

Getting ready to trade

A short guide to help you take the right steps

Of course there's a lot to consider and do when you're starting a business and preparing to trade. Here you'll find a few useful pointers, and a 'Fast Five' guide to getting set up with Cardnet to take advantage of all our services.

You can do a lot of your own market research

You can get a good picture of your market by looking up surveys online, studying what competitors offer and finding recent research in specialist publications like trade magazines.

Define what you offer, what makes you different

What's your unique selling proposition? What makes your product or service better than everyone else's? Define it simply and customers will understand what's in it for them, and find it easier to make a buying decision.

A business plan is worth taking your time over

With a well thought through business plan you can clearly prove the viability of your idea to yourself - and to other parties involved. It needs to show where you are, where you want to be and what you need to do to get there.

Take care of all the money matters

There are a number of important financial questions to consider at this stage.

- What will your initial and ongoing costs be?
- Do you have the necessary funds or will you need to borrow?
- How much money do you need to earn each week/month to cover your personal and business expenses?
- How much will your product or service cost the customer?

There are different people you need to contact

You need to let a number of different organisations know about your new venture.

- Your bank - It's a good idea to keep your personal and business finances separate by opening a business account, so get in touch with your bank to see which account is right for you.
- Your insurers - Working from home can invalidate your domestic policy and affect your life insurance. You may also need to take out additional business insurance.
- HM Revenue and Customs - You must inform HMRC about your business for tax reasons. If you plan to import or export, you may also need to contact them to pay tariffs or to get permission for some types of international trading.
- Companies House - Contact them to register as a limited company or limited liability partnership (LLP).
- VAT - Registration is required if your taxable turnover reaches or is likely to reach the VAT registration threshold (this is currently £73,000).

Being distinct helps you become well known

Aim to make your business as visible as possible.

- Make sure your business has a professional image, then work hard to make your business known by potential customers.
- Hold an event to mark the launch of your business, and invite suppliers, customers and other people connected with your business.
- Having a website is essential for most types of business. If you do have one, make sure it performs well on search engines. Also focus on a clear, professional appearance online, and how it supports your promotional efforts.
- Clear contact details make it easy for people to get in touch, so make sure they appear on things like company vehicles, stationery and upfront on your website.



Your Fast Five

Get set for Cardnet

Are you ready to apply for Cardnet? Here are five things you need to consider before you apply for our merchant services.

- 1. Have a business bank account in place** - We'll need your bank sort code and account number to set up your Cardnet merchant account. Lloyds TSB can provide a highly competitive business account to suit your needs.
- 2. When you need a website** - If you want to open an account with us to enable you to trade over the internet, you must have your website up and running so we can link our card acceptance facility with your site and integrate with your chosen third party Payment Service Provider (PSP).
- 3. Set a start date** - You typically need to allow 10-15 working days from when you submit your application forms for your Cardnet account to be set up.
- 4. Help us understand your business** - To help make sure we set up the right facilities we need to understand how your business will operate. We would like to have a business plan and financial forecasts showing how you plan to grow your business.
- 5. The size of your turnover** - Cardnet is suitable for all types and sizes of business. As a guide, however, you should be looking to take a minimum of approximately £1,000 per month on cards.

