The Starters’ Manifesto
Start a business and build your own future
By Nadia Finer

Brought to you by
CityStarters
The Starters’ Manifesto: Start A Business and Build Your Own Future
by Nadia Finer

Version 2.0

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Contents

4 Introduction
8 Case Study: Archtor

Chapter 1: The Time Is Now
10 The Time Is Now
13 Try This: No Worries
15 Myth Busting
16 Try This: Just Imagine
17 What Makes A Successful Starter?
21 Try This: Meet The Starters!
24 Case Study: Eat Safe
25 Case Study: PlaqueChecker

Chapter 2: The Big Idea
27 Find Your Thing
32 Studenterprise
34 How To Have Ideas
37 Try This: Run A Brainstorm
40 Problem Solving
41 Try This: Little Book Of Moans
42 Try This: Dial It Up
44 CitySpark
46 Case Study: AnteBox

Chapter 3: Shape Up
48 One At A Time
49 Try This: Park It
50 The Super Simple CityStarters’ Business Planner
54 What Exactly Is Your Idea?
55 How Will You Make Money?
57 Try This: Cash Tracker
58 A Quick Note About World Domination
58 Your Special Sauce
59 Try This: Why Bother?
60 The Name Game
62 Try This: Pitch Perfect
63 Dream Team
66 Try This: Team Member Tick List
69 Case Study: Twipes
70 Case Study: Eat Chay

Chapter 4: Do Your Homework
72 Try This: Go Stealth
75 Try This: Target Practice
77 Meet The People
80 Say What?
82 Try This: Perception vs. Reality
83 Try This: Opportunity Spotting
84 Try This: Suck It And See
85 Case Study: VEVA

Chapter 5: Money On My Mind
87 Costs
89 Bootstrapping
91 Pricing
94 Try This: Forecasting
96 Spreadsheet-tastic
98 Cash Flow
100 Money Management
102 Funding
104 Crowdfunding
106 Case Study: Ocushield
107 Case Study: Weavee

Chapter 6: Be Prepared
109 Legal Eagle
112 Use Protection
116 Risky Business
116 Try This: Make The Headlines
118 Case Study: Kugali

Chapter 7: Brand Building
120 What Is A Brand?
121 Try This: Brand Inspiration
122 Try This: What Do You Stand For?
123 Try This: Identify Your Values
124 Gut Feeling
125 Get The Message
126 Try This: Tagline-tastic
128 Go Graphic
129 Design Brief
130 Try This: Write Your Own Design Brief
131 A Site To Behold!
134 Case Study: TRYATEC

Chapter 8: Spread The Word
136 Spread The Word
137 Social Media
140 Top Marketing Tips
144 Networking
146 Do Your Own PR
148 Search Engine Optimisation
150 Case Study: Popcord

Chapter 9: Get Going!
152 Launch Your Startup In Just 24 Hours!
157 Case Study: Rewinr

Chapter 10: Useful Stuff
159 At City
160 On The Inter-Web
163 About the Author
Packed with simple advice, useful tools, crafty short-cuts and bags of ‘can-do’ spirit, The Starters’ Manifesto gives you everything you need to know to get your ideas off-the-ground and make them happen.

You might not realise it but you’ve come to City at a very interesting time; there’s a revolution happening out there!

Firstly, increasing costs and competition for graduate jobs, means that more students are taking matters into their own hands and starting their own businesses; be it a small freelance business to gain experience and earn a little extra money or a super-duper web startup on a mission to take on Google or Facebook.

Secondly, the availability of cheap online tools and digital resources is causing an explosion in startups. Digital startups are everywhere! Don’t believe us? London is now talked about in the same breath as Silicon Valley as a global hotspot for entrepreneurship, startups and all-round techy awesomeness. And the best thing? City is located right in the heart of the action.
Why manifesto?
We think starting a business is awesome for lots of reasons. But don’t just take our word for it.

According to a report by Lord Young, advisor to the Prime Minister on small business and enterprise, today’s employers are looking for candidates who demonstrate self-reliance and creativity.

As the report says, “Enterprice means more than just the ability to become an entrepreneur. It is that quality that gives an individual a positive outlook, an ability to see the glass as half full rather than half empty, and is a valuable attribute for the whole of life.” Sound familiar? We thought so.

The small business revolution is well and truly here! Here’s some stats from Lord Young’s report to prove it:

- Self-employment contributed to nearly half of the 780,000 new jobs created in our economy.
- The rise in entrepreneurial activity has amounted to 600,000 more microbusinesses (firms with 0–9 employees) in existence than there were when the recession first began in 2008, and 40% more than at the turn of the century.

What are you waiting for? Be a starter and start building your own future today!

“City gave me the opportunity to participate in lectures given by key business people at Cass Business School. Lastly, the CityStarters Team not only provided us with incubator space, advice and guidance, they’re always there to support us and motivate us to develop our idea.”

Christoforos Konstantinidis, BSc Business Studies student, Cass Business School, and co-founder of AnteBox

¹Download the full report at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/enterprise-for-all-the-relevance-of-enterprise-in-education
CityStarters are here to help you!

Events
Attend a Startup Seminar or Startup Studio and learn from business experts. Network with successful entrepreneurs and meet with future collaborators and – who knows – even future co-founders for your own business. Registration is free, just sign up online. www.city.ac.uk/cityventures

Competitions
We run hands-on student enterprise competitions where you get to work in teams, develop your ideas, pitch them to potential customers and investors and then work on them for real. Want to know more? Then check out CitySpark, a business design and doing competition, where you could win £3,000 to bootstrap your idea and make it happen. www.city.ac.uk/cityventures/start/cityspark

Business support
Finally, we offer a range of different support services for budding student entrepreneurs. From incubation space at the City Launch Lab, to monthly Startup Surgeries, free legal clinics, discounted business cards and much more besides. www.city.ac.uk/cityventures

Investor support
We are also lucky enough to have the £10million Cass Entrepreneurship Fund, an early-stage growth equity fund managed by a professional in-house team. The Fund makes commercial investments into promising companies from across the Cass and City network. These typically range in size from £50,000 to £500,000 in the first instance. www.city.ac.uk/cityventures/cass-entrepreneurship-fund

“When I decided to start exploring the startup scene, City’s events were the first I attended. Its location, resources and the networking opportunities available made me even more determined to try and bring my ideas to life. In fact, I met my co-founder at one of City’s events!”
Sahil Sethi, BSc Computer Science graduate, School of Mathematics, Computer Science and Engineering, and co-founder of Rewinr
Get in touch
If you need some help or fancy a chat, here’s what to do:

• Check out our website
  www.city.ac.uk/cityventures
• Give us a call: 020 7040 8720
• Drop us an email: CityStarters@city.ac.uk
• Tweet us: @CityStarters
• Check us out on Facebook:
  www.facebook.com/CityStarters

There’s no time to waste! Get on it!

“Being at City allowed me to get into the startup community. I always knew I would be involved heavily in business, but the CityStarters team and their weekly events allow me to channel my thought process and energy towards strategically building a business and thinking everything through. Through CitySpark I have been introduced to a lot of mentors and experts who have been giving me great advice!”

Dhruvin Patel, BSc Optometry graduate, School of Health Sciences, and founder of Ocushield
I spend a lot of time on different games, software programs, even typing in different languages. I realised my peripherals weren’t helping me stay on top of this and left my skills suffering whenever I was out of flow. I wanted peripherals that worked with me, changed with me and improved me.

Protean is a reactive gaming keyboard that allows each key to be completely customised by the user.

We have now successfully finished the third prototype and launched a Kickstarter campaign in September. Beyond that, we aim to design and manufacture an array of peripherals aimed at providing each user with the ability to interact with their PC in their own way.

Our biggest successes to date we could say are all three prototypes. Each had a myriad of issues, but once overcome, we found ourselves in a better position than before.

In addition to that, building a team that’s so passionate and committed to the project. Finally, and possibly most importantly, is the reaction we see on gamers faces when they see Protean in action. It never ceases to amaze us and always spurs us on further.

Developing the business required the expertise from diverse backgrounds. City provided us with access to great programmers and product developers who are now part of our team. In addition to that, CityStarters provided necessary training, networking opportunities and initial funding through winning CitySpark to keep us going with our idea.

Bridging the gap from idea to final product is quite challenging and requires not just hard work, but also targeted effort. It all comes down to just doing it rather than simply talking about it. At the end of the day, with a great team, hard work and commitment, this gap disappears and the progress made makes you feel amazing.”

Case Study

Miodrag Vidakovic, PhD Sensors and Instrumentation researcher, School of Mathematics, Computer Science and Engineering, and co-founder of Archtor, creators of Protean, the fully customisable gaming keyboard.

www.archtor.com
Chapter 1
The Time Is Now

Start a business and build your own future
Okay, so there are plenty of reasons why some people might think starting up in the middle of your studies is a ridiculous idea. For example:

- You need to focus on getting a good degree
- You may not know anything about business yet
- A high percentage of startups fail
- You're flat broke

Yes, these are indeed reasons to stay at home on the sofa watching Bargain Hunt. Perhaps the responsible, sensible thing to do would be to do nothing.

But, since when have you listened or done what you’re supposed to do? We know you like to fly by the seat of your pants and go your own way. You’re young and wild and free and there’s no time like right now to start something awesome. Forget waiting around for something to happen, we’re all about building our own futures.

We all know that Mark Zuckerberg was a nerdy undergrad when he founded Facebook from his bedroom. Aren’t you a little bit tempted to see if you’ve got an amazing business or project growing inside you, just waiting to leap out (and earn you a very nice living in the process)?

Just in case you have any doubt in your mind, here are a bunch of very logical reasons why the time is indeed now. If you’ve got even the tiniest glimmer of a business in you, university is the perfect time to get your startup started. Here’s why…

1. Get skilled up

Even if you plan on getting a job after uni, starting something for yourself before you step out into the world of work is a great way to get experience, develop skills and make your CV look insanely good. Employers love self-starting grads that can demonstrate motivation, dedication and collaboration.

“Use all the opportunities that are given to you while at City! Apart from the fantastic courses offered that encourage entrepreneurship, there are great opportunities throughout the year which helped us grow and develop our entrepreneurial mind-sets and business concept, such as entering CitySpark.”

Elena Sokolova and Sabine Opris, MSc Marketing Strategy and Innovation graduates, Cass Business School, and co-founders of TRYATEC
2. Few responsibilities
You're not laden down with responsibilities yet. Chances are you don’t have three kids, a dog, a rabbit, a mortgage and an expensive season ticket. You’ve got nothing to risk and nothing to lose. And if things don’t quite go according to plan, you can dust yourself off and start again – or just get on with your degree. No biggie.

3. No leap required
In a few years starting a business may require you to quit your job and leave behind the security of your monthly salary, pension scheme, padded cubicle and stationery cupboard. Now that would be a wrench. But right now, you’re not leaving anything behind. And there’s everything to gain.

“The first and most important step is to just do it and not be scared of failing. If I didn’t take the first step then I would never have come this far, and I am so glad that I did because being an entrepreneur is the best opportunity that I have been given.”

Hawaa Budraa, BEng Biomedical Engineering graduate, School of Mathematics, Computer Science and Engineering, and co-founder of PlaqueChecker

4. Helpful experts
Here at City, you can call on fellow students, teaching staff and professors in loads of useful subjects like law, journalism, business studies, and marketing. When and where else will you have access to such a wealth of expertise? Plus, these experts actually care about you and are willing to help – for FREE! A rare and beautiful combination.

5. Support from CityStarters
We might be biased... okay, we’re definitely biased, but you’re a lucky lot. CityStarters was set up to help students like you to start businesses. We’re here for you. For FREE. No strings. From networking and expert advice to office space at The City Launch Lab, you’re spoilt rotten. Make the most of it. Head over to our website to find out more
www.city.ac.uk/cityventures

“As students we had the time and space to develop our idea. We had a really supportive group of classmates who helped us by being our focus groups and testers. And we had the structure of CitySpark business plan competition, which encouraged us to put our ideas onto paper! We students have the chance to experiment in a safe environment where it’s okay to fail, learn, challenge yourself and ask questions. It’s the perfect environment to create a business!”

Jody Orsborn, MA Culture, Policy and Management graduate, School of Arts and Social Sciences and co-founder of The Backscratchers
6. Even more support

There's a hell of a lot of support available for students starting a business these days. Once you're out in the big wide world, away from the comfort of university, this is a lot less readily available, and a lot more expensive! Make the most of organisations like The National Association of College and University Entrepreneurs (NACUE) and Shell LiveWire while you can.

www.nacue.com
www.shell-livewire.org

7. Tech City

Look around you. City is based slap-bang in the middle of Tech City, Europe's answer to Silicon Valley. This is prime entrepreneur territory. While you're here, get involved in some of the most cutting-edge startup events and networking opportunities around. It'd be rude not to.

www.techcityuk.com
www.silicondrinkabout.com/london

8. Fresh talent

If you're thinking of building a team, university is the perfect time and place. Take your pick from the enormous pool of likeminded, intelligent, motivated intellects – your fellow students.

9. Potential customers everywhere

University is not only a source of potential colleagues, you're also surrounded by thousands of people just like you. Potential customers. If you do decide to target students, the good news is they're right here, all around you. They understand you and you understand them. And there are loads of them!

“One of the advantages of being at City was the opportunity to interact with students from all over the world and test the business concept with respect to their own markets. It gave our team the confidence that Wardrobe has the ability to become a global product.”

Dhruv Bonnerjee, Executive MBA graduate, Cass Business School, and co-founder of Wardrobe.

10. Make your own job

After university, finding a job may be tricky. Don’t wait around for employers to realise that you’re the answer to their prayers – start your own business. Who knows, you may end up employing them one day. And even if it doesn't work out, you will have made yourself much more employable.
No Worries

What worries you about starting a business?
What’s holding you back?
Write down a list of your worries ...

Writing down your worries is a great way to get them off your chest. Look at them rationally and assess whether these worries are going to hold you back. If you’re not prepared to let these concerns get in your way, then **cut out this list, tear it up and chuck it in the bin**. There. Isn’t that better? Now, let’s get started!
Myth Busting

We all have our preconceived ideas about what running a business involves, usually based on the people you know, books you’ve read or TV you’ve watched.

“Work on an idea that you are really passionate about. There will be plenty of times, even early on, that you will doubt your capabilities in building the business, so you need that belief that you are making something that will help people in some way to keep you going.”

Stefan Metaxa, BSc Business Studies student, Cass Business School, and co-founder of BookBall

Here are some of the most common myths – and the truth that lies behind them. Let’s bust some business bull!

You need to study business in order to start a business
Understanding a bit about business is obviously helpful, but business-related qualifications are not a necessity. Your area of expertise may lead you to spot an opportunity in a completely different field. There’s nothing wrong with learning about the intricacies of running a business as you go along – that’s why we are here!

You need to be a tech genius to start a business
You might not know anything about coding or apps, but if you have a good idea, you can always build a team of people who have the skills you lack.

You’ll be raking it in, in a matter of months
It can take time to make money – months and sometimes years. So, if you need money instantly, you might be wise to get a job instead.

Your website will get found, because it looks pretty
Launching a site is not simply a case of ‘build it and they will come’. Think of a website as a table in the centre of a field. Nobody has a clue it’s there. You’ll need to work super hard to tell people you exist and persuade them to visit you, using a variety of tactics from Search Engine Optimisation (SEO), blogging and guest posts to PR and promotional activities to drive traffic. We’ll be sharing lots of useful ideas in Chapter 8, so don’t panic.

All entrepreneurs dress a certain way
Admittedly, yes, some starters forget to wear socks and shave while others wear suits and shout ‘You’re fired’ a lot, but there isn’t an identikit entrepreneur. Clothes and facial hair are not important. Everyone, no matter how dodgy his or her dress sense, has the potential to become an entrepreneur.

People will love my product as much as I do
Just because your mum thinks your business is awesome, doesn’t mean it’s a goer. Test your product on real, impartial people, not just friends and family. See who is actually prepared to part with their cash – as opposed to just saying they will. Check out Chapter 4 for more info.
Imagine what your new life as a starter will be like:

- Where are you working?
- How are you spending your days?
- How do you feel?
- What are the challenges you’re facing?
- What has surprised you?
- What do you love about it?

Now, close your eyes and let your mind wander, creating a picture in your head of your entrepreneurial future.

**Make notes here...** Draw a mindmap, or a picture, or just make some notes.

More than a bunch of doodles, this page is the really important. Visualising your goals and your new life, is the first stage towards making it happen.
The good news is, entrepreneurs and business owners come in all shapes and sizes. Middle-aged builders, mums making cakes, app building geeks, silver surfers and students ... whether you have business experience, loads of qualifications, or hardly any, it doesn't matter at all.

Business success does not necessarily come down to technical know-how or business experience. The key characteristics that successful entrepreneurs have been proven to share are the things that you’ll find deep inside you, if you have them.

Have a read and see if any of these ring a bell.

1. **Determination**
   The path to startup success is never smooth. It would be nice, but rather dull, if it was! Working for yourself when the going gets tough takes a lot of grit and gumption. There will be set backs, cock-ups, quiet times, complications and challenges. You will need to pull yourself through these, as nobody else will be there to drag you forward. If you give up at the first sign of trouble, your business will wither and die. So before you start, think about whether you have the resolution to keep your business moving forwards, come what may.

2. **Hard work**
   This may be a bit of a slap in the face, but we thought it only fair to warn you that being your own boss is not all long lunches, early doors, fancy gadgets, fast cars and fistfuls of cash. It’s going to be hard work and long, long hours, especially if you want to run a successful business, as opposed to one that doesn’t last five minutes.

“I think if you want a stable quiet job then a startup is not for you. I need people that are not afraid to be unorthodox. Life as a starter can be very sporadic, most days are rewarding and fun, but some days are hard and depressing. I am fortunate in my case to work on a tangible product like food. I get to design packaging, taste different menus and talk to customers. You also have days where you ask yourself: is it worth it?”

Daniel Kaplansky, MSc Investment Management graduate, Cass Business School, and founder of OneFineMeal
“It’s seems terrifying to start a business, but you can get going for virtually nothing nowadays, and there is never a better time to experiment than during your studies. Take the plunge and at worst you’ll learn some great lessons.”
Matt Bland, MSc Marketing Strategy and Innovation graduate, Cass Business School, and co-founder of Eat Safe

“IT’S BLOODY HARD, AND INCREDIBLY REWARDING!”
Frank Milani, Masters in Innovation, Creativity and Leadership student, Cass Business School, and co-founder of Popcord (Powergoat Ltd)

3. Self-belief
Successful starters have oodles of confidence. They believe in themselves, their ideas and their team. It’s not that they’re arrogant - they’re just sure that they’re doing the right thing. We know that confidence is not necessarily something that comes naturally to all of us, but if you have faith in your business idea, other people will too. In order to sell a product or service, you need to be sure it’s the best solution to your customer’s challenge. That certainty will enable you to talk to potential customers, partners, investors, suppliers and members of the media without quaking in your boots.

4. Imagination
To be successful in business you need to be one step ahead of the competition and able to spot opportunities for new products, markets or promotions. This ability to assess what’s out there, who’s doing what and then seeing what could be improved on gives you the edge. If you’re the kind of person who has loads of ideas and is always solving problems, then you’ve got it!

5. Guts
The safest option is usually to do nothing. But unless you’ve got the guts to try something different and go against the grain, you won’t reap the big rewards. Successful starters have the balls to take a risk and not worry too much about flopping. If you’re too worried about what could go wrong, then you’ll never try something new. Obviously, we’re not talking about doing crazy things without the proper preparation, but as long as you’ve run the numbers to make sure you’re in with a chance, it’s worth a shot. If you don’t have a go, you’ll never know.
6. Financial focus
We’re not saying you need to be obsessed with money, but actually, having an eye on the bottom line (i.e. your profit), will ensure your business is a success. Being ditsy or generally useless around money is not cool. It’s all very well being the “creative” one, but all successful starters need to get to grips with the cold hard stuff as well.

7. Dynamism
Ideas are great, but unless you make them happen, they’re just random drawings on a bit of paper. A successful entrepreneur is someone who can make stuff happen; mobilise and motivate those around them and actually get things done. If you’re someone who just likes to talk and talk about ideas, you either need to get a rocket up your bum, or maybe get a job in radio!

8. Passion
If you love what you do, chances are you’ll be good at it. It might sound clichéd, but if your business excites you, that enthusiasm will rub off on people – from potential clients to investors, team members and employees. Inspiring and motivating others is a great way to mobilise people to help you grow your business. So, when you’re considering which area to start your business in, do yourself a favour and choose something that floats your boat.

9. Humility
Successful starters listen to what others are saying; they don’t just bulldoze their way through life. Taking on board feedback, criticism and ideas from customers, team members, experts and investors is super important. Time to exercise your eardrums.

“As the founder, it’s up to you to keep everyone motivated. You are the company’s dynamo and people rely on you to know what you’re doing. It’s hard work but lots of fun!”
Ashuveen and Lukas Linsbichler, Executive MBA graduates, Cass Business School, and co-founders of VEVA.
10. **Flexibility**

A successful starter can chop and change depending on how things turn out. Faced with challenges, they’ll adapt and tweak their plans until they find the right solution. Rather than feeling disheartened or discouraged, their agility and sheer flexibility allows them to find quick fixes and new paths to success.

“Starting a business is certainly time consuming, and requires flexibility. The most important thing is exposure, and more often than not I found myself doing things like public speaking that I certainly did not wish to do, but the reality is that you must be prepared to take a chance and be prepared for setbacks.”

Josh Burrill, Graduate-Entry LLB student, The City Law School, and founder of the Intellectual Property Research Society

11. **People skills**

Businesses are built on relationships – with customers, suppliers, team-members and beyond. If you’re good with people it will certainly help. If people like you, they’ll be more inclined to come to you to do business and stay loyal to you. If you’re awkward around others, all is not lost. It might just be worth working in a less customer-facing role and bringing people on board who like interacting with other people.

If you don’t feel like you have a whole bunch of these qualities, don’t panic. You can always build a team of people who have the skills you lack.

And in the end, whether you have these traits or not, it’s up to you to make it happen, in your own unique way.
Right! Time to get up, get out and go talk to some real life entrepreneurs.

Being located in the heart of Tech City means that there are loads of great networking events on your doorstep! These events usually get like minded people together over a drink to discuss a certain topic, listen to a talk or just get together and chat about startup stuff!

www.meetup.com

On MeetUp you can discover a whole world of people who are into the exact same things as you! Whether it be fintech, marketing or tea and cake, there is a whole plethora of people waiting to meet up and chat about their chosen topic.
City Unrulyversity

Have you heard about Tech City’s free pop-up university? City Unrulyversity is a free pop-up university in the heart of Tech City. Our mission is to inform, inspire, and empower the next generation of Tech City entrepreneurs.

Taught by leading academics of City, City Unrulyversity combines practical relevance with academic rigour, theoretical underpinnings and the latest research.

All sessions are interactive and focus on sharing knowledge, discussing ideas, challenging assumptions, and reflecting on your own business practice.

Find out more and book now: www.city.ac.uk/cityventures/launch/city-unrulyversity

Pop by The City Launch Lab and meet some entrepreneurs

The City Launch Lab is a super cool co-working space that has been specially designed for student and graduate entrepreneurs who want to get their idea off the ground.

