a taxable person;
- In the course or furtherance of business and are not specifically exempted or zero rated;
- To unregistered EU customers.

VAT is collected by the Collector General and is normally payable bi-monthly.

REGISTRATION

VAT registration is necessary if the annual business turnover (excluding VAT) is likely to exceed the following annual limits (w.e.f. 1 May 2008):-

€75,000 in respect of supplying goods

€37,500 in respect of supplying services

Registration may also be necessary if you are in receipt of taxable services

from abroad or if you are a foreign trader doing business in the State.

There are certain circumstances where it is not compulsory, but still advisable to register.

TAX RATES

The standard rate is 23% but there are reduced rates of 13.5% and 9% for tourism related activities and 4.8% specifically for agriculture. The 13.5% rate applies to certain fuels, building and building services, certain newspapers etc. Some goods and service are zero rated – no VAT and some are exempt from VAT. Suppliers of goods and services exempt from VAT are not entitled to register for VAT unless they also make taxable supplies

Any VAT charged by the business is known as output VAT and the total charged or collected in the VAT period is payable to the Collector-General.

INPUT VAT

Input VAT is the VAT that you are charged on your business purchases and expenses (the other persons output VAT) and is normally recoverable in full by a trader who only makes standard rated or zero-rated supplies. Businesses that make some exempt supplies (known as partially exempt businesses) have different recovery rules. The total input VAT suffered in the period is deducted from the output VAT charged or collected and the difference is either the amount of VAT due or the amount repayable.

The majority of input VAT is recoverable but there are special rules for certain transactions.

To reclaim VAT you have been charged as input VAT, you must hold valid evidence that you have received a taxable supply, which normally means a valid VAT invoice from a registered trader showing his VAT number and the amount of VAT charged.

SPECIAL EVENTS

VAT was originally described as a simple tax but has gradually become more and more complicated over the last twenty years with changes to the operation of VAT every year.

It is not always possible to calculate each period's VAT liability by merely deducting input VAT incurred from the sales income and professional advice needs to be taken in the following situations:

- Importing and Exporting either within or outside the European Union;
- Retail Schemes, i.e. where both zero rated and standard rated supplies are made which cannot be separately identified at the point of sale;
- Land and Property;
- Cash Accounting;
- Self-supplies;
- Second-hand schemes for movable goods, works of art, collector's items and antiques, sales of trade in vehicles by motor dealers and sales of agricultural machinery by dealers.

PENALTIES

Interest on overdue tax is charged on a daily basis and this also applies to overclaims of VAT.



VAT CHECKLIST

Registration

- (a) Should the business be registered?
- (b) Is basis of registration correct?
- (c) Are details on registration certificate correct?
- (d) Do procedures exist for notifying the Revenue Commissioners of relevant changes?
- (e) Review position at regular intervals.

Preparation of returns

- (a) Has return been received? If not, then obtain duplicate from VAT Office.
- (b) Review sources of information.
- (c) Prepare draft return.
- (d) Check for accuracy and completeness.
- (e) Make payment (if outputs exceed inputs)

Input Tax

- (a) Do any restrictions on input tax exist?
- (b) If "Yes", does an agreed method exist?
- (c) Does this method maximise input tax?
- (d) Are invoice additions and calculations checked?
- (e) Is input tax claimed at the earliest tax point?
- (f) Are all claims properly supported?
- (g) Ensure all supporting invoices kept.

Output Tax

- (a) Are all income heads reflected for VAT accounting?
- (b) Are all potential sources of notional supplies considered?
- (c) Are all potential sources of income (asset sales, etc.) covered by the VAT accounting system?
- (d) Is VAT captured at the correct tax point?
- (e) Is VAT correctly applied where appropriate?

MONEY LAUNDERING REGULATIONS

There are many aspects to the The Criminal Justice (Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing) Act 2010 but in particular attention is drawn to those relating to High Value Dealers (HVDs).

HVDs are those traders who may receive €15,000 (or equivalent in any currency) for goods, whether it be in a single transaction or a series of linked transactions. The Regulations principally apply if cash or cash equivalent are offered in settlement.

If you believe you may be a HVD you should discuss this with your advisors. There is a requirement for the designated persons covered in this legislation to undertake specific effective customer due diligence measures at the outset of a business relationship and certain other measures during the course of the business relationship.

Further if you believe you may be affected by the Regulations as they related to regulated businesses you should discuss this with your advisors as the penalties for not complying are serious.



PAYROLL TAXES

PAYROLL TAXES

Irrespective of the form of business in which you operate, if you are going to have employees then you will have to contend with payroll taxes. The brief summary that follows will give you some guidance in the rules and regulations in connection with PAYE/PRSI.

HELPFUL PUBLICATIONS

The Revenue Commissioners have a very useful section on their website www.revenue.ie on an Employers Guide to PAYE/PRSI. Not only do you collect and remit PAYE to the Revenue Commissioners, you also operate the PRSI scheme. You should run the PAYE scheme in accordance with the legislation and should you fail to comply then the Revenue Commissioners will look to you for the amounts you failed to deduct. This can be costly if you are unable to recover the amounts from the employee.

DO YOU HAVE EMPLOYEES?

