

tech-hub

By



Enterprise
Nation

Ready for launch!

Digital starter kit for
new small businesses

In partnership with



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Contents

- 04 Introduction
 - Essential digital devices for business
- 06 Your business website
- 08 Your brand and visual identity
- 10 Your community
- 12 Your payment system
- 13 Your customer and sales data
- 14 Your social media marketing
- 15 Your online advertising
- 16 Your workload and to-do list
- 17 Your finances and accounts
- 18 Digital technology groups to join on Enterprise Nation
 - Diagnostics

Introduction

When you're launching a small business, using the right technology can be the key to getting things off the ground. It can help you reach customers, track sales leads, manage your books and lots more.

It's also great for keeping you organised – a challenge that often gets overlooked in the first few months of starting up. The problem? There's so much technology available that it can be hard to know what's right for you.

Naturally, you'll want your tech – tools, apps, software, devices and so on – to be easy to use and intuitive. It has to meet your current needs and be flexible enough to grow with your business. And, crucially, it shouldn't cost the earth.

We've put together this checklist for small businesses just starting out. It's based on our years of experience working with new founders like you across the UK. We hope you find it useful!

Essential digital devices for business

Computer

Communicate with clients or customers / Store documents and data securely / Access software and tools / Manage your finances and accounts

If you'll be doing business online, you'll need a good-quality laptop or PC. Something dependable – the last thing you want is your computer breaking down at an important moment.

Look for fast processing speed and a decent amount of RAM (memory). Time is your most valuable asset when you're running a small business, so don't let sluggish tech hold you back.

Phone

Stay connected with customers and staff / Manage your finances and track expenses on the go / Market your business on social media / Use productivity apps to stay organised

Most people these days carry a decent smartphone, and any modern device should see you through your business day. But if you're worried about getting business calls out of hours, think about getting a separate phone.

[Sign up for a Vodafone Business mobile plan and work worry-free without limits. Choose from a range of Unlimited 5G-ready business plans and focus on what matters most.](#)

[Keep your business mobile secure with Cisco Secure Endpoint](#)

Card reader

Take payments without the need for cash / Make transactions quick and convenient / Keep finances secure through encrypted data and less risk of fraud

Most shoppers have replaced a pocket full of change with a single contactless card, or even a smartphone or watch with a contactless payment or mobile payment function built in. With this in mind, now is a great time to make sure that you're set up to take card payments.

[Skip to payment systems](#)

Your business website

Having a website benefits your small business in so many ways. It gives you an online presence, which is vital in reaching a larger audience and allowing people to find you easily when searching the internet.

Through your website, you can showcase your products or services and make those all-important sales. You can establish yourself as credible and professional, and interact easily with your customers. All in all, a website is a crucial marketing tool for any small business.

If you're yet to build a website, don't worry. Even if you aren't tech-savvy, there are many great budget-friendly options that make the process simple and quick. And they won't break the bank.

More Enterprise Nation resources to help you

[Website building checklist: What small business owners need to consider](#)

[How to build a small business website on a low budget](#)

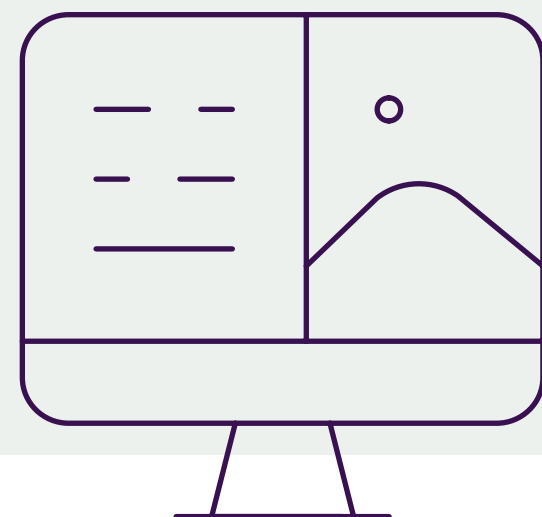
[E-commerce: How to make the most of your business's online shop](#)



Watch this webinar

Website expert [Gill Wilson](#) lays out the steps you need to take when it comes to building the best website for your business.

[Lunch and Learn: How to build your website](#)



Tools for building a website

Builder.ai: Create a website, online store or app exactly how you want it – without the need for technical knowledge.

