

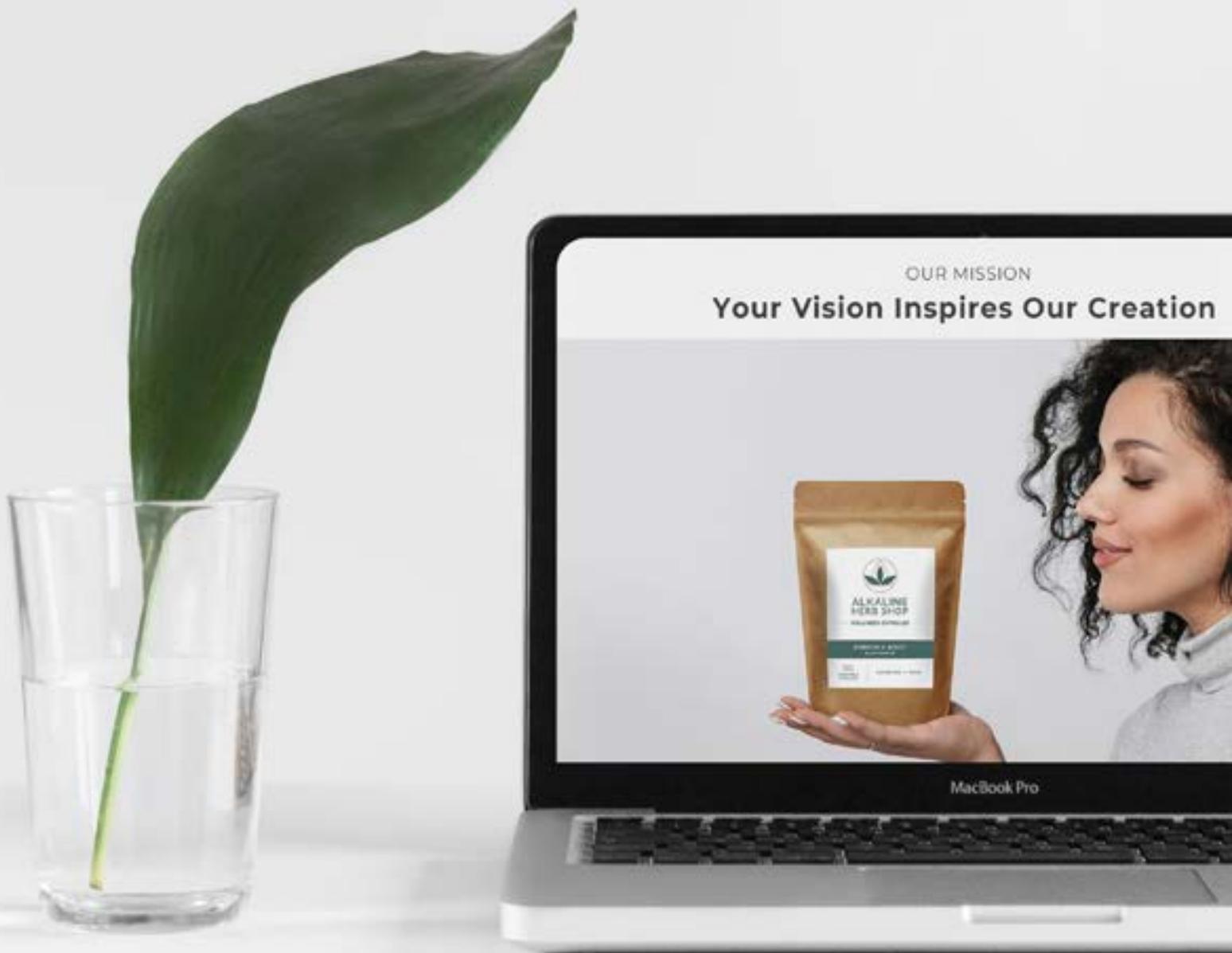
Start My Business!