The City Launch Lab provides everything from free coffee to hot-desking, and can help you to foster relationships with academics, other students and graduates from City and local Tech City entrepreneurs.

It’s a great place to meet and network with entrepreneurial rock stars from across the Tech City community.

Find out more: www.city.ac.uk/cityventures/launch/city-launch-lab

CityStarters Case Studies

Still feeling shy? Then visit the CityStarters website and read some of our student case studies for ideas and inspiration.

www.city.ac.uk/cityventures/case-studies
I've made a list of my worries and decided to move on.

I've glimpsed my future as an entrepreneur – and by visualising what life will be like, I've taken the first step towards making it happen.

I put this book down, went out and met some fellow student starters.
**Matt Bland, MSc Marketing Strategy and Innovation graduate, Cass Business School, and co-founder of Eat Safe, the restaurant dictionary app for people with dietary restrictions.** www.eatsafeapp.co.uk

“Eat Safe is a restaurant directory app that allows people with dietary restrictions to easily find new places to eat out that are safe for their diets.

There are up to 20 million people in the UK with dietary restrictions and our research has shown that 70% want to eat out more but just find it too difficult to find the right information.

We give the power of choice back to the consumers with an effortless search system, opening up a whole new set of customers for the restaurants while helping them complying with food information laws.

My girlfriend contracted a severe stomach virus and after the treatment she had developed a soy allergy. We’re both real foodies, and I suddenly saw how difficult it was to find a restaurant to eat at when you have to check every dish for allergens. This made me realise there was a genuine problem to investigate. The more I talked to people the more clear this issue became, and so Eat Safe was born!

We currently have the MVP for our menu management system live, and are onboarding restaurants for a pilot scheme in Islington. The consumer side of the app is very soon to being completed and so we’re reaching out to our network to get beta testers on board.

The plan now is to prove the concept and rapidly develop the prototype in the Islington pilot, before incorporating more boroughs across London into the beta, with the aim for wider public release at the start of 2017.

My three biggest successes so far have been: Validation of the problem through research. By actually going out and talking to customers I was able to truly understand that this was an issue and get deep insight into what people wanted; Winning the start up competitions at City. I hated public speaking when I was younger, but by throwing myself out of my comfort zone with the opportunities through CitySpark I now think pitching is a real strength of mine. The seed money has also been a real bonus in getting everything off the ground! Lastly, getting the first restaurants on board. We knew there was a real demand from customers, but the restaurant industry is notoriously difficult to change. But once we were through to door the response was generally great. Being able to upload that first menu was a fantastic feeling!

I didn’t even think about entrepreneurship before attending the CityStarters Startup Weekend at the start of my course. Those 3 days helped ignite a passion for entrepreneurship and opened my eyes to a whole new exciting world!”

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**Case Study**

We currently have the MVP for our menu management system live, and are onboarding restaurants for a pilot scheme in Islington. The consumer side of the app is very soon to being completed and so we’re reaching out to our network to get beta testers on board.

The plan now is to prove the concept and rapidly develop the prototype in the Islington pilot, before incorporating more boroughs across London into the beta, with the aim for wider public release at the start of 2017.

My three biggest successes so far have been:

Validation of the problem through research. By actually going out and talking to customers I was able to truly understand that this was an issue and get deep insight into what people wanted; Winning the start up competitions at City. I hated public speaking when I was younger, but by throwing myself out of my comfort zone with the opportunities through CitySpark I now think pitching is a real strength of mine. The seed money has also been a real bonus in getting everything off the ground! Lastly, getting the first restaurants on board. We knew there was a real demand from customers, but the restaurant industry is notoriously difficult to change. But once we were through to door the response was generally great. Being able to upload that first menu was a fantastic feeling!

I didn’t even think about entrepreneurship before attending the CityStarters Startup Weekend at the start of my course. Those 3 days helped ignite a passion for entrepreneurship and opened my eyes to a whole new exciting world!”
“I created the PlaqueChecker technology for my final year project after my sister was refused braces due to the high levels of plaque and she told me she had it under control. This could have been prevented if she had a way of regularly monitoring her teeth.

PlaqueChecker is a digital dental check-up app for a mobile device to improve oral health by providing accessible, affordable and personalised digital dental care to help individuals actively engage in improving their oral health.

We are also working on the first data of its kind which will help pharmaceutical companies target and understand customers further and provide insights that can help aid research. Our data will also highlight correlations between oral health and systemic diseases and oral health of different demographics.

Our current prototype consists of image recognition technology that highlights areas of inflamed gums and plaque. We are also working on the design of our hardware piece that clips onto the smartphone.

City has helped loads through PlaqueChecker’s journey. The potential of the technology was realised when we won CitySpark and the Fast Forward pre-accelerator helped us learn how to commercialise the idea.

The space at The City Launch Lab is a thriving environment to develop PlaqueChecker, meet other entrepreneurs and gain access to great mentorship, expertise and resources, all of which have been invaluable.

We would tell students that everyone has the ability to use the skills learnt at uni and apply them in the real world. The first and most important step is to just do it and not be scared of failing. If I hadn’t taken the first step then I would never have come this far. I am so glad that I did because being an entrepreneur is the best opportunity I have been given.”
Chapter 2
The Big Idea

Anyone can have awesome ideas
Find Your Thing

What kind of business are you going to run? If you haven’t got a clue, panic not, we’re here to help.

When you’re thinking of setting up on your own, you want to make sure you’ll be working on the right thing for you. And looking at the following four factors, and the ways in which they overlap, is a clever way to come up with ideas that suit your interests and skills.

It might just be that the answer to your business conundrum is staring you in the face.

Let’s consider:

1. Your expertise
2. Your skills
3. Your passion
4. Your must-haves

“Bridging the gap from the idea stage to the final product is quite challenging and requires not just lots of hard work with the right people, but also targeted effort. It all comes down to just doing it rather than simply talking about it. At the end of the day, with a great team, hard work and commitment, this gap disappears and the progress made makes you feel amazing.”

Miodrag Vidakovic, PhD Sensors and Instrumentation researcher, School of Mathematics, Computer Science and Engineering, and co-founder of Archtor.

1. Your expertise
Doing the thing you’ve been trained to do is a great way to do business.

If you’re training to be an accountant, a psychologist, optometrist, project manager, translator, speech therapist or a midwife, you understand your industry. As you’re training, you could well spot an opportunity to improve products and services or solve a problem that has until now been endured.
What are you best qualified to do? Write it here:

2. Your skills
Aside from your professional skills and qualifications, what are you really good at?
Think of behavioural qualities. For example, “I’m patient” or “I’m really well organised,” as well as practical things like, “I am great with numbers” and “I’m good with animals.” If you find it hard, why not ask your friends, colleagues and family what they think?

What are you really good at? Write it here:
3. Your passions
What are you passionate about? Running a business is a lot of hard work, but if you love what you do, it won’t seem like work at all. Well, less work, anyway.

Ask yourself, if you had to get up at 5am each morning to go to work, what would you be happy doing?

What are you passionate about? Write it here:
4. Your must-haves

Imagine starting a fabulous boutique only to find, six months down the line, that you can’t stand working indoors and actually you hate talking to customers.

Most people don’t spend time thinking about this stuff, and we know (from experience) that it can lead to tears if you don’t.

Spend a few minutes thinking about the top ten things you can’t live without. For example, do you want to spend all your time outside, work only three days a week and be part of a dynamic team? Or would you rather work alone, travel the globe and be creative every day?

What are your must haves? Write them here:
5. Putting it all together

Jot down each of your areas of expertise, skills, must-haves and passions – one per sticky.

Try grouping things together and see what emerges.

Cluster your stickies where there’s common ground or overlapping themes start to form, or perhaps an idea starts to form. There are no hard and fast rules here, so don’t worry if you’re doing it right!

For example, you might find that your love of cats, combined with your previously unexplored fashion design skills and your degree in marketing, inspires you to create a new business “Coats for Cats!” Or maybe your writing skills, combined with your journalism degree and your love of fashion, lead you towards exploring the world of freelance PR?

An alternative method is to use the following diagram adapted from an original diagram by Bud Caddell. Simply plot your Post-it notes in the relevant circles to uncover your sweet spot.
Here's an idea: leverage your student contacts by setting up a business targeting your fellow students.

There are plenty of businesses that can be started on a shoestring that will work well on campus.

See if any of these tickle your fancy:

**Freelancing**

Calling all writers, photographers, journalists, designers, coders, translators, SEO experts, social media users and marketing enthusiasts! Your luck is in. As long as you have a computer and access to the internet, there are plenty of places you'll be able to find work. Bid platforms can be one source of potential work. Check out:

- Elance [www.elance.com](http://www.elance.com)
- Peopleperhour [www.peopleperhour.com](http://www.peopleperhour.com)
- 99 Designs [www.99designs.co.uk](http://www.99designs.co.uk)

If you invest time in creating a professional profile on these bid sites, set your price right (don't undersell yourself), and take care making compelling pitches, you should start to win work and build a portfolio.

CityStarters also works with a number of companies who are looking to hire student experts. So, get in touch and we'll see if we can hook you up.

**Party/event organising**

If you're the life and soul of the party, you like organising things and people and you're good under pressure, an event planning business could be for you. Given you're at university, surrounded by thousands of people who are up for a good time, it could be the perfect opportunity. Plus, cloud-based ticket sales software such as [www.eventbrite.co.uk](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk) can keep costs low. All you'll need are some posters, a venue and some helpers.

**Sampling and promotions**

Brands and businesses are clamouring to reach students – you guys are a lucrative market. Set up a promotional agency and offer to spread the word to students about their stuff, whether it's drinks, clothing, food or banks. You'll need access to lots of fellow students willing to hand out flyers and do sampling, but you can build that into the price. Brands will cover the cost of branded t-shirts and samples – and you'll provide the local knowledge and people on the ground, as well as access to student websites and magazines.
Flyering agency
Clubs are desperate to get students along to their events. If you don’t fancy the hassle of actually organising events yourself, you could start a business that specialises in distributing flyers to students.

Market research
Students want to earn money. Simple. Brands want to know what the ‘yoof’ of today are really in to. Set up a market research service offering to organise focus groups for big brands interested in discovering the true views of students.

Graphics
If you’ve got design skills, why not set up your own graphic design agency and produce flyers, posters and album covers for student bands and clubs? You could also branch out and start selling your work online through sites like www.peopleperhour.com and www.degreeart.com.

Cleaning
Students are known for being a bit laid back when it comes to housework. Perhaps you could set up a cleaning business, offering to keep digs in order. Once you’ve honed your skills, you could expand to the surrounding areas and up your prices! All you’ll need are some cleaning materials, a basic website and lots of elbow grease. As everyone at university tends to live so close together, you may not even need a car. There are bound to be plenty of fellow students keen to earn some extra cash – so you’ll be going international in no time.
How To Have Ideas

Still not sure what kind of business you’re going to start? Not to worry, having ideas is something anyone can learn. This is a bit of a relief, for most of us! Sitting around waiting for inspiration to strike can take a long time!

There are a bunch of tried and tested techniques designed to get you in touch with your creative side – and we’re going to share them with you. But, as with most things in life, practice makes perfect. Get ready to put in some legwork.

Chill out

Feeling tense is a sure-fire way to freeze your creative juices. The more you think about the fact that you haven’t had any ideas, the less likely it’s going to happen. So, first of all, you need to take a deep breath, kick back and relax. Nice.

There’s a reason you’re more likely to have ideas when you’re a bit dreamy – when you’re about to nod off, when you’re staring out the window on a train, when you’re out for a run, when you’re in the shower. As we relax our brain releases dopamine, which helps us have ideas. Plus, as we get more relaxed or distracted, our subconscious mind is free to make connections and find solutions. Genius.

Embrace this feeling. Put yourself into the zone on a regular basis and see if it helps the ideas to flow, (but don’t think about the fact that you’re supposed to be having ideas while you’re doing it, or it won’t work). And remember to keep a notebook handy to jot down any ideas, before you drop off or let them slip away.

Out and about

It’s hard to come up with an idea for a new business just by sitting on the sofa and racking your brains. Get out of the house and find some inspiration. Join in with networking events such as:

- City Unrulyversity
  www.city.ac.uk/cityventures/launch/city-unrulyversity
- Startup Seminars
  www.city.ac.uk/cityventures/start/startup-seminars
- Google Campus
  www.campuslondon.com
- Silicon Drinkabout
  www.silicondrinkabout.com/london
- Go to relevant trade shows or exhibitions
- Attend webinars
- Use social media

Chat to people and find out what’s going on. What’s bothering them? What are they loving at the moment? What’s the latest gossip?
“The idea for BookBall was conceived through my own frustrations with playing sports in London. It was just so hard to book a football pitch and I thought there had to be a better way to do it than phoning up venues or emailing them. But there wasn’t.”

Stefan Metaxa, BSc Business Studies student, Cass Business School, and co-founder of BookBall.

The more you get out and about and meet inspiring new people who are making great things happen, the more likely you are to have your own ideas.

Try new things

We’re creatures of habit, us humans. Get out of your rut and open your mind to new experiences. From sitting in a new position in class, to walking a different route, wearing new clothes, travelling, reading random magazines, going to new places, eating new food – anything goes.

The fresher you are and the more new stimulus you’ve been exposed to, the more your brain will buzz with ideas. Obvious, really!

Cool hunting

Start collecting things that you find cool and inspiring.

Attach a luggage tag to each item explaining why you think it’s so cool.

• What do you start to notice?
• Are you attracted to things with similar characteristics?
• Can you apply the coolness from one type of product to another industry entirely?
• Have you spotted a gap in the market?

Look around

Spend time looking around and noticing what’s going on around you. Sit in a coffee shop with a notebook or wander around town for half an hour at lunchtime. You’ll start spotting new businesses, interesting behaviour, products and services that could be improved and potential opportunities.

Business analysis

Think about businesses that are successful. What are the key principles that make them work? For example, people keep going back to Weight Watchers every week because they really want to lose weight and in the process they spend loads of money on magazines, snacks, books and meetings. The support and friendships they make at the meetings keep them motivated. Plus, once they reach their goal weight, many of them start eating normally again, and put the weight back on – ensuring they’ll be back to Weight Watchers soon enough, to spend more money. A clever business model, if a little cynical! Which businesses can you emulate? Are there new and interesting business models you can apply to your own sector?

Trendspotting

Think ahead. What do you think is going to be important in a year’s time? Investigating trends on websites such as www.trendwatching.com and www.thecoolhunter.co.uk will help keep you in the loop. Think about how these new trends will play out in different industries. See if they spark any ideas for you.

Don’t judge me

While you’re having ideas, don’t start wondering which ones will work. The time for judgement and critique is much later. If you move away from the creative mindset and start saying “well that won’t work” at this stage, then you’re screwed.
**Keep going**
You're much more likely to find “the one” if you have a large selection of ideas to choose from when the time comes to start sifting them. In their midst you'll hopefully find something truly brilliant. So, keep going. Crack on and gather lots of ideas.

**Positive people**
There are plenty of people out there who find ideas, change and the prospect of a new business so scary that they'll do anything to put your ideas down. Instead of shrouding yourself in a veil of negativity and naysayers, get together with likeminded entrepreneurial people, drink lots of coffee and chat about your ideas. Together you'll spark ideas and help them grow too, instead of stomping all over them.

**Write them down!**
Inspiration can strike at the most inconvenient moments. Keep a notebook and a pen by the bed and in your bag, so you're ready to jot down all the ideas that will be popping into your buzzing brain. Besides, we love an excuse to buy new stationery. Ooh, now that gives us an idea...
Run A Brainstorm

We’re great fans of brainstorming sessions. As long as they’re done right they can be life changing! You may have been scarred by chaotic ideas sessions where everyone shouts out random stuff, someone scrawls illegibly all over a flip chart and then at the end of the day... nothing actually happens. But, needless to say, there’s a better way.

What you’ll need
• Three to ten sparky people buzzing with ideas
• Sweets, drinks and treats
• A quiet room with lots of wall space
• Plenty of sheets of A4 plain paper
• Marker pens
• A stopwatch
• Post-its
• Coffee
• Sweets

The rules
We’re about to get going, but before we do, here are the RULES. Sounds counter-intuitive, but in order to have lots of fab ideas, we all need to stick to them.

Go with it! Now is the time for generating lots and lots of ideas, not judging them by saying stuff like “that’ll never work!” Don’t be afraid to be really out there.

Question time. Ideas start as thoughts and need building up. Ask lots of questions like, “How will it work?” “What will it look like?” “Who’s it for?”

One by one. Write down one idea per sheet of paper – it’s clearer and less confusing.

Plump and park. Don’t spend too long on each idea. Once an idea is shaped and plumped up on paper, put it to one side for later and move on to the next one. Keep momentum up – there will be time to work on the details later.

Small team. One leader. Get into groups of three or four and appoint someone to lead the discussion and write down ideas. This should avoid a mad scrummage!
The challenge
Create a fresh new concept in cafes to rival Starbucks.

Exercise 1: Flip it
We're going to start off by turning the café concept on its head.
What do we know about cafés that already exist? What are the key principles they tend to follow? List them here. Then write down the opposite scenario.
For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cafes tend to...</th>
<th>Flip it!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serve hot and soft drinks</td>
<td>Serve alcohol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close by 7pm</td>
<td>Stay open all night</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now use these opposites as a springboard for your ideas. The aim is to have lots of ideas, so don't spend more than a couple of minutes on each one.

One person should be the scribe and write each idea on one piece of paper

Complete each idea sheet as follows:

Give your idea a name:

Describe it in a nutshell:

Draw a picture here:

What makes it special?
Exercise 2: Out of this world

Now we’re going to look at other worlds for inspiration and apply them to our café concept.

Pick a brand that you really love. It can be anything at all - Louboutin Shoes, Fiat 500, iPhone, Malmaison hotels, Beatz by Dre.

Draw out the key principles that make it interesting - instantly recognisable red soles, a modern take on a retro design classic, and so on.

Apply those principles to your café.

For example: A café inspired by Paperchase

• Makes noting down ideas and working fun and stylish
• Seasonal collections

Spend time capturing each idea.

So, our café could be...

Pretty seasonal - Have colourful and pretty window displays that change with the seasons giving the customer a reason to pop in and try something new

Coffee and Inspiration – Café themed around inspiration. Retail lovely stationery and inspiring books to encourage customers to have caffeine-fuelled moments of inspiration.
Another highly successful way to discover an epic business opportunity is to solve a problem.

If you go out and create something people don’t need or really want, they’ll be like, “meh.” And “meh” does not a massive business make.

Creating a product just because you can is also not the answer. Rather than being wowed by your brilliance, people will simply shrug, and move on.

Discovering pain points is the key to success. Pain points are things that wind people up, cause them to waste time, get confused, frustrated or angry. Now you’re talking.

For example, Sarah Tremellen hated the fact that women with big boobs were forced to wear ugly bras with names like Doreen, so she founded Bravissimo, specialising in lingerie for bigger busted women. It’s now a multi-million pound business.

People are always on the lookout for solutions to their problems. Things that are better, faster, cheaper, more practical … you get the idea.

“We started the business because it was something that we needed. We had worked in the creative industries before and had been frustrated by how hard it was to find good, reliable animators, graphic designers and producers when we needed them. We created The Backscratchers to solve that problem.”

Jody Orsborn, MA Culture, Policy and Management graduate, School of Arts and Social Sciences and co-founder of The Backscratchers.

Look for problems that cause grief for enough people, not just you! Niche is good, but a niche of one person may not lead to a viable business.

Some of our most successful CityStarters have founded business in this way!
“My girlfriend got a severe stomach virus that require incredibly strong antibiotics, and after the treatment she had developed a soy allergy. We’re both real foodies, and I suddenly saw how difficult it was to find a restaurant to eat at when you have to check every dish for allergens.”

Matt Bland, MSc Marketing Strategy and Innovation graduate, Cass Business School, and co-founder of Eat Safe.

This is a way of forcing yourself to spot pain points by discovering the things that wind you up and irritate you in your daily life. What things are you putting up with that shouldn’t be so tricky?

Make a list of a day’s irritants. It might look something like this:

• Leaking bin bag makes mess all over the floor
• Email overload does my head in
• Burned hand on coffee
• Bad weather ruins run
• Blister from running shoes
• Can’t find a good yoga teacher in my area
• Look terrible in selfie

Keep a notebook with you at all times. Every time you find yourself getting annoyed or frustrated, write it down.

Now expand your search and start noticing things that wind up other people too.

When you write down each thing, make a note of the following:

• What you were doing at the time
• Why it was a problem
• What the obstacles were
If someone is already doing the thing you’d like to do, that’s okay. There’s not just one shoe shop in the UK. Or one gym. Or accountancy firm. Or café chain.

Your new business doesn’t need to be a brand new concept. In fact, one might argue that improving on something that is just okay is a great option. People will understand what you’re offering from the outset and they may be ready to upgrade or find an alternative.

Don’t even bother competing on price though. It’s a no go. Leave well alone. You simply won’t stand a chance given that existing companies will have established supplier relationships and economies of scale. We’ll talk more about pricing later, but as a rule of thumb, never get involved in a race to the bottom because you’ll lose.

Instead, pick an edge and ramp it up, beating your competition into submission through quality and innovation.

We love Seth Godin, he’s one of our all-time business gurus. He suggests we use “edgcraft” to create ideas.

Choose an angle and dial it up as far as the consumers in your industry can bear. Remember that “radical” might not mean the same thing to accountants or teachers as it does to students.

Use the table on the next page to dial it up. There are “edges” on the left to spark ideas or help you differentiate your service from existing businesses.

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Read more about edgcraft here www.sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2013/09/edgcraft-instead-of-brainstorming.html
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<th>What if our business was a lot... than the competition</th>
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<td>... cooler, design-wise</td>
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<td>... celebrity-cool, with endorsements</td>
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Now that you have your idea, why not enter CitySpark and take it to the next level?

CitySpark is a business design and doing competition that helps City students and recent alumni to develop an idea, test it out with potential customers and then make it happen!

Unlike other university business plan competitions, which focus on pitching ideas and persuading a small panel of judges or investors, often with little evidence or no real-world traction behind them, CitySpark is all about finding problems, identifying real gaps in the marketplace and building evidence-based startups right from day one.

CitySpark is designed to help you understand the process of moving from a business idea to a fledgling startup venture.

Why you should enter:

• Find out how to design & build a startup business
• Pitch your idea to local entrepreneurs and investors
• Develop key enterprise skills to enhance your employability and career prospects

If you’re thinking, “Yeah but, my idea is so new. I’m not ready for anything like that!” Don’t worry. You’re in exactly the right place. CitySpark is all about challenging you to think of a business solution to the problem you have identified and helping you develop a viable business model.

Autumn Term - The CitySpark Marketplace

The first stage of CitySpark focuses on finding a solution to a problem. The selected finalists will try and attract the attention of over 50 judges in a startup marketplace and get them to invest their CitySpark dollars in your idea!

Spring Term - The CitySpark Grand Final

In the second semester the bar gets raised! We will be looking for a solid business model and want to see that you have gone out and spoken to your customers. The finalists will pitch infront of VIP entrepreneur judges and an audience who will decide the five teams that win the £3,000 prizes!

