

NIBUSINESS
INFO.CO.UK



Shauna Fenton

AT EVERY STAGE OF BUSINESS



**NIBUSINESS
INFO.CO.UK**

nibusinessinfo.co.uk provides a service which cuts across government departments, business support organisations and all aspects of business

Essential information, support and services to help you **start, maintain or grow** your business.

Simple to use, up-to-date and practical, nibusinessinfo.co.uk is the first place to go to find **guidance on regulations** and to **access government services**.

It also has **online tools, calculators**, and best practice **case studies**; and provides access to **funding options, mentoring and networking opportunities**, as well as **wider support**.

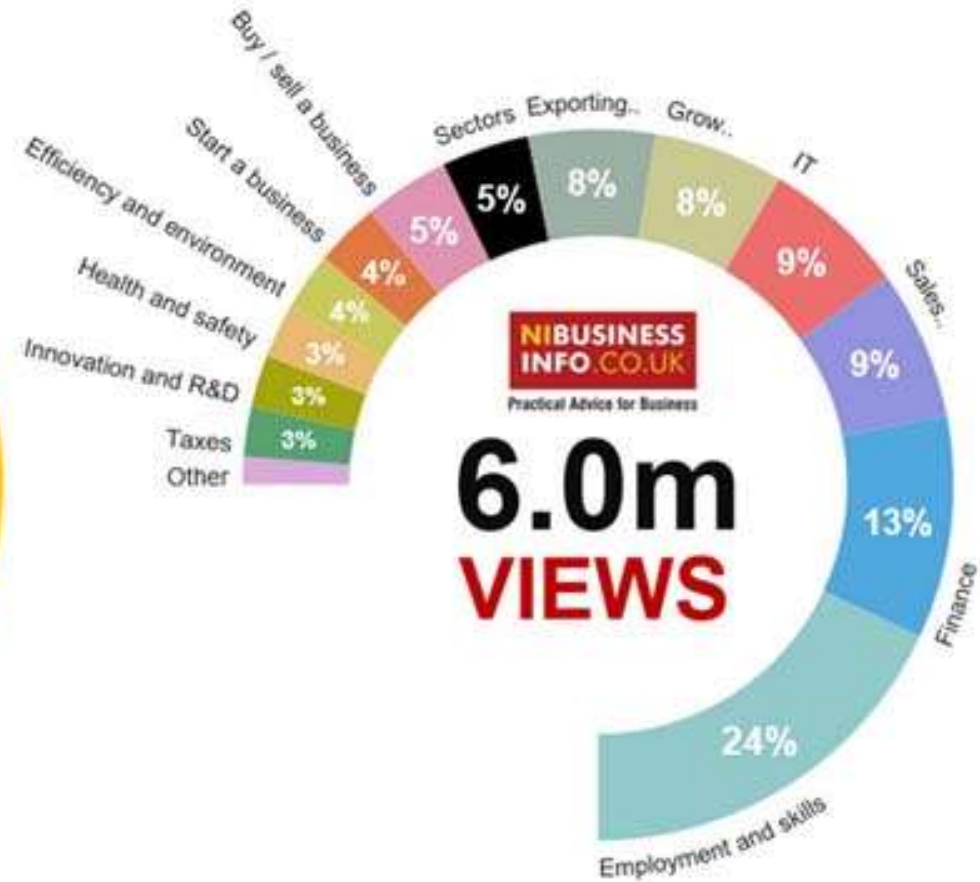
Find guides by theme	
Starting a business	
Finance	
Taxes	
Employment and skills	
Health and safety	
Efficiency and environment	
Business premises and rates	
Innovation and R&D	
Sales and marketing	
IT	
Exporting and importing	
Grow your business	
Buy or sell a business	

Find guides by sector	
Tourism	
Creative industries	
Food and drink	
Property management	
Construction	
Manufacturing	
Retail	
Transport	

CUSTOMER VISITS AND INTERESTS IN 2016-17



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WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP



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NIBUSINESSINFO.CO.UK CUTS ACROSS ORGANISATIONAL SILOS THE SITE'S SUCCESS IS BUILT UPON COLLABORATION

Business in the Community
Craft Council
Creativity NI
Crown Solicitors Office
Councils
Department for Infrastructure (DfI)
Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs (DAERA)
Department of Education (DE)
Department of Finance (DoF)
Department of Health (DoH)
Disability Action
Carbon Trust
Central Procurement Directorate
Chartered Institute of Management Accountants
Food Standards Agency Northern Ireland
FSB Northern Ireland
Halo NI
Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland (DfE)
HM Revenue & Customs
Housing Rights Service