Whether an individual is an employee or not in a particular situation is a question of fact depending on the terms on which he/she works. The question of whether an individual is employed or self-employed is very important for the business “employing” him or her, as that business has to comply with the reporting requirements.

In certain areas the Revenue Commissioners has placed emphasis on reclassifying individuals claiming to be self employed and has issued the leaflet “Employed or self employed – a guide for tax and social insurance”. This booklet sets out the questions that should be answered to determine the problem. If you have treated someone as self employed and subsequently after a routine visit from the Revenue Commissioners it is clear that they were employees, then the tax etc which should have been paid will be assessed on you. Therefore it is important to ensure when using the services of self employed people, that they are in fact self-employed.

If doubt exists as to the status of an individual, the situation can be clarified with the Revenue Commissioners.

THE OPERATION OF A PAYE SCHEME

Upon registration the Revenue Commissioners will send to you guidelines on operating PAYE/PRSI.

Included will be a number of forms with which to operate the PAYE/PRSI and benefits in kind system. You should familiarise yourself with and have supplies of these forms, which are as follows:-

P46	Notification of new employee to the Regional Revenue office
P45	Details of employee leaving
P60	End of year return and employers certificate
P35	Employer’s annual statement
P35L/P35L/T	Employer’s supplementary returns
P50	Employee’s application for refund of tax during unemployment
P30	Bank Giro payslip remittance form for PAYE/PRSI contributions

In order to calculate the amount of tax and PRSI due by an employee, the Revenue Commissioners will supply you with certificates of tax credits and cut-off point.

A Universal Social Charge has now been introduced to replace the Income Levy. Another set of tables can be referenced to calculate same.

The Employer’s and Employee’s PRSI insurance is calculated by reference to the gross pay with a third set of tables.

The tax and PRSI should be paid to the Collector-General between 1st and 14th of the next calendar month following the month in which the deductions were made. Payment can be by direct debit.

Benefits in kind are also taxed through the PAYE system.

INCOME TAX AND CORPORATION TAX

INCOME TAX AND CORPORATION TAX

Eventually you will have to deal with income or corporation taxes. The taxation legislation is extensive and can be confusing for an individual starting a business. This chapter does not cover all the tax ramifications of a new business, nor does it detail all the expenses you can claim for, nor does it give details of allowances available on the purchase of some capital items. A qualified Accountant should be consulted when you are dealing with the taxation affairs of the business. The payment of taxation has a direct impact on your cash flow.

WHICH ACCOUNTING YEAR SHOULD I CHOOSE?

If you expect profits to rise steadily year by year, in the case of sole traders/partnerships, an accounting date early in the tax year, for instance 31 January, might be best in the short term, because this will defer the payment of tax on your profit.

On the other hand if you expect to make losses in your early years, an accounting date late in the tax year, for instance 31 December, will ensure that you get tax relief for those losses as quickly as possible.

It will also be necessary to bear in mind the seasonality of your business. As part of the profit for your first period of trading could be taxed twice, it would be unfortunate if a poor choice of accounting date were to accelerate the tax on the profit of your first busy period. In these circumstances it might be preferable to run your first accounts to a date just short of your peak period.

As ever, it is important not to overlook commercial considerations. Your bankers might want to see as healthy a profit as you can manage and this desire could conflict with tax planning. A solution would be to choose a tax efficient tax accounting date, and keep the bank happy with quarterly management accounts.

COMPANIES

Companies are charged corporation tax at the rate applicable during the financial year. Where a company's accounts period spans two financial years the profits for the period are apportioned between the years.

The Corporation Tax rate is 12.5% for trading income and 25% for passive income such as rents or investment income.

SOLE TRADERS/PARTNERSHIPS

Sole traders and partnerships are charged income tax at the rate applicable during the financial year ended on 31st December. The rates are currently as follows:

	2014	Rate	2015	Rate
Single person	€32,800	20%	€33,800	20%
Then	balance	41%	balance	40%

Under self-assessment your income tax return, which encompasses your trading results, needs to be filed by 31 October following the tax assessment year.

For start ups and on admission of partners the rules are complex and you should refer to an accountant for specific advice.

PENALTIES

There are penalties for late submission of returns and for late payment of tax.

CASH PLANNING AND FORECASTING

CASH PLANNING AND FORECASTING

CASH IS KING! The lifeblood of any business is its ability to collect cash and pay bills as well as pay its employees, particularly its owners. Far too often small businesses are profitable, but they do not have enough operating capital to meet their current needs. Consequently, they may be forced to sell out to a stronger competitor, sell a portion of the company to investors at an undesirable price or close the doors and put the company out of business. None of these alternatives are typically what the owners intended when starting the business.

The ability to forecast cash resources and uses is an art and is by no means a well-defined science. None of us have a crystal ball and any cash forecast which is prepared by the management of a company or an outside consultant can be no more than a guess as to when the customers pay and when your business will pay its obligations. Hopefully, the more effort that is put into cash forecasting the better will be the educated guess and the more accurate the resultant picture of the future operations of your business.

STARTING THE ANALYSIS

One of the most significant factors to be considered in your cash flow forecast is the volume of sales that will be generated in the next several months and for the rest of the period for which you intend to forecast. Your sales forecast must be as fine tuned as possible. It may be unrealistic to assume that there is a million pound market for your product in your area and you will be able to capture a specified percentage of it. A sales forecast needs to be based on specific facts. These might include your sales history or the history of similar businesses you have owned or operated or the competition. In your area, what has been the experience of similar operations?