Startup Summer School

The winners of The CitySpark Grand Final will also win a place on the Startup Summer School, a two week programme for up to twenty teams to work on their startup and develop their understanding of their product, market and customers with help and guidance from industry experts. The programme ends with the CitySpark Demo Day when all of the participating teams will get to pitch their business to an invited panel of successful entrepreneurs and investors.

Head to www.city.ac.uk/cityventures/start/cityspark to find out more and enter your idea!
Checklist

☐ I have a clear picture of my skills, expertise, passions, and must haves.
☐ I've explored student ideas.
☐ I've tried new things and got out and about.
☐ I'm researching the latest trends.
☐ I've learned to relax and harness my subconscious ideas machine.
☐ I've got a bunch of positive people to bounce ideas around with.
☐ We ran a brainstorm and had a bunch of café-tastic ideas.
☐ I'm noticing problems and whinges everywhere!
☐ I've picked an edge and dialled it up.
☐ All in all, my mind is buzzing!
“Every country in the world has something to offer. For example, halloumi cheese from Cyprus or summer truffle from Italy. AnteBox makes these available by connecting local businesses to travellers and customers.

Bojana and I traveled over 150 times to visit each other which gave us the opportunity to live as locals and experience the unique food and traditions in each other’s countries. Soon we fell in love with some of the products, like halloumi cheese, and never traveled without them as they are not available world wide. We want to share these products with the world, and using travellers is the fastest way!

AnteBox was launched in February 2016, and already has a website which offers basic functionality. People can browse through products and make requests that can be satisfied by people travelling their way. We currently have 10 local businesses working with us to promote their products and we are now aiming to expand our network to include restaurants, hotels and airlines.

Our biggest success is giving hope to the local businesses we work with. They are looking forward to selling their products that will directly help them and their families. Secondly, from an achievements perspective, the biggest success was to enter the Cyprus Entrepreneurial Competition Final 2016 and CitySpark 2016. Finally, gaining the trust of businesses that have never heard of us, like Quality Life Italian Made.

Being a student at City helped me in many ways. Firstly, I had the opportunity to learn from professors that had worked many years in industry, and further to my regular course lectures, City gave me the opportunity to participate in lectures given by key business people at Cass. Lastly, the team not only provided us with incubator space, advice and guidance, they’re always there to support us and motivate us to develop our idea.”
Chapter 3
Shape Up

Turning your idea into a business
One At A Time

Before we crack on with shaping and developing your ideas, you’ll need to have one business idea in mind. Just the one. For now.

“Looking back, we shouldn’t have tried to please everyone and do everything at the same time, when a single focus would have got us great results.”
Ashuveen and Lukas Linsbichler, Executive MBA graduates, Cass Business School, and co-founders of VEVA.

If, like us, you tend to get a bit overexcited, particularly after a few too many coffees, it can be hard to choose just one thing to concentrate on.

The key thing is to focus. For those of you bursting with a new idea every day, this can be a frustrating prospect. But it’s better to make one idea work than to be constantly changing your mind and never getting anything done.

There are plenty of starters who never actually get started because they are constantly chopping and changing, jumping from one idea to another.

It’s okay to have loads of ideas, but if every time you have a new idea you get completely derailed, you’ll end up all over the shop.
So you don’t feel like you’re wasting ideas, keep a box or scrapbook for the ones you don’t have time for at the moment.

Next time you find yourself going off the rails and popping out new ideas in a slightly manic fashion, park them. Then they’re safely written down and you can revisit them when you have time. Knowing they’re not going anywhere means you can relax and get on with doing the business.
Right, so now you’ve got THE idea and you’re ready to get started, the next step is building it into a business plan, of sorts.

We are not fans of the 600-page business plan that takes two years to write. By the time you’ve finished with it, the world has moved on, or someone else has actually made your idea happen. Besides, starting a business is fun and exciting and writing a really long tedious document has a way of sucking the fun and excitement out of you, turning you into a withered husk of your former self.

So, instead, we’re going to be keeping it light and top line – to make sure your idea is robust and viable, but ensuring you keep hold of your will to live!

Often we have an idea, (Coats for Cats, for example...) but once the euphoria has subsided, you realise you’ve actually got more of a thought than a fully fleshed-out idea.

You could have Coats for Cats buzzing round your head for ages, with no clear idea about how your business is going to make money, what it will actually offer, who to, where and so on. There are a lot of unanswered questions!

• **What** exactly is your idea?
• **How** will you make money?
• **What** makes it special?
• **Why** are you doing it?
• **What** is your business called?

The purpose of this chapter is to help you answer these initial questions to help you shape your idea into something clear and easy to understand.

**Useful tools**

If you’re looking for a one-pager to help you plan your business, you should check out the Business Model Canvas approach by Alexander Osterwalder³. Each section has been carefully designed to help you answer key business questions, helping you describe, design, challenge, invent, and pivot your business model.

We use this tool at City to help students get planning.

Alternatively, you can use the simple business questionnaire style template on the next page.

We love the business model canvas, but we reckon the following approach simplifies things even further. As you work through this book, simply fill out these self-explanatory boxes and watch, mesmerised, as your idea turns into a fully formed, sensibly planned out business.

(Perhaps make a couple of copies of this section, before you scrawl all over it!)

³Find out more and download your own free copy at: www.businessmodelgeneration.com/canvas
1. Business name:

2. Business summary:
   *Summarise your idea in 10 words or less*

3. What is the unmet customer problem or need that you are addressing?
   *What evidence do you have to support the above? E.g. customer interviews, survey data, market research reports etc.*

4. What is your proposed solution?
   *What evidence do you have to support the above? E.g. Screen-shots, product mock-ups, working product pictures etc.*

5. Who are your target clients or customers?
   *What evidence do you have to support the above? E.g. market research data, customer interviews etc.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Support Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. How big is the potential market?</td>
<td>What evidence do you have to support the above? E.g. market research data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. How will you make money? (Business model)</td>
<td>What evidence do you have to support the above? E.g. competitor examples,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>interviews with partners and distributors etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Who are your competitors and why is your idea better?</td>
<td>What evidence do you have to support the above? E.g. market research data,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>customer interviews etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. What is your sales and marketing strategy?</td>
<td>What evidence do you have to support the above? E.g. sector, competitor examples,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>customer research etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Who’s on the team and what do each of you bring?</td>
<td>What team members/skills are you missing? E.g. Sales superstar,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>programming genius etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. What will be your key costs and revenue streams for the first 12 months? What evidence do you have to support the above? E.g. supplier quotes, customer orders, pre-sales etc.

12. What are you going to do during the first 90 days? What evidence do you have to support the above? E.g key milestones, project plan etc.

Contact [CityStarters@city.ac.uk](mailto:CityStarters@city.ac.uk) for an electronic copy of this form.
What Exactly Is Your Idea?

So far, on the back of your hand, you might have scrawled something like “Coats for Cats” or “posh toothpaste” or “squishy laptops and tablets” or “financial planning for students” or “copywriting for clubs” but what do you really mean?

As it stands, those are just thoughts. What’s the big idea? What makes it into a business?

You need to answer these two very important questions:

- What type of business is it? Are you a service, a manufacturer, distributor, retailer etc.?
- What are you going to be doing to make money?

Add in your idea below and see if you can flesh it out a bit...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Thought</th>
<th>Type of Business</th>
<th>What we'll actually be doing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coats for Cats</td>
<td>Online retailer and manufacturer</td>
<td>Making luxury coats for posh pet cats whose fashion conscious owners want them to follow the latest trends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nightclub copywriting</td>
<td>Local service</td>
<td>Offering a copywriting service to nightclubs – ensuring their flyers and websites attract lots of the right clients.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How Will You Make Money?

It’s the million-dollar question, literally.

Unless you have a clear idea how your business is going to make money, then it’s just a hobby. Anyone can create a business that doesn’t make any money. Sounds ridiculously obvious, but it’s a good idea to know where the cash is going to come from!

Waving your arms and saying that you plan to make money sometime in the future once you’ve got 10 million visitors to your website is all very well if you have investors bankrolling you, but we imagine you’d quite like to make some money sooner rather than later, especially if your plan is to be earning a decent amount by the time you leave university, so you don’t need to get a job!

There are lots of different ways of making money which can be applied to your idea. Here are some different business models:

**Retail**
Retail means you are selling a product, either in a bricks-and-mortar shop, or online. Whether you’re selling electronics, ice cream, shoes or scaffolding, the key thing is that you are selling a tangible thing. Retail is no longer limited to the high street. You could grow a multi-million pound operation selling goods to people all around the world from your bedroom. The world is your oyster.

Whether your store is virtual or physical, your main focus will be driving people to your shop. This could be even more of a challenge online than on the street. Setting up shop online is a bit like setting up shop in the middle of a field and hoping people will walk past.

Leveraging the power, traffic and influence of marketplaces such as www.ebay.co.uk, www.amazon.co.uk and www.notonthehighstreet.com will help you grow your business more quickly than if you go it alone.

**Service**
With a service business you are selling your time to clients, often on a one-to-one basis. Hypnotherapists, yoga teachers, PRs, photographers, coders, web designers, freelance writers and virtual assistants are all service-based businesses. The size of your business is limited by the number of hours in a day – although you could expand and have a team delivering the service on your behalf.
Knowledge
If you have expert knowledge in a particular area – video production, SEO, weight loss, fitness, nutrition, horse riding, skateboarding, face painting – a knowledge-based business model could be for you. By creating instructional videos, online courses, e-books or membership sites, you could turn your knowledge into cash, by selling it to people who want to learn from you.

Useful Resources:
Udemy – Sell your courses www.udemy.com
Ruzuku – Create and deliver courses www.ruzuku.com
Wild Apricot – Membership site software www.wildapricot.com
MemberMouse – Turn your wordpress site into a membership site www.membermouse.com
GoAnimate – Make cool videos www.goanimate.com

Social enterprise
A social enterprise is a business whose objective is to create a positive social or environmental impact. TOMS shoe company is an example of a social enterprise: for every pair of espadrilles purchased, they give a pair to people in developing countries. A social enterprise is not a charity; it is still a business, created to make a profit, but unlike a charity, only a percentage, as opposed to all of the profit, is reinvested into the business.

Useful Resources:
• Unltd – Advice and resources for social entrepreneurs www.unltd.org.uk
Ashoka – Global social entrepreneurs network www.uk.ashoka.org
Ogunte – Resources and networking for women social entrepreneurs www.ogunte.com/innovation

Referral
If you’re great at marketing and sales but not so keen on actual product development, you could try a referral or affiliate model. Instead of developing your own products you sell other people’s stuff, in return for commission. You don’t need to worry about packaging or delivery with this model as the retailer does this for you. You won’t even need to worry about setting up complicated code to track purchases. All you need to do is apply to become an affiliate, receive a special code which you will use in your communications and persuade people to purchase. In order to be successful you will need to drive lots of traffic to your website and create a loyal following of people who respect your opinions.

Useful Resources :
Income Diary – Learning resource for online business owners www.incomediary.com

Copyblogger – Extensive blog resource about marketing writing www.copyblogger.com

Franchise
A franchise is a ready-made business that you buy into. It’s often part of a well-known brand – e.g. Dunkin Donuts, McDonalds or Subway are all franchises. An investment gets you the right to use the company branding, suppliers and resources, but you run your individual store. It can be easier than starting from scratch because the model definitely works – the products have been developed, the brand is known, and all the structures are in place to enable you to run the business effectively from the start.

A franchise can be good for people who don’t necessarily have their own idea, but want to own a business. On the flip side, buying in to a successful franchise can involve huge initial costs, and you often have to pay the franchisor a percentage of the cash you make.
Grab a beermat (we imagine, you have easy access to a ready supply...) We like beermats, because they’re not too big – which helps keep things simple. And when you’re done they fit nicely into your pocket.

Now, draw a diagram showing how you’ll make money and the different places it will come from.

It might be a good idea to have a few different sources of income in case one doesn’t work out. Try to keep it really simple though, with a few boxes and some arrows. Here’s one we made earlier:
A Quick Note About World Domination

**Whatever you do, ask yourself whether it could be scaled up. Could you expand to other towns, or even go global?**

Is your business relevant beyond the UK? Can sales be processed online? Do you need to run events in person or could you produce a pack to enable people to do their own? Could your expertise be made available electronically? Could you set up a franchise for your business idea?

If you do want to aim for world domination, start thinking about it now and build a plan to create a scalable business from the start, rather than having to redesign everything later on. It’s good to have the option if you fancy it.

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**Your Special Sauce**

Your business needs to stand out from the crowd. Chances are, you aren’t the only coffee shop in town, or the only graphic design agency in the area, but that doesn’t mean you can’t be the most awesome.

You want to get people talking about you. You need to give them a reason to ditch the business they are currently loyal to because they can’t resist your unique and enticing offering.

Maybe you are thinking of setting up a tutoring business for primary school kids. Perhaps your unique selling point is that you use sport to help teach the kids their maths and literacy? Or maybe all your tutors will be students under the age of 22, meaning they can relate better to the kids?

Does your computer fixing business talk to customers in language they understand? Does your cleaning business use only environmentally-friendly products? People only spend money on things that matter to them, so why would they choose to spend their money with you?
People love stories and having a strong story, or a compelling reason for your business to exist will help people remember you and understand why you do what you do. (Plus it can help you get press coverage later on.)

Knowing why you are doing this will not only inspire and intrigue others, it will help keep you motivated when the going gets tough.

Waking up every day knowing you are going to be doing something you are truly passionate about is a joyous thing. You’ll literally skip to work, beaming. Work will be more like play.

If you’re passionate about your “why” you’ll inspire and mobilise others to follow you, work with you and buy from you, again and again.

To try to uncover your story, answer these questions:

• What are you hoping to change / improve through your business? (Aside from your bank balance)

• Were you inspired by something that happened to you? If so, what?

• Did you witness a problem and decide there and then to take action? Tell us more!

• Did you have your idea in an inspiring or unusual situation?

• Which piece of news or recent event prompted you to take action?

Useful stuff
If you’d like to find out more about discovering your why, we recommend you read author Simon Sinek’s guide to leadership and business: www.startwithwhy.com.
The Name Game

Choosing a name for your business is fun, but it’s also a crucial stage of branding. It’s going to create an all-important first impression for potential customers. Giving your business a name, even at this early stage, takes you one step further towards actually making it happen. Plus, it’s easier to refer to your idea by its name rather than just calling it “that thing.”

Here are our top tips for a great name:

- Keep it short, catchy and instantly recognisable. Think about great brands that stick in your mind - Virgin, Innocent, Apple, Pepsi, Nivea, Google - if you printed your name on a t-shirt, would passers by notice and remember it?

- Make it reflect what your business does - framing, moving, cleaning, building?

- If you think something more abstract would be suitable, consider using a unique word so that the only references on Google are links to your site – like Moonpig, or Google itself. If you’re stuck for a name, or a domain that’s untaken, check out the awesome (and free) Panabee tool. It will help you generate some interesting new name ideas and it also tells you which names are available. [www.panabee.com](http://www.panabee.com)

- Pick something that reflects your brand values. A traditional-sounding name, conveying durability and old-fashioned values, or a modern name, suggesting a fresh, innovative approach?

- Keep it simple – you don’t want to be forever spelling it out, or losing customers when they misspell your website.

- If you’re likely to be trading overseas, check that the name doesn’t mean anything rude in other languages and that it can be easily read and pronounced. (Check out the sensitive words and expressions guidance from Companies House [www.companieshouse.gov.uk/about/gbhtml/gp1.shtml](http://www.companieshouse.gov.uk/about/gbhtml/gp1.shtml)

- Check to see if your name is already being used. If a sole trader at the other end of the country is using it in a different market sector it might be fine, but if a local or national business is using it, you’ll have to find another name. If your name is similar to another in the same sector you may have to change it, particularly if you want to register it as a trademark. Check here to see if your name is available: [www.companieshouse.gov.uk/about/miscellaneous/nameAvailability.shtml](http://www.companieshouse.gov.uk/about/miscellaneous/nameAvailability.shtml)

It’s worth doing your research now because renaming your business will be a right pain further down the line, and getting your customers to stop using your old name might prove to be impossible.
What to do next?

Buy the domain name (web address) as soon as possible. It’s a cheap way to protect your business name a little bit. Even if you’re not selling over the Internet, people will look for you online and will be reassured to see a professional website that can be found easily in the search engines. Go Daddy and 123-Reg are good places to register a domain.

Registering your domain might cost as little as a fiver - it could be the best fiver you’ve ever spent.

If you really want to protect your name, you can take out a trade mark, either by using a trade mark attorney to guide you through the process or by using the Intellectual Property Office website. This is quite expensive though, so it might be something to look into once things are up and running.
Now you’ve got an idea, you need to be able to talk about it passionately, but concisely.

Launching into a 20-minute speech every time someone asks you about your business will not only send people running for cover at parties, but it also suggests you don’t have a very clear idea.

You need to be able to sum up your business in about 60 seconds, so that if you bump into a very generous millionaire in a lift you can dazzle them with your ingenuity and maybe encourage them to write you a cheque before they reach their floor.

Write a paragraph that describes your business.

Try to answer the key questions we’ve been working on:
- **What** your business is called
- **What** you do
- **How** you will make money
- **What** makes your business special
- **Why** you are doing it

**Top tips**
- Make sure anyone can understand your idea - leave out the jargon.
- In a couple of sentences, explain why you set the company up in the first place. Be brief and don’t waffle.

**Next up...**
Say it out loud in front of the mirror. It’s hard at first, but practice makes perfect.

Test it out on your family and friends to see if they know what you’re on about..
It pays to be picky and think strategically about the kind of skills and personalities your business will need to thrive. Look at the gaps and aim to find people to fill them.

Pick people you get on well with. You’ll be spending a lot of time together!

“One of our biggest achievements is building a team that is so passionate and committed to the project, and capable and willing to deliver which has been really important. Developing the business, especially with complex products, requires the expertise from diverse backgrounds to bring a project to fruition. City provided us with access to great programmers and product developers who are now part of our team.”

Miodrag Vidakovic, PhD Sensors and Instrumentation researcher, School of Mathematics, Computer Science and Engineering, and co-founder of Archtor.

Picking your mates can work well, but it is risky. Working with friends can test your friendship to the max.

Always choose the best possible people to join your business. The good news is, at university you are surrounded by brainy people!

“It’s better to have a hole in your team rather than an a.hole! Cultural fit is the most important thing. Are you passionate about the same stuff? Would you like to hang out with them for many hours, every day? Don't hire the same personality types or people with similar skill sets. These should be complementary.”

Greg Drach, BSc Investment & Financial Risk Management graduate, Cass Business School, and co-founder of Inscribe Media.

Passion is just as important as skill. After all you can teach people new skills.

If your entire team is made up of enormous egos, you’ll probably spend all your time arguing. And if you are all computer programmers who find talking to people uncomfortable, you might find getting press coverage and driving sales a challenge.

Did you know that for investors, or venture capitalists as they are often called, a strong team with a range of complementary skills is one of the key factors that influence their decision on whether to invest or not.
Rei Inamoto, chief creative officer at innovation company AKQA, refers to the key members of a team as Hipsters, Hackers and Hustlers – a bit pretentious, perhaps, but it sums up some of the different qualities needed in a strong team – creative people, technical people and sales people. (It’s also missing a key element, the person who is good with money.)

As an alternative analogy, we’ve gone with a football theme. To create the dream team, we reckon you are going to need a Gaffer, Midfielder, Striker and a Goalie.
Gaffer
If you've got ideas leaking from every pore, chances are you’re the creative brain of the team. Gaffers want to change the world and they're great at inspiring and motivating others to believe they can. They have a vision and they're on a mission to make it happen, just like Mourinho.

Midfielder
You'll need at least one doer in your business. Someone who’s great at working out what exactly needs to be done to achieve the business goals. They are able to translate the creative plans of the gaffer and make them happen. They'll create a plan, assign tasks and get everyone organised, motivated and on track.

Striker
Strikers are the most charismatic members of the team, prepared to put themselves on the line and close the deal. Some people can talk to anyone – whether they're at the bus stop, on the phone to a journalist, chatting to a customer or schmoozing at serious networking dinner. A striker will be the voice of your operation – the person who’s happy to go on the radio or TV telling the world about your business, who will persuade journalists to feature you or new clients to buy your stuff. They'll be great at doing deals and ducking and diving to help your business get the right result.

Goalie
Someone in your business needs to have a safe pair of hands and be very good with money; building budgets, creating cost-cutting plans, calculating forecasts and managing the accounts. It’s not everyone's cup of tea, but without a goalie to defend your assets and manage the dough in your business, you'll go belly up quicker than you can say “where’s all our money gone?”

How to find your dream team
If you don’t already have a team lined up, our advice would be to get up, get out and start networking.
Here are some places you could go:

- CityStarters events [www.city.ac.uk/cityventures](http://www.city.ac.uk/cityventures)
- Cass Entrepreneurs Network (for Cass and City students and alumni) [www.cen.life](http://www.cen.life)
- Different uni societies to meet people with different skills and interests

- Silicon Drinkabout (regular after-work drinks event for startups) [www.silicondrinkabout.com/london](http://www.silicondrinkabout.com/london)

You could also use social media, especially LinkedIn and Twitter, to track down the right kind of people.

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**Try This**

**Team Member Tick List**

Finding the right people is not easy, so create a clear checklist of characteristics or skills and ensure new recruits make the grade. Here are some suggestions:

- Do they have relevant experience?
- What specific skills do they have that your team needs?
- Are they motivated to succeed?
- How much time do they have to dedicate to the business?
- Are they passionate about your business?
- Can they demonstrate a strong work ethic?
- Do they have useful contacts they are prepared to share?
- How do they feel about the risks involved in working in a startup?
- Can they afford not to earn money for a while?
- Are they flexible? Able to think quickly and adapt to new situations?
- How do they cope with setbacks?
Finally, don’t rush in to inviting people to join your team. You can always work with people on a trial basis over the course of a number of months to see how they fit in with the rest of the team.

The legals
If you do decide to form a team, PLEASE go and see a lawyer and get a commitment agreement written up between you and signed by a third party. We know it’s a pain and you’re all on good terms now, but just DO IT. It is so, so important.

We meet lots of business owners, some running startups and some with established multi-million pound organisations, who do not have a partnership agreement in place. It’s all well and good when things are going well, but all partnerships go through conflicts, and if things go wrong, it leaves you wide open to massive rows, expensive legal fees, lots of stress and sleepless nights. You could potentially risk losing EVERYTHING.

You can go and see the guys at Start-Ed, based within City University London, for free one-to-one legal advice from professional advisors. www.start-ed.org

You can also find free templates online e.g. www.startupcommons.org/founders-shareholder-agreement.html
Checklist

☐ I've chosen one key idea and parked the rest
☐ I've used the The Simple CityStarters Business Plan to clarify my idea
☐ I'm clear on the type of business I'll be running
☐ I understand where the money is coming from
☐ World domination is a possibility
☐ I've worked out what makes my business different from the competition
☐ I've found my story
☐ My business has a name
☐ My pitch? I've got it down!
☐ I've know who I'm going to need in my team
Over 14% of the £9 billion wet wipe market is purchased for use in the bathroom, because consumers feel unclean using just toilet paper. Yet, “flushable” and “disposable” wipes are just marketing gimmicks and these wipes clog the drainage system in cities, are not environmentally friendly and some are actually bad for your skin!

