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Downtown Morganton Business Startup Checklist

The City of Morganton's Main Street Office is your first stop shop when it comes to opening a business in downtown Morganton. The Main Street Office facilitates the economic development of downtown Morganton and is an important component to your business. We hope that you utilize this business startup checklist once you have decided to make downtown Morganton your business "home".

- Prepare a business plan that outlines your business goals, operating procedures, competitors, as well as the company's current and desired funding. Determine your business model: Sole Proprietor, S Corp, LLC, cooperative?
 - For more information on business plans, <https://www.downtownmorganton.com/main-street/page/business-plans-and-loans>
- Obtain your federal tax identification number (also called employer identification number or EIN). It's used by the IRS to identify your business for all taxation matters.
- Get to know your State Requirements:
 - North Carolina Sales Tax - <https://www.ncdor.gov/taxes-forms/sales-and-use-tax/sales-and-use-tax-rates>
 - ABC Licensing - <https://www.abc.nc.gov/>
- Get to know your Local Requirements:
 - Contact the City of Morganton Development & Design/Zoning Office prior to opening your business to ensure it fits within the approved uses: 828-438-5260
 - Sign Permitting: The City of Morganton Development and Design 828-438-5260
 - Building Inspector for any renovations 828-438-5271 – Please learn what you can and cannot do yourself **BEFORE** you begin any project.
 - Be sure to ask the Building Inspector what being in a fire district means to your renovation/new construction efforts.
 - Food/Beverage inspections: Burke County Department of Environmental Health 828-764-9240 <https://www.burkenc.org/2286/Environmental-Health>
 - Need a dumpster? Call Public Works at 828-438-5248 to get signed up for trash pick-up. **Please note:** The street trash cans and recycling cans are meant for pedestrian/customer use. Not business use. Most blocks have shared dumpster and cardboard boxes.
- Recycling pickup: Simply Green Recycling Services 828-437-1277

- For a cardboard container contact G.D.S.
 - Disposing of cardboard; you must breakdown all cardboard boxes **BEFORE** putting them in the cardboard box container.
- Select an accountant and attorney you can turn to for advice when starting out, as well as throughout the life of the business.
 - Just like every personal relationship has its ups and downs, so do business partnerships. So before you tie the knot (so to speak), you need to enter into what is known as a partnership agreement to protect yourself and your business.
 - Open a business bank account and obtain a business credit card. Contact your bank about business banking requirements to ensure you have all the necessary paperwork.
 - Set up your business accounting/bookkeeping. Be prepared to account for all disbursements, payments received, invoices, accounts receivable/payable, etc.
 - Obtain business insurance. Discuss your particular industry and business needs with your insurance agent to obtain the appropriate type and amount of insurance.
 - Ensure you comply with government requirements (e.g., unemployment insurance, worker's compensation, OSHA, payroll tax requirements, self-employment taxes, etc.).
 - Determine your business location and take these steps:
 - Lease a space.
 - Discuss and negotiate all up-fit or building improvements needed or wanted with property owner and assign responsibilities and cost **BEFORE** signing a lease.
 - Marketing: Secure your company's website domain name. Create a website. A company website allows you to establish your brand and will be the first opportunity to make an impression with customers. Claim Google Business Listing.
 - How will you market your business? Create a monthly marketing timeline for advertisements, website, social media, news stories, etc. Get listed on www.downtownmorganton.com by contacting the Morganton Main Street Office at 828-438-5280
 - What will your hours be? Consistency is key!
 - The Paper
 - News Herald
 - WMNC
 - WSVM

- KICKS
 - Channel 2
 - Motion Media
 - Vannoppen Marketing
 - Sign Makers: Jack Edge, Oak Hill Iron
- Create a marketing plan for your products and services. Increase the likelihood for success with a plan for promoting your products and services to your target market.
 - Setting Up Shop:
 - Electricity: City of Morganton
 - Natural Gas: Piedmont Natural Gas
 - Water and Sewer: City of Morganton
 - Internet/Phone: City of Morganton, COMPAS X-Stream or any other provider
 - Building Contractors: If you plan on doing any renovations STOP. You must go to City Hall Development and Design Department to obtain appropriate permits. Some renovations will require a contractor to pull the permit. *YOU MUST see City building inspections department.
 - Architects:
 - Depending on what you need, call the Morganton Main Street Office for a suggestion list to get matched with the right person. 828-438-5252
 - Printers/Office Supplies:
 - Table Rock Printing
 - UPS Store
 - Other Resources to Contact
 - Burke County Chamber of Commerce – 828-437-3021
 - Morganton Downtown Development Association – 828-438-5280
 - Burke County Tourism Development Authority – 828-433-6793
 - Landscaping: You are responsible for any potted plants outside your store.
 - Design Incentives and other: all items MUST BE pre-approved. No reimbursement after project completion unless approved first. The City of Morganton Main Street Office follows the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Depending on the level of renovation, you must contact the Development and Design Services department for applicable regulations.
 1. Downtown Bucks – Marketing Incentive
 2. Building Incentives
 - (a) Facade Grant
 - (b) Facade Loan

(c) Sign Grant
(d) DIG

- Sidewalk usage: As long as you do not impede traffic and leave a 5' passage, we encourage you to use outdoor spaces. Example: A-frame signs, sales racks. *If you desire outdoor seating, you will need to see the Main Street Office because this requires a different permit*
- Special notes:
 - Smoking: If you or your employees smoke outside of your building. All buttes must be disposed of properly. Littering is not friendly to anyone.
 - Parking: There are hundreds of free parking spaces in downtown Morganton. We encourage you and your employees to pick one. The front spaces to your business should be reserved for your customers. Please see the parking map on www.downtownmorganton.com for guidance. There is a parking committee that reviews parking request on an as-need basis. Parking tickets will be given out to those parked inappropriately.
 - Music: We strongly encourage that stores have some type of background music playing to enhance the customer experience.

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