Meta Shop: Build and customise a digital storefront, showcase your products and connect with customers more effectively.

TikTok Shop: An e-commerce platform built in to the TikTok app. Use engaging video content to reach a wider audience and let customers to browse and buy products from you directly.





Your brand and visual identity

Having a strong brand is more important than ever. There's a huge amount of competition out there and customers are increasingly choosing to shop with businesses that share their values.

Your brand identity is what makes you professional and recognisable and builds trust and loyalty among customers. It's made up of elements that demonstrate your business's personality, values and promise to customers – logos, colours, typography, messaging and so on.

A clear brand identity is something you can create yourself too, using the many online tools and apps now available.



Tools for designing your business branding

- Adobe Creative Cloud:** A range of applications – including Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign – that give you the essential tools for graphic design, video editing, photography, web development and more.
- Adobe Express:** A free online platform that lets you produce digital graphics, social media posts, flyers, posters, videos and more, easily and quickly.
- Canva:** Produce visually stunning marketing materials, social media graphics, presentations and more. Create a professional and consistent brand and save valuable time in the process.
- Shutterstock:** Get access to a rich library of high-quality images, videos and music you can use to create captivating marketing materials, strengthen your brand and engage your audience.
- Vista:** A design and marketing tool with simple solutions that meet all your print, design and digital needs, helping you stand out to customers and win new business.

More Enterprise Nation resources to help you

- [How to create a brand identity for your small business](#)
- [Brand design for small businesses: Cost-effective ways to get recognised](#)
- [Create a visual identity for your business on a budget](#)



Watch this webinar

- Brand strategist [Kiki Bhaur](#) explains what it takes to build a truly effective brand that will achieve its goals and see major growth.
- [Lunch and Learn: How to build effective branding for your small business](#)

Your community

It might be that something's delaying your launch – perhaps you're waiting for paperwork to come through or a supplier to deliver your products. So why not use that time to build a community around your business and get people excited about you?

Make a page on your website that lets you collect email addresses from people who are interested in your business. A simple "Let's keep in touch" or "We'll let you know when we launch!" form should do – all [good website builders](#) have templates for this.

You'll need to choose an email marketing platform to send email updates to the people who've joined your list.

And remember to make sure you're complying with the [General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\)](#) when collecting information.



Tools for email marketing

Mailchimp: Create your own professional, branded emails with Mailchimp's easy-to-use email builder. Its free plan lets users send emails to up to 2,000 subscribers, with a limit of 12,000 emails per month.

Track who is opening and engaging with your emails, and connect your online store to your email campaigns. And you can use the mobile app to create and send emails on the move, from anywhere.

More Enterprise Nation resources to help you

[How to build an email marketing list from scratch](#)

[How to grow your email marketing list](#)

[10 tips for effective email marketing](#)



Watch this webinar

Digital marketing consultant [Emma Goode](#) explains how you can send relevant and timely messages that resonate with your customers based on their interactions with your brand.

[Tech Hub: How to create an automated email campaign that converts](#)





Your payment system

“Sorry, it’s cash only.” As customers, we’ve all been on the receiving end of these dreaded words at some point. Cue the walk of shame to the nearest cash machine...

Luckily, things are changing. Nowadays, nearly all small businesses have a portable card machine on hand, and there’s a huge range of simple and affordable solutions out there.



Tools for taking card and online payments

SquareUp: Payment processing solutions that let you accept payments, manage stock and run your e-commerce store efficiently.

Stripe: Online payment processing for small businesses, allowing you to accept payments securely and conveniently from customers around the world.

SumUp: Use this affordable and user-friendly mobile point-of-sale (POS) system to take card payments easily and securely using a mobile device.

Worldpay: Accept a wide range of payment methods, including credit cards, debit cards and digital wallets.

Your customer and sales data

You don’t need expensive technology to record sales leads in the early stages – a simple spreadsheet would work. List names, job titles, companies and sectors, plus whether the person is a warm or cold lead.

But if you need something more comprehensive, a customer relationship management (CRM) system will organise customer data, log conversations and help you forecast future sales.

More Enterprise Nation resources to help you

[How to set up your first CRM system](#)

[How your small business can do sales outreach successfully](#)



Watch this webinar

HubSpot’s [Anna Gordon](#) lays out the basic concepts of a CRM system, and explains how to use the AI tool Chatspot to make sales more efficiently.