Twipes are moist wipes on a plastic roll that slides on to your existing bathroom toilet roll holder. Twipes are antibacterial, alcohol free and paraben free, they don’t dry out and most importantly, each Twipe is 100% dispersible in water within three hours, unlike traditional “flushable” branded wipes that can take up to 12 months! This means that from the moment you flush, to the time it gets to the main waterworks, Twipes have broken down into its basic elements.

Recently we have been busy forming partnerships with eco-friendly bloggers & parent YouTubers, in the UK in preparation for our launch. These influencers will promote Twipes through their websites, videos and social media outlets.

The team at City are amazing. You’ve got your own incubator in Shoreditch, access to funding, business summer schools and just about everything we needed to get off the ground! I can’t think of any other UK university that provides so much for startups!

You should start your business whilst at university because students are more hungry and eager. Obviously you have more free time as a student than if you were full time employees. Also, City offers loads of amazing support which we wouldn’t get if we were working full time rather than being students, so make use of all their facilities and events while you still can!
Like many people, we got sick of the overpriced boring salads we could find on the high street. We are not vegans ourselves but simply want to eat less meat and more wholesome food. We decided to create our own food business to jazz up vegetables and put them in the spotlight!

Eat Chay cooks up veggies that blow your mind! We aim to change the negative perception that people have about vegan food by giving them indulgent plant-based food that will satisfy both meat eaters and vegans alike.

We have tested our concept by catering to a couple of networking events around London and are now about to launch our first food market stall.

Our first success would definitely be having people coming up to us telling us how good the food is or how they cannot believe there is no meat in it. It feels great when someone loves your product as much as you do! The second success is getting to work at The City Launch Lab. The support and connections we get from the community has been wonderful. The third success is getting bloggers and passionate foodies talking about us. We don’t just want to cook food, we also want to create a community around our food.

We received a lot of support from the team at City. Attending events such as CityStarters Weekend was very helpful for us in getting a taste of understanding what it takes to lift an idea off of the ground. Even though our initial business idea did not get selected for CitySpark competition, we received great feedback that enabled us to improve the business concept. And lastly, we were offered hot desks at The City Launch Lab!

Our advice to students would be to get your idea out there, be your brand’s biggest advocate! I was really shy about sharing my simple food business idea with people. I was too afraid of criticisms and judgement. However, when you get your idea out there, all you get back would be wonderful support and feedback. It will forever remain just an idea if you don’t actively make it reality.
Chapter 4

Do Your Homework

Will it fly?
Right folks, it’s time to check out the competition. Looking in detail at who’s already doing what will help you shape your business idea and increase your chances of success.

“By actually going out and talking to customers I was able to truly understand that this was an issue that needed addressing and get deep insight into what people wanted. Build a product to solve a problem, don’t find a problem for you product. By starting with the need first you know that there will be a demand for what you are doing.”

Matt Bland, MSc Marketing Strategy and Innovation graduate, Cass Business School, and co-founder of Eat Safe.

Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to find out who’s doing what, where, how, and for how much.

What you need to know
Get answers to questions like these:

• What products / services do your competitors offer?
• What business model do they use?
• Where are they located?
• How much do they charge?
• How would you describe their branding?
• What kind of customers are they targeting?
• Which clients do they already have on board?
• How many clients do they already have?
• How much are they already turning over?
• Have they received much press coverage?
• How do they promote themselves online? Do they use Google ads, Facebook ads, affiliate schemes and so on?
• How do they manage their customer service?
• Do they have any great customer service policies?
• In what areas do you think there is room for improvement?
• Have they received any negative feedback or coverage?
• Do they seem to be thriving?
We know starting a business is exciting, and all you want to do is crack on. But, without gathering the right kind of information, you’re putting yourself at risk of failure before you’ve even started. You wouldn’t run a marathon without setting foot in the gym, would you?

“We looked at white papers, websites, others’ apps and also surveyed people through Survey Monkey to better understand what would be compelling about the concept and who our target customers are.”

Ashuveen and Lukas Linsbichler, Executive MBA graduates, Cass Business School, and co-founders of VEVA.

What to do
To get answers, why not try this:

• Head to relevant trade shows – the perfect place to check out the competition and also your potential clients.

• Attend seminars, workshops and any free talks to learn as much as possible about your industry.

• Become a spy. To get under the skin of your competitors, go undercover; trench coat and dark glasses optional.

• Visit your competitors’ shops and use their services. Have a wander round the area (if you’re thinking of setting up a physical presence like a shop or office).

• Pretend to be a customer – phone up or walk in and ask loads of questions. Learn what they are doing well and what needs improving. Don’t forget to find out prices. If you’ve got friends who like a bit of role play, you can always enlist their services to give you a hand.

• If you’re feeling brave, you can even ask for an interview – as part of a “university project” you’re doing.

• Join social media groups and pages, chat rooms, forums and specific social networks relevant to your business. Engage with the group – join discussions, answer questions, ask questions, offer to help.

• You could even get a job working for a competitor – to find out as much as possible. If you do this, it’s a good idea to check your contract and make sure you aren’t agreeing to something that will hamper you – some contracts prevent you from working in that field or for a competitor for a certain period. You don’t want to get sued!

• Search on social media – Twitter in particular – for disgruntled customers. Find out what they’re not happy with.

• Sign up for your competitors’ email lists so you hear about their news and launches.

• Read articles and blogs written about your competitors – what do people really think of them?
Useful stuff

Here are some super-handy resources to help you:

• Did you know the British Library Business and Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC) has an amazing reference library? And they love helping starters like you find the information you need. Market reports can be really expensive, but the good news is the BIPC has access to loads of reports and information that can help you – just register for a reader pass and all their resources are free to use. (www.bl.uk/bipc/dbandpubs/busres/index.html)

• Look at your competitor’s website on www.whatrunswhere.com/features.php and find out where they’re advertising. There’s a 3 day trial for $1.

• www.trendhunter.com is a great place to discover new and innovative products and services from around the world, which have just launched.

• Set up Google Alerts for your competitors and monitor when they’re in the news or mentioned online.

• Check out the competition using DueDil – you can even find out how much money they have in the bank. (It’s perfectly legal!) www.duedil.com

• Monitor who’s saying what on social media using Tweetdeck, Hootsuite or Sendible.

• Discover very useful intelligence about the digital activities and successes of your competitors, quickly and easily, with Rival IQ www.rivaliq.com. It’s expensive, but there’s a 14 day free trial.
Based on the information you have gathered so far, your next challenge is to figure out who your customers are going to be.

Firstly, let’s create an initial profile of your potential customers. You need to know who you’re targeting so you can go out and chat to them or you’ll just be wandering the streets talking to randoms.

Breaking down your audience into chunks is called segmenting. And, take it from us, it’s a good idea – because it will help you understand your audience and focus your efforts.

“Don’t try to solve everything for everyone. Focus on one pain point.”
Daniel Kaplansky, MSc Investment Management graduate, Cass Business School, and founder of OneFineMeal.

It’s interesting to do this exercise twice – once before you meet and talk to customers and once after you’ve met them.

Create a profile for each type of customer type you plan to target. Aim for 3-4 different types of person.

Let’s say you’re creating an app that reminds people to drink water and stay hydrated... you could target gym bunnies, joggers, office workers and uni students.

Each of your profiles could include the following approximate information:

- Name
- Age
- Gender
- Where they live
- Hobbies
- Type of job
- Location
- Where they shop
- Products they are currently using
- What they spend their money on
- Things they care about
- What you think motivates them

Add in lots of pictures taken from magazines or printed off the internet to bring your profile to life.

Remember, the first time you do this, you’re basing your customer profiles on assumptions. You can’t know this information for sure yet, but it will help you find the right kind of people to chat to in the next phase.

The more you get into the shoes of your potential customers, the easier it will be for your new business to be just what they’re looking for.
Try your own here
Meet The People

Time to hit the road and actually talk to some real people. Don’t be shy!

“My advice to students would be talk to your customers. Once you come up with your business concept and target customer you need to start talking to them to find out if there really is a problem that needs to be solved. ”

Olufikayo Adeola, MA Creative Writing graduate, School of Arts and Social Sciences, and founder of Kugali

The goal is to be sure that your product or service is something that people NEED, and which they would actually be willing to PAY for. Trying to flog something that nobody really wants or needs is exhausting. If you wanted to spend your time wading through thick mud, you’d do one of those extreme mud races.

You don’t need to talk to hundreds of people; it’s about asking key questions and speaking to the right people. Our preferred method is to have a coffee and a chat with five to ten carefully chosen people, on an individual basis, rather than give a formulaic questionnaire to 100 randoms on the street.

We prefer one-to-one interviews as opposed to focus groups – there’s always one loudmouth who dominates the discussion and a few people who just nod and agree with them! Plus, it’s much harder to manage a group discussion, ensuring everyone has a chance to speak.

These in-depth chats will help you discover what motivates and interests your potential customers, what they like about your product, and what they’d like to change.

Top tips

• Offer people an incentive in return for their time – this could be cash, vouchers or simply cake and coffee, depending on the type of group.

• Consider introducing yourself as an independent researcher, rather than the founder of the business. This way the respondent will feel more comfortable telling you the truth and won’t be worried about upsetting you.

• Ask the person to sign a confidentiality agreement before you start talking so they take the confidential nature of the conversation seriously. This should include their name, address, email and words similar to the following: “I agree that any information or data shared in this interview is confidential and shall not be shared with any other parties. I also agree to have my photo taken for internal use by xxxx. I acknowledge receipt of my incentive payment of £……. for this session. Signed……. Date.....”

• If you’re offering some kind of incentive e.g. money, vouchers or muffins – give them at the beginning of the session as it puts the person at ease.

• Take someone with you as scribe – it’s really hard to lead a conversation and write notes at the same time. We’ve tried!
• You could also record the conversation on your phone, with a clip-on mic – if the person you're speaking to is happy to be recorded. If you decide to do this, don't go to a café, as the sound of the coffee machine will drown out their voice. We've made that mistake too!

• Pre-prepare questions, but be flexible enough to go off-piste depending on the flow of the conversation.

• Ask open questions – avoid asking questions which can be answered by just a “yes” or “no.” Instead ask “how” and “why” and “what” to encourage people to open up to you.

• If feedback is not as positive as you had hoped, don't ignore it. Ask why. Ask what they would like to improve.

• Don't lead people to tell you what you want to hear. The truth can sometimes hurt, but it's useful! There's no point doing research if you're only asking to try and get people to say what you want them to.

• Listen! If people suggest changes to your product or service – listen to them. After all, they are the ones who will be spending their hard-earned cash.

• You need to look, listen and take action to dig out information. Think of it as if you were collecting clues to solve a crime. As you collect, keep things real, don't turn stuff into marketing speak – it might lose its richness.

• The language people choose to use can be a good clue to what’s going on underneath. Listen out for some of these: repetition, keywords, language that sounds out of place, analogies.

• Listen out for contradictions – it can mean there is an unmet need there somewhere.

• Don’t draw conclusions too quickly – particularly based on the way they look or initial comments they make.

• Be interested – make them feel like they are telling you something new: “That is interesting, I haven't heard that before – tell me more about that”. Nod your head, murmur encouragement.

• Go with an open mind. We are all consumers and have our own opinions but people will always surprise you and with an open mind you'll see different things.

• Follow your nose, not a discussion guide. If you hear something interesting, ask about it. If you see something surprising, ask them about that too.
How to find the right people to talk to:

• If you're thinking of opening a shop, it might be as simple as heading to your chosen location and seeing who goes past. Alternatively, you could stand near your competitor's stores and find people there.

• Use social media – put out a request for people to help with your research. If you place these in relevant groups, or use appropriate hashtags, it will help you focus.

• Create a simple survey online using tools like Survey Monkey or Smart Survey - and spread the word using Facebook or LinkedIn to sift out the right kind of people. Offer a prize for one lucky respondent. Then, from these basic answers, arrange to meet or chat over Skype with a chosen few.

• Make the most of the fact that you're at university surrounded by people who are often ready to do almost anything for a pint. It helps if students are your target audience for this!
Say What?

The questions you ask will obviously depend on your business and the people you’re speaking with. The goal is always the same though: to get to know your potential customers, to find out what turns them on and off, and ultimately what would make them buy into your product or service.

The start of your conversation should be very general. Aim to break the ice. And then, get more and more focussed as the interview progresses. We've prepared some suggested questions to help you write your questionnaire.

General chit chat
• Can we start by asking you a bit about yourself?
• How long have you lived in...?
• What kinds of things do you like to do for relaxation?

Set the scene
• We’re here today to explore attitudes to...
• How do you feel about...?
• What are the best things about...?

On topic
• How do you feel about...?
• Are you troubled by...?
• What kind of challenges are you facing that you wish you could resolve?
• What kind of products do you now buy that you didn’t before?
• Where do you find information on...from?
• How would you feel if someone described you as “...?”
• What do you think counts as being ‘...’ nowadays?

• How do you think attitudes to...are changing?
• What do you think about when you think about...?
• How important is it for you to...?
• Where do you go to connect with people?
• How do you use technology? Socialise? Shop?
• How often do you go online?
• Do you shop online?
• Do you research...online?
• Can you tell us about the kind of sites you visit?

Brands
• Which brands talk to you in the right way?
• Which brands don’t?
• How do you think companies could appeal better to...?
• Can you think of any products / brands that are clearly targeting...?
• Do you think these brands do it well / badly – why?
Shopper habits

• How far in advance do you plan your buying? Is it spontaneous or pre-planned?
• How do you make the choice on what to buy?
• Is it based on person / price / range / brand / product?
• How much research would you do about … products?
• How different are the tastes in your family?
• How often do you shop for … products?
• Which … product could you not live without?
• How do you know if a … product works?
• What puts you off buying things?
• How do you know when you’ve made a smart buy?
• Where do you tend to shop for … products?
• Why?
• What do you like best about that shop?
• What are you not getting from the products / services you are currently using?
• What changes or improvements would you like to make?

Focus on your product

Show them sketches / prototypes / images to represent your product and explain your business in a nutshell.

Ask them to have a look at it for a few minutes.

• What is your initial impression?
• What do you like best about it?
• Do you think there is a market for this type of product / service?
• How do you think it is different?
• What do you think makes it better?
• What do you think of the brand name?
• What do you think of the design?
• Give me three words to describe the brand e.g. fun, serious, stylish, expensive, cheap.
• Are you already using something similar?
• How does the pricing compare to products or services you have used?
• How likely would you be to purchase this product / service?
• How much would you be willing to pay?
• How often would you buy from them?
• How would you describe this business to a friend / colleague?
• Where would you expect to see this advertised?
• What would you like to change or improve?
Now that you've actually met real people, go back to your customer profiles and adapt them based on the reality.

- **Were there any glaring differences?**
- **What surprised you the most?**
- **How will this information change your approach?**
Now that you're overloaded with information, the question is, what does it all mean?

Ultimately, you need to know where the opportunities lie. Use the information you have to answer these key questions:

- What are the problems people are facing that need solving?
- What are they buying at the moment?
- How much do you think people would be prepared to pay for a solution?
- What would persuade them to switch to yours?
- What makes your business special or different from the competition?
By now you're probably all talked out and raring to just get STARTED!

We can research ideas until the cows come home, or the pubs shut, but there's nothing like actually putting it all out there to see what happens. The best way to test an idea, is to actually test it, in the real world.

So, roll up your sleeves, it's time to start.

Build a web page announcing the launch of your idea to the world. If you don't already have a website, we suggest using a tool called www.launchrock.com, designed to help starters like you to launch your new ideas. Creating a Coming Soon page or a sign up widget will allow you to spread the word and gauge interest in your idea.

Once you've built your Launchrock, spread the word amongst your friends, family, social media followers and beyond. If people sign up or express an interest in your product before you've even launched, you know you're on to something.

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**Try This**

**Suck It And See**

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**Checklist**

- I've researched the market to check my business is unique.
- I've build a clear picture of the people I'm targeting.
- I spoke to some real-life people.
- I have reviewed my customer profiles based on these discussions.
- I understand where the opportunity lies.
- I've put my business out there to see if it flies.
We came up with the idea for VEVA when we were trying to meet up, ad hoc, with some friends after work first and then at a pub later. The problem young urban people face is that city life is hectic and unpredictable and people decide what to do on the go. There is no efficient way to organise a night out, especially last minute. Who hasn’t had an hour to kill, been held back in a meeting and wanted to go for a drink, or wanted to find a new place but didn’t know where the closest popup bar is? The solution is The VEVA App to go out whenever you want and simply meet wherever you are.

VEVA is a going out app that helps Londoners to socialise at the City’s best venues and tap hidden offers around them, on the day. City venues are able to attract app users through efficient and targeted real-time offers, using the VEVA web portal.

We are now trying to push VEVA out to a wider London audience and sign up more venues to get special offers for our users. We want to focus on traction and self-funding with revenue from venues. Once we hit the 25k+ user mark we would like to seek a Series A investment round to scale the brand to UK and beyond!

We both studied my Executive MBA at Cass. The MBA gave us all the tools we needed to start a business. The network we were able to tap into has also been pivotal in securing key hires (our CTO was through the network) and also valuable partnerships to build awareness.

My advice to students would be to be confident and bold – you are the one who has to sell a vision and make people believe that they have a need for what you are offering. And you have to try everything once! There is a huge potential in startups and you meet fantastic people everyday. Innovation is the key to truly change the world and you can have that key!
Chapter 5
Money On My Mind

Look after the pennies and the pounds will come rolling in!
In our experience, costs associated with running a business are always higher than you’d think, so do your homework to avoid a big shock later on. Besides, it’s better to know now that your business idea is a no-go than to end up broke or, even worse, living back at home with your parents.

If your costs are too high, your profit will be too low and the business will not be viable. You’ll either need to work out how to drive more sales or reduce your costs (that doesn’t mean simply not including them in the spreadsheet!)

Get clear on your costs and you’ll be able to calculate your pricing strategy and make sensible forecasts. We’re talking about the cost of getting started, the cost of running the business and the cost of producing your product or delivering your service.

To help you get started with your planning, here are some of the costs you may need to include:

**Start up costs**
How much will it cost you to get your business up and running?
- Computers
- Web design
- Premises
- Stock
- Marketing
- Printing
- Shop-fitting and furniture
- Vehicles
- Uniform

**Overheads / fixed costs**
How much will it cost you to run the business on a monthly basis? Try to calculate these for the first 12 months:
- Rent and service charges or mortgage
- Business Insurance
- Professional services e.g. lawyers and accountants
- Broadband
- Phone
- Wages for staff
- National Insurance contributions
- Advertising
- Training
- Your own salary
- SEO
- Travel
- Entertaining clients
- Stationery
- Printed materials e.g. leaflets, flyers, business cards
- Electricity and water
- Extra cash for contingency
Work out how much you will spend in each category over the next year or so. Don’t forget to include a salary for yourself - you’re not a volunteer.

**Cost of sales**

How much does it cost you to produce one product? You’ll need to know this to help you work out how much to charge and how much profit there is to be made per product.

- Travel
- Raw materials
- Delivery
- Warehouse fulfilment
- Postage
- Packaging
- Machine hire

**Top tips**

- Remember that you will need to budget for tax, National Insurance and your pension too. Get some advice from a proper accountant because you might need to save up for this.

- Beware of underestimating your costs and forgetting that they can increase very quickly - you need to be sure that you will still be able to make a profit.

- Do as much digging around as you can to find out exactly how much things are likely to cost and whether they might increase suddenly. You don’t want to get caught out.

- Ask a handful of friendly entrepreneurs about the type of costs they incur each month. There are sure to be loads of things you hadn’t even thought of.

- And don’t forget to add in a bit extra – contingency money – so you’ve got some money put aside for a rainy day, or if there’s some kind of drama.

**Recommended read**

If thinking about numbers brings you out in a sweat, you might like to read Chapter 5, Managing the Moola of “The Right Brain Business Plan” by Jennifer Lee-, for a more creative approach to financial planning. www.rightbrainbusinessplan.com/book
There are so many shiny new things to buy when you’re starting a business – business cards, laptops, offices, desks, equipment, outfits. It’s a veritable shopping spree waiting to happen. Don’t be the person with all the shiny new equipment who looks awesome, but never turns a profit.

Starting a business is about making money, not spending it! Running a business that doesn’t make any money is just a very time-consuming hobby. If you spend loads, your first year will be even more challenging than it is already going to be. Why make life even harder for yourself?

Top money saving tips

- Work from home or in a café. If you need an office space, consider a hot desk in a co-working space, or why not apply to The City Launch Lab? Find out more at www.city.ac.uk/cityventures/launch/city-launch-lab

- Buy second-hand equipment where possible.

- Look for affordable services like logo design or web design on bid websites such as www.fiverr.com, www.peopleperhour.com and www.elance.com

- Build your own website – using template software such as www.wix.com, www.squarespace.com, or www.moonfruit.com

- Do your own PR – don’t rush to employ a PR agency.

- Swap skills and services with fellow starters.

- Hire students looking for work experience.

- Always negotiate with suppliers, don’t just pay the initial price asked for.

- Get free mentoring via CityStarters

- Manage your finances carefully using free tools e.g. www.waveapps.com

You may not be brilliant at managing your own finances, but starting a business calls for some sensible money management.

Waving your arms around and being ditsy is not an option!

“We built an entire tech platform which was a beautiful thing, but which, it turned out, the majority of our customers couldn’t use (even though they had said they wanted it). If we could have done it all over again, we would have started with just two emails and done everything else offline and just built what was 100% needed and grown it organically that way. Basically, don’t build anything until you know exactly what you need to build and there is a proven reason for it. Don’t do tech just for tech’s sake.”

Jody Orsborn, MA Culture, Policy and Management graduate, School of Arts and Social Sciences, and co-founder of The Backscratchers.
Bootstrapper’s best friends

- www.fiverr.com (marketplace for jobs priced at $5)
- www.peopleperhour.com (bid marketplace with focus on quality)
- www.wix.com (website creation tool)
- www.squarespace.com (website creation tool)
- www.moonfruit.com (website creation tool)
- www.canva.com (DIY graphics, banners, logos)
- www.shopify.com (online shop creation tool)
- www.tictail.com (online shop creation tool)
- www.99designs.co.uk (graphic design marketplace)
Pricing

How much are you going to charge for your products or services? It’s one of the trickiest things to work out. Too high and people might not part with their cash, too low and you risk looking cheap and not making a profit.

First of all you need to know who you’re selling to. If you’re selling to consumers (business-to-customer, B2C) then you’re pricing strategy will differ from businesses selling to other businesses (business-to-business, B2B).

Ultimately, the price you can charge depends on how much real people (not just your mum) are willing to pay for your product or service.

There is no right or wrong answer to the pricing problem. Don’t drive yourself round the bend trying to get the perfect price – instead here are some things to bear in mind:

• Brand positioning - where does your product or service sit in the marketplace? What kind of brand do you intend to create? Are you premium? Mass market? Bargain basement? If you plan to communicate high quality or luxury, you should probably be priced above your competitors.

• Cost of goods – how much does it actually cost you to create and deliver your product or service? Once you know this, you can ensure your pricing will be profitable.

• Competitor pricing - what are your competitors charging? If you go too low you could start a price war and if you go too high you might price yourself out the market.

• What will the market bear – what are your target customers able to afford? What the market will bear is likely to influence how much you are able to sell. Are you based in a low-income area, or are you selling to millionaires?