ESSENTIAL CHECKLIST

MAKE A PLAN TO KICK THINGS OFF RIGHT
WITH OUR INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC GUIDANCE

Beauty & Cosmetics | Food & Beverage | Wine & Spirits
Herbs & Supplements | Cannabis & CBD

cremedemint.com



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Below you will find templates you can adapt to your own company. We recommend having your legal team review policies before publishing online.

- ▶ [Template for Website Privacy Policies](#)
- ▶ [Template for Website Terms & Conditions](#)
- ▶ [Template for Website ADA compliance](#)
- ▶ [Shopify Policy Templates](#)
- ▶ [Lawyer for Website Policies](#)

ARE YOU **READY** TO START A BUSINESS?

Starting a business isn't for everyone. It's exciting and appealing, but it's also a process with a lot of moving parts. It requires in-depth planning, tenacity, and the willingness to pivot when things aren't working.

One of the most important pieces that determines your success is a business plan. A good business plan serves as a roadmap for your business journey.

We've created this Essential Checklist to guide you through each step of crafting your business plan, including links to helpful articles and downloadable worksheets.



Helpful Articles, Guides, and Downloadable Worksheets to Help You Get Started:

- ▶ [Guide to Choosing the Right Legal Structure for Your Business](#)
- ▶ [Tips to Set Up Your Dream Team](#)
- ▶ [Downloadable Worksheet: Startup Costs](#)
- ▶ [How to Simplify Your Budget Process](#)
- ▶ [Guide to Funding Your Business](#)



Before you begin, ask yourself two important questions.

#1 Will I be a solopreneur or will I build a team?

One of the most important decisions you'll make when starting your business is whether to share it with one or more co-founders. Having a partner means you'll have more support and resources, but you won't have the same autonomy and you'll be sharing your profits.

If you do choose to work with a co-founder, it's essential that you choose well and that you make an agreement before you start which sets boundaries and anticipates potential conflicts.

Read our blog post to [explore this question in depth](#).

#2 What is my exit plan?

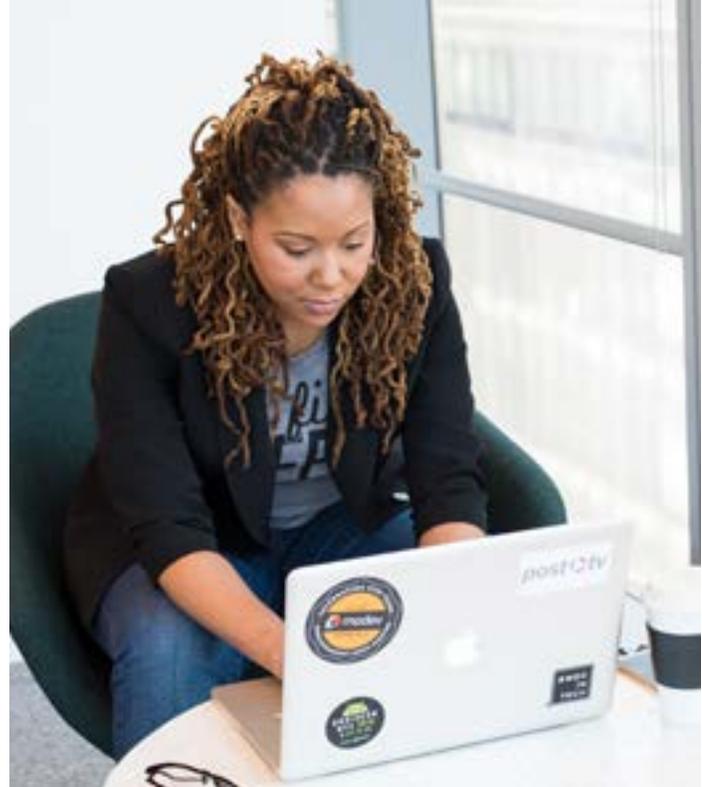
Before you start your business, you need to be honest with yourself about how long you are willing to put resources into your business, and how much time and money you are willing to invest. The last thing you want to think about is what happens if you fail. But part of starting a business is planning ahead for all contingencies—including exiting your business.

