FREE RESOURCE | PILLAR & CROWN MANAGEMENT

BUSINESS CREDIT
Quick Start Checklist

Your Step-by-Step Path from Zero to Fundable

01	02	03	04
ENTITY SETUP	**FUNDABLE IDENTITY**	**VENDOR CREDIT**	**BANKING STRATEGY**

STRATEGY · STRUCTURE · STABILITY · SUCCESS

PILLAR & CROWN MANAGEMENT

BUILDING LEGACY. FUNDING FUTURES.

HOW TO USE THIS CHECKLIST

Work through each phase in order. Check off each item only after it is fully complete — not just started. Each phase builds on the one before it. Skipping steps creates gaps lenders and bureaus will find. The tips inside each item give you enough to act independently. When a step requires strategic decisions specific to your business situation, that's where a Pillar & Crown consultation adds the most value.

01

FOUNDATION & ENTITY SETUP

Build the legal and operational base of your business

◇ **Register your LLC or Corporation with your state**

Go to your state Secretary of State website. File online — most states process in 1–5 business days.

> Tip: An LLC is the most flexible starting structure for most entrepreneurs. Wyoming and Delaware are popular choices, but your home state works fine.

◇ **Apply for your EIN at IRS.gov**

Go to IRS.gov > Tools > Apply for an EIN Online. It is free and instant. Never use a paid third-party service.

> Tip: Each entity needs its own unique EIN. Do not share EINs across businesses.

◇ **Open a dedicated business checking account**

Use your LLC documents and EIN to open an account at a bank that supports business banking (Chase, BofA, or a local credit union).

> Tip: Never mix personal and business funds — even once. Commingling is one of the top reasons lenders deny applications.

◇ **Set up a professional business email**

Use your domain (e.g., info@yourbusiness.com). Google Workspace starts at ~$6/month.

◇ **Set up a dedicated business phone number**

Use a VoIP service like Google Voice, OpenPhone, or Grasshopper. This number must match all filings.

◇ **Create your NAP master document**

Record your exact registered business Name, Address, and Phone in one document. Reference it every time you fill out any form or application.

> Tip: Even a small inconsistency — "Ave" vs "Avenue" — can create mismatches in bureau records.

02

BUILD A FUNDABLE BUSINESS IDENTITY

Establish your digital presence and bureau registration

- ◇ **Launch a professional business website**
  Your site must clearly show: what you do, who you serve, and how to contact you. It must be live — not "coming soon."

  > Tip: Wix, Squarespace, or WordPress all work. Focus on clarity over complexity.

- ◇ **Claim and verify your Google Business Profile**
  Go to business.google.com. Verify via postcard or phone. Make sure your NAP matches your master document exactly.

- ◇ **Register for your D-U-N-S Number at dnb.com**
  Your D-U-N-S is your primary business credit identifier with Dun & Bradstreet — the most widely used commercial bureau. Free; takes up to 30 days.

  > Tip: Do not pay for expedited processing unless you have a time-sensitive funding need.

- ◇ **List your business on key directories**
  Add your business to: Yelp, Bing Places, Apple Maps, Yellow Pages, and any industry-specific platforms.

  > Tip: NAP consistency across directories matters more than the number of directories you are listed on.

- ◇ **Confirm NAP matches across all platforms**
  Cross-check your website, Google profile, D&B listing, directories, and bank records. Every field must be identical.

03 VENDOR CREDIT & TRADE LINES

Build your business credit file through reporting accounts

Open 2–3 starter vendor net-30 accounts

Search for "net-30 vendors that report to Dun & Bradstreet and Experian Business." Apply using your EIN — not your SSN.

> Tip: Starter vendor selection is strategic. The specific vendors that approve new businesses change over time — this is an area where a consultation adds real value.

Make intentional purchases of $50–$150 per account

Buy supplies your business legitimately needs — office supplies, packaging, cleaning supplies, or business services.

Pay every invoice early — within 10–15 days

Net-30 means you have 30 days to pay. Paying early builds a stronger payment history than paying on time. Never pay late.

> Tip: Set a calendar reminder for each invoice the day you receive it.

Confirm each vendor reports to business credit bureaus

Not all vendors report. Ask before opening the account, or check after 60 days via Nav.com.

Sign up for Nav.com to monitor your business credit

Nav offers a free plan that shows your D&B Paydex score, Experian Business, and Equifax Business reports.

> Tip: Check your reports monthly once you have active trade lines. Errors are more common than most people expect.

Aim for at least 3–5 reporting trade lines before applying for credit cards

Most lenders require a minimum of 3 active trade lines before extending business credit products.

04 BANKING & CASH FLOW STRATEGY

Show lenders a clean, active financial picture

Run transactions through your business account every month

Deposits, vendor payments, and operating expenses should all flow through your business checking. Dormant accounts are a red flag.

Maintain a positive average daily balance

Lenders review 3–6 months of bank statements. Avoid repeatedly draining your account to zero.

> Tip: A consistent modest balance signals more discipline than occasional large deposits followed by zero.

Set up basic bookkeeping
Use Wave (free) or QuickBooks to create invoices and track income and expenses. Organized books are required for most SBA applications.

Create invoices for every transaction
Even if you are the only employee. Invoices create a paper trail of legitimate business activity.

Separate all personal and business finances completely
Pay yourself via an owner's draw from your business account rather than using business funds for personal expenses.

> Tip: One commingled transaction can raise questions about your entire account history.

Introduce yourself to a banker at your branch
Ask about business credit products available to existing customers. Banking relationships open doors that applications alone do not.

30-DAY QUICK START TIMELINE

WEEK 1

FOUNDATION

- Register your LLC or Corporation
- Apply for your EIN at IRS.gov (free)
- Open your business checking account
- Buy your domain + set up business email
- Set up a dedicated business phone number
- Create your NAP master document

WEEK 2

IDENTITY

- Launch your business website
- Claim your Google Business Profile
- Register for your D-U-N-S Number
- List on key directories (Yelp, Bing, etc.)
- Open 2–3 vendor net-30 accounts
- Verify NAP is consistent everywhere

WEEK 3

ACTIVITY

- Make first purchases on vendor accounts
- Run transactions through business account
- Set up Wave or QuickBooks
- Create your first business invoices
- Pay any vendor invoices received — early
- Sign up for Nav.com credit monitoring

WEEK 4

POSITION

- Confirm trade lines are reporting
- Apply for first business store credit card
- Introduce yourself to your banker
- Compile your business documents folder
- Outline your 90-day revenue goals
- Book a Pillar & Crown strategy consultation

READY TO ACCELERATE?

This Checklist Gets You Started.
A Consultation Maps Your Full Path.

Timing, entity structure, credit sequencing, and lender strategy should be tailored to your specific situation. Book a one-on-one strategy session with Pillar & Crown Management.

BOOK A FREE STRATEGY CONSULTATION

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