• Value - how much value are you delivering to your customers. Does your product change lives? If so, people might be willing to spend rather a lot of money on it!

• Special sauce – if you’re product is unique, you will have more freedom when it comes to pricing. Being different and special enables you to charge a higher price. Plus, early adopters are more inclined to pay higher prices for products that are new and exciting.

Profit is key

The most common pricing strategy is to have a Profit Margin Target. This is the point at which you will make enough money to cover all your costs and turn a profit.

Example

Here’s an example of some rough calculations for a men’s t-shirt business:

• Each t-shirt costs £4 to produce – including the cost of the t-shirt, printing, packaging etc. (cost of sales).

• The business itself costs £2,500 to run each month (fixed costs including money for your salary).

• You plan to sell approximately 250 t-shirts per month in the first few months. Fixed costs per t-shirt are therefore £10.

• Total production cost per t-shirt is £4 + £10 = £14.

• Your brand positioning: Your t-shirts are luxury designer creations and the price should reflect that.
• Competitor analysis: Your competitors sell comparable products for £30.
• If you sell direct to customers via your website for £30. £30 - £14 = £16 profit!

Here’s another example for a luxury ice cream van business:
Add the cost of sales and the fixed costs to get to your production cost.
• Cost of sales: each ice cream costs £0.20 to produce, including the ice cream, the cone, the sauce etc.
• Fixed costs: your fixed costs are £2000 per month (this includes the van, petrol, staff costs, your salary). You plan to sell 2000 ice creams per month. So the fixed costs per ice cream is £1.
• Production costs: £0.20 + £1.00 = £1.20.

Then add a certain level of profit, which is usually expressed as a percentage, to calculate your price.
• If you operated at 75% profit margin: (£1.20 x 75% = £0.90) + production cost of £1.20 = Price £2.10 per ice cream
• If you operated at 100% profit margin: (£1.20 x 100% = £1.20) + production cost of £1.20 = Price £2.40 per ice cream

Look at your competitors. How much do they charge?

A standard ice cream van would charge £2 per ice cream. But yours is a luxury product, so you decide to go with 100% margin and charge £2.40 per ice cream, resulting in £1.20 profit per ice cream. Delicious.

Selling to retailers
If you’re selling to wholesalers or retailers, you’ll need to find out what their typical mark-up is, and work backwards from there to calculate the price at which you will sell to them.

For example, you’re planning to sell your range of iPad covers to a store.

Based on your research you would expect the covers to retail at £25.

The retailer would expect to make 50% profit on the covers. So, they would buy the covers from you for £12.50.

That means your wholesale price is £12.50

The RRP is £25.

Each cover costs you £2 to make. So, you make £10.50 on each product you sell to the retailer.
Curve pricing

Another method of pricing is based on the assumption that different people are willing to spend different amounts based on their personal preferences.

According to Nicholas Lovell, author of The Curve\(^4\), by giving people an option, of free, standard and premium, you can move people along a curve from “freeloaders to superfans”.

Imagine you’re an expert / consultant. You could consider offering a three-tiered pricing approach. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Free download or e-book</th>
<th>Fantastic value product</th>
<th>Premium consulting services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£29.99</td>
<td>£99 per hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automated download</td>
<td>DVD, Book, E-Course</td>
<td>One-to-one skypeseessions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Or perhaps you’re a musician or filmmaker? You could try this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Free music / video download</th>
<th>Signed CD / DVD</th>
<th>CD / DVD with extra songs and limited edition artwork</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£29.99</td>
<td>£79.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Top tips

Don’t forget to include margin to cover your own time. There’s a strong temptation to keep costs down by not paying yourself, but six months down the line, when you’re exhausted and broke, you might be tempted to jack it all in.

When you’re thinking about pricing, don’t talk yourself out of money. Shaving more and more money off your price because you don’t believe in yourself is risky. If you’re offering a quality product, charge a decent price for it, otherwise you’ll be constantly struggling to make ends meet, undervaluing your business and your customers will think you are no good. Customers often equate price to quality. Think about how much you are prepared to spend on different brands of juice, for example, and why that might be.

\(^4\)For more information about The Curve, check out www.thecurveonline.com
Now you know where the money is coming from, you need to work out how much money you are likely to turn over.

“Forecasting” may sound complicated, but it’s actually just sensible guesswork. Having a rough idea of your numbers, based on conservative and very sensible estimates, will help you make decisions.

However, spending months and months fiddling around endlessly with a spreadsheet of forecasts is a total waste of time. Treat this as an educated guessing game, be cautious rather than wildly optimistic, and you’ll be okay.

Produce a spreadsheet detailing your expected sales for the first 12 months.

Put the months along the top of the spreadsheet and break down how much you would expect to sell in each month.

Include the following things in your forecast:

- Value of each sale
- Volume of sales
- Reasons for any uplift or drop in sales

Things to think about:

- How many customers do you have now?
- How many customers do you think you will gain each month?
- How many customers do you expect to lose each month?
- How much do you think each customer will spend on average?
- Which months do you think will be particularly busy?
- Which months do you think will be particularly slow?
- Are there any important dates you need to consider? (e.g. special occasions like Valentines Day)
- Are you planning any new product launches? If so, when?
- Do you have any marketing activity planned? (e.g. sampling at festivals)
- Is the market growing or steady? (If it’s declining, perhaps you’re in the wrong market)
- Are you planning on growing your team in a particular month?
- Will you be raising your prices?
Top tips

• Don’t forget to flex your forecasts based on seasonality, Christmas, holidays etc.

• Be very conservative indeed – ask for a second opinion if necessary. Better to be safe than sorry.

• Take a realistic view of your first few months in particular. You won’t necessarily be selling thousands of units, or be completely booked up in your first week.

• Make sure delivering your forecast is physically possible – based on the number of hours in the day, or capacity for each person / machine.

• Once you’ve had a go at the forecast, move away from the forecast and get on with running your business. As we said, it’s just a rough guess – and not a full time job in itself.

• Get a second opinion. CityStarters are here to help!
If you need a spreadsheet template to manage your financial forecasts, we have a suggested template.

1. Start with sales predictions and work out how many products you’re going to sell each month.
2. Then, based on RRP, calculate your income.
3. Next, work out your cost of goods.
4. Then calculate your fixed costs.
5. Subtract your costs from your income to work out your net cash flow.

It looks a bit complex, but we promise that if you simply fill in your own numbers, all will become clear. To get an electronic copy, email CityStarters@city.ac.uk
### Sales Assumptions

<table>
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<th>Product 1</th>
<th>RRP (Price)</th>
<th>Jan-14</th>
<th>Feb-14</th>
<th>Mar-14</th>
<th>Apr-14</th>
<th>May-14</th>
<th>Jun-14</th>
<th>Jul-14</th>
<th>Aug-14</th>
<th>Sep-14</th>
<th>Oct-14</th>
<th>Nov-14</th>
<th>Dec-14</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Product 1</td>
<td>£ 5.00</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product 2</td>
<td>£ 10.00</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product 3</td>
<td>£ 20.00</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product 4</td>
<td>£ 30.00</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Number of Transactions**
- 0
- 8
- 33
- 39
- 69
- 95
- 121
- 140
- 171
- 210
- 235
- 290
- 408

### Income

#### (How much you'll make)

| Product 1 | £ 0.00 | £ 25.00 | £ 50.00 | £ 80.00 | £ 75.00 | £ 100.00 | £ 250.00 | £ 150.00 | £ 165.00 | £ 240.00 | £ 275.00 | £ 325.00 | £ 1,590.00 |
| Product 2 | £ 0.00 | £ 30.00 | £ 50.00 | £ 70.00 | £ 100.00 | £ 150.00 | £ 200.00 | £ 250.00 | £ 300.00 | £ 350.00 | £ 400.00 | £ 500.00 | £ 2,400.00 |
| Product 3 | £ 0.00 | £ 30.00 | £ 150.00 | £ 200.00 | £ 275.00 | £ 400.00 | £ 525.00 | £ 650.00 | £ 765.00 | £ 940.00 | £ 1,000.00 | £ 1,100.00 | £ 6,009.00 |
| Product 4 | £ 0.00 | £ 0.00 | £ 0.00 | £ 80.00 | £ 900.00 | £ 1,300.00 | £ 1,900.00 | £ 2,800.00 | £ 3,300.00 | £ 4,200.00 | £ 4,600.00 | £ 5,100.00 | £ 3,500.00 |
| Product 5 | £ 0.00 | £ 0.00 | £ 0.00 | £ 0.00 | £ 0.00 | £ 0.00 | £ 0.00 | £ 0.00 | £ 0.00 | £ 0.00 | £ 0.00 | £ 0.00 | £ 80.00 |

**Total Income**
- £ 0.00
- £ 150.00
- £ 290.00
- £ 600.00
- £ 1,250.00
- £ 1,890.00
- £ 2,350.00
- £ 2,850.00
- £ 3,330.00
- £ 3,990.00
- £ 4,475.00
- £ 5,325.00
- £ 25,495.00

### Expenses

#### Cost of Sales (Costs involved in creating products)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Cost per product</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Product 1</td>
<td>£ 0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product 2</td>
<td>£ 0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product 3</td>
<td>£ 0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product 4</td>
<td>£ 0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product 5</td>
<td>£ 0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Cost of Sales**
- £ 0.00
- £ 25.00
- £ 52.00
- £ 124.00
- £ 220.00
- £ 304.00
- £ 388.00
- £ 472.00
- £ 541.00
- £ 621.00
- £ 712.00
- £ 209.00
- £ 4,506.40

#### Operating Costs (Costs of running the biz)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office Costs - rent, rates,</td>
<td>£ 50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal &amp; Professional</td>
<td>£ 50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance - Employers &amp;</td>
<td>£ 25.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>£ 50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Subscriptions</td>
<td>£ 25.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website hosting</td>
<td>£ 25.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>£ 25.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sundries Costs - Bank charges, Stationery, Freelancers</td>
<td>£ 25.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Operating Costs</strong></td>
<td><strong>£ 525.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Employee Costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employee 1</td>
<td>£ 1,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Salary Cost</td>
<td>£ 1,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employers National</td>
<td>£ 1,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Employee Cost</strong></td>
<td><strong>£ 3,138.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Costs**
- £ 525.00
- £ 205.00
- £ 251.00
- £ 454.30
- £ 399.50
- £ 483.50
- £ 717.50
- £ 551.50
- £ 1,805.00
- £ 2,139.00
- £ 2,069.50
- £ 2,245.50
- £ 11,812.40

**Net Cash Flow (Income less costs)**
- £ 329.50
- £ 150.10
- £ 13.50
- £ 175.70
- £ 950.50
- £ 1,666.50
- £ 3,632.50
- £ 2,188.50
- £ 2,465.00
- £ 1,790.50
- £ 2,305.50
- £ 3,279.50
- £ 14,682.60

**Cash Flow**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash at start of month</td>
<td>£ 0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash at end of month</td>
<td>£ 329.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cumulative Profit/Loss</strong></td>
<td><strong>£ 329.50</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash at start of month</td>
<td>£ 0.00</td>
</tr>
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<td>Cash at end of month</td>
<td>£ 329.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cumulative Profit/Loss</strong></td>
<td><strong>£ 329.50</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cash Flow

Cash flow is the amount of cold hard cash your business has coming in and going out.

There’s an old saying ‘turnover is vanity, profit is sanity and cash is reality’ – and how true it is. It’s one thing to be on track to make lots of money, but unless it lands in the bank on time, when you need it, you’re in the danger zone.

“I didn’t care sufficiently about the bottom line and the cash flow. I didn’t understand all the rules and requirements imposed by the HMRC. Big mistake!”

Greg Drach, BSc Investment & Financial Risk Management graduate, Cass Business School, and co-founder of Inscribe Media.

Cash flow problems are the single biggest business killer. Bury your head in the sand at your peril! Even if your business is making money you might find yourself in a tricky situation where you don’t have the money you need to pay your bills when they’re due.

Those pesky 30-day payment terms written in small print at the bottom of invoices can prove lethal. Big businesses often try to hold on to cash for as long as possible, and will therefore pay you later than you’d like. This means that you’re left waiting for payment, with bills of your own to pay. Without careful cash flow management and an eagle eye on your bank balance, your whole business could go belly up quicker than you can say “cash flow crisis”.

You need to be aware of the amount of cash in your business at all times. And you need to keep hold of cash in your business for as long as possible – whilst simultaneously trying to get people to cough up as quickly as possible. We like to think of it as a kind of grip and grab manoeuvre.

Top tips

Here are some cash flow-crisis avoidance tips to ensure you don’t run into difficulties.

Bank stuff

• Set up a separate business bank account and set up regular text alerts with your balance.

• Check your bank balance and sales forecasts at least weekly so you can see if anything is about to go wrong.

• Be wary of cheques – they might bounce. And keep a record of the cheques you write in case they are not cashed immediately.

• Put a warning system in place so that if you get dangerously close to running out of money your bank lets you know.

• Keep a cash buffer for a rainy day, or see if your bank will give you a free overdraft facility.

• Use financial management software – which makes it easier to monitor your financial position and chase late payments (more info at the end of the chapter).
Invoicing
• Track payments against your invoices every day, so you can see who’s late paying and send them a reminder.
• Make sure you deliver your products or service on time and invoice immediately.
• Make sure you write your payment terms clearly at the bottom of your invoices.
• Consider invoicing a percentage of any fees up front and the rest on completion.

Systems
• Make it easy for people to pay you – take payment over the Internet or over the phone where appropriate.

Timings
• Ask your clients to pay for materials or send an up-front payment to enable you to pay for stuff.
• As soon as you make any money, bank it.
• Only pay your own bills when they are due – don’t pay in 15 days, if the terms are 30 days.
• Charge interest on late payments.
• After a couple of days, call the client to chase payment.

Cash
• Don’t over-spend!
• Look at your spending on a monthly basis and for ways to cut costs.

Customers
• Credit-check your customers to make sure they will pay you and they’ll pay on time.
• Refuse to work with slow paying clients or insist they pay up front.
• Offer discounts for clients who pay early to encourage good payment behaviour.
• If someone continues to pay late, stop working with them. A late payer can turn into a non-payer.
Money Management

If you’re filing system consists of various piles around the house, you need to get a grip!

As a business owner you will need to keep proper financial records. It’s the law. This may fill you with dread but the good news is, accountants were invented to help you with this. Not only do you need to keep records for legal reasons, but it will save you time and money and you’ll know you’re paying the right amount of tax.

“Don’t spend your money too fast! Have a contingency plan. My first two startups were funded, but we blew the money too quickly, ending up with half-finished products which we had to sell just to cover our costs.”

Alborz Bozorgi, BA Cultural and Creative Industries graduate, School of Arts and Social Sciences, and co-founder of Twipes.

It won’t be long before the money starts rolling in and you’re going to have to pay tax on your profits. This will involve filling in lots of forms and sending off your bank statements and receipts. So, our first piece of advice is to get an accountant.

Our second piece of advice is keep your accountant happy! Your accountant will help you to complete your tax return using all the stuff you’ve collected over the year. If you hand them a box stuffed with scrunched up bits of paper, they won’t like you very much.

Set up a business bank account as soon as possible. Shop around and track down a deal that gives you free banking for a while and some free advice, plus any other goodies you might be able to find.

Register as self-employed (if you are) with HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) as soon as possible. If you don’t do this within three months you might have to pay a fine.

Here’s the link: www.hmrc.gov.uk/selfemployed

Keep your documents neatly in chronological order in organised folders, not stuffed in a shoebox.

File business bank statements and invoices and receipts for everything you’ve bought for the business. There are loads of other types of records you will need to keep, from petty cash books to till rolls – exactly what you keep depends on your business type. We suggest asking your accountant for advice, they know all about this stuff.

Keep records of everything you spend money on and all the money you make, either using a spreadsheet or a fantastic service like Wave www.waveapps.com.

Use codes to match these numbers with actual bits of paper.

It’s a good idea to keep a cashbook too – a notebook where you can keep a running balance of your spending and income while you’re out and about. Or you could use a cloud-based system like Freshbooks to capture your expenses. That way everything will be safely stored and backed up, so if you spill something on your laptop or notebook it doesn’t matter.
Keep a record of any money you pay into or take from the business. If in doubt – keep the bits of paper anyway. You will need to keep records for seven years.

Ask your accountant whether you need to register for VAT, or to give you the heads up when it's time to do so.

Swot up on all this so you don’t rely too much on your accountant having the time to talk to you (and sufficient communication skills to explain stuff). Ultimately it is your company and not the accountant’s. It might be boring, but doing it right the first time round will save you a lot of time and hassle in the long run. Plus, you’re more likely to end up paying the right amount of tax and avoiding hefty fines.

If you want to learn more, the HMRC offers great introductory courses to get you started and at least help you speak the same language as your accountant.  
www.hmrc.gov.uk/courses/syob2/syob2/index.htm

Useful resources
Wave (small business software for invoicing, accounting and payroll) www.waveapps.com
Shoeboxed (receipt management system) www.shoeboxed.com
Freshbooks (cloud accounting) www.freshbooks.com/uk
Funding

What happens if you need some cash to get you started? There are plenty of sources of money around; it’s just a question of putting yourself out there and applying!

CitySpark
CitySpark is an annual business design and doing competition run by CityStarters with five prizes of £3000. The competition helps City students and recent alumni to develop a business idea, test it out with potential customers and then make it happen.

CitySpark is all about finding problems, identifying real gaps in the marketplace and building evidence-based startups right from day one.

www.city.ac.uk/cityventures/start/cityspark

“CitySpark and the Startup Summer School have helped me further develop my ideas, given me an opportunity to develop and practise my pitch, and provided me with the contacts and seed funding to make it a reality.”

Matt Bland, MSc Marketing Strategy and Innovation graduate, Cass Business School, and co-founder of Eat Safe.

Cass Entrepreneurship Fund
We are also lucky enough to have The Peter Cullum Centre for Entrepreneurship at Cass Business School. The Centre houses a variety of resources, which can assist the development and execution of business concepts and is a focal point for practical support for entrepreneurs. It is also home to the £10m Cass Entrepreneurship Fund, an early-stage growth equity fund managed by a professional in-house team. The Fund makes commercial investments into promising companies from across the Cass and City network. These typically range in size from £50,000 - £500,000 in the first instance. For more info head over to

www.city.ac.uk/cityventures/scale/cass-entrepreneurship-fund
More useful stuff:

**The Varsity Pitch**
Win £10,000 in cash for your business! The Varsity Pitch Competition is the UK’s premiere pitching competition for student and graduate entrepreneurs.

If you want the chance to win £10,000 to invest in your business, NACUE (the National Association of College and University Entrepreneurs) has just launched its annual Varsity Pitch Competition. The competition is open to any current college or university student or graduate of the past five years with a business idea or a current business.

[www.nacue.com/events](http://www.nacue.com/events)

**Cockpit Arts**
UK’s only creative-business incubator for designer-makers.

[www.cockpitarts.com](http://www.cockpitarts.com)

**Santander Universities Entrepreneurship Award**
This annual competition has categories for Undergraduates and Postgraduates with prizes ranging from £1000 to £20,000!

[www.santanderuniversities.co.uk/enterprise/win/entrepreneurship-awards](http://www.santanderuniversities.co.uk/enterprise/win/entrepreneurship-awards)

**Shell LiveWIRE**
An online community for young entrepreneurs aged 16-30. Weekly Prize of £1,000.

[www.shell-livewire.org](http://www.shell-livewire.org)

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**Funding Circle**
Get a fast, flexible loan, up to £1,000,000, for your business. Bypass the banks and have your loan funded directly by people and organisations across the UK.

*Please seek advice from CityStarters before applying for a loan!*

[www.fundingcircle.com](http://www.fundingcircle.com)
Crowdfunding

Another option, if you’re in need of some cash to get started, or you’re keen to create a loyal following of fans, is crowdfunding. It’s a great way to get new projects off the ground by asking lots of people to pledge small amounts of money.

“Kickstarter allowed us to pre-sell more than 3,000 units in less than 3 months, raising £47,000 for production, spending NO money on marketing and advertising. A great achievement for a cash strapped startup!”

Frank Milani, Masters in Innovation, Creativity and Leadership student, Cass Business School, and co-founder of Popcord (Powergoat Ltd).

Crowdfunding is not a license to print free cash, but it can be an effective way to raise a considerable amount of money.

You don’t necessarily need to have a huge fan-base before you start, as long as you’re clear about your goal and what people will get in return for their money.

Top tips

• Film a video to create a clear and compelling pitch to potential funders.

• Create an enticing offering giving people a chance to invest in your exciting project in return for a range of money-can’t-buy rewards, like a branded t-shirt or your product.

• Consider an affordable investment level of around £15, such as a signed book or print, and then a more premium reward that will get people reaching for their credit cards.

• Make it clear what will happen to the money you receive.

• Give yourself sufficient time to deliver results – you don’t want to let your funders down.

• Running a successful crowdfunding campaign is a lot of work. We recommend you do your research before starting and consider doing an online course to maximise your chance of success.

• Marketing is key to a successful campaign. No one will fund it if they don’t know it exists!
Check out these crowdfunding platforms that are perfect for student startups:

**Kickstarter:** [www.kickstarter.com](http://www.kickstarter.com) The original and biggest, perfect for creative projects but, as it has become so large, it is harder than ever to get a project accepted.

**Indiegogo:** [www.indiegogo.com](http://www.indiegogo.com) Huge reach, no application process!

**Buzzbnk:** [www.buzzbnk.org](http://www.buzzbnk.org) An online crowdfunding platform bringing social ventures looking for startup or growth capital together with like-minded people keen to participate in a new way of funding social change. Funds can be raised in a variety of ways, from offering fun and engaging benefits, in return for goods or services, or as a loan.

**Hubbub:** [www.hubbub.net](http://www.hubbub.net) Online crowdfunding for any project, idea or event.

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**Checklist**

- [ ] I've got a grip on my costs.
- [ ] I know what bootstrapping is and what's involved.
- [ ] I've picked a pricing strategy.
- [ ] I've begun forecasting – it's sensible guesswork.
- [ ] I'm building in clever cash flow techniques.
- [ ] I've investigated money management software to keep us on track.
- [ ] If I need extra money, I've looked into funding options.
- [ ] If I'm considering taking out a loan, I have spoken to CityStarters first!
Dhruvin Patel, BSc Optometry graduate, School of Health Sciences and founder of Ocushield, a revolutionary screen protector for digital devices that protects the user’s eyes from harmful blue light. www.ocushield.com

“Working at Vision Express in Canary Wharf last summer, I was intrigued when the practice took stock of a new lens from Hoya, named Blue Control. Discussing the lens with colleagues and delving into research on blue light, I learnt that, to prevent blue light having an effect on the sleep wake cycle, around 50% of the light needs to be blocked. However, many blue light blocking products are only able to cut 25% of the rays emitted, so I wondered if more could be done.

I went away and developed Ocushield. All digital devices produce harmful blue light. This blue light causes eye strain and fatigue as well as suppressing melatonin which disturbs our sleep wake cycle. By using OcuShield’s screen protector you can protect your eyes; it cuts eye strain and fatigue, as well as allowing the user to fall asleep more easily.

As a student, I was happy to risk time and capital – without a second thought. I wanted to create and establish a brand and my vision is to take it as far as possible.