An exit strategy will protect you from wasting resources on a business that you no longer want to sustain. [Consider your options and plan ahead](#).

MANUFACTURE & PREPARE TO SELL YOUR PRODUCTS

Choosing the right manufacturer is an essential part of running a successful product business, as your manufacturer will determine the quality and price of your products.

Understanding how the process works will make it easier to find the right manufacturer to fit your needs and budget.



Once your product is made, how will you reach your customers?



Thanks to [a] direct relationship with our customers, we have access to endless inspiration for new products, experiences, and ways of building an enduring business.

- EMILY WEISS, FOUNDER AND CEO OF GLOSSIER

If you plan to sell through multiple marketplaces (Amazon, Shopify, eBay, etc.), **Fulfillment by Amazon (FBA)** will save you a lot of time and hassle. A third party integration tool will give you one dashboard to manage all of your orders. **Learn more about FBA.** Plan to start the 6-8 week brand registry and FBA setup process as soon as your brand trademark is under consideration and your packaging and product are on order.

Resources to Help You Make Well-Informed Manufacturing Decisions:

- ▶ [Guide to Planning Your Product Mix](#)
- ▶ [How to Find a Manufacturer](#)
- ▶ [How to Choose the Right Manufacturer](#)
- ▶ [Manufacturer Research Template](#)
- ▶ [Recommended Beauty Product Manufacturers](#)

Should I hire a sales team?

Working with sales representatives can be a great decision for your product business. They will sell your product for you in exchange for a commission.

Read our blog post for [tips on finding reliable sales representatives](#) for your business.

Which distribution channel is right for my business?

Choosing the right distribution channel impacts your ability to reach your target market. Should you go with retail, direct to consumer through internet sales, wholesale, or another avenue?

Consider the different [distribution options](#) and if [wholesale](#) makes sense for your business.

STAY FOCUSED BY DEFINING YOUR COMPETITIVE NICHE

When you launch a business, it can be tempting to not choose a niche. You might think you don't want to limit yourself, opting instead to appeal to as many people as possible.

The truth is that a niche gives you focus and direction. Being highly focused is one of the best things you can do for your brand. How do you find your competitive niche?



A niche helps you develop effective marketing and sales strategies

ASK YOURSELF

Who am I selling to and how am I solving their problem in a way that my competitors aren't?

If you can offer a group of people a unique solution to their most pressing problem, your brand will be far more likely to succeed.

Your niche should align with you, your skills, and your values. It's also important to remember that in order for your business to thrive, your niche must be profitable.

Helpful Articles, Guides, and Downloadable Worksheets to Help You Define Your Niche:

- ▶ [Guide to Creating Your Value Proposition Canvas](#)
- ▶ [7 Questions to Help You Define What Makes You Unique](#)
- ▶ [Downloadable Brand Identity Questionnaire](#)
- ▶ [Worksheet: Competitor Research](#)

Who is my target audience?

When visualizing your target market, you need to be clear on who they are and what they want. The best way to do this is by **creating customer personas** (fictional characters) to help keep your customer clear in your mind.

What makes my business unique?

A clearly defined brand will help set you apart from your competitors. Read our blog to learn how to **define your brand** and **analyze your competitors**.

CRAFT A BRAND TO CONNECT + ENGAGE

Branding is more than just a logo or a tagline. Your brand isn't just one element. It's the way customers feel when they think about your company. It's your reputation. It's your story.

Branding is the process of actively creating the reputation, story, and feelings customers associate with you. A successful brand aligns with who you are, connects with people, and showcases what's unique about you.

This resource guide includes everything from naming your business and products to crafting a compelling brand story and creating a mood board.