[Tech Hub digital drop-in: How to set-up a free CRM](#)

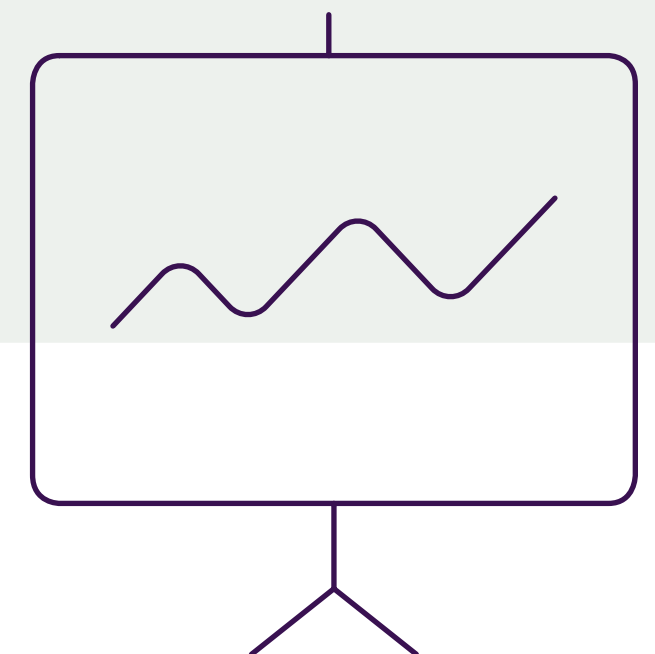


Tools for organising customer information

HubSpot Smart CRM: Easily store and manage contact information, track interactions, and keep a log of all your communication.

Salesforce: Customer relationship management (CRM) software that helps you manage your sales, customer service, marketing and other business via a single online platform.

Zendesk: A sales CRM that lets you manage all your interactions – both direct and indirect – with existing and prospective customers.



Your social media marketing



Tools for managing your social media

Buffer: Create and schedule content for your social media channels, manage all your profiles from a single dashboard, and measure the impact of your efforts with built-in analytics.

Hootsuite: Take advantage of a range of tools for creating social media posts, automating replies, generating captions and even using AI to write hashtags.

The reach and affordability of social media makes it essential technology for small business owners.

But while creating a profile on each platform is easy, keeping track of your different accounts can become a full-time job in itself.

As such, it's well worth using a social media management and scheduling tool. They let you oversee your content, write social posts in advance and publish them at your chosen time.

More Enterprise Nation resources to help you

[How to save time by automating your social media marketing efforts](#)

[How to create eye-catching content for social media](#)

[How to create photos, graphics and video to promote your business on social media](#)



Watch this webinar

Social media coach [Joanna Michaels](#) discusses some of the best social media tools for start-ups and new businesses and how to use them to make your social media impactful.

[Lunch and Learn: How to make an impact on social media](#)



Your online advertising

Online advertising is promoting products or services on the internet using various digital channels. They include display ads, social media ads, search engine marketing and more.

It allows you to reach a wider audience, target specific demographics, and track the success of your campaigns through analytics. It's a cost-effective way to promote your brand and drive traffic to your website, ultimately increasing both your sales and revenue.

More Enterprise Nation resources to help you

[Paid ads: How to make them effective – on a budget](#)



Watch this webinar

Pay-per-click (PPC) expert [Henry Marshall](#) explains the basics of PPC and how your small business can get the most from its budget.

[Lunch and Learn: How to use PPC and paid social to grow your business](#)