To raise money to fund the business, I’ve taken an alternative approach. I’ve been distributing products from America, and created an ecommerce platform for the UK (www.screwmatt.co.uk). I’ve also been purchasing items from China, and reselling them on my eBay power-seller account “dp_distribution”. Also, where students spend their student loans on food and clothes, I tend to invest it. In addition I entered the CitySpark competition and won £3,500. All this has helped me to develop my product and fund the business, without needing to give away equity or take out a loan.

I have made mistakes, like spending money spontaneously, before thinking it through. Also, I didn’t learn enough about tax, or the legalities of setting up a business. So, I recommend doing that properly!

If you think your business has a possibility of making a profit, go for it. Remember that your first venture won’t be your last; you'll learn as you go along, you'll refine processes, so that when you have that million dollar idea, you'll be ready to lift off.”
James Grant, Computer Science with Games technology student, School of Mathematics, Computer Science and Engineering, and founder of Weavee, the job site that helps people discover their full potential. www.weavee.co.uk

“I was getting more and more frustrated by the constant conversations with recruiters and getting no response or recruiters simply trying to put me in front of jobs that were not at all relevant to what I would want.

I developed the initial idea when working at Hays and started thinking about how I could improve the process they had. So I started skill matching to find jobs more relevant to me. The concept of discovering what you could do came from trying to differentiate between all the other platforms and realising what was missing from general day to day life.

Weavee helps people discover what they can do. We appraise their skills, abilities and personality using a unique algorithm able to show people their position within the industry. We also create value for the recruiter. Relevant empowered candidates go in front of an employer with a higher likelihood of success, reducing time to hire and increasing operational efficiency.

At the moment the company is steaming ahead! We have 400 candidates who have been appraised, 1000's of people reading the blog and lots of empowered people using the platform. We also have 23 recruiters currently on the platform and have placed people into two jobs so far. As we are fully set in the acquisition stage of the business, the next stage is activation of revenue streams, this is mostly dictated from mass adoption.

Being in the computer science department at City meant I was simply able to build whatever I could imagine as I was able to code! The core support of the team of advisors at City was also important alongside mentorship.

I personally wanted to spend time developing my career rather than studying and so I put myself on the Professional Pathway scheme. This meant that I was not only able to work and study, but also earn at the same time! Everything I have learned can be attributed in some form to the flexibility of the scheme.

The support received from City is great. Students should just go and ask for help! You should 100% be asking the CityStarters team for advice. Having the constant support of a team is vital as they will be able to find beneficial ways to get the word of what you are doing out there!

I would suggest spending time talking to people about your idea and when people critique it look into the reason they did it, if it is just an idea you are likely pitching it wrong. Don’t see this as a person that is a detractor, it is instead an opportunity to learn and refine your pitch until it is correct!”
Chapter 6
Be Prepared
How to bulletproof your business
Deciding what type of legal structure your business will have is a complicated business, but it’s one of the first things you’ll need to do before you start trading.

It’s important to get it right, because it affects lots of important things.

- Forms you need to complete in order to officially start the business
- The tax you’ll be paying
- How you get paid and when
- What your personal responsibility is if the business makes a loss.

We’ve tried to make this stuff as easy to understand as possible to give you a heads up, but before you make any final decisions, we thoroughly recommend going to see an accountant.

These are the most common legal structures for you to choose from:

**Sole trader**

You’re a sole trader if you run your business as an individual. (Although you can employ people - you don’t have to work on your tod.) From a legal and tax point of view, it’s simple to set up as a sole trader, which makes it a popular option.

Being a sole trader simply means that you alone are responsible for the business and any debts you may incur. But, on the upside, you get to keep all the profits (after you’ve paid tax of course!)

You, as an individual, are responsible for:

- Any losses the business makes
- Keeping good clear records of all your sales and expenses
- Paying all the business's bills.
- Submitting an annual Self Assessment tax return
- Paying income tax on profits
- Paying National Insurance

If this sounds scary, don’t worry – an accountant will be able to advise you.

How to set up as a sole trader:

You will need to register with HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) as soon as you’ve started the business. Go here for more information www.hmrc.gov.uk/startingup/index.htm

**Limited company**

A limited company is a legal organisation that you can set up to run your business on your behalf. This means that the finances of the business are separate to your own piggy bank. Every limited company has shareholders who own a stake of the company.

Any money the business makes belongs to the company, and only once tax is paid can it share the profits with shareholders and directors.

Warning: before rushing in to become a company director, it’s a good idea to become acquainted with the legal obligations associated with directorship, as there are lots.
The real advantage to a limited company is that the directors are not personally responsible for any debts the business may have, as long as they don't break any laws.

A Limited Company is responsible for:
• Putting together annual accounts
• Submitting an annual return to Companies House
• Sending HMRC a Company Tax Return

On top of this, directors must also fill in a Self Assessment Tax Return every year and pay tax and National Insurance through the PAYE system on any salary they earn.

An accountant can help you with these things, unless you’re feeling particularly brave. For free legal advice head to Start-Ed www.start-ed.org.

How to set up a limited company
You must formally register your business with Companies House – you can usually do this online.
www.companieshouse.gov.uk/infoAndGuide/companyRegistration.shtml

You must also inform HMRC when you start trading:
www.hmrc.gov.uk/ct/getting-started/new-company/start-up.htm

Partnership
In a business partnership, you and your business partner (or partners) share personal responsibility for the business. Profits are split between the partners and each partner pays tax on their share of profits.

As a partner you will be responsible for:
• Your share of any losses the business makes
• Keeping good clear records of all your sales and expenses
• Paying your share of the business’s bills
• Sending a partnership Self Assessment tax return every year
• Sending a personal Self Assessment tax return every year for your own income
• Paying income tax on your share of profits
• Paying National Insurance

Like a marriage, a partnership means sticking together in sickness and in health, i.e. sharing both profits and debts. It could be fun working with someone else, as long as you get on well and can be honest and open with each other. If you fall out, things could go badly, so set up an agreement on how the business will be run at the start.

We know plenty of people who failed to put the necessary legal contracts in place, and this lack of preparation led to a huge mess when things didn't turn out quite as planned. You might start off as friends, but things can often get complicated when money is involved. Deciding who will do what, how much time you’ll be spending on the business and what happens to the business if one of you decides to leave, or go travelling, or head off to live in a yurt, could save a lot of heartache in the long run.

For the sake of a couple of hundred quid, it’s better to do this right. As a great lawyer told us, “it's better to build your business on strong foundations than on a bog!”

If you don’t fancy being held personally liable for the business’s losses, you can set up a limited partnership or limited liability partnership instead.

How to set up as a business partnership
Head over to HMRC for more info www.hmrc.gov.uk/sa(parts-partners.htm#1.
Limited Liability Partnership (LLP)
This is like a partnership, but less risky. (And more complicated.)

It's less risky because your liability is limited to the amount of money you invested in the business... and more complicated because it costs more to set up and you need at least two “designated members” who'll have extra responsibilities.

In a limited liability company your personal financial risk is limited to the amount you've invested, as with an LLP, but, you will have extra legal duties, like keeping public records and filing accounts.

If you're thinking of setting up a LLP, you will need to go and see a solicitor or an accountant for advice.

Top tips for finding the perfect legal structure for you

• If you’re not sure which business structure is right for you, ask an accountant or solicitor for advice. Did we mention Start-Ed? Oh yes we did! Free legal advice based at City University London – what’s not to love: Find out more at www.start-ed.org.

• Don’t assume you need to form a limited company right from the start.

• If you do need to register your business formally, don’t pay money for incorporation services online – go straight to Companies House.

• Decide where your registered office will be and where you'll be keeping important documents – this can be your house, your accountant’s office, or your own office.
Use Protection

As intellectual property is a rather technical topic, we’ve brought in the big guns in the form of Mandy Haberman, inventor and intellectual property guru. (For more information about Mandy and her inventions head over to www.mandyhaberman.com.)

Here’s her advice on using the concept of Intellectual Property to protect your idea and help you to find out if it’s original.

For more detailed information on any aspect of Intellectual Property, visit www.ipo.gov.uk

“To help us protect our idea, we used exclusive contracts with distributors, trademarks and established a difficult-to-replicate supply chain.”

Greg Drach, BSc Investment & Financial Risk Management graduate, Cass Business School, and co-founder of Inscribe Media.

“What is Intellectual Property (IP)?

Mandy: “Intellectual property is something unique which you have created using your mind. It can be an invention, a new product, a logo, something written, something artistic, computer software, music or film. If you create something, then you the individual or the business you work for, own the IP. Protecting your IP helps prevent other people stealing your ideas, or using them without permission. It also enables you to charge other people to use your ideas, if you want to.”

“The whole team is under employment contracts. It’s really important! You should always have a contract with co-founders, investors and employees, to protect yourself and protect the business.”

Jody Orsborn, MA Culture, Policy and Management graduate, School of Arts and Social Sciences, and co-founder of The Backscratchers.
How do you find out if your idea is original?

Mandy: “A thorough internet background search is always a good start to any product design. It helps to see what the market looks like and to see if your idea has already been done. However, if you can’t find it in the market, it doesn’t necessarily mean that your idea is original. Many brilliant ideas have never been commercialised. It is therefore also important to search the patent database. You can search over 80 million patents on Espacenet using keywords and categories.” www.espacenet.com

Protecting your idea prior to public disclosure

When it comes to talking about a new business idea, it pays to be careful. Asking people for advice and getting honest opinions is a great thing to do, but in certain situations you may need to take precautions.

When discussing your idea it may be fine to share what you’re doing, but don’t give away how you’re going to make it happen, in the same way that Coca Cola don’t disclose their secret ingredients!

If you do need to have a discussion with a supplier or retailer, consider using a confidentiality agreement – sometimes called a non-disclosure agreement or NDA. This is a short agreement that ensures your idea will be kept secret by the people you are going to talk to. It might seem like a bit of a pain, or like you’re being paranoid, but you shouldn’t be naïve. There are people out there who will steal your ideas. We’ve seen it happen and it’s not pretty.

Mandy: “Prior to applying for a patent you must not show anyone your idea until they have signed an NDA. Public disclosure without an NDA will disqualify you from applying for a patent. Even after you have applied for a patent, or registered your design, an NDA can be helpful. It acts as belt and braces to keep your idea safe when approaching potential licensees, suppliers or retailers.”

Another very helpful tool that can protect your creative work prior to acquiring IPRs, is a Creative Barcode (www.creativebarcode.com). Some companies refuse to sign NDAs but are willing to acknowledge a Creative Barcode.

Different types of protection

The kind of protection available to you depends on the type of work you want to protect.

Copyright

As long as your written work or artwork is original it will automatically have copyright protection without you having to do anything. To help protect your copyright work, you should mark it with the © symbol, your name and the year in which the work was created.

Design rights

Design Rights protect the look of something. They protect the shape or configuration of the whole, or a specific part of the product, but they don’t protect the technology (how it works). Unregistered Design Rights are automatic and protection lasts for 15 years. A registered Design Right will last for 25 years. To have either a registered, or an unregistered Design Right, your work must be original and not copied from an existing design.
“We have patents, design rights, and trademarks. You can also protect your idea by getting it out in the market quicker then everyone and keep improving and try to be the best at it.”
Frank Milani, Masters in Innovation, Creativity and Leadership student, Cass Business School, and co-founder of Popcord (Powergoat Ltd).

Trade marks
A Trade Mark is a sign that signifies your brand. It can be a word (or words), a logo, or a combination of both. If your product is going to be commercialized or licensed, you might consider registering your Trade Mark but until then, if you want to protect a brand name, you can mark it with ™. See the IPO website for guidance on what would be accepted as a Trade Mark: www.ipo.gov.uk/types/tm/t-about.htm

Patents
Patents protect how something works i.e. the technology. Products embodying similar patented technology might look completely different. Whilst you can apply for the other IPRs (listed above) by yourself, you should use a professional patent agent to draft your patent. www.cipa.org.uk

In order to qualify for a patent, your idea must be original, new and have been kept secret prior to application. Once you have applied for a patent, you can mark your work as “patent pending” which is helpful when approaching potential licensees or investors. Before your patent application is published by the UKIPO (usually within 12 months of the first filing) you can choose to extend your patent application to additional countries.

“Patenting is an expensive process. Only embark upon it if you are confident that your product will be commercially successful. If you do decide to make an application but find yourself unable to proceed as time progresses, you have the option of withdrawing the application. If this is done before publication (usually about 12 months after filing the application), your invention will remain undisclosed, enabling you to start a fresh application at a later date.

Before you apply for a patent, check that you actually own your IP. Some universities require you to assign any IPRs created whilst you are a student to the institution as a condition of enrolment. If this is the case, discuss patent application with them.

“I have trademarked “Ocushield” but I decided against a patent as it takes 18 months and a lot of capital; money which can be used to establish the business rather than waiting for a patent to go through. If your idea is truly technical, then I’d say patent it. Ocushield is a collaboration of materials that already existed so in my opinion, it’s not too intellectual!”
Dhruvin Patel, BSc Optometry graduate, School of Health Sciences, and founder of Ocushield.
NB If you intend to register your design and also apply for a patent, you should apply for the patent first, so that the Design registration does not publicly disclose any features of what you want to include in your patent application. Postponing the Design registration is also sensible, as the final design of your product is likely to change as your invention progresses towards production.

Note: Please be aware that different IP regimes operate in different countries. This guide relates purely to commercial strategies in the UK and is not intended as a substitute for legal advice.

Useful resources

Here's a handy guide to NDA's from the IPO (Intellectual Property Office)
www.ipo.gov.uk/nda.pdf

There's also lots of useful info at the British Library Business and IP Centre
www.bl.uk/bipc

Start-Ed, based at City, can also help with legal advice www.start-ed.org

Intellectual Property Health Check
www.ipo.gov.uk/ip4b/ip4b-uk/iphealthcheck.htm

IP Equip App: The IPO have created a handy app for businesses keen to learn more about IP. It has been designed to help you find the best way to protect your intellectual property and avoid expensive mistakes.
www.gov.uk/government/publications/intellectual-property-for-business
Risky Business

While we’re on the subject, let’s have a think about what might go wrong with your business – not because we’re being negative, but because it’s sensible!

Here are only a few examples of possible pitfalls:

• Slow payers will need chasing up, which can take up a lot of time.
• Competitors ripping you off, seriously undercutting you, or copying you.
• Customers not valuing your product or service.
• Problems with deliveries and other practical stuff.
• Computer or machinery meltdown.
• Staff issues e.g. general stroppiness, lack of skills, availability, high costs.
• Random nightmares e.g. fires, floods, earthquakes, terrorist attacks.

Being aware of the risks will help you to take action now to prevent things going wrong and, if they do, you’ll know what to do.

Try This

Make The Headlines

In a bid to try to make this as fun as possible, and not too depressing... try this!

Step 1
Imagine the front page of The Sun – your business has gone belly up. What’s the headline? Why has it happened?

• Did you lose your bottle?
• Did you fall out with your business partner?
• Did your competitors make a better version of your product?
• Did your staff let you down?
• Did you make a mistake?
• Did you ignore the warning signs?
• Did your assistant go loopy with the company credit card?
• Did your customers not pay you?
Step 2
Now, think about how you can protect yourself from each of these risks to avoid your worst nightmares coming true. We've already discussed lots of things that could help, for example NDAs, cash flow management and financial planning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Disaster</th>
<th>Protection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Checklist
- Accountant visited
- Legal structure selected
- Business registered
- Legal protection investigated
- Start-Ed / British Library / Intellectual Property Office consulted
- Risks considered
- Preventative action taken!
Case Study

Olufikayo Adeola, MA Creative Writing graduate, School of Arts and Social Sciences, and founder of Kugali, a digital library for the best African titles in animation, gaming and comics. www.kugali.com

“There is a perceived lack of diversity in the media by members of the African diaspora across Europe and North America. This representation is lopsided because it is disproportionate to the demographics across these regions. Furthermore, in Africa the entertainment industry is still at its infancy. This means that there are a limited number of distribution and marketing platforms available to African filmmakers or game developers. As a result the audience suffers due to a lack of content.

I found several great African titles scattered across the internet but there was no central hub through which I could consistently keep up with the best titles. Therefore, my team members and I decided to create one.

By creating a single platform where users can discover African narratives Kugali can create value for content providers and their respective audiences. For content providers Kugali offers a much needed marketing platform that will help them connect with a relevant audience. Similarly for audiences interested in African Narratives Kugali is a simple and convenient service that can help them discover, rate, review and share the best titles across film/TV, comics and gaming.

Our podcast, which was featured on iTunes new and noteworthy, consistently receives up to 5,000 listeners per month. We’re currently beta testing the first iteration of our website. We’ll use this opportunity to model our value and growth hypothesis and once we hone in on these we’ll seek to raise some early stage funding to improve the website and expand our user base.

Liaising with the Entrepreneurship Team has given me access to a body of knowledge and expertise that has helped me steer the business in the right direction. My advice to students would be talk to your customers. Once you come up with your business concept and target customer you need to start talking to them to find out if there really is a problem that needs to be solved.”
Chapter 7
Build-A-Brand

Create a gut feeling
Actually, branding is a lot more than a symbol or a slogan. The way your business chooses to represent itself visually is only part of its overall branding.

Branding is all about promise, emotion and gut feeling. It tells your prospective customers what to expect, how to feel, what your company stands for and how your product is different to the rest.

Your brand is made up of the following elements:

1. What you stand for – your brand values
2. What makes people connect with you – emotional connection
3. How you communicate – your messaging and tone of voice
4. How you look – visual elements – e.g. logo
5. What makes you stand out in your industry

Successful brands stand out from the crowd, promise great things and deliver on those promises.

Hands up if you think your brand basically means your logo?

The word brand tends to make us think immediately about Nike swooshes, Innocent Drinks smiley faces, McDonald’s golden arches and Mercedes badges.

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Successful brands stand out from the crowd, promise great things and deliver on those promises.

“Be confident and be bold – you are the one who has to sell a vision and make people believe that they have a need for what you are offering.”

Ashuveen and Lukas Linsbichler, Executive MBA graduates, Cass Business School, and co-founders of VEVA.

Having a clear brand from the start will help you make decisions – from knowing what colour to paint your store, to how you'll handle a customer complaint. For example, let's say you're opening a café dedicated to supporting and giving back to the community. If you're clear on your commitment and values from the start you'll be able to make good decisions about the kind of people you want to employ, what coffee you sell, who makes your cakes, which crockery you use and what everyone wears.

Powerful brands have loyal customers who choose their products and services over the competition, possibly paying a higher price for the privilege. They are able to attract people who stick with them through thick and thin because those people connect with the values held by the brand.

Branding is the reason why we always buy Evian mineral water instead of filling our water bottle with tap water. It’s the reason we love our New Balance trainers and our iPhone. It’s not that we’re shallow, or easily led, but rather that we’re influenced by the allure of brands which appeal to our core values.

Creating a strong brand is important because it will help attract customers and encourage them to take a punt on your business.

Sometimes, the business starts before a brand has been identified – especially if your business just kinda happened, or if you were in a rush to be first to market. If you haven't already sorted your brand, there's no time like the present.
Track down examples of brands that catch your eye for different reasons. From the good, the bad to the downright ugly.

“A great branding example I’ve seen is water repellent and protection for trainers. You normally see this being sold in shops in very generic cans, with no real brand association. Along comes J2k, a musician, who obviously loves trainers, and creates “Crep Protect.” Suddenly, trainer protector is cool and selling very nicely in places like Foot Locker and Schuh.”

Dhruvin Patel, BSc Optometry graduate, School of Health Sciences, and founder of Ocushield.

- What does the logo and branding tell you about the product?
- Can you find anything that you bought purely because of the brand? What made you buy it?
- Find things where the brand needs a LOT of work! What would you do to improve it?
- What brands do you identify with in particular? What makes them great?
- Which messages do you identify with?
- What do you like about their visual identity?
- Which aspects would you like to emulate in your own brand?
- How radical / formal / informal is the brand in its context?

Jot down any ideas you get!
Your BRAND is more than your BRANDING. Think of your brand as the values that inform your decisions about what to wear, and your branding as the things in your wardrobe.

Your aim as an entrepreneur is to create a brand that engages and mobilises people. It’s the personality of your business. It’s what you believe in and what you stand for.

Here are some examples of brand values:
- Coca-Cola: Simple pleasures, optimism, happiness, human connections, bringing people together.
- Virgin: Fun, rebellion, self-expression, rock-star lifestyle (at accessible cost).
- Apple: Simplicity, design, premium quality, usability.

“Try This
What Do You Stand For?

Your business: | Brand values:
---|---

- "You need to differentiate yourself from your competitors somehow and demonstrate that your brand offers something unique. You can always be more generic but you risk getting embroiled in a price war, which you won't win!"

Ashuveen and Lukas Linsbichler, Executive MBA graduates, Cass Business School, and co-founders of VEVA.
Identify Your Values

Here is some provocation to help you identify your brand values:

• If your brand were a person, what would they be like? What would their personality traits be?

• If your business was an ice cream, what would it be like?

• Who would feature in a TV ad to represent your brand?

• If your brand were a superhero, who would it be and which super powers would it have?

• If your brand was a politician, what would their key policies be?

Once you’ve chosen your brand values, you’ll need to write them up – stick them on the wall, make them into a screensaver, have them tattooed on your arm. Whatever it takes to make them stick and be front of mind when you’re making every single business decision from now on.
And where do you go for your morning coffee? Starbucks? Costa? Nero? Or the independent place around the corner? When you’re dashing to lectures holding your paper cup, have a think about why you chose that particular brand.

We may not realise it, but as consumers we have a relationship with these products. And our decision to buy them says something about us.

Consumers choose brands based on the emotional connection they feel with it. This connection is based on the different elements of their branding – from customer service, to packaging, taste, price or where the product is available.

The connection is also created by tapping into the customer's emotions, desires and unmet needs. For example, a need to belong, the desire to stand out from the crowd, to be seen to care about the environment, to be on trend, to be health conscious, to be a caring person, to be cutting edge and so on.

What emotional connection will you make with your customers?
You need to decide the impression you want to give your potential customers. Using clear consistent messaging and the appropriate tone of voice will help lead your customers and give them a good understanding about the brand they are buying into.

Are you…?

• Old-school and reliable
• Cutting edge, modern
• Risky and exciting
• Cute and cuddly
• Quirky and different
• Feminine
• Macho and manly
• Healthy and fresh
• High-end luxury
• High quality handmade

The words you use and the things you say will need to reflect this. Everything from your slogan or strapline, the brochures you write, the copy on your website, the signs in your shop and the messages on your packaging should be consistent.

What will your tone of voice be?
Your brand tagline or strapline is the short sentence or phrase that accompanies your logo. It should be short, sharp, snappy, memorable and explain in a few words what your business is all about.

It should communicate your brand’s personality and explain why someone should shop or work with you.

[BUSINESS NAME] is [KIND OF PRODUCT OR SERVICE] for [KIND OF PEOPLE].

Not rocket science really, but it might help you to get clarity!

Have a bash at writing some different versions of your tagline using the above formula and see if anything sticks.
Test your tagline

When you're done, walk away, take some time out and come back to it when you're feeling fresh.

Only choose a tagline that feels right. It's all about the gut feeling.