Articles, Guides, and Downloadable Worksheets for the Branding Process:

- ▶ [Guide to Developing Your Brand Language](#)
- ▶ [Worksheet: Understanding Branding](#)
- ▶ [Downloadable Worksheet : Write a Tagline](#)
- ▶ [7 Steps to Choosing Your Brand's Color Palette](#)



Here are two questions to help you get started.

#1 What story do I want to tell?

Your brand has a story, whether you write it or other people do. Every review and social media comment shapes that story. By crafting your own story, you can guide the thoughts and feelings customers have about your brand.

A compelling brand story can inspire trust and loyalty by giving customers a reason to care about your business.

#2 How will I tell my story visually?

Much of your branding process is an intellectual activity. A mood board is the bridge between the intellectual exercise of defining your brand and the process of creating your actual brand identity.

You can finally take all of the ideas and concepts you've been ruminating over and make them visual. Your mood board will guide your branding decisions from here on out.

Read this blog post for tips on **creating a mood board** for your brand.

CREATE A LOGO THAT LEAVES A LASTING IMPRESSION

A well designed logo comes from a strong brand, which is the backbone of a thriving business. Your logo should convey the concepts and feelings associated with your brand story.

Focusing on your story will help you choose the fonts, colors and other design elements that will resonate with your customers.



Push yourself beyond the obvious to create a memorable logo



To make an original logo, you must go further than using the traditional shapes, pictures, and symbols associated with your niche or product.

- LAUREN CASGREN-TINDALL, PRINCIPAL OF CREME DE MINT

Choosing the right colors for your brand is essential. Research has shown that up to 84.7 percent of customers cite color as the primary reason they make buying decisions.

Read the Crème de Mint blog to discover 7 steps for **choosing effective brand colors**.

Useful Articles, Guides, and Downloadable Worksheets to Help You Design Your Logo:

- ▶ Reference Guide for Logo Types
- ▶ 10 Beginner Mistakes to Avoid
- ▶ Competitor Research to do Before You Start
- ▶ Bonus Checklist: Tips for Hiring a Designer
- ▶ How to Choose the Right Font for Your Logo

RESOURCES

A trademark protects your business assets, such as your business name or logo, from being used by other businesses.

- ▶ Fool-Proof Process for Naming Your Business
- ▶ How to Trademark Your Business Name
- ▶ Trademarks, Patents, and Copyrights
- ▶ Trademarking Resource List
- ▶ Lawyers & Legal Services Resource List

DESIGN PACKAGING THAT SELLS

Your product will sit on the shelf next to dozens of similar products. If it doesn't stand out, it's not going to sell. Good packaging serves as a mini-ad for your product, drawing in consumers, making them interested in the product, and convincing them to buy it.

Creating a design and package for your product is a complex process, full of choices. Anything that goes on the package, as well as the structure of the package itself, is all part of packaging design.

This resource guide will help you make decisions and source materials and services.



Useful Articles, Guides, and Downloadable Worksheets for Packaging Design:

- ▶ [Beauty/Skincare Packaging Guidelines](#)
- ▶ [Food, Beverage & Supplement Regulations](#)
- ▶ [Guidance for Dietary Supplement Claims](#)
- ▶ [Alcohol Labeling Requirements](#)
- ▶ [FDA-Compliant Food Labeling Service](#)
- ▶ [7 Packaging Mistakes to Avoid](#)



RESOURCES

Your primary component is the layer of packaging that touches your product, like a tube or bottle. The shape and material should be functional, easy to use, and keep your product in prime condition for as long as possible.

Read our blog post for [tips on choosing your packaging materials](#).

▶ [Primary Packaging Resource List](#)

Secondary packaging refers to the outer box or bag that holds the primary component. The main function of secondary packaging is to appeal to your customers through branding.

▶ [Outer Packaging Resource List](#)

▶ [Certifications Resources](#)

▶ [Barcode Resource List](#)

▶ [Guide to Packaging Symbols](#)

Packaging easily makes the difference between a product's success or failure.