Some of the questions that should be addressed would include what other factors could I control such as adding new product lines, deleting unprofitable operations, adding a new salesperson, or terminating one that is not producing to quota? In preparing a forecast, you must also take into consideration items such as the seasonality of your business, the relative state of the economy and the period over which you will forecast.

Obviously your ability to forecast sales for the next month is better than it is for three to five years from now. The amount of detail that must be included in the cash forecast is really a matter of preference. It can be based on per unit sales extended out by the sales price of each type of unit or an average sales volume per day, week or month of your type of business in its current environment.

CASH COLLECTIONS

Once you have determined a reasonable level of sales and you are comfortable with the forecast you have made, you must address questions such as: what percentage of my sales are received in cash, and what portion are credit sales for which I will have to carry amounts in debtors? For those that are debtors based, how soon is the cash collected? Do I have to wait for customers to pay me or do third

parties such as Visa or MasterCard or a debt factor take the customers account and convert it to cash for me with an appropriate discount?

If you are relying on customer payments for collection of debtor balances you must determine what portion of the debts will be collected in thirty days, sixty days, ninety days and thereafter, and what portion, if any, may never be collected. To assume that 100% of your sales will ultimately be converted to cash is probably unrealistic especially considering the current economic environment and the tight cash situations that may face some of your customers.

Other sources of cash may be available in addition to sales. Do you expect to bring in a partner or other investors, or can you borrow money from a bank? When will you receive the cash and how much will you get? Part of your cash flow analysis may be to determine how much investment money or borrowings will be required to operate your business.

Once you are comfortable with the cash receipt side of your business, and the timing of the collections of funds from your sales and other sources, it is necessary to consider the expenses and other cash needs of your business operation.

DISBURSEMENTS

Certainly if your business entails sales of stock, you will have to purchase the merchandise from others or purchase the component parts and pay employees to assemble it. This may require a significant outlay of cash before the first pound of sales is generated and received. You should consider how often and in what amount your employees must be paid and when their payroll taxes must be paid over.

Additionally, you need to know the credit trade terms your creditors are willing to advance to you. Do you have to pay for stock items on a C.O.D. basis or can you pay for them thirty or forty-five days after receipt? What expenses must be paid to allow you to convert purchased merchandise to saleable stock? If your production requires utilities to run machines or supplies that are required, such as consumable chemicals or packing materials that must be purchased prior to the sale of the stock, you should consider the timing of these payments.

In addition to the cost of manufacturing, you should consider whether your productive capacity would allow you to generate enough stock to support the level of sales that you are predicting. If the volume of sales you forecast is above your ability to produce today, what changes in your operating environment must be made to meet the production levels. Will you need additional employees, if so, how much will they cost?

Do you have to acquire additional machinery for your shop operations? What is the cost of the machinery and when will you have to pay for it? Do you have enough space to cope with the additional activity?

Once you have determined the cost of operating your production or service facilities, you need to consider what other expenses you must pay to keep the doors of your business open. You typically will have to pay rent for your office or manufacturing facility. You must consider how much the monthly payment is and when it has to be paid. Ask yourself if there will be other cash requirements such as a deposit on first and last month's rent. If you are opening a new business, you must consider what your cash requirements are to make your facility ready for your specific needs and purposes. Will you have to buy or rent furniture? Will you need to make tenant improvements or pay deposits for utilities and other services?

You also need to consider many of the overhead items and costs to open a new business that will hopefully be one-time expenses. This may be a solicitor's fee for drafting partnership agreements or incorporating your business, the cost to obtain business licences, approval from the taxing authorities, setting up an accounting system, stationery costs, cost of signs or logos.

It may seem like the list of costs and expenses to be incurred is endless. It may even discourage you in moving forward with your business endeavour. However, it is imperative to make the list as detailed as possible to ensure that you have sufficient funds to make your operation ready for business prior to running out of cash. The more detailed the list and the more sufficient information you can provide, the less chance there is of unpleasant surprises as you move down the stream to opening your business.

In addition to determining the amount and volume of expenses and cash outlays you will have to make, it is critical to determine the timing of such payments. As we have discussed in other chapters, there may be a variety of financing alternatives that are available to you. Most of the start-up cost which you incur can be delayed or deferred until you can generate the cash from your operation to help pay them. This needs to be carefully analysed and built in to your cash flow analysis. However, a good rule of thumb is to assume that you are going to have to pay your expenses sooner than you think and that you will collect your cash slower than you anticipate. If you work with this attitude, any surprises should be favourable ones.

Cash flow projections can be very slow, time consuming and tedious to undertake. It is often very tempting to hire someone else to prepare the projections for you. There are a variety of individuals who can help you do this, but the critical factor is that they only **help**. You as the owner and operator of the business are the only one truly qualified to develop your cash flow projections. You know what it takes to open and operate your business. Certainly a trained professional can offer guidance and ask pointed questions to be sure you are considering all

of the necessary and sometimes hidden costs of operating a business. However, the more effort you put into developing the cash flow projections the more accurate they will tend to be. This exercise may also help you to pinpoint areas of potential cash savings that you have not otherwise considered.

