



FREE GUIDE 02 · OCTOBER 2026

# The Brand Launch Checklist

Thirty steps from idea to first customer, in plain English: name it, own it, look the part, get found, get paid.

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[sparkmyname.com](https://sparkmyname.com) · Free to read, print and share

# The Brand Launch Checklist

Thirty steps from idea to first customer, in the order that saves money. Tick them off as you go. Most cost nothing.

## NAME IT

- ☐ **1 Write a one-sentence brief.** Who you serve, what you do, how it should feel. Judge every name against it.

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- ☐ **2 Shortlist five names.** Short, easy to say, and true to the business you really run.

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- ☐ **3 Do the phone test.** Say each name to a friend once. If they cannot type it into a search bar, drop it.

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- ☐ **4 Search Google and Google Maps.** Look for anyone in your field, nearby or online, already using the name.

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- ☐ **5 Search your state's business registry.** Every state has a free name search on its official business site.

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- ☐ **6 Search trademarks for free.** The USPTO search is free at [tmsearch.uspto.gov](https://tmsearch.uspto.gov). A first look, not a full legal search.

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## OWN IT

- ☐ **7 Buy the .com.** If the .com is gone, think hard before settling; customers type .com by habit.

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- ☐ **8 Claim the same social handles.** Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, LinkedIn and X, even if you only post on one or two.

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- ☐ **9 Set up email at your own domain.** [you@yourbusiness.com](mailto:you@yourbusiness.com) looks real; a free webmail address looks like a hobby.

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- ☐ **10 Register the business.** An LLC, or a DBA (fictitious name) if you trade under a name that is not your own. Fees and forms differ by state.

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- ☐ **11 Get an EIN, free, from the IRS.** Apply on [irs.gov](https://irs.gov). The IRS does not charge for an EIN; skip sites that do.

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- ☐ **12 Open a separate business bank account.** Keep business money apart from personal money from day one.

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## LOOK THE PART

- ☐ **13 Get three logo versions.** Full color, one color, and a small square icon for profile pictures.
- ☐ **14 Pick two or three brand colors.** Write down the hex codes so every post, card and sign matches.
- ☐ **15 Pick one or two fonts.** One for headlines, one for everything else.
- ☐ **16 Fill in the One-Page Brand Sheet.** Free guide 04. It keeps your brand the same everywhere.
- ☐ **17 Make a business card and email signature.** Both are free tools on [sparkmyname.com](https://sparkmyname.com).
- ☐ **18 Get one strong brand photo.** Your product, your work or your space, in good light.

## GET FOUND

- ☐ **19 Create a free Google Business Profile.** If you serve customers locally, this is how you show up on Maps.
- ☐ **20 Put up a simple website or link page.** What you do, who it is for, your prices or a price range, and how to book.
- ☐ **21 Plan your first six posts before launch.** So the page is not empty when people find it.
- ☐ **22 Make a review QR code.** Hand it to happy customers; reviews are how strangers learn to trust you. Free tool on [sparkmyname.com](https://sparkmyname.com).
- ☐ **23 List the business on two or three directories that fit your trade.** Pick ones your customers actually use.
- ☐ **24 Tell twenty people yourself.** Friends, neighbors, past coworkers. Ask each to pass it to one person.

## GET PAID AND STAY LEGAL

- ☐ **25 Write down your prices.** A clear price list makes saying yes easy.
- ☐ **26 Set up a way to take payment.** A card reader, an online checkout or a payment app.

- ☐ **27 Check your city and county license.** Many towns require a local business license or permit.
- ☐ **28 Ask about sales tax.** If you sell taxable goods, your state may require a sales tax permit before your first sale.
- ☐ **29 Keep every receipt from day one.** A folder or an app. Your future tax return will thank you.
- ☐ **30 Check insurance for your trade.** Especially if you work in customers' homes, with pets, food or tools.

**Official places to start:** SBA business guide ([sba.gov/business-guide](https://sba.gov/business-guide)) · IRS EIN ([irs.gov](https://irs.gov), search "get an EIN") · USPTO trademark search ([tmsearch.uspto.gov](https://tmsearch.uspto.gov)) · your state's secretary of state or business registry site.

### Want it done for you?

Describe your business in one sentence at [sparkmyname.com](https://sparkmyname.com). Spark makes 6 brand names, each with a live .com check, logo concepts, brand colors and a brand photo, plus a first trademark screen when one is available. Founding price \$39 one time for the first 100 customers · Regular price \$49.

General information, not legal, tax or financial advice. Rules and fees change and differ by state and city; check the official sites named here before you file or pay. Written October 2026.