A fun way to test your tagline is to imagine it written on the side of a lorry. Will people passing you on the motorway get a clear understanding of your brand as they whizz past?

We saw a genius, and very literal, example of the lorry test recently. A sewage company had the following slogan “Everything you do is driven by us.” We'll never forget it!
How will your branding look? Which colours, graphics and fonts will you use?

Most businesses choose a business name, logo, colour scheme, symbol, strapline to reflect their brand values.

Whatever you choose, keep your visual identity in line with your brand values.

Keep it consistent – use the same fonts, colours, graphics, strapline and logo on everything. This will help establish your brand, boost recognition and avoid confusing people.

The following methods of communicating your business may need a brand makeover:

- Product design
- Packaging
- Brochures
- Website
- Business cards
- Uniform
- Office / shop front
- The way you answer the phone
- Email footer
- Vehicles

It makes us feel sad when we see poor branding. You know the kind: higgledy piggledy, inconsistent, messy, unclear. There’s no excuse!

After all, a strong, alluring brand can entice customers to part with more money. Why wouldn’t you want some of that?

Top tips for creating an awesome logo and brand identity

- Use a professional designer!
- Be original – don’t just copy a brand you love – it’s lazy and you could get sued.
- Gather images and key words and create a moodboard to inspire you.
- Keep it simple – do not include too many different elements or it will look a mess.
- Be aware of cultural differences – check your logo is acceptable in different countries you plan to operate in.
- Ideally your logo will look good in black and white as well as in colour.
- Keep to one or two fonts to avoid it looking messy.
- Check your logo works on a white or black background.
- Check it’s legible from a distance.
- Ensure it’s timeless and won’t go out of style in a year.
- Turn your logo upside down and round and round to check it doesn’t look odd or rude from a funny angle.
- Check for hidden words. People discovered a rude word when Weight Watchers was written in lowercase.
- Show draft versions to lots of people and get feedback before you decide.
- Once you have a brand identity – use it across everything you do.
Chances are you’re not going to be designing your logo yourself. You’ll need to write a brief for your designer including key information. This will save you time and money and keep your designer happy.

Here are some suggestions for the things you’ll need to include:

- Contact details
- Your business name
- What the business does
- Strapline
- Brand values
- Emotional connection: how do you want potential customers to feel about your brand?
- Colours and fonts you like
- Target audience e.g. women aged 25-45 living in London who are interested in fashion
- Style preferences e.g. cutting edge, hipster, traditional
- Competitors – what do your competitors’ logos look like?
- Inspiration – include any images or graphics you’re drawn to. You could create a Pinterest board for this, or send over some scans

When you get the final design, be sure to get it in different sizes and formats including a vector*. You should also get a style guide detailing fonts used and colours with their references (get Pantone and CMYK and RGB references) This will make it easier to use the logo in different formats and if you want to print cards, t-shirts etc.

Where to find an affordable designer
With the advent of online market places you don’t need to spend a fortune to get a professional looking logo.

- People Per Hour [www.peopleperhour.com](http://www.peopleperhour.com)
- Fiverr [www.fiverr.com](http://www.fiverr.com)
- 99 Designs [www.99designs.co.uk](http://www.99designs.co.uk)
- Design Crowd [www.designcrowd.co.uk](http://www.designcrowd.co.uk)
- Odesk [www.odesk.com](http://www.odesk.com)

And if you fancy having a go yourself, use an easy to use design tool like [www.canva.com](http://www.canva.com).

*What’s a vector we hear you say! Well a vector is a digital graphic that is not made up of a set grid of pixels, but plotted lines with a start and end point. Because Vectors are not made of pixels, they can be greatly enlarged without pixelating.
Try This

Write Your Own Design Brief
A Site To Behold!

There’s no excuse not to get your website up and running as soon as possible. If you need a basic site giving potential customers information about your business, the days of paying a designer thousands of pounds to build something from scratch are long gone.

Building your own site using drag and drop technology is easy and fun. Plus, the wide range of professionally designed templates available makes it easy to achieve a super-stylish result.

You can even create a landing page or one page site to announce you’re coming soon and start gathering people's email addresses for when you’re ready to launch.

It’s possible to register your domain for a few pounds and build a site for free. There’s nothing stopping you! And if you build the site yourself, making design and content changes is really easy, so you’re free to experiment (although it is probably a good idea to get your branding nailed before you start, if possible.)

Reasons you need a website

- Everyone else has one – including your competitors. If your business is the only one without a website, you immediately seem less professional.
- When you’re in bed with a hangover or down the pub, people can still reach you through your website.
- You’ll get found. Considering people reach for Google when they’re looking for something, it pays to be online.
- A great website can give the impression that you’re more established than you actually are, making it easier for potential customers and suppliers to trust you.
- Being online will immediately expand your potential reach to a global audience and therefore expand your potential income. Who wouldn’t want to give customers from around the world the opportunity to buy your products?
- More and more networking takes place online. Your website is like a walking, talking business card for your business. Without it, you’re missing the opportunity to showcase your business to the online community.
- Your site gives you the ability to chat to customers when they’re browsing, resolve any issues and answer their questions – giving your sales a nice big boost.
- Save yourself lots of time by placing useful information, guides and FAQs on your website. Helping customers to help themselves is more effective than answering loads of emails and phone calls.
- Adding a regularly updated blog to your site will help to get people talking about your business.
- Build a list of people interested in your business using sign-up forms on your site. Use this list to send newsletters and marketing emails – helping you to build relationships and making it easier to sell more.
- Build an online store on your site with downloads, books or products for sale 24/7.
- If a potential client is on their way to meet you and they’ve forgotten your address, make it easy for them to find your contact details and location by featuring them on your website.
Top web design tips

• Make it clear what you do – in a few lines. Don’t force people to read a whole thesis before you get to the point.
• Use simple language and avoid jargon that makes you sound pretentious.
• Keep your structure and navigation simple.
• Use a white or light coloured background to make your site easy to read.
• Use pop-ups and ads sparingly to avoid making your site looking cluttered.
• Use simple fonts which are large enough to read.
• Bring your site to life with images and video.
• Responsive Mobile Design – make sure your site looks great on mobiles and tablets too.
• Link to social media accounts – so people can engage and connect with you.
• Sharing buttons – to encourage people to share your content.
• Include the basics - contact details, opening hours and a map if necessary, so clients can find you.
• Contact form – make it easy for people to get in touch.
• FAQ – to answer any potential questions people might have.
• Blog – makes it easy for you to update content and build engagement.
• Include a STORY page detailing the story of your business. Talk about what inspired you and how you made it happen.

Domain name

Once you’ve decided on a name for your site, buy your domain name from a registrar like: www.godaddy.com or www.123-reg.co.uk

Reliable hosting

You’ll need website hosting – the storage location for the content of your site. If you’re looking for someone to host your new site check out GreenGeeks. Their 24/7 support is second to none. We’ve tested it on numerous occasions – even on a Sunday night – and their support staff have always been incredibly patient and responsive. www.greengeeks.com

Build your own beautiful website

Build your own professional looking website in a matter of hours with one of the fun to use template tools. Choose from hundreds of stunning templates created by designers, simply adapt to your own needs using the drag and drop editor. Check out www.wix.com or www.squarespace.com

Themes for Wordpress

If you’ve decided to go for Wordpress, you’ll be needing a theme to give your website an individual feel. Not sure where to search? Check out ThemeForest. They have a huge selection of themes that are easy to use and will give your site the right look. www.themeforest.net

Thrive editor for Wordpress

Wordpress is great for lots of reasons, but when it comes to formatting posts and pages, it can be rather tricky. Thrive makes creating beautifully structured posts quick and easy. You don’t need to code or drive yourself insane trying to manage shortcodes. It will literally save you hours of time every week. And you can use it to create sales and landing pages too. Nice. www.thrivethemes.com/contentbuilder

Useful tools

If you’re not sure what to call your website – then check out Panabee for inspiration. It’s an easy to use and fun way to find cool domain names that are available. www.panabee.com
Images
Looking for gorgeous impactful images for your website? $1 per photo is a total bargain. www.dollarphotoclub.com

Find a freelancer
If you’re in need of some expert help with your site, but you don’t know any good web builders or designers, check out www.peopleperhour.com.

There are thousands of freelancers on there, able to sort out any glitches, and design additional graphics, as well as experts on hand to get your site up and running.

You could also try advertising for fellow students to help!

Checklist
☐ Brand inspiration collected.
☐ I know what my brand stands for.
☐ I’ve created a gut feeling around my brand.
☐ I’ve written my tagline.
☐ I’ve briefed a designer.
☐ Website underway!
“After experiencing the problem of gaining affordable access to DSLR cameras firsthand, Sabine conceptualised a business for renting out cameras. We worked with this idea for our course project.

TRYATEC is a try-before-you-buy service that lets you experience the latest technology without breaking the bank. Using the principles of the sharing and the experience economies, we provide an online peer-to-peer platform to rent and lend out the latest tech gadgets, such as drones, DSLRs and fitness trackers.

A few key successes along the way have been when we were shortlisted as one of the four finalists for the Inspiring Innovator of the Year Award; when we tested our concept with the public and were pleased to see such a positive reaction at an early stage; and lastly when we secured office space at The City Launch Lab. It’s a great environment to develop our business which wouldn’t have happened without CitySpark.

Being a student at City brought a plethora of opportunities to develop TRYATEC both in and out of academic study. After presenting at CityStarters Weekend, TRYATEC was shaped through our MSc course at Cass, where we received great feedback from external advisors on our pitch. Sabine is writing a dissertation to explore TRYATEC’s best business strategies, and Elena took part in the Startup Summer School, gaining tailored business mentoring.

The one piece of advice we would give to students would be to use all the opportunities that are given to you while at City! There are great opportunities which helped us grow and develop our entrepreneurial mindsets and business concept.”
Chapter 8
Spread The Word

Making people aware of your awesome new product or service
What are your plans to promote your business? You will need to get yourself in front of the right people at the right time, and persuade them to part with their cash.

The good news is, if you're passionate about your business and you're offering a product that people actually need and want, this should be a doddle.

First, you need to hatch a marketing plan. What are you going to do to spread the word and when are you going to do it? This is about common sense, not spending millions on a global ad campaign. Sometimes the more creative - and much cheaper - guerrilla tactics can be more fun and have more impact.

We don't want to overwhelm you with suggestions, so, for now, this chapter has a selection of ideas that you could employ to get the punters in.
Using social media to promote your business is a huge topic and could make a whole book on its own. But planning to grow your business with the general notion of ‘social media’ is not enough! Investors will walk out the door if that’s your only idea. Marketing using social media is one part of the tool kit, like a handful of cola bottles in your bag of marketing pick-n-mix.

Facebook
Use the power of Facebook to spread the word about your business. Set up a Facebook page for your business that includes details of your product or service and contact information, and use it to engage fans, chat to people, get feedback and share offers.

Personal updates
Share news about your new venture on your own Facebook profile but don’t go too crazy or you’ll get on everyone’s nerves!

The maximum we would recommend is updating your personal profile with business stuff once a day – no more. Share links to new products, link to comments from fans, share photos of people using your product, or invite them to take part in a competition, answer a question or do a quiz.

Don’t stop sharing the stuff you usually share on your profile – like personal photos, family news, nights out etc. If you just talk work work work, your friends might get bored of you.

Business Facebook page
Setting up a Facebook Page for your business is a great way to promote your brand. Only the people who have “liked” your page will see updates from you. That doesn’t mean they want their timeline to be rammed with you shoving your brand down their throats.

On the other hand, these people have expressed a desire to hear from you. So, take the opportunity to share your news, special offers, advice, PR mentions and so on.

A good way to get people interested is to also share things that are not directly linked to buying your stuff. You could try posting:

• Links to interesting content
• Inspiring stories linked to your business
• Beautiful or funny photos
• Inspirational quotes
• Trend updates
• Quizzes

Top tips
• Only post a maximum of twice a day.
• Don’t just promote your products.
• Reply to comments as quickly as possible.
• Keep content fresh and relevant.
LinkedIn
LinkedIn is so much more than an online version of your CV. It’s a great place to network with other professionals and to spread the word about your business to a professional audience.

Use LinkedIn to connect with relevant business contacts and build your professional network.

Even if your product does not target professionals, it is definitely worth setting up a LinkedIn profile and page for your company.

Top tips
• Your LinkedIn profile should detail your skills and experience and of course describe what you’re up to now.
• Link to your website in your profile.
• Use keywords in your profile to increase the chances of potential clients finding you.
• Build your network by inviting all your contacts and friends to connect with you.
• Do not invite randoms to join your network; LinkedIn is for building a network of people you already know.
• Every time you meet someone new, invite them to connect.
• Join lots of relevant groups and get involved in discussions.
• Share useful information, content and promotions and start conversations.
• Do not spam groups with salesy messages. The point of groups is to help others, make connections and engage potential customers.

Twitter
Twitter is an incredibly powerful tool for startups. It’s a free way to connect with potential customers around the world and it’s perfect for delivering impeccable customer service to your existing customers.

Top tips
• Use a relevant Twitter handle that’s easy to spell and remember.
• Don’t sell sell sell or you’ll turn people off.
• Include a link to your website in your profile.
• Use keywords in your profile to help people find you.
• Post images and videos as these are shared more often than text tweets.
• Spread your tweets out – don’t jam up people’s timelines with lots of messages at once.
• Monitor Twitter for brand mentions and mentions of your competitors.
• Focus on helping and connecting people.
• Share interesting content from other sources relating to your industry, not just your own stuff.
• Join in conversations relating to your industry as a whole.
• Follow influential people and engage with them – they may follow you back.

Snapchat
Snapchat is a great tool to send your followers image updates and create a daily story. The story is a great way of showing ‘a day in the life of’ and followers will love to see what it takes to build a business.
Pinterest

Pinterest is a place to gather and share inspiring images in themed boards. It’s great if you’re selling online as it allows you to show off your beautiful products and encourage others to do the same.

By adding a Pinterest pin button next to products in your online store and encouraging people to “pin” them, your fans are doing your work for you.

Creating themed boards that relate to hot topics or the time of year will help you spread the word. Or create boards of different elements of a single outfit for a specific occasion. The more inspiring your boards the better!

Forums

When thinking about social networking, don’t forget forums.

They may not be as on trend as the latest social platform, but they are a great way to market your new business. Participating in online forums can be an amazing way to get your business in front of the right audience. It can be one of the best forms of online marketing there is, as long as you follow these rules:

• Take your time getting to know people and the rules of the forum.

• Do NOT spam people or you’ll get on everyone’s nerves, and you may even get banned. Focus instead on answering people’s questions and helping them out.

• As you gradually get to know people, only then start to talk about your business.

Blog on

Adding a blog to your website is a clever way to drive more traffic and establish yourself as an authority in your field. Content marketing is the art of drawing people in through intriguing and informative content.

You could write about your journey to launch, talk about your “why,” document your growth with photos or video, share customer stories, share funny stuff, run quizzes, profile interesting people in your industry, feature infographics or teach people something about your world or your products.

Writing a blog is time consuming, but if you use keywords and compelling titles, it can be a really effective way to grow your brand.

Useful tools:

• Buzzsumo – find top performing content ideas www.buzzsumo.com

• Zemanta – link up with similar content to drive traffic www.zemanta.com

• Copyblogger – content marketing advice www.copyblogger.com

• Yoast SEO plug in – top SEO tool for wordpress sites www.yoast.com

• OnlyWire – disseminate your content across the web www.onlywire.com

• Sendible – awesome social media management tool www.sendible.com

• Hootsuite – affordable and powerful social media management www.hootsuite.com
Top Marketing Tips

1. Friends and family
Your friends and family will probably be the first people to buy into your product or service. Your business can’t live solely off their good will, but don’t forget them!

• Practise your sales pitch on friends and family and see which version works the best.

• Ask them for testimonials that you can use on your website (ideally don’t use family members with the same surname as you!)

• Send an email with links asking them to tell their friends.

2. Testimonials
Always ask for feedback and testimonials from customers, starting with friends and family. Put these on your website or in brochures to help raise your credibility and make it easier for people to trust your brand.

Always feature the name of the person, their company, if appropriate, and a photo of them next to the quote if possible. You could even create video testimonials of them extolling the virtues of your brand.

3. Flyers
How very retro! Flyers may not involve the latest technology, just a flimsy bit of paper, but they’re still an effective way to tell people about your business. Obviously a one-page flyer is cheaper than a leaflet or brochure, but it’s also easier for people to chuck away. If your business is targeting people in your local area, hitting the streets and handing out eye-catching flyers is an affordable way to spread the word.

Top tips:

• Keep it simple. Focus on your key messages only.

• Do include your website and Facebook details, but don’t expect that alone to drive sales.

• Use a call to action, like a coupon or discount code to stop people chucking your flyers in the nearest bin.

• Start with 100 or so to begin with, so you can make changes if you need to.

• Don’t just stand anywhere. Go where your people are, like near a competitor café or by the train station.

• Use a special domain or code so you can track the effectiveness of your flyers.

• If you decide to scale up, consider using a flyer distribution company to do the donkeywork for you.
4. Trade shows or exhibitions
You could consider taking a stand at a relevant exhibition, although this can be very expensive. A more sensible option could be to go along as a visitor, wearing a branded t-shirt or hat. You probably won’t be allowed to hand out leaflets if you don’t have a stand, but wearing your brand isn’t a problem.

Before the big day, ask the exhibition organisers if you could write a guest post on their blog, or perhaps give a talk on your subject as part of the schedule of events, as this may be free.

6. Make an infographic
Visual representations of complex issues or problems are very popular online at the moment. Use an online package such as Easelly [www.easel.ly](http://www.easel.ly) to create a branded infographic and then spread the word online, encouraging people to share and embed it into their site. It’s an easy way to raise brand awareness and to get yourself known as an authority.

7. Online competitions
Use a social media platform such as Rignite [www.rignite.com](http://www.rignite.com) or a tool like Rafflecopter [www.rafflecopter.com](http://www.rafflecopter.com) to run a competition on Facebook and or Twitter. Prize draws, caption contests and even creative competitions are a great way to get people engaged in your brand.

8. Promotional clothing
Another old-school marketing tactic is to wear your brand. Design some brightly coloured t-shirts, hats or bags featuring your logo and encourage people to wear them on campus.

“Get your idea out there, be your brand’s biggest advocate! I was really shy about sharing my idea and was afraid of criticisms and judgement. However, when you get your idea out there, all you get back would be wonderful support and feedback. It will forever remain just an idea if you don’t actively make it reality.”

Liz Nguyen and Joseph Tam, MSc Marketing Strategy and Innovation graduates, Cass Business School, and co-founders of Eat Chay.

5. Key influences
Invite a list of influential people in your industry to contribute to your blog. You could even consider pulling together an e-book about your industry featuring these interviews.

This is a great way to get people with power to know about you and spread the word about the work you are doing. Cunning.
9. Brand ambassadors
Recruit a team of aspirational people to represent your brand. They could be bloggers, designers, models, musicians, sports-people; anyone relevant to your brand. Give them a free product and incentivise them with free stuff, a photo shoot, or a feature on your website with links back to their site. In return, they should help spread the word about your business on social media.

10. Blogger outreach
Create a list of influential bloggers in your field and send them a press release about your product or service. Bloggers are keen to get free stuff, so if you can afford to give them a free sample in return for a review, you’ll be more likely to get a good number of reviewers.

Always insist on a link to your website, and ask if it’s possible to see the review before it goes live.

Useful stuff:
• Blogdash – brilliant blogger outreach tool www.blogdash.com
• InkyBee – powerful outreach tools www.inkybee.com

11. Email marketing
Building a list of customers and potential customers along with their email addresses is a powerful form of marketing. In fact, it’s a must-have. Collecting details of potential clients via your website is one of the main reasons for having a site in the first place!

Use pop-ups and sidebar widgets to encourage people to sign up to your list. Consider offering them something for free in return for signing up. For example, a guide to improving something related to your business, an article on the “Top Ten Pitfalls to Avoid When…”, or a special offer for subscribers.

“We use word of mouth and ask our customers to recommend us to their friends and colleagues. Your customers are your best salespeople. We also did some cold emailing. It took a while but we eventually perfected an email that has an almost 100% response rate. We basically kept talking to customers and figured out exactly what their pain points were. If you can clearly address those pain points to potential customers (and show how you can solve them), it shouldn’t be too hard to get a meeting or a phone call set up.”

Jody Orsborn, MA Culture, Policy and Management graduate, School of Arts and Social Sciences and co-founder of The Backscratchers.

Useful stuff:
Email capturing pop-ups:
• Sumo Me www.sumome.com
• Hello Bar www.hellobar.com

Email marketing tools:
• Mailchimp www.mailchimp.com
• Aweber www.aweber.com
• Get Response www.getresponse.co.uk

Sign up to an email marketing service and send your list an email every week with news of your business or links to useful content, or special offers.
Top tips:

• Set up a series of automated messages so that when someone signs up to your database you can move them along the sales funnel without having to lift a finger!

• Consider always emailing on the same day so that people almost expect to hear from you.

• Always include a call to action in your emails so recipients get used to doing something – then, when you’re set to start selling to them, they’ll be good and ready!

• Only email people who have opted in to hear from you – otherwise you could get into big trouble for spamming people.

• Ask for people’s first name as well as their email addresses so you can send them a personalised email.

• Include links to your social media accounts and encourage people to engage with you on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter etc.

13. Partnerships
Organise a partnership with a larger website or organisation in return for free stuff, free content or a special rate. Be sure to pick a business with similar brand values and a huge, relevant audience you are keen to tap into.

14. The big launch
You could invite potential customers to a champagne reception to tell them about your business. Or you could organise something a lot less expensive and a lot more exciting. Depending on your business idea, think of something radical that will prove a big draw for potential customers and even journalists.

If your product is online, think of ways of creating a virtual launch party on Twitter or Facebook.

Your goal should be to raise awareness of your business and get people excited about your brand.

12. Countdown
Using social media and email, create a sense of excitement and curiosity around your business by counting down to launch. Offer a limited special price or special offer to your first customers to entice them in. Set up a sales page on your website where people can sign up to register their interest for the new business. This could even include a countdown clock on a landing page, such as those you can build on LaunchRock (www.launchrock.co). Offer a limited number of places at the reduced price to encourage people to cough up as soon as the product goes on sale.
Networking

Find networking events in your local area, with relevant people from relevant industries and pop along. You’ll be amazed at the connections you make, every time you put yourself out there.

Top tips:

• Choose the networks which fit the profile of your target audience best e.g. musicians, artists, builders etc.

• If you’re worried about “networking” just think of it as socialising. Smile, look friendly and people will come over and chat to you.

• Most networks offer a free trial – which is a great way to meet people, for free. (Cheapskates, us?!)  

• Remember to take lots of business cards so you can hand them out, but only do it when appropriate - business card bombing is a major no-no.

• Have your 60-second pitch ready so you can explain to people what you do.

As we mentioned in Chapter 2, City University London is right in the middle of Tech City, the biggest startup cluster in Europe, and there are a whole bunch of networking events to choose from.