The following tax matters require consideration as part of the preparation of your cash flow forecast:

VAT AND OTHER TAXES

If you are VAT registered (compulsory for businesses with sales in excess of the statutory limit), your sales receipts will include "Output" VAT and some of your costs will include "Input" VAT.

The net receipt of VAT has to be paid over to the Collector-General bi-monthly. If, however, your sales are zero rated, you will be able to claim back the VAT on your purchases.

The basic calculation is not as difficult as is often made out. Typically, adding up your sales receipts for a period, multiplying the figure by 13,5 and dividing by 113,5 gives you your output VAT (assuming all sales at 13,5%). Do the same for your purchase invoices to calculate input VAT. Deduct input from output and put this figure into your cash forecast in the first month of the next period.

PAYE

If you employ people you will have to deduct tax/PRSI from their pay and pay it over to the Collector-General in the following month. For a forecast it is sufficient to put the **gross** figure in the cash flow forecast as it automatically includes PAYE. Don't forget to include your employers PRSI payment in this calculation.

PERSONAL TAX

If you are the proprietor of a business that is not a limited company, your wages are part of the profit of the company and referred to as "drawings". The tax that you pay will be based on the profit of the company not the amount that you take out. It is advisable to pay a sum into a deposit account each week to provide for this tax that will be due after your year-end and it could be a lot of money. Ask your accountant about this!

Many businesses go bust because they fail to provide for the taxes that are payable. Make sure that it does not happen to you!

OBTAINING CREDIT AND FINANCING FOR YOUR BUSINESS

OBTAINING CREDIT AND FINANCING FOR YOUR BUSINESS

If not independently wealthy and perhaps even if you are, eventually you will probably need to obtain some outside capital for your business. In some instances, you may need to obtain capital for the initial expenses prior to opening your business or for instance, the funds you require may be for expansion or working capital during the off season.

Generally business financing can take two forms, debt or equity. Debt, of course, means borrowing money. The loans may come from family, friends, banks, other financial institutions or professional investors. Equity relates to selling an ownership interest in your business. Such a sale can take many forms such as the admitting of a partner or, if you are in a company, issuing of additional shares to investors. It is typically a prudent idea to consult with your accountant, as there are many significant legal ramifications to such a step.

HOW DO I GET THE MONEY?

Irrespective of the type of financing you need and are able to obtain for your business, the process of obtaining it is somewhat similar. There are several questions that must be answered during the course of raising money for your business. The ability to answer these questions is critical to your success in obtaining financing as well as the overall success of the business. Remember, in raising capital you have to sell the ability of your business to potential investors in much the same way as you sell your product to your customers.

1. How much cash do I need?

To answer this question you will have to do some serious cash flow planning, which will require estimates of future sales, the related costs, and how quickly you must pay your suppliers. You will also have to build into your planning some assumptions about when you will generate enough cash to pay the money back. However, if you raise cash through equity you probably don't need to pay it back but your investors will want to know how the value of the business will grow and how they will benefit through dividends or selling their shares.

2. What will you do with the money?

One of the most important questions you will have to answer for a potential investor is how the money will be spent. Will you use it for equipment or to hire additional employees or perhaps for research and development for a new improved product? Again, part of the answer on how you spend the money is how it will benefit the company.

3. What experience do you have in running your business?

One of the primary reasons for business failure is lack of experience of management. You will need to convince your investors that you have the knowledge, experience and ability to manage your business and their money at the level at which you expect to operate.

4. What is the climate for your type of business and your geographic location?

Few investors will want to put money into your business if you haven't done sufficient "homework" to determine that you have a reasonable chance of success. If your business is based on existing economic or legal conditions that are subject to change in the near future your risk is substantially increased. Even if your business has great potential, if the local economy is sluggish to the point that it can't support your venture, you need to be aware of this before moving ahead.

Once you have developed concrete answers to these and other pertinent questions, you can begin looking for financing. One of the first steps is to determine whether to raise funds through debt or share capital. There are positive and negative aspects to each type. The cost to your company of each type of funding is different, as is the way in which they are treated for tax purposes. The interest on borrowed money is deductible by a business for tax purposes, which reduces the effective cost to your company. Dividends which you might pay on the same investment in shares would typically not be tax deductible by your company. In selling shares there usually is no firm commitment by your company to pay the money back but your shareholder will want, and generally will have, a legal right to have a voice in the management of your company. When you have made the decision as to the type of financing you think is appropriate to fit your desires and needs, it is probably a good idea to consult with your accountant as to alternative types of debt or equity financing available.

BUSINESS PLAN

Typically, a potential lender will want to know all about you and your proposed venture. Many of these details will have already been provided, but are best provided in a logical consolidated format. This format, or **business plan**, is a document that enables the investor to readily obtain an understanding of your proposal. It follows that in order to successfully raise funding, the business plan should be commercial and realistic.

FINANCING ALTERNATIVES

Whether you determine that debt or equity financing is the best choice for your company, there are a number of alternative types of financing available. Depending upon the nature of your business, the financing may be a combination of debt and equity and may be tailored to fit the specific needs of your company.

In the summary we will only mention a few of the more conventional methods for a young company to obtain capital, though the possibilities are many.