Information Commissioner's Office
Insolvency Service (DfE)
Land & Property Service (DoF)
NI Chamber of Commerce
NI Consumer Council (DfE)
NI Courts & Tribunals Service (DoJ)
NI Hotels Federation
NI Independent Retail Trade Association
Northern Ireland Environment Agency
Police Service of Northern Ireland
Social Enterprise NI
The Landlords Association of NI
The Prince's Trust
Tourism NI (DfE)
Trading Standards (DfE)
Universities and Colleges
InterTrade Ireland
Travelwise (DfI)
UK Trade & Investment
Women in Business NI
Young Enterprise Northern Ireland

- 1) Guides:** 800 across 21 themes
- 2) Tools and templates:** Over 130 business tools and templates
- 3) Case studies:** Learn from other businesses
- 4) e-Learning:** Covering key start-up themes
- 5) Support finder:** Finance and advisory services
- 6) Resources:** Company search, property, business idea
- 7) Events:** Networking, workshops, seminars
- 8) Business news:** Changes as they happen
- 9) Questions answered:** Email, telephone, social media
- 10) Free registration:** Newsletter, event alerts, grant updates, regulation changes

GUIDES: 800 ACROSS 21 SUBJECT AREAS



NIBUSINESS
INFO.CO.UK

The screenshot shows the NIBUSINESS INFO.CO.UK website homepage. At the top, there is a search bar with the text "What can we help you find?" and a magnifying glass icon. Below the search bar is a navigation menu with tabs for "Guides", "Resources", "News", and "Events". The main content area features a "NEWS GALLERY" with a featured article titled "How to do websites workshop in Antrim". To the right, there is a "Most Popular" section with tabs for "Pages", "Videos", and "Tools", listing items like "Buy a franchise", "Corporate social responsibility", "Invoicing and payment terms", "Joint ventures and partnering", and "Sample IT policies and notices". Below this is a "Featured" section with three video thumbnails: "Video: Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful", "Know how much holiday to give your staff", and "Managing employees working from home: seven top tips". At the bottom, there is a "Latest events" section with two event listings: "Research and development clinic" and "Business basics".

Guides by theme

- Starting a business
- Finance
- Taxes
- Employment and skills
- Health and safety
- Efficiency and environment
- Business premises and rates
- Innovation and R&D
- Sales and marketing
- IT
- Exporting and importing
- Grow your business
- Buy or sell a business

Guides by sector

- Tourism
- Creative industries
- Food and drink
- Property management
- Construction
- Manufacturing
- Retail
- Transport

The footer of the website is divided into several sections. On the left, it says "Provided by" followed by the Invest Northern Ireland logo. In the center, there is a paragraph of text: "nibususinessinfo.co.uk, a free service offered by Invest Northern Ireland, is the official online channel for business advice and guidance in Northern Ireland." Below this text are social media icons for Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Google+. On the right, there is a search bar and a list of links: "About us", "Contact us", "Help", "Copyright", "Terms & conditions", "Privacy & cookies", "Accessibility", "Starting a business", "Finance", "Taxes", "Employment and skills", and "Health and safety".

How to start a business in Northern Ireland



Guide

Introduction

Your local council will provide you with support designed to help you start your own business. It includes tailored guidance from a business advisor to develop your business plan. This free help is available to anyone interested in starting a business in Northern Ireland.

Some council areas may offer additional support. You can find out what specific help is available by contacting your local council directly.

This guide highlights the importance of a business plan and provides contact details for your local council.

next >

Get help to develop a business plan through your local council

In this guide:

Introduction >

Get help to develop a business plan through your local council >

Contact your local council for start a business support >

Starting a business in Northern Ireland - Learning Space (video) >

 [Printer-friendly version](#)  [Send by email](#)

Market research and market reports



Guide

Five tips for effective market research

A business that understands its customers and their buying habits can sell more effectively, compete with other suppliers, target new customers and identify new opportunities. Follow these five tips for better market research.

1. Identify the information you need - Understanding market trends is important if your business is to make the most of its opportunities and remain competitive. You also need to understand your competitors and be aware of what they are doing in order to predict their next moves and exploit any weaknesses. See [understand your customers' needs](#) and [understand your competitors](#).