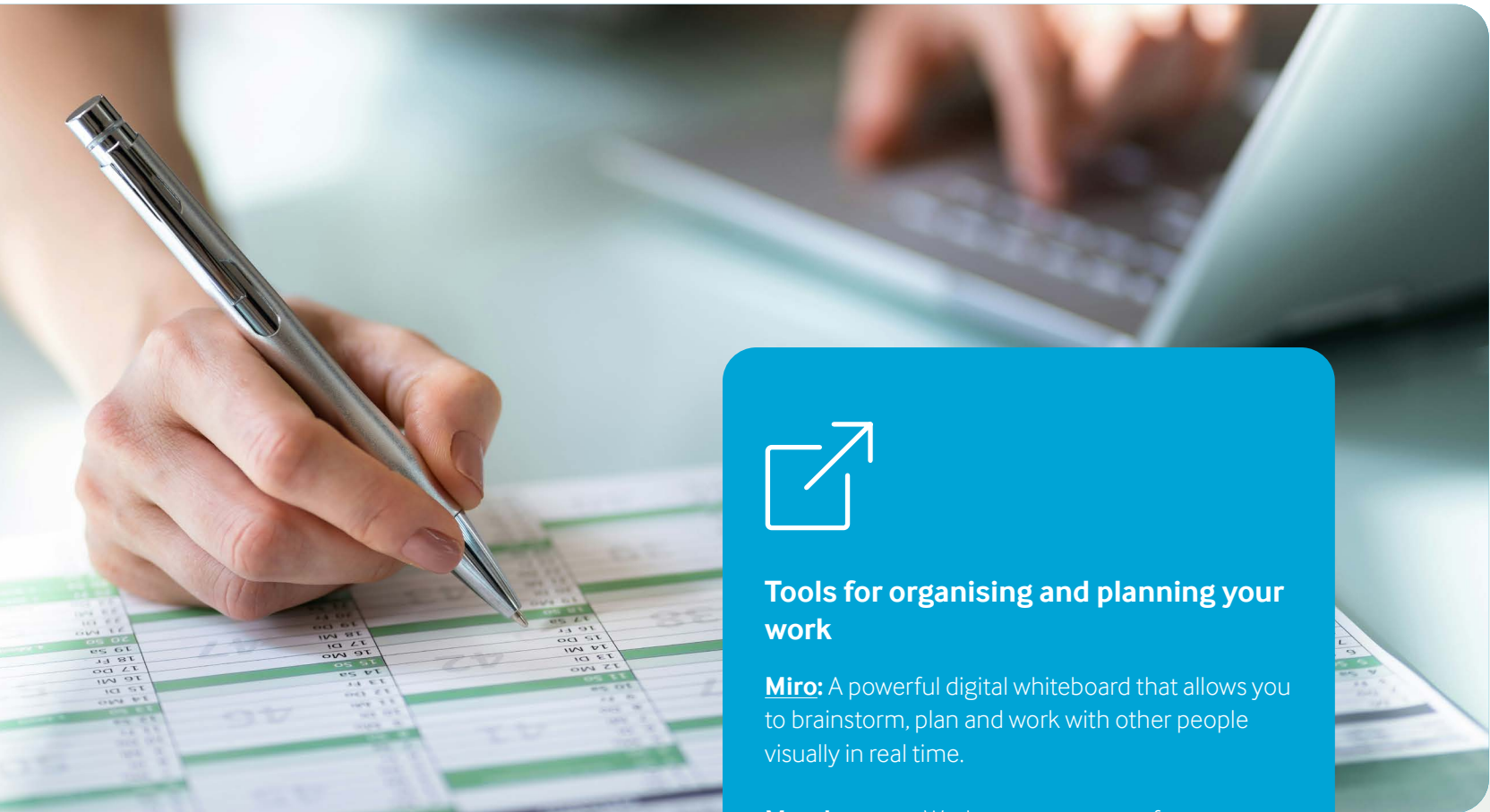


Tools for advertising your business online

Facebook Ads Manager: Advertise your business efficiently and effectively – whether you're looking to boost brand awareness, drive website traffic or increase conversions.

Google Ads: Find relevant keywords and pay only for results, like clicks to your website. Whether it's more sales, traffic or brand awareness, Google Ads can help you reach your goals.

TikTok Ads: Connect with potential customers in an innovative and engaging way. Promote your products and services on TikTok and reach the most relevant audiences.



Your workload and to-do list

To-do lists tend to get complicated when you're running a business and, as a result, things can slip through the cracks.

Have you ever felt like there's too much to remember? Trying to keep track of a long to-do list takes up a lot of your mental capacity and can cause anxiety. Why not create a system to manage and prioritise the tasks you need to do?

More Enterprise Nation resources to help you

[How to develop productivity-boosting routines that stick](#)

[Easy ways for small business owners to work smarter not harder](#)



Tools for organising and planning your work

Miro: A powerful digital whiteboard that allows you to brainstorm, plan and work with other people visually in real time.

Monday.com: Work management software designed to help you make processes more simple and efficient, collaborate with people, and keep your projects well organised.

Trello: From brainstorming to planning to execution, use Trello to manage all of it. It uses a visual approach to organise projects, tasks and to-do lists, making it easy for you to stay on top of your work.



