

In Business and Incorporated In 8 Steps

A guide from the
entrepreneurship pros at
[incorporate.com](https://www.incorporate.com)



The 8 steps to being officially in business.



1 Name it.

You have the idea, the talent, and the drive. But before any of that matters, your business needs a name. Ask yourself these questions when brainstorming:

- ▶ Does the name convey what my company does?
- ▶ Does it reflect my desired brand image, and will it appeal to my target audience?
- ▶ Will it hold up if I decide to expand my offerings, grow geographically, or shift focus?
- ▶ How will my name do in internet searches and when used on social media?
- ▶ Is it already taken by someone in my industry or region?
Contact [incorporate.com](https://www.incorporate.com) and we will do a comprehensive name search for you.



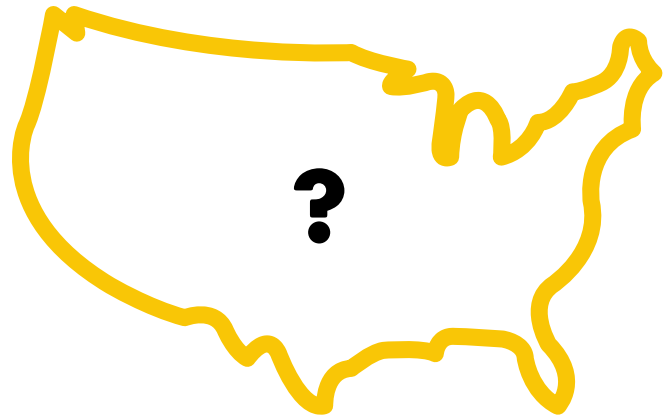
2 Get it ready for the internet.

Today, having your business online isn't a nice-to-have: it's a requirement. When seeking out a URL (web address), aim for something that's as close to your company name as possible. Search for available URLs and consider a templated website builder like [Squarespace](#) to get up and running fast.

Depending on your industry, you might also want to utilize social channels such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram. Consider the nuances of being online now, so your digital presence is ready to go live when the time comes.

3 Pick a state, any state.

But do it wisely. It might be easiest to incorporate where your business is physically located, but many companies choose states like Delaware or Nevada for their tax benefits and simpler incorporation processes. That being said, incorporating out of state doesn't necessarily free you from your home-state obligations. Contact us to explore the ins and outs of choosing a state.



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Choose a business structure.

This is the big one. Compare the options below, and check out our site's [Business Startup Wizard](#) to decide what's right for you.

	C Corp	S Corp	LLC	General Partnership	Sole Proprietor
Owners have limited liability for business debts and obligations	✓	✓	✓		
Created by a state-level registration that usually protects the company name	✓	✓	✓		
Business duration can be perpetual	✓	✓	✓		
May have an unlimited number of owners	✓		✓	✓	
Owners need not be U.S. citizens or residents	✓		✓	✓	✓
May be owned by another business, rather than individuals	✓		✓		
May issue shares of stock to attract investors	✓	✓			
Owners can report business profit and loss on their personal tax returns		✓	✓	✓	✓
Owners can split profit and loss with the business for a lower overall tax rate	✓				
Permitted to distribute special allocations under certain guidelines			✓	✓	
Not required to hold annual meetings or record meeting minutes			✓	✓	✓



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Appoint a Registered Agent.

Choosing a registered agent is a required step when incorporating your business. A registered agent's primary role is to send and receive formal correspondence between your business and government agencies.

Our [Registered Agent Service](#) is designed for organizations of all types and sizes, and is available in all 50 states. When you select [incorporate.com](#) as your registered agent, we will receive important legal documents on your behalf, enhancing your privacy and giving you more time to run your company. You will also have free unlimited access to [Compliance Watch](#), an innovative tool that provides secure online storage for important business documents, alerts you when essential filings are due, and much more.

Appointing [incorporate.com](#) as your Registered Agent will streamline and expedite all state filings, improving your business' overall efficiency.

Speaking of...