2. Use market reports and other data - Support is available from a range of sources. For example, Invest NI's [Business Information Centre](#) offers free access to extensive market research through company databases and worldwide market reports.

3. Use field research - Popular methods of field research include surveys, interviews and direct observation. The way that you conduct your field research will have a significant impact on the quality of the results - ask the right questions, talk to the right people, talk to enough people and keep research impartial. See [difference between qualitative and quantitative research](#).

4. Interpret the information - Be careful how you interpret readily available market information. External data might not be in a format that's easy to use - it may have been collected for other purposes or be from a range that doesn't tally with your target market. Also beware of out-of-date market information. See [avoid market research pitfalls](#).

5. Consider using a market research agency - If you don't have the time or skills to carry out research yourself, and if budget is available, you could consider using a market research agency. Always provide the agency with a thorough and clear brief. You should include the project's business objectives, what the research should uncover, and details on how you will use the results. See [should I use a market research agency?](#)

Actions

[Invest NI Business Information Centre](#)

Also on this site

[Understand your competitors >](#)
[Understand your customers' needs >](#)

Distance and online selling rules



Guide

Distance selling is to sell goods or services through digital TV, by mail order, online or by phone or text message. If you are a distance seller there are certain rules that you must follow, including extra rules if you are selling goods or services online.

Providing information before an order takes place

Before selling to a customer at a distance (including online), you must provide them with certain information.

This includes:

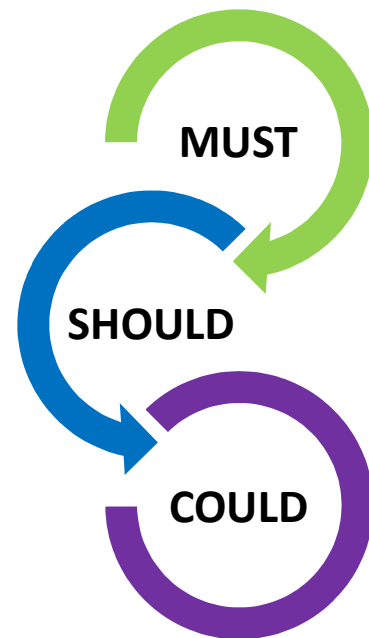
- your business name, contact details and address
- a description of your goods or services, including what digital content does (for example, the language it's in or how to update software)
- the total price, including all taxes and how to pay
- delivery arrangements, costs and how long goods will take to arrive
- the minimum length of their contract and billing period

Also on this site

[Consumer contracts >](#)
[Selling online: consumer contracts >](#)
[The Consumer Rights Act >](#)

CONTENT APPROACH

My New Business content will adopt a task-based approach to maximise engagement and conversion:



- ① **THINKING ABOUT STARTING**
- ② **TIME TO GET STARTED**
- ③ **RUNNING YOUR START-UP**

MAKING IT EASIER TO DO DIFFICULT THINGS:
LAY THE WHOLE PROCESS OUT, BEGINNING TO END, IN ONE PLACE

- Developing step-by-step journeys for users doing complex tasks.
- ‘Learn to drive’ beta version offered users a step-by-step journey from the first to the final step.
- Hosted six Lab Days to validate and refine their approach using task-based usability lab sessions.
- ‘Starting a business’ pilot is currently under development.

Learn to drive a car: step by step

Check what you need to do to learn to drive.

[Show all](#)

1 **Check you're allowed to drive**
[Show](#)

2 **Get a provisional driving licence**
[Show](#)

3 **Driving lessons and practice**
[Show](#)

and **Prepare for your theory test**
[Show](#)

4 **Book and manage your theory test**
[Hide](#)

You need a provisional driving licence to book your theory test.

[Book your theory test](#) – £23

[What to take to your test](#)

[Change your theory test appointment](#)

[Check your theory test appointment details](#)

[Cancel your theory test](#)

5 **Book and manage your driving test**
[Show](#)

Interested in enterprise?

Take a look around to get inspired by others, learn about business and develop a big idea. Find the right support, advice and inspiration for your future business

Get start-up help

- > [Business support](#)
- > [Latest events](#)
- > [Sign -up](#)

Thinking about starting

1 What's the big idea?

Maybe you have a great business idea or maybe you need some inspiration. Either way, use our Business Idea Profiles to get tips and detailed information on starting different types of business.

2 Make your plan

The business plan. It's not as daunting as you might think, but it's an important starting point. It should help you understand the finances your start-up might need and the scale of your project in the initial phase.