Watch this webinar

Business strategist [Yasmin Vorajee](#) shares her fresh approach to time management. She explains why the solution isn't more hours in the day but rather tackling the root cause of your time struggles.

Explore how to transform your business model into a powerhouse of profitability.

[Lunch and Learn: Uncommon strategies to boost productivity](#)

Your finances and accounts

Having a good grasp of your numbers will help you work out whether your business is profitable and, if so, how to keep it that way. You can also track your expenses, set aside money for tax and spot new opportunities.

Luckily, accounting software has come a long way and there are plenty of tools designed to make the process simple. Alternatively, the cheapest option is to create your own bookkeeping system using spreadsheets.

More Enterprise Nation resources to help you

[Cloud accounting software checklist \(Sage\)](#)

[Is it time to switch to cloud accounting software?](#)

[How to smartly use cloud accounting apps](#)



Tools for managing your money

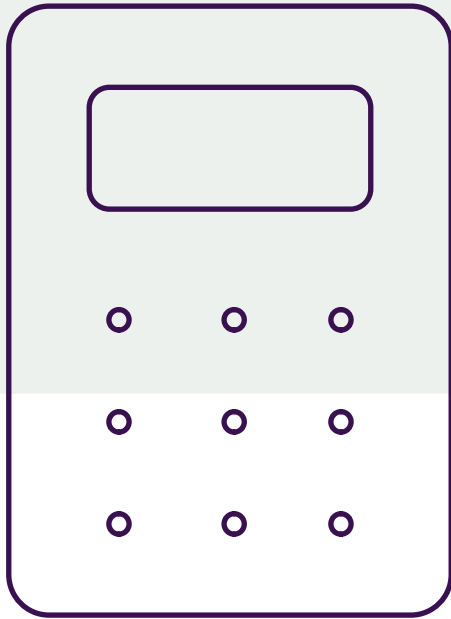
Sage Accounting: Send and track personalised quotes and invoices immediately. Make your accounting and employee records digital with ease. Pay and manage your staff. Calculate VAT returns through HMRC-recognised software. Then you can spend time doing what you love.



Watch this webinar

Michael Cox, learning specialist at Sage, explains how to get started with digital accounting and ways to simplify your accounts with Sage's accounting software.

[How to get started with digital accounting](#)



Digital technology groups to join on Enterprise Nation

As a small business exploring whether to use technology – and how – you’re certainly not alone!

Enterprise Nation boasts a vibrant network of communities designed specifically to help and inspire founders like you. They offer a wealth of resources, opportunities to connect, and invaluable insights to help you navigate the exciting yet challenging task of adopting new technology.

Business apps and tools

A group for new business founders who are trying to work out what tech they can’t do without. Share those great apps and your tips for getting the most out of your digital tools.

Digital for business operations

Whether you’ve already begun adopting digital tools and are seeing the benefits, or you’re ready to start, discuss your experiences with people in the same position as you.

Must-have digital tools for your business

Learn about the essential, often free digital tools that can dramatically boost your efficiency and effectiveness while lowering your costs. Join a monthly, more hands-on event where you can see a selected tool in action and hear about how useful it is to other business owners.



Diagnostic tool

Use our [free diagnostic tool](#) to identify digital tools and technology that can improve your business and find support that’s tailored to your specific needs and goals.

Get personalised recommendations in under five minutes.



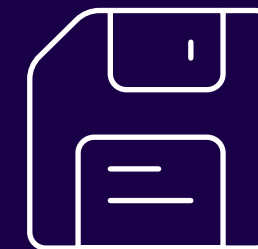
Step 1: **Answer questions**

Give us some basic information about how your business currently operates, particularly when it comes to technology.



Step 2: **Get recommendations**

We’ll use your answers to direct you towards relevant digital tools. We’ll also provide guidance on how to build the technology into your business.



Step 3: **Save your results for later**

We know you’re likely to adopt new digital tools and technology gradually, so you’re free to access your results from the diagnostic tool at any time.

Ready to learn how technology can help your business? Take the [free diagnostic tool](#)

About Tech Hub

Backed by top technology firms, Tech Hub is a new-generation, one-stop-shop solution that allows businesses to access industry-leading digital tools, training, support, and know-how to succeed, all in one place.

In partnership with



Google

Sage



With support from our Tech Hub consortium partners



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