

The "Zero-to-Launch" Business Checklist (2025 Edition)

For Home-Based & Low-Cost Startups

Most people never start because they get stuck on the wrong things (like printing business cards). This checklist focuses solely on what generates income.

PHASE 1: The "Sanity Check" (Validation)

Don't build it until you know they want it.

- ☐ Define Your "One" Thing: Write down exactly what you sell in one sentence. (e.g., "I help fitness influencers reply to comments so they can film more.")
- ☐ Identify the "Pain": What exact problem are you solving? (e.g., "They are overwhelmed by DMs.")
- ☐ The "Stranger" Test: Ask 3 people who are not your friends or family if they would pay for this. If they say "maybe," it means "no." You want "When can I start?"
- ☐ Competitor Recon: Find 3 people doing this already.
- - Deep Guidance: Don't be discouraged if others are doing it. That proves there is a market! Review their 1-star reviews to identify what they are doing wrong, and address those issues in your offer.

PHASE 2: The "Lean" Setup (Logistics)

Keep it legal, keep it cheap.

- ☐ Name It (Fast): Spend max 30 minutes. Use a tool like Namelix to generate ideas. Check if the .com or a clean social handle is available.
- ☐ Separate Your Money:
 - Deep Guidance: NEVER mix personal and business money. You don't need a fancy business bank account yet. Just open a separate free checking account (like Chime or a local credit union) dedicated 100% to the business.
- ☐ Payment Gateway: Sign up for Stripe or PayPal.
 - Action: Send \$1 to yourself to verify it works.
- ☐ The "Good Enough" Workspace:
 - Clear a specific corner of a room.
 - Test your internet speed (you need stable upload speeds for Zoom/Content).
 - Tip: If your background is messy, use a free virtual background tool or hang a plain sheet.

PHASE 3: The "Digital Storefront" (Branding)

Look pro without hiring a pro.

- ☐ The Logo: Use Canva (Free Tier). Choose a simple font-based logo. Complex icons look cheap if done poorly.
- ☐ The "One-Page" Website:
 - Use Carrd.co (Free/Cheap) or Notion turned into a site.
 - Must Have: Headline, Bullet points of benefits, "About Me", and a "Buy Now" or "Book Call" button.
- ☐ Social Media Land Grab: Secure your handle on Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn, and X (Twitter). Even if you won't use them all, lock the name.

- [] Professional Email:
 - Free: YourBusinessName@gmail.com
 - Pro (\$6/mo): Name@YourBusinessName.com (via Google Workspace). Recommended for B2B.

PHASE 4: The "Noise Maker" (Marketing)

Build the hype before you sell.

- [] The "Coming Soon" Tease: Post on your personal social media: "Working on something to help [Target Audience] with [Problem]. Who wants early access?"
- [] The "Dream 20" List: List 20 people (friends, former colleagues, local businesses) who might need your service or know someone who does.
- [] Content Stockpile: Create 5 pieces of content (posts/videos) before you launch so you aren't scrambling on Day 1.
 - Idea: 1 "About Me" post, 1 "Problem/Solution" educational post, 1 "Behind the Scenes" post.

PHASE 5: Launch Day (Go Live)

Perfect is the enemy of done.

- [] The Announcement: Post everywhere. Ask friends to share.
 - [] Direct Outreach: Send personal messages to your "Dream 20" list.
 - Script: "Hey [Name], I just launched [Business]! We help with [Problem]. Do you know anyone who might need this? No pressure, just wanted to share!"
 - [] Get the First Review: Over-deliver for your first client. Do extra work for free. Then, ask for a video testimonial or a Google Review immediately.
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