It makes sense to hire a professional with experience creating successful packaging who can guide you through the process.

We've put together a [beginner's guide to packaging design](#) and a [checklist](#) to help you find the right designer for your business.

PREPARE FOR AN EXCITING LAUNCH!

You've chosen your business name, set up your business legally, selected a manufacturer, and planned out your design and copy—now it's time for the launch! Launching your product business is very exciting. But it's important that you launch your business strategically.

Your goals for your launch are to build your email list, get people excited about your products, and create buzz around your business. This is also an opportunity to learn about your customers, discover what marketing activities you like and don't like, and gather marketing materials for your business.



Resources for your launch:

- ▶ [Implement Best Practices for SEO](#)
- ▶ [Is Your Website ADA Compliant?](#)
- ▶ [10 Steps for a Successful Launch](#)
- ▶ [4 Avoidable Instagram Marketing Mistakes](#)
- ▶ [Downloadable Editorial Calendar](#)
- ▶ [How to Craft the Perfect PR Pitch](#)



Here are two questions to help you get started.

#1 How can I create a “wow” website?

A professional-looking, easy-to-navigate website is essential to build trust with new customers. Start with our [5 tips for building an impressive website](#).

Will a [custom build or website template](#) best fit your needs? There are so many tools out there to help you build a beautiful website. Not sure where to start? Check out our [guide to website platforms](#).

QUICK LINKS

- ▶ [Template for Website Privacy Policies](#)
- ▶ [Template for Website Terms & Conditions](#)
- ▶ [Template for Website ADA compliance](#)
- ▶ [Shopify Policy Templates](#)
- ▶ [Lawyer for Website Policies](#)

#2 How do I build a social media audience?

For product businesses, social media marketing is key. It's one of the best ways to develop a following, attract new leads, and build relationships with customers and influencers.

Developing a [marketing strategy](#) and planning ahead is beneficial.

Our blog offers helpful [tips on creating engaging content](#) and building relationships with influencers.

TRACK YOUR PROGRESS

STEP 1: SET UP YOUR BUSINESS

- Create your legal structure
- Create a budget
- Research funding sources
- Build your team
- Define your exit strategy

STEP 2: MANUFACTURE AND SELL YOUR PRODUCTS

- Plan your product mix
- Choose a manufacturer
- Choose a distribution channel

STEP 3: DEFINE YOUR NICHE

- Define your niche & value proposition
- Create customer personas
- Research your competitors

STEP 4: CRAFT YOUR BRAND

- Write your brand story
- Develop your brand language and colors
- Create a mood board
- Write a tagline for your business

STEP 5: CREATE A LOGO

- Create the perfect brand name
- Trademark your name
- Design a unique logo

STEP 6: DESIGN YOUR PACKAGING

- Explore your options
- Choose the right designer

STEP 7: PREPARE FOR LAUNCH!

- Build your website
- Plan your editorial calendar
- Create your social media presence
- Get press coverage



thank you

We hope this Essential Checklist
has been a useful tool in your
business journey!

NEXT STEP: GROW!

Crème de Mint crafts specialty food, beauty, and supplement brands from start to finish, with award-winning packaging design, strategic branding, and cohesive online presence and marketing.

Are you ready to grow your business?

Schedule a free 30-minute call to ask us questions and discuss your needs.



I'm Lauren, the founder of Crème de Mint.

We love to help businesses grow and thrive. Keep an eye on your inbox for future newsletters from us with more helpful tips for growing your business!

Feeling overwhelmed?

Building a thriving business can be a lot of work for one person. Consider hiring a business or project manager to help you keep all the balls in the air.

Here are some recommendations:

- ▶ **Dana Shannon**
- ▶ **Virtual Assistant Services**

Looking for legal advice or help with accounting?

Here are some recommendations:

- ▶ **Legal Assistance**
- ▶ **Accounting Services**