With these key phrases in your vocabulary, you'll be talking like a business pro in no time.

Director

An elected or appointed member of the Board who oversees the activities of a company. Their duties are outlined in the corporate by-laws.

Officer

Appointed by the board of directors, an officer is responsible for the management and day-to-day operations of a corporation.

Articles of Organization

Also known as articles of formation, this is the document you must file in many states to register a limited liability company (LLC).

Domestic LLC

A limited liability company organized under the laws of the state in which the LLC plans to conduct business.

Foreign LLC

A limited liability company organized under the laws of a state other than the state where it plans to conduct business.

Member(s)

The owner(s) of an LLC.

Operating Agreement

The contract among the members of the LLC that guides the company's membership, how the business is managed and operated, and how income is distributed.

Single-member LLC

An LLC owned by one person or entity. The Internal Revenue Service treats a single-member LLC as a "disregarded entity," meaning the entity does not file a return and all profits and losses are reported on the LLC member's return.

Articles of Incorporation

Also called the certificate of incorporation or corporate charter, this is the document you must file to incorporate in many states.

Bylaws

Rules adopted by a corporation that govern its actions and the rights and duties of corporate members and officers.

Foreign Corporation

A corporation that is formed in one state or country but does business in another state or country.

Minutes

Written records of actions taken or authorized by a corporation's shareholders or board of directors.

Shareholders

The owners of a corporation based on their holdings. Shareholders (also known as "stockholders") own an interest in the corporation rather than specific corporate property.

Voting Rights

The shareholders' rights to vote their shares, which are governed by law as well as by the corporation's bylaws and Articles of Incorporation.



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Have your license(s) ready.

There are over 150,000 filing jurisdictions across the country, all with specific requirements for business licenses. Depending on your location and industry, the type and number of licenses you'll need will vary. Please visit our free [Business License Guide](#) to get a more comprehensive look into licenses, and to learn how we can help you acquire them. For starters, here are a few examples:

- ▶ Tax registrations
- ▶ State-issued occupational licenses
- ▶ Liquor licenses
- ▶ Reseller's licenses
- ▶ Zoning and land-use permits
- ▶ Health department permits

Congrats!

You're open for business!



You handle the real work. We'll handle the legwork.



Companies have trusted [incorporate.com](https://www.incorporate.com) and its parent company, Corporation Service Company, for more than a century. Our proven professionals can help your business from the very beginning, and we can be there for the long haul, too. We specialize in a range of ongoing business services, such as:

- ▶ Annual reports
- ▶ Obtaining an Employer Identification Number (EIN)
- ▶ Business license research
- ▶ Continuing Registered Agent service
- ▶ DBA/fictitious name
- ▶ Trademark search
- ▶ Registering your business with other states (foreign qualification)
- ▶ Corporate and LLC amendments
- ▶ Operating agreements
- ▶ Bylaws
- ▶ Business coaching to help you follow state rules and regulations
- ▶ Corporate kits and supplies for your existing corporation or LLC
- ▶ Certified copies of corporate and LLC documents
- ▶ Dedicated account manager available for business questions and check-ins

With multiple packages, easy payment options, and top-notch customer care, [incorporate.com](https://www.incorporate.com) makes it easy to add “Inc” or “LLC” to your business name.

Get started by calling 855-402-1516 today.



Don't take it from us.

"Extremely friendly, accurate, and knowledgeable. Delivered on all they promised."

MICHAEL EGBERT
Palo Alto, CA

"Your company made it very easy for me to get an LLC, and it saved me a lot of time and frustration."

TERRI MCLEAN
Woodbridge, VA

"Much easier than incorporating on one's own. I've done it both ways and it was well worth the money."

JAMES IRELAND
Las Vegas, NV

"The process was very simple and the price was great!"

MARILYN FIELDS
Middletown, NY

"Great customer support and an amazing range of services offered at the best prices. Add to that the Compliance Watch service and it just can't be beat."

ASHTON E. SMITH
Fairfield, CT





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