DEBT FINANCING SOURCES

1. Banks

The first source of funds, which typically comes to mind when borrowing money, is a bank, which is why they are in business. Banks typically lend to small businesses on a secured basis using equipment, stock or debtors. The more liquid and readily saleable the assets you have to offer as security, the more acceptable they are likely to be a banker. Loans from a bank may take several forms such as:

- (a) An overdraft limit which is reviewed annually and allows you to borrow up to a predetermined maximum as you need it and pay it back as funds from sales and receivables are collected.
- (b) A short-term loan that is repayable on specified dates.
- (c) A term loan for the purchase of a specific asset such as a computer or a machine.

As your relationship with your banker becomes better and your business becomes established, you may consider a longer (3 to 5 years) loan which will be payable in instalments.

2. Lease Financing

In today's business environment it is quite common to acquire equipment through lease agreements. Leasing packages come in a variety of types through many sources. Leasing companies typically will accept a somewhat higher degree of credit risk because they are looking to the value of the equipment for collateral if your business cannot make the agreed upon payments. For this reason, leasing companies generally prefer to finance new equipment of a general purpose nature which can be resold if necessary. Leases often run for a period of three to five years and because of the risk that leasing companies are willing to take, they are somewhat more expensive than commercial bank loans.

3. Trade Credit

A very important source of financing for your company may be from the creditors and suppliers with whom you do business. Many suppliers will originally ask for cash on delivery or, in some instances, they want payment before starting on your order, depending on the nature of your purchase. Most suppliers will quickly establish trade credit with you once you have gained their confidence by continuing to do business with them and paying as requested. Establishing good relationships with trade creditors is essential because it allows you to use the goods and services in your operations and sell your product to your customers, in some instance before you pay for them. The trade credit you build today will be relied upon by other suppliers as you attempt to establish yourself with other suppliers in the future. Trade credit terms will vary depending on the type of purchase you make, the industry you are buying from and the industry you are in.

EQUITY FINANCING SOURCES

Equity financing usually means selling a portion of your business. This can be accomplished in a number of ways including the sales of ordinary or preference shares. Equity sales are usually carefully tailored to meet the needs of both the company and the investor.

VENTURE CAPITAL COMPANIES

A venture capital company or fund is typically a company that is in the business of taking risks. A venture capital fund is often backed by a group of investors that may be individuals or companies. The investors are often represented by a management group that evaluates potential investments and manages the existing investment portfolio.

The price of venture capital financing is usually very high when compared to borrowing money from a bank, but it must be remembered that venture capitalists are dealing with much higher risk situations than commercial banks will finance. This cost of venture capital is measured in terms of the portion of your company you must sell to obtain the level of financing you require.

PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS

Very often, individuals who are successful in their own right and have accumulated substantial wealth may be looked to for investment in your business venture. Such individuals may believe that the success of your business may enhance theirs as well as help increase their personal wealth. These individuals, like a venture capital company, very often want to participate in the management activities of your firm and help guide your progress through representation on the Board of Directors. The business acumen and contracts of these individuals can often be a valuable asset of your business. An individual investor can often react to opportunity much quicker than a venture capital firm and typically has only his own interests to serve as opposed to a financial backer or group of limited partners.

Individual investors can be more flexible in the type of investment structure they can deal with, and often have personal, financial and tax motivations to consider.



INSURANCE

INSURANCE

Business insurance like many types of expenditure is one of those items that business owners typically do not like to pay. You must remember that sufficient insurance can be as critical to the success of your business as a good product or service. Without proper insurance you could lose all the money, time and effort you put into your company. The types and amounts of coverage you purchase must be evaluated on a cost – benefit basis like any other commodity that you purchase. Your insurance broker can help you review the amount of coverage your business requires. Usually you will want to insure against risks that could have significant detrimental impact on your business. This normally would include items such as fire, storm damage, theft, employers', public liability and products liability. Depending on the nature and size of your business it is often a good idea to self insure for all or a portion of certain losses. Self insurance can be accomplished by not buying cover for incidental risks or by increasing the deductions on policies that you buy. Often raising the deductible (excess) can have a very favourable impact on the policy premium. The administrative cost to the insurance company to process small claims is quite high consequently the rates typically go down substantially if they are relieved of this expense by insuring losses in excess of a sizeable deductible amount. An insurance broker can provide you with comparative costs for various types of cover and varying degrees of deductible amounts.

REQUIRED POLICIES

The insurance cover required by law is employers' liability and third party motor insurance. Your insurance broker can explain the required cover and help you purchase the correct policy. You must be aware that the terms of your building, office lease or mortgage may require you to carry certain kinds of insurance cover in specified minimum amounts. If you have leased equipment or have borrowed money from a bank or other lenders, there will usually be insurance requirements in the agreement relating to these transactions. There are many other types of policies that you may wish to consider. Specific cover is provided by each policy and a qualified insurance broker can explain the related costs in-depth.

Some types of insurance cover that you should consider for your business are listed below.