3 Beards: www.3-beards.com

• Silicon Drinkabout: Every Friday, meet people, discuss ideas, find talent

• Don’t Pitch Me, Bro! Monthly events. Get feedback on products and solve business problems

• Chew The Fat: Conversations with high profile entrepreneurs, founders and VC’s designed to motivate and inspire

• Digital Sizzle: BBQ event with panels, debates, entertainment

Silicon Roundabout: www.meetup.com/SiliconRoundabout

• Third Friday of every month

• Over 100 previous meetups

• For entrepreneurs, developers and marketers

• Over 10,000 people
Tech Hub: www.techhub.com
• Creates spaces around the world for tech entrepreneurs to meet
• Provides physical and virtual spaces
• Events
• 2 locations in Tech City

Google Campus London: www.campuslondon.com
• Environment encouraging innovation through collaboration, mentorship and networking
• Events on specific topics lead by experts

“My advice would be to stop over-analysing, hesitating, overthinking and dreaming and just start acting, trying out, prototyping, and sharing your ideas with potential customers for feedback as early as you can.”

Mila Kayukala, Masters in Innovation, Creativity and Leadership graduate, Cass Business School, and founder of OffWeGo.
Do Your Own PR

Do Your Own PR

Writing a press release is not as hard as it sounds. It’s also not necessarily the answer to getting pages and pages of press coverage.

A press release contains the basic information about your new business, and includes a couple of images as well as your contact details. But, more than that, there needs to be a hook or a story to grab the attention of journalists and their readers. Is there a time of year or event that makes your business particularly pertinent? For example, Kim Kardashian’s wedding or the World Cup?

The fact that you have started a business is important to you, but not necessarily to the media. They are looking for stories to sell newspapers and magazines and drive people to their websites. They’re not there to provide you with free advertising.

So, think carefully about creating lots of different hooks and angles to your story – both in your personal life and in the business. For example:

- Business started by an ex-boyfriend and girlfriend
- Business started by students in dad’s garage
- Overcoming adversity – got ill, leg fell off, dog ran away. Journalists love triumph over tragedy

Make a list of publications you wish to target and contact them one by one. Don’t just send spam, make each call and follow-up email personalised and relevant.

“To launch our app, we held an event at Cass Business School. As part of this launch we also utilised social media channels, PR and guerrilla stunts (reverse graffiti) to get our brand noticed. PR and brand ambassadors have helped us spread the word. Word of mouth is really powerful, you just need to get a community of people who believe in and trust your product.”

Ashuveen and Lukas Linsbichler, Executive MBA graduates, Cass Business School, and co-founders of VEVA.
Top tips:

• You have a whole journalism department at City – so go and speak with them. Show them your press release and ask for their help.

• As a student starter, you should contact the uni magazine. If your business is being launched by students at the university, that's news!

• Don't be shy, pick up the phone. Emails can get ignored, so it’s better to make contact in person if possible.

• Organise a survey and publish the results in a press release e.g. 98% of students say they never eat fruit. Link into the launch of your new fruit delivery service designed to combat vitamin deficiency and rickets in students.

• Don’t be scared of journalists. If they are grumpy on the phone it’s just because they're super busy. So, before you start waffling on, ask them if now is a good time to talk.

• The headline and first paragraph of a press release are the most important bits. So make your headline incredibly catchy. The first paragraph needs to answer all the key questions – who, why, when, what, how.

• A press release should only be one page long – not a short book!

• Call first and press send on the email with your press release while you’re on the phone, so you can check it has arrived.

Whatever you do, at this stage, don’t waste thousands on a PR agency. Talk to the CityStarters Team for any more advice.
Search Engine Optimisation

Help your website get found on search engines by using Search Engine Optimisation (SEO). This is a potentially free way to get loads of traffic. Bonus. It’s also rather complicated and could be the subject of a PhD thesis or 20, but here are some top tips to help you rank:

- Use the Google Keyword Planner to choose relevant keywords with lots of traffic and not too much competition [adwords.google.co.uk/KeywordPlanner](adwords.google.co.uk/KeywordPlanner)
- Use an SEO plug in like Yoast on your Wordpress site [www.yoast.com](www.yoast.com) – or use the widgets available on [www.wix.com](www.wix.com) or other web design platforms.
- Mention your keywords in your headings, in the URL, in the content of each page and post.
- Learn from the master – check out Neil Patel for a lot more info from someone who really knows what they’re talking about. [www.neilpatel.com/?v=2](www.neilpatel.com/?v=2)
- Get “natural” links to your site by writing quality guest blogs on other higher ranking sites and encouraging people to review your product.
- Create awesome content on your site that people want to link to.
- Create how-to guides that establish you and your business as an authority in your field.
- For specific advice about your site, use this tool to do a website health check for free [www.quicksprout.com](www.quicksprout.com)
Checklist

- Facebook page sorted
- LinkedIn profile updated
- I’ve joined the Twitterati
- Been pinning on Pinterest
- Forums joined
- Selected my favourite marketing tactics
- Popped along to some networking events
- On my way to doing my own PR
- Started on my SEO
Frank Milani, Masters in Innovation, Creativity and Leadership graduate, Cass Business School, and co-founder of Popcord (Powergoat Ltd); the sleek key-ring that can be used as a charging cable for smartphones. www.popcord.co

“We created Popcord because our phones kept running out of battery life, and we decided to do something about it!

After trying all the charging solutions in the market - bulky battery cases, easy-to-forget power banks, and tangled-up charging cables - we thought there should be a better way. So, we set out to put a charging cable on a keyring. Powergoat is a hardware startup developing charging that doesn’t suck.

When we were researching our idea, we talked to as many people as possible from outside our circle too. We went to loads of networking events, to listen, and get lots of different points of view.

When doing our market research we made really good use of the “university project excuse!” It makes approaching people - from people in the street, to industry leaders, successful entrepreneurs, and even people in the same industry - a lot easier. We’d mention ‘research paper’, and wave our student card – and everything was fine!

To grow the business we used Kickstarter. It was a brilliant way to test our concept, spread the word and of course make money. Kickstarter allowed us to pre-sell more than 3,000 units in less than three months, raising £47,000 for production, spending NO money in marketing and advertising! A great achievement for a stone broke startup.

Now we have mass manufactured our first product, and have reached thousands of customers. We are now planning to scale up, expanding our channels and developing a range of products. Stay tuned!

The biggest achievements so far have definitely been the Kickstarter campaign, our first full scale manufacturing run and being selected as Virgin Startup ambassador and having the honour of meeting Sir. Richard Branson and hear his advice on how to brand your business in the early days.

CityStarters, the Centre for Creativity in Professional Practice, and the wider Entrepreneurship Team offer expert advice, organise amazing seminars, workshops, clinics, and the team are always available to answer questions, give guidance, advice, and introductions to valuable contacts.”
Chapter 9
Get Going!

Launch your startup in just 24 hours. Sleep is for losers!
Launch Your Startup In Just 24 Hours!

Now is the time to start making it happen. If you haven’t already started your business, why not? And if you’re still planning, tweaking and perfecting, let’s get down and dirty.

There is no reason why you can’t start now, right this minute.

This chapter is a step-by-step action plan to get you moving. In 24 hours, we’re going to start a business from scratch, Jack Bauer style. Sleep is for losers! (You can of course spread this over the course of a few days, if you’re feeling sensible.)

“My advice to students wanting to start a business would be don’t waste your time. You have all the resources and time needed to build your dream company and see your idea come to life.”

Christoforos Konstantinidis, BSc Business Studies student, Cass Business School, and co-founder of AnteBox.

Our intention here is not to achieve perfection at every stage, but to get moving. There is plenty of scope for improving stuff later, once you’re making money. This is about testing your concept to see if it’s a goer without wasting weeks of your life.

Set yourself the challenge that this time tomorrow you will already have started making money. Come on, let’s do it.
Hours 1-2: Solve a problem
Think about things that are bugging you right now. Chances are, you’re not alone. For example:

• “The coffee on campus is rubbish, I wish there was something nicer.”

• People are always asking me to help them proof-read their essays, I should start charging because good spelling and grammar gets you extra points.”

• “I’d love a uni hoodie, but they are so not stylish. I could definitely design something better.”

• “We don’t have a washing machine in our rooms. Getting the laundry to the laundrette is tricky. Baskets are hard to carry, and I don’t have a bag big enough.”

Ask yourself these questions:

• How are your customers managing at the moment, prior to your new business?

• How will your new business improve their lives?

Hours 3-6: Get creating
So, you’re going to design sweatshirts. You need to source the hoodies and create your first design.

If you’re offering a freelance proofreading service, you’ll need to create service packages. What will you be doing and for how much?

If you’re thinking of selling laundry bags, you’ll need to source your product, or work out how to make them.

You’ve got a few hours to get cracking, so you’ve got something to show people.

Hour 7: Work out the money

• How much does your product cost to make?

• How much do you think people would be willing to pay?

• How often do you think they’ll buy from you?

• How are you going to get people to part with their money?

• What can you do to get them to buy from you right now?

• How many products can you expect to sell in your first week (being realistic)?

• How much does each product cost?

• How much profit will you make on each purchase?

• If your profit margin is not very high, what can you do to increase it? Find a cheaper supplier? Make the product less complex? Encourage people to sign up for a 3-month plan instead of pay-as-you-go?

Make a spreadsheet detailing the number of sales you’re hoping for in the next week and the profit you plan to make. Stick it on your wall so you can keep an eye on it.

Hour 8: Get to know your customers
Who is your typical customer going to be?

Make a list of your potential clients. Obviously, targeting students would make life a lot easier in the short term!

• Students

• Local small businesses

• Local gyms

• Other student entrepreneurs

Next to each type of person, write down where you’ll be able to find them, what they’re interested in, what is likely to motivate them, what they’re (probably) already buying and where they shop.

Add in details of any warm leads you might have.
Hour 9: Find a domain name
It doesn’t need to be the perfect name – just something that’s catchy, fits with your own way of doing things and is available!

Head over to www.panabee.com or www.godaddy.com

Check options with a couple of mates to make sure you’re not doing anything silly.

If push comes to shove, better to have a business with a less than perfect name than no business at all. You can always change it later.

Hour 10: Get a logo
Go on to www.fiverr.com and get yourself a logo for less than the price of a cup of coffee. If necessary, pay a bit extra to get your logo finished in a matter of hours.

Look carefully at examples of previous work to find someone who can work to your style. Send over a logo in a similar style to give the designer something to work with.

You could also forego a logo for now - just write your business name in a cool font and save it as a jpeg. Check out www.canva.com!

Hour 11: Set up a Mailchimp account
You’re going to collect newsletter subscribers via your new site. Mailchimp is going to keep a list of them until you’re ready to announce you’ve launched in a few hours. www.mailchimp.com

Hour 12: Get on Twitter and Facebook
We find Twitter in particular is a great tool for spreading the word quickly about a new business. Set up your accounts with your new business names and link to your new website.

Tell people what you’re doing, that you’re aiming to launch a business in a matter of hours and that they need to follow you or like your page to be kept in the loop.

Hours 13-15: Whip up a website
Use a web building package like www.wix.com or www.squarespace.com to build your own site. Alternatively, build a one-pager using www.launchrock.co

• Make sure your website is written clearly and succinctly. Is it obvious on the first page what you’re all about?
• Don’t worry about creating loads of pages at the moment, keep it really basic for now. Even one page will do!
• Add your products or services with a link to your Paypal account
• Add a newsletter sign-up button, linking to your Mailchimp account
• Add a contact page / box so people can get in touch with any questions
• Add your logo if you have it!

Hour 16: Tell your mates
Look for friends and contacts you already have who would be interested in your product or service. Get on to them straight away. Tell them what you’re doing, that you’re launching in x hours and that they’re gonna love what you’re doing. Don’t forget to send them the link to your website.

Then, send an email to all your friends and family (even if they’re not your target audience) asking them to spread the word about your business. If you give them an idea of what to say, it will encourage them to get involved, because you’re making it super easy for them. You can also post to Facebook asking people to spread the word to their friends.

Don’t be shy. These people love you and want you to be successful. In fact they get pleasure from helping you, so you’re actually doing them a favour!
**Hours 17-18: Make a list**
Using the customer types you made earlier, build a list of potential customers you’re going to contact – via LinkedIn, email, Facebook, phone etc. Use keyword searches to help find the right people.

Think about potential partners. Are there websites or blogs who would love to sell your product? Could you offer them an incentive to sell?

If you’re selling laundry bags, perhaps the shop where everyone goes to buy their washing powder will stock them?

Pull together a spreadsheet with the contact info of anyone who may be interested, so it’s all in one place and you can keep track of who you’ve spoken to.

**Hour 19: Write a sales email**
Write an email that can double as a kind of sales script for when you start selling. It doesn’t need to be cheesy, aggressive or overly complicated. Something like this:

Hello ...

I’ve just launched a new business/ product / service, which I think, could be right up your street.

It’s a xxxx and is unique because...

We’re solving the problem/ challenge of ... which is why I thought I’d get in touch.

To celebrate our launch, I’d like to offer you a special deal of xxxx

This special offer is limited to my first xxxx customers, so if you’re interested click here xxxx

Looking forward to doing business with you!
Hours 20-23: Sell, sell, sell

Remember, your product is awesome. People need it. You are not trying to sell them something they don’t need or want. You are simply drawing their attention to something that will improve their lives. If you believe in your product then they will too.

Lots of us are scared of selling, but when it comes to it we find that we actually love it because it’s exciting and it gives us a real buzz. You can use email and social media, but nothing beats old fashioned face-to-face or over the phone conversations.

If someone says NO, don’t take it personally. You’re going to need to learn to roll with the punches!

A no does not mean the conversation is over! Ask them what would be interesting to them and see if you can tweak your offering to suit them.

The key with selling is to keep at it. Not everyone is going to say yes. But you need to take the knocks and keep cracking on regardless.

Hour 24: Count your money!

Phew. Time to see how you did.

Next steps

Get some sleep.

Then, take time to move your business on to the next level, perhaps in a less frenzied fashion!
Case Study

Sahil Sethi, BSc Computer Science graduate, School of Mathematics, Computer Science and Engineering, and co-founder of Rewinr, a mobile rewards advertising network. www.rewinr.com

“I was one of the first cohorts to take the Entrepreneurship module when it was introduced as part of my degree in 2006. That set off a desire to setup my own business and it’s taken me some time to come full circle on finally taking the plunge.

When I started exploring the startup scene, City’s events were the first I attended. Its location, resources and the networking opportunities available made me even more determined to try and bring my ideas to life. In fact, I met my co-founder at one of City’s events!

Rewinr is a mobile rewards network for brands, merchants and app owners that makes mobile app advertising a rewarding rather than an annoying experience. We run targeted reward distribution campaigns for brands by serving users of our partner apps with rewards like free coffee, cookies and vouchers instead of typical ads. These rewards are aggregated in our own app which acts as a wallet and marketplace for redeeming and exchanging the rewards with deals and discounts from merchants. We also take advantage of gamification techniques during the campaign and within our app to increase engagement from users.

Prior to working on Rewinr, we used to provide marketing and technology consultancy to other startups that were looking to create apps. Whilst doing this, we realised that developing an app is actually the easy part but marketing and monetising it is where most startups fail. To solve that problem and help startups reach new audiences in a smarter and targeted way alongside monetising their apps, we came up with the idea of Rewinr.

We have now built the MVP and successfully carried out a demo at Techhub @ Campus London which received some fantastic reviews and the app has just been launched in beta.

Getting selected to be part of The City Launch Lab and then being sponsored for the FFWD pre-accelerator program have truly driven our product development and provided an excellent launch pad for our beta app launch. If there is one piece of advice I can give to students, I would tell them to share their idea at as many networking events as possible.”
Chapter 10
Useful Stuff

Handy tools to get you started and help you work smart
So now you’ve read The Starters’ Manifesto you have everything you need to take the startup world by storm.

There are loads of useful tools, people and places right here at City!

**Key contacts**

- **CityStarters** (that’s us! Your first stop for all things enterprise): [www.city.ac.uk/cityventures](http://www.city.ac.uk/cityventures)

- **CitySpark** (our annual business design and doing competition): [www.city.ac.uk/cityventures/start/cityspark](http://www.city.ac.uk/cityventures/start/cityspark)

- **Start-Ed** (for free professional legal advice): [www.start-ed.org](http://www.start-ed.org)

- **The City Launch Lab** (the co-working space for City students and graduates in the heart of Tech City): [www.city.ac.uk/cityventures/launch/city-launch-lab](http://www.city.ac.uk/cityventures/launch/city-launch-lab)

- **Cass Entrepreneurship Fund** (financing high-growth young businesses): [www.city.ac.uk/cityventures/scale/cass-entrepreneurship-fund](http://www.city.ac.uk/cityventures/scale/cass-entrepreneurship-fund)

- **City Unrulyversity** (Tech City’s free pop-up university): [www.city.ac.uk/cityventures/scale/city-unrulyversity](http://www.city.ac.uk/cityventures/scale/city-unrulyversity)

- **Careers** (careers and information service): [www.city.ac.uk/careers](http://www.city.ac.uk/careers)

- **Startup Surgeries** (weekly drop-in advice sessions): [www.city.ac.uk/cityventures/startup-surgeries](http://www.city.ac.uk/cityventures/startup-surgeries)
On The Inter-Web

One of the best things about being a student entrepreneur these days is the Internet, once you know where to look there’s oodles of smart tools, apps and websites out there to help you run your startup. Here are some of our favourites.

**Project management**
- Trello: (FREE and fun to use) [www.trello.com](http://www.trello.com)
- Asana: [www.asana.com](http://www.asana.com)
- Wrike: (Includes GANTT charts, if you want to) [www.wrike.com](http://www.wrike.com)
- Thrive Solo: (Perfect for freelancers) [www.thrivesolo.com](http://www.thrivesolo.com)
- iDoneThis: [www.idonethis.com](http://www.idonethis.com)
- Remember The Milk: [www.rememberthemilk.com](http://www.rememberthemilk.com)

**Finances**
- Wave (small business software for invoicing, accounting and payroll) [www.waveapps.com](http://www.waveapps.com)
- Shoeboxed (receipt management system) [www.shoeboxed.com](http://www.shoeboxed.com)
- Freshbooks (cloud accounting) [www.freshbooks.com/uk](http://www.freshbooks.com/uk)
- Start-Ed: (For free professional legal advice) [www.start-ed.org](http://www.start-ed.org)
- Stripe: (Take payments online) [www.stripe.com/uk](http://www.stripe.com/uk)

**Social media management**
- Hootsuite: [www.hootsuite.com](http://www.hootsuite.com)
- Sociota: [www.sociota.net](http://www.sociota.net)
- Sendible: [www.sendible.com](http://www.sendible.com)
- Rignite: [www.rignite.com](http://www.rignite.com)
- Buffer: [www.bufferapp.com](http://www.bufferapp.com)

**Customer relationship management**
- In Touch CRM (includes email marketing) [www.intouchcrm.com](http://www.intouchcrm.com)
- Capsule: (includes great app, integrates with Mailchimp) [www.capsulecrm.com](http://www.capsulecrm.com)
- You Don’t Need a CRM (sales focus) [www.youdontneedacrm.com](http://www.youdontneedacrm.com)
- Contactually: Helps you follow up with right people at right time [www.contactually.com](http://www.contactually.com)

**All in one business management**
- Skylight: [www.skylightit.com](http://www.skylightit.com)
- Blue Camroo: [www.bluecamroo.com](http://www.bluecamroo.com)
- Sellsy: [www.sellsy.com](http://www.sellsy.com)

**Email marketing**
- Mailchimp (great free plan, easy to use) [www.mailchimp.com](http://www.mailchimp.com)
- Aweber (very powerful) [www.aweber.com](http://www.aweber.com)
- Get Response (includes landing pages) [www.getresponse.co.uk](http://www.getresponse.co.uk)
Find freelancers
• Fiverr (marketplace for jobs priced at $5) www.fiverr.com
• People Per Hour (quality freelancers around the world) www.peopleperhour.com
• Odesk: (more quality freelancers around the world) www.odesk.com
• 99 Designs: (logo, web and graphic design) www.99designs.co.uk

DIY websites
• Wix: www.wix.com
• Moonfruit: www.moonfruit.com
• Squarespace: www.squarespace.com

Landing pages
• Kick Off Labs: (Includes viral kick and email marketing) www.kickofflabs.com
• Launch Rock: www.launchrock.co
• Leadpages: www.leadpages.net

Printing
• Solopress: www.solopress.com
• Moo: www.uk.moo.com
• Vistaprint: www.vistaprint.co.uk

Customer support
• Keeping: (Handle customer support in your Gmail – it’s FREE!) www.keeping.com
• Olark: www.olark.com
• Zendesk: www.zendesk.com

Video
• GoAnimate: (easy to use animation tool) www.goanimate.com
• Animoto: (awesome video slideshows) www.animoto.com
• Powtoon: www.powtoon.com

Stock images
• Dollarphoto Club: www.dollarphotoclub.com
• iStockPhoto: www.istockphoto.com

E-commerce
• Shopify: (Awesome ecommerce solution) www.shopify.co.uk
• TryCelery: (Ingenious way to accept pre-orders) www.trycelery.com
• Big Commerce: www.bigcommerce.com
• TicTail: www.tictail.com

Market research
• Recollective: (Free market research) www.recollective.com
• Survey Monkey: (Create your own surveys) www.surveymonkey.com
• Feedly: (keep up with your topic, news and blogs) www.feedly.com
• Google Alerts: (monitor mentions on the web) www.google.co.uk/alerts

App building
• Appery: (Build your own app, no coding knowledge required!) www.appery.io
• Heroku: (Free cloud bases for your app) www.heroku.com
Collaboration

• Quip: (messaging and shared docs in one place) www.quip.com
• Pushpin: www.pushpinplanner.com
• TeamBook: www.teambookapp.com
• Draft: (Collaborate on written stuff) www.draftin.com
• Dropbox: (Shared folders on all your computers) www.dropbox.com
• Evernote: (document collaboration and sharing) www.evernote.com
• Slack: (use this instead of email for all internal communication) www.slack.com
• WorkingOn: (track who’s doing what) www.workingon.co

Have we missed anything? If you’re using a super useful online tool to help you grow your business and we haven’t included it in our list, then let us know by emailing CityStarters@city.ac.uk and we’ll make sure it’s included in the next edition of this e-book!
Hi, I'm Nadia Finer – startup mentor, small business consultant and writer. I live off entrepreneurial endorphins and get my kicks out of helping people like you to launch and grow their ventures.

I have 15 years’ experience working in marketing and innovation for huge brands such as Johnson & Johnson, NIVEA, Emap, Lexus, Astra Zeneca, Elastoplast and Danone. But, my real passion is helping startups make more money. I’ve worked with all manner of businesses, from fitness instructors and builders, to hairdressers, florists and street food vendors.

I don’t just talk the talk; I’ve also set up and run my own businesses. To help female entrepreneurs grow their businesses I set up the More To Life Than Shoes support network. With groups around the country as well as an online hub, over the years I was able to help hundreds of women grow their businesses.

During that time, my friend Emily and I set off on a mission to interview the country’s most inspiring women and find out how they achieved their ambitions, resulting in our book “More To Life Than Shoes; How to Kick Start Your Career and Change Your Life.”

Then, as founder and MD at Media Darlings, boutique PR agency, I helped small business owners develop marketing strategies and secure amazing levels of press coverage.

Nowadays, I spend my time drinking ridiculous amounts of coffee, writing about entrepreneurship, giving talks and mentoring start-ups through my new startup support club; nadiafiner.com.