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# How to use these record sheets

**These record sheets** are designed to collect your thoughts, your research results and your ideas for the future of your business. They are designed to be easy to use and straightforward.

Your completed record sheets will build into a professional-looking plan that will not only help you run your business well, but will also make you proud of it from the start.

You will also find extra copies of all these record sheets on our website at [www.essential-business.co.uk/step-by-step](http://www.essential-business.co.uk/step-by-step).

There you will find two types of record sheet:

- **PDFs** – you can download the pdfs and print them as many times as you want (you will need Adobe Acrobat Reader to be able to open them). You can type directly on to some of the pdf sheets.
- **Spreadsheets** – some of the record sheets, such as the cash flow forecast, are available as interactive spreadsheets, with automatic calculations built into them. If you own, or have access to, Microsoft Excel, you may find it easier to use these sheets, instead of having to do all the calculations again each time you change the numbers.

You are welcome to download all the sheets for printing, and you may use any of them as frequently as you wish. This gives you the chance to be creative whilst using your record sheets and gives you the opportunity to make alterations if you change any parts of your plan as you go along. It doesn't matter if the record sheets end up looking a bit messy, packed with your ideas and thoughts – you can always rewrite or type them once you are clear about your ideas at the end.

Remember: don't try to complete all the record sheets at once. It may take you some time to give them the thought they need and find the information you need. Also, feel free to skip any that do not apply to you. You can revisit them later, as your business grows.

**Be creative!** Get thinking and writing...





# Important contacts

> Name \_\_\_\_\_

> Company \_\_\_\_\_ > Job title \_\_\_\_\_

> Address \_\_\_\_\_

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> Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ > Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

> Email address \_\_\_\_\_

> Website \_\_\_\_\_

> Notes \_\_\_\_\_

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> Name \_\_\_\_\_

> Company \_\_\_\_\_ > Job title \_\_\_\_\_

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> Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ > Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

> Email address \_\_\_\_\_

> Website \_\_\_\_\_

> Notes \_\_\_\_\_

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# Important contacts continued



> Name \_\_\_\_\_

> Company \_\_\_\_\_ > Job title \_\_\_\_\_

> Address \_\_\_\_\_

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> Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ > Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

> Email address \_\_\_\_\_

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> Name \_\_\_\_\_

> Company \_\_\_\_\_ > Job title \_\_\_\_\_

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> Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ > Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

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> Download a pdf to print extra copies of this page at [www.essential-business/step-by-step](http://www.essential-business/step-by-step)

Example

## What do you want your business to give you?

By the end of **year 5**, I would like my business to give me

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By the end of **year 4**, I would like my business to give me

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Example

By the end of **year 3**, I would like my business to give me

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## How to start your business

### A rough guide

	Originality of idea	Risk level acceptable	Capital available	Branding support required
High	Own start	Own start	Buy existing	Buy existing
			Buy franchise	Buy franchise
Medium	Buy existing	Buy franchise	Own start	Buy existing
Low	Buy franchise	Buy existing	Own start	Own start

How original is my business idea?

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How much of a risk and what types of risk will I take in my business?

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How much capital can I invest in my business?

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## Your initial business idea

**This is your starting point**, how you think your product or service will be created and delivered to your customers. After this, you will use research to find out whether your initial idea works, or whether you need to change any aspects of your initial business idea before you start.

What do you think your product or service should be?

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What will your total 'package' include (product or service, plus level of customer service, quality, credit terms, any other 'extras')?

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How will you make it (your product) or create it (your service) and deliver it (your product or your service)?

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Example

**more**  
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## Your initial business idea continued

What makes you think there is a need for what you plan to offer?

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What types of people do you expect to buy your product or service?

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What evidence do you have that they will buy your product or service?

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How you will tell those people about your product or service?

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>> Now return to page 14 of your workbook

## 10 reasons for success

Here are **10 reasons** why I can be reasonably sure my idea is going to work:

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>> Now return to **page 15** of your workbook

Example





Example

## Key marketing research questions

Write down the **key questions** that could make the difference between success and failure for your business:

**For example:** *'What types of people will buy what I want to sell?'*  
*'How many people fitting this description live within 20 miles of here?'*

1

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Example

more  
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**Key marketing research questions**  
continued

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**7**

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**8**

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Example

>> Now return to **page 18** of your workbook

## Secondary research results

Include detailed **references** to where you found the information – publications, websites, and so on – so you can find them again.

**For example:** *Leek, Staffordshire has five convenience stores but no delicatessen.*

*Source: [www.britinfo.net](http://www.britinfo.net)*

*Around 49% of the population of Leek is aged between 25 and 59, with over 15% being between 50 and 59 years of age.*

*Source: [www.upmystreet.com](http://www.upmystreet.com) (based on 2001 census data)*

Example

>> Now return to **page 19** of your workbook



## Primary research questionnaire

Write down the **key questions** that could make the difference between success and failure for your business. **Remember:** questions in questionnaires tend to be quite simple and factual.

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Example

more  
>>>>>



Primary research questionnaire  
continued

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Example

## Interview or discussion questions

**Remember:** this is your chance to find out about people's feelings and attitudes.

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**2**

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**3**

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**4**

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**5**

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Example

more  
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**Interview or discussion questions**  
continued

**6**

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**7**

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**8**

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**9**

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**10**

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>> Now return to **page 24** of your workbook

Example

## My personal strengths

For example: *'I am a good communicator'*

1

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Example

How the **personal strengths** I have listed could be used in my business

For example: *'I could give some free talks'*

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>> Now return to **page 29** of your workbook



## Total and target customer groups

### TOTAL POSSIBLE CUSTOMER GROUP

Description of my **total possible customer group**.

For example, *'All parents of primary school children who live within 30 miles of my studio'*

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>> Now return to **page 29** of your workbook

### TARGET CUSTOMER GROUPS

Detailed description of my possible **target customer groups** (add personal characteristics such as age, gender, where they live, lifestyle and so on):

**For example**

People who...

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| > <i>are married or co-habiting, work full or part time and have children at primary school</i> | > <i>are single parents, do not go out to work, and have children at primary school</i> |
| > .....   | > .....   |
| > .....   | > .....   |
| > .....   | > .....   |
| > .....   | > .....   |
| > .....   | > .....   |

### Target customer group 1

People who...

- |         |         |
|---------|---------|
| > ..... | > ..... |
| > ..... | > ..... |
| > ..... | > ..... |
| > ..... | > ..... |
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**more**  
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## Total and target customer groups continued

### Target customer group 2

People who...

> .....	> .....
> .....	> .....
> .....	> .....
> .....	> .....
> .....	> .....
> .....	> .....

### Target customer 3

People who...

> .....	> .....
> .....	> .....
> .....	> .....
> .....	> .....
> .....	> .....
> .....	> .....

### Target customer group 4

People who...

> .....	> .....
> .....	> .....
> .....	> .....
> .....	> .....
> .....	> .....
> .....	> .....

If you have more target customer groups, you can download a pdf version of this form from our website at [www.essential-business.co.uk/step-by-step](http://www.essential-business.co.uk/step-by-step)

>> Now return to page 30 of your workbook