COMMERCIAL LIABILITY INSURANCE

There are many types of liability your business may need cover for. "Liability" refers to your legal obligation to pay compensation and costs awarded against you in respect of loss or damage sustained by a third party. Types of liability insurance you may want to consider are:-

- **Public Liability** – this will protect you from any liabilities to a third party (other than your employees) for bodily injury or loss/damage to their property that may occur during the normal operation of your business.
- **Employers' Liability** – if you are a limited company or employ anyone outside your immediate family, you are required by law to purchase employers' liability insurance. This insurance offers you protection for any liability arising from injury or illness sustained by employees whilst they are working for you.
- **Products Liability** – this will protect you from any liabilities to a third party (other than your employees) for bodily injury or damage to their property that may occur from the products you have sold or supplied.
- **Professional Indemnity** – this cover is usually purchased by "professionals" such as IT consultants, surveyors, accountants, solicitors etc. This cover will protect your legal liabilities to third parties arising from you or your employees' professional negligence/wrongful advice.

PROPERTY INSURANCE

There are many different types of property cover but generally businesses will purchase cover for buildings, machinery and stock against fire and other perils such as storm/flood etc and theft. They will also consider covering money, goods in transit and glass. For small businesses cover can be provided on a 'package' basis where certain covers such as money and goods in transit are included in the premium as standard, however this option is only available for specific occupations/trades and you should consult with your broker for further details.

If you are working from home be aware that generally your ordinary household insurance policy will not provide cover for your business stock and liabilities. Specific policies can be purchased if you are working from home and you should contact your insurance broker for further details.

There are specific policies for property owners who rent out their premises to tenants. These policies provide cover for buildings, liability and loss of rent. Loss of rent cover is usually only provided in the event of an insured peril occurring such as a fire or flood etc.

BUSINESS INTERRUPTION

This covers loss of income/revenue or additional expenditure incurred following a disruption to the operation of your business. Business interruption usually mirrors your property policy and covers the same perils however, it is possible to add additional perils to your business interruption cover such as food poisoning or failure of utilities. Your broker will be able to provide you with advice regarding this cover and the possible extensions.

FIDELITY GUARANTEE

This type of insurance typically covers risk of loss from theft by employees. If your business deals in large amounts of cash, negotiable

securities or similar types of assets, you may well be advised to consider this cover. Certain industries are required to carry this insurance by regulatory authorities.

DIRECTORS & OFFICERS LIABILITY

Directors and officers of companies in recent years have been found to be personally responsible for their negligence in the running of their company. Recent legislation has also made company directors liable for their behaviour to the company so that shareholders, creditors, customers and employees can now sue them as individuals.

Directors and officers liability cover provides indemnity to the company in respect of the costs it incurs in indemnifying a director against the successful defence of a claim or indemnifying the director where the defence has not been successful.

Although this is a relatively new cover in the insurance market, it is strongly recommended for limited companies and you should seek the advice of your broker for quotations.

KEY PERSON/ SHAREHOLDER/ PARTNERSHIP PROTECTION

Key Person Protection

This provides a company with a valuable safety net should serious illness, disability or death curtail the contribution certain "key" people could make to its stability, profitability and success.

Identifying a Key Person

- These are the people whose special knowledge, skills or enterprise are vital to the continuing survival of a business people who are difficult to replace.

Remember, key people come in many guises. They aren't always the Managing Director or other high, profile senior managers. Consider other key functions that are necessary to the company's business when talking key person insurance with your clients.

When is Key Person Protection Needed?

There are three clearly identifiable situations when key person insurance is most needed.

- To prevent loss of profits
- To protect the repayment of loans
- To safeguard the raising of capital

Partnership Protection

The death of a partner can be extremely damaging to any business. The ability to continue trading and maintain the financial well being of the firm will be vital. In addition, there are other problems which may have to be faced, in the absence of property provision in the Partnership Agreement and insurance cover:

- the partner's interest may pass to an heir who may not have the necessary skills, experience or interest to continue in the business.
- the partner's interest may need to be turned into cash to pay Inheritance Tax or provide for his or her dependants on death.

Raising the finance to buy a partner's interest may involve the sale of assets or finding someone who can afford to buy-in to the partnership. Finding a suitable replacement and raising the money can be difficult and time consuming. If unsuccessful, the partnership may even have to be dissolved. It is clear that partners need to retain continuity, stability and control of the business whatever the eventuality. This can be achieved by making adequate legal and financial provision.

Shareholder Protection

Like partners, shareholder's shares may pass to an heir who does not understand the company's business or whose interests conflict with those of the other shareholders. Alternatively, the shareholder's interest may need to be converted into cash to cover Inheritance Tax liabilities or provide for dependants.

Maintaining control and stability of the company during this often turbulent time is key to its continued success. By taking the appropriate legal and financial steps shareholders can be confident that the future holds no surprises.

SELECTING PROFESSIONAL ADVISORS

SELECTING PROFESSIONAL ADVISORS

Starting your own business obviously entails a multitude of decisions; decisions which can seem overwhelming without the right players on your team. In order to succeed you need to equip yourself with every tool at your disposal.

One of the most cost effective tools you can utilise is the expertise of a specialist. The right accountant and solicitor can eliminate a host of problems and potentially costly errors you might make as you build the financial foundation of your successful business.

As any coach can tell you, having a first rate quarterback (you) won't guarantee a winning team without a first rate line of defence. The right accountant and solicitor is your best defence. Their expertise can help save you money that in turn can be used to increase profits.