+ Use our pre-start checklist

There's a lot to think about before you take steps to start your business. Find out what other people have done, get more information on business structures, research your market and find tools to refine your idea.



Ten steps to a successful start-up

Discover what it takes to get ahead and stay ahead



Interested in enterprise?

Take a look around to get inspired by others, learn about business and develop a big idea. Find the right support, advice and inspiration for your future business

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- Dedicated look and feel
- Neutral brand
- Helpline support
- Links to key checklists

- Quick links to partner assistance
- Fixed menu upon scroll
- Helpline a constant

Thinking about starting

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- 'Pre-start checklist'
- Structured and ordered task-based journey
- Snapshot of essential guidance and support



Ten steps to a successful start-up

Discover what it takes to get ahead and stay ahead





Ready, steady... Go For It

You can get your business off the ground with free support from your local council



Follow our step-by-step guide to writing a business plan



Find success in the present

Catherine Cunningham combined her love of trees and design to start and grow her gift business



Turn your hobby into a business

Hear how Stephen Henderson followed his passion and talent to start Ruach Music



Check out if you know how to start with our vital A to Z

- Dedicated promotions per checklist
- Showcase and signpost customers to relevant partner guidance, support and initiatives

Time to get started

1 Structure your business

The three main business types are sole trader, partnership and company. Each one has advantages and disadvantages and rules to follow. Take the time to choose the right form for your business.

2 Name your business

Picking a name for your business is a little bit more involved than you might think. It's important for your branding and marketing but there are also special rules depending on how you've structured your business.

+ Use our start your business checklist

You're ready to take the plunge to get your business going. Use our guidance and tools to help you through the tricky phase of getting your business established and draw inspiration from other local entrepreneurs.

- 'Start your business checklist'



Starting up as a female entrepreneur

Kelly Neill shares her experiences of finding the right support to start her business





City Start programme

Belfast City council is offering bespoke assistance to help put your business start-up plan into action



Find support schemes and organisations which can make your business



Starting a business with a disability

Claire Bowes on the support and advice available to help budding entrepreneurs start a business



Apply for a UK patent. Learn what you need to do



Starting a social enterprise

Simon Black, co-founder of SlackPres, on how the SlackPres team created a social enterprise

Dedicated promotions for the 'Start your business checklist'

Running your start-up

1 Taxes and regulations

Running a business means a whole new world of rules. Thankfully support is available to make your life easier when managing taxes for the first time and keeping your business on the right side of the law.

'Running your business checklist'

2 Marketing your products or services

Starting a business means making your mark on the world – but how big a splash can you make? Tools to make customers aware of your products and services run from traditional advertising to social networking.

+ Use our running your business checklist

Changing from a start-up to an established business means moving up through the gears and accelerating sales and growth – use our guides and find out how other local entrepreneurs have made the transition.





The spirit of success

How David and Fiona Boyd-Armstrong made it with Shortcross Gin



Selling goods and services

Stay on the right side of the law and know the rights of customers



What you need to know about health and safety

Follow the rules that apply to you and ensure compliance



Employing staff for the first time?

Eight things you should know if you've never hired an employee before



Get export ready: follow the steps to succeed outside Northern Ireland



How to use social networks to increase sales and improve brand awareness

- Dedicated promotions for the 'Running your business checklist'

Latest events

> Search all events

Leading equality, diversity and inclusion
Mallusk Business Park, Newtownabbey, 9 Jan 2018

Tourism and recreation trade clinics
Riada House, Ballymoney, 9 Jan 2018

Enter a town, city or postcode

- All topics -

Find events

Business support

> Search all support

Go For It
Local council support to start a business

Latest events

> Search all events

Leading equality, diversity and inclusion
Mallusk Business Park, Newtownabbey, 9 Jan 2018

Tourism and recreation trade clinics
Riada House, Ballymoney, 9 Jan 2018

Enter a town, city or postcode

- All topics -

Find events

- Feed from Events finder
- All Councils feature
- Driving conversions > partner event details and booking form

Business support

> Search all support

Go For It
Local council support to start a business

Explore Enterprise Programme
Unemployed support to start a business

Business need

-Any-

Business sector

-Any-

Business stage

-Any-

Council area

-Any-

Support type

-Any-

Support organisation

-Any-

Find support

- Feed from Support finder
- All Councils listed
- Driving conversions > overview of support and contact details

- Fixed menu upon scroll
- Helpline a constant

Get start-up help

- > Business support
- > Latest events
- > Sign -up

Speak to a business adviser
> 0800 027 0639

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**NIBUSINESS
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Contact details

nibusinessinfo.co.uk
Bedford Square, Bedford Street
Belfast BT2 7ES
T: 0800 181 4422
info@nibusinessinfo.co.uk



- nibusinessinfo.co.uk brand presence
- Partnership working illustrated via Council logos and links

Start your business checklist

You're ready to take the plunge to get your business going. Use our guidance and tools to help you through the tricky phase of getting your business established and draw inspiration from other local entrepreneurs.