When enlisting the expertise of an accountant and solicitor you want a specialist suited to meet your specific needs. You want a specialist who will listen to you. More importantly, you need some you can and will listen to as they devise strategies to help you succeed.

You want to succeed and you can. By taking the time to make key decisions and enlisting the right players on your team you will succeed!

We wish you success and welcome you to the wonderful world of free enterprise.

You can select your CPA professional advisor online www.cpaireland.ie



COMPUTER ACCOUNTING SYSTEMS FOR FIRST TIME USERS

COMPUTER ACCOUNTING SYSTEMS FOR FIRST TIME USERS

INTRODUCTION

A business user choosing a computer system for the first time has to give detailed consideration not only to the purchase of the hardware and software but to the installation of the system and the training of staff. The proprietor of the business will need to make a solid commitment in both time and money in order to reap the benefits.

This chapter is intended to alert the business user of computers to areas needing attention and action when installing or updating a system. It is not intended as a complete DIY handbook covering every eventuality!

HARDWARE

The choice of hardware involves primarily:-Hard disk size, Processor speed and Memory. In general terms go for as much memory and the highest processor speed within your budget. A very high specification PC can be bought for around €700-€800.

PRINTERS

For accounts purposes, a “dot matrix” printer will produce copies of invoices and payslips if these facilities are being used.

Laser printers are affordable for quality letter printing but, of course, only produces one copy at a time. For colour printing, inkjet printers represent good value and indeed the price of colour lasers has also dropped significantly and good quality printers can now be purchased for around €300.

SOFTWARE

Accounting software, like hardware, is now very powerful and comparatively inexpensive. Integrated software includes Sales, Purchase and Nominal Ledgers with Sales/Purchase Order Processing and Stock Control in a single suite of programs.

We have reviewed most of the well-known names in this sector of the market and find, as with many things in life, you tend to get what you pay for.

Microsoft and their “Office” software package and Windows operating system is practically universally used on PCs nowadays. Accordingly, most other software producers have now produced Windows versions of their own packages. Microsoft “Office” includes word processing, spreadsheet and database software and will be suitable for most business environments.

SUPPLIERS

The computer industry is well known for “here today, gone tomorrow” suppliers. Make sure that you choose one with a good local reputation and never part with money until you have received the goods. Paying extra for on-site maintenance is a sound insurance for equipment being used for business.

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

Planning and implementation must cover the layout of your accounts, control over the information going in and verification of the information coming out of the system.

It will also be necessary to produce the accounting data for entering the opening balances.

Where advanced management information is involved, such as profit and loss by departments, more detailed planning is required. Development of a system can only take place at the pace at which staff are able to increase their own skills. The following phases of development may be appropriate for a new start-up system:

- Recording of prime entries (Cash Received and Paid; Sales and Purchase Invoices)
- Bank Reconciliations and VAT Returns
- Monthly Adjustments (e.g. Depreciation and Stock Change) producing monthly management accounts
- Sales Invoicing Routines
- Advanced Management Information e.g. detailed analyses of sales and departmental costs
- Sales and Purchase Order Processing with Stock Control

Even at the first stage the system will produce Aged Debtors and Creditors on a regular basis to enable the business to improve its cash flow.

A “set up procedures list” together with details of typical available reports follows this section.

TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Training staff that are to use the computer is essential both to get off to a sound start and to make progress.

SECURITY

The popular press would have you believe that it is only a matter of time before a virus attacking your hard disk eats up your data! The most frequent reason for loss of data is not taking backups.

COSTS

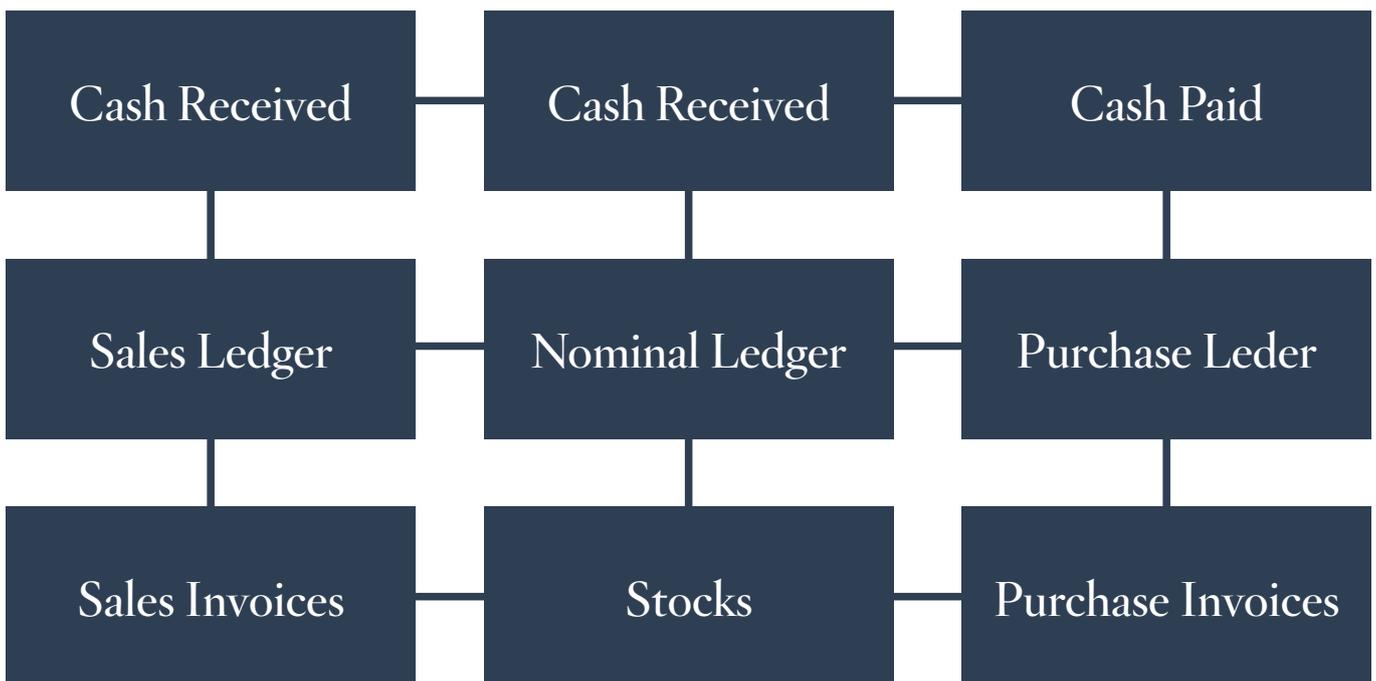
Hardware and software is dependent on prevailing market prices. Installation and training is proportional to your requirements and usually charged at an hourly rate.

INSTALLATION OF ACCOUNTING SYSTEMS

1. Consult your accountant! Grants may be available for training.
2. Decide on starting date, consider trial period.
3. Set up nominal ledger accounts, Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss Layout.
4. VAT Accounting.

5. Are departments required for sub analyses?
 1. Use a dummy company for practice (Multi-company systems only).
 2. Obtain starting trial balance.
 3. Obtain starting Sales and Purchase Ledger balances.
 4. Enter Trial Balance by journal entry.
 5. Enter Sales/Purchase account code, names, addresses, etc.
 6. Enter Sales and Purchase Ledger balances by posting directly to Sales/Purchase control account.
 7. Enter live data:
 - (a) Sales and purchase invoices
 - (b) Cash received
 - (c) Cash paid
 - (d) Petty cash
 8. Consider the need to keep manual records for at least three months and Cash Book for full year.
 9. Reconcile Bank Statement with Cash Book and Computerised Bank Control Account.
 10. Consider direct production of Sales Invoices. Free text or from stock. If the latter, stocks, dummy or real need to be entered into stock records.
 11. Keep a backup disk for each of the five weekdays. Keep a weekend backup off the premises.
 - Benefits will be mainly a business that you manage instead of a business that manages you!

ACCOUNTING SYSTEMS



DOUBLE ENTRY PRINCIPLES

By entering a Sales Invoice in the Sales Ledger, the customer's account, the Sales Ledger Control Account (agreeing the total of the individual sales ledger balances to the total debtors in the trial balance), the VAT Account, and the Sales Account in the Profit and Loss Account are all automatically updated.

Posting Purchase Invoices, Cash Received and Cash Paid all complete the double entry and update Control Accounts.

USEFUL NAMES ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS

USEFUL NAMES, ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE NUMBER
Revenue Commissioners	9/15 Upper O'Connell Street, Dublin 1. www.revenue.ie	021 602 7000
	Revenue House, Blackpool, Cork	01 865 5000
Miscellaneous		
Small Firms Association	84-86 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2 www.sfa.ie	01 660 1011
ISME	17 Kildare Street, Dublin 2 www.isme.ie	01 662 2755
Chambers of Commerce of Ireland	17 Merrion Square, Dublin 2 www.chambersireland.ie	01 661 2888
Companies Registration Office	Companies Registration Office Parnell House, 14 Parnell Square Dublin www.cro.ie	01 804 5200



CONCLUSION

You now have a handy reference guide to starting a business. With it you should be able to successfully handle many of the problems encountered in starting and running a business. Always remember to seek professional advice in areas that you are not sure. The benefit will far outweigh the cost. Good luck!

Institute of Certified Public Accountants in Ireland (CPA Ireland)

The Institute of Certified Public Accountants in Ireland (CPA Ireland) is one of the main Irish accountancy bodies representing 5,000 members and students. The CPA designation is the most commonly used designation worldwide for professional accountants and the Institute's qualification enjoys wide international recognition. Its current membership operates in public practice, Industry, financial services and the public sector and CPAs work in over 40 countries around the world.

The Institute is active in the profession at national and international level participating in the Consultative Committee of Accountancy Bodies – Ireland – CCAB (I) and together with other leading accountancy bodies the Institute was a founding member of the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC) – the worldwide body. The Institute is also a member of the Federation des Experts Comptables Europeens (FEE), the representative body for the main accountancy bodies in 36 European countries.

The Institute fulfils its statutory role as a recognised body by overseeing the professional activities of its members in practice, and insuring that education and training standards are maintained. As the first accountancy body to introduce a mandatory regime of Continuing Professional Education, the Institute ensures that all CPAs remain at the leading edge throughout their careers. The Institute provides a quality service to its Members and Students, which has been recognised through the award and maintenance of ISO 9001:2008. For further information visit www.cpaireland.ie

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