- 1 Structure your business.
[Show](#)
- 2 Name your business.
[Show](#)
- 3 Find the money.
[Show](#)
- 4 Choose your premises.
[Show](#)
- 5 Hire some staff.
[Show](#)
- 6 Protect your business ideas.
[Show](#)
- 7 Avoid common mistakes.
[Show](#)

How other local entrepreneurs got started.



Start your business checklist

You're ready to take the plunge to get your business going. Use our guidance and tools to help you through the tricky phase of getting your business established and draw inspiration from other local entrepreneurs.

- 1 **Structure your business.**
[Show](#)
- 2 **Name your business.**
[Hide](#)
 - Choose the right name for your business
 - Rules for naming your business
 - Company name and trade mark checker
- 3 **Find the money.**
[Show](#)
- 4 **Choose your premises.**
[Show](#)
- 5 **Hire some staff.**
[Show](#)
- 6 **Protect your business ideas.**
[Show](#)
- 7 **Avoid common mistakes.**
[Show](#)

Expandable task list page
Lays out the whole end-to-end process - the numbered sections expand to show links to everything you need to complete that step

Part of
[Start your business checklist](#)

Task list header on content pages. Allows you to easily return to the task list page.

Choose the right name for your business

Choosing a business name to create the right impression

When generating ideas about a business name, you may initially focus on personal preference. However, an objective approach will enable you to consider the customer first.

Your business name will be the cornerstone of your brand. It is something that you have to get right to create the right impression for potential customers and to market your business. See **branding: the basics**.

Points to help you decide on a name for your business

When choosing a name for your business, you need to ask:

- Do you want the name to reflect what your business does - moving, cleaning, building? Or would something more abstract be suitable?
- Would it be a good idea to include your own name?
- Do you want a traditional-sounding name, conveying durability and old-fashioned values, or a modern name, suggesting a fresh, innovative approach?

Note that there are rules that could affect your choice of business name.

For more information on business names, see **rules for naming your business**.

Further guidance can be found on the Companies House website, with an overview of the **controls and restrictions when choosing a company name**.

The National Business Register website provides data on **10 million UK businesses, companies, trade marks and brands** to help you research and choose the right name for your business.

[next](#)
Rule for naming your business >

In this guide:

Start a business Helpline
0800 027 0639

Companies House Contact Centre
0303 1234 500

Actions

Company name guidance controls and restrictions [↗](#)
UK businesses, companies, trademarks and brands [↗](#)

Guides pulled through from nibusinessinfo.co.uk with helplines and links.

Also on this site

Rules for naming your business >
Branding: the basics >

Part of
[Start your business checklist](#)

[Show all](#)

1 Structure your business

[Show](#)

2 Name your business

[Hide](#)

Choose the right name for your business

[Rules for naming your business](#)

[Company name and trade mark checker](#)

Expandable task list appears as a sidebar. Helps you know where you are and what to do next.


3 Find the money

[Show](#)


Introduction >
Choosing a business name to create the right impression >
Names for limited companies and LLPs >
Names for sole traders, partnerships and limited partnerships >
Use of sensitive words and expressions in business names >
Displaying and disclosing your business name >
Getting your business name on the internet >
Ten top tips for choosing a business name >
Choosing the right name for my business - Moonpig >
Defining your product or service (video) >

- 4 **Choose your premises**
[Show](#)
- 5 **Hire some staff**
[Show](#)
- 6 **Protect your business ideas**
[Show](#)
- 7 **Avoid common mistakes**
[Show](#)


Tools and resources to get you started



Company name and trademark checker



Ten top tips to choose your business name



HR documents and templates
Take the hassle out of becoming an employer with our freetemplates

Latest events

> Search all events

Leading equality, diversity and inclusion
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Tourism and recreation trade clinics
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