

The Business Owners' checklist

There are many aspects to consider when it comes to running a successful business. So, whether it's an SME looking for a refresh, or a start-up looking for assistance to get up and running, this selection of products and services has been curated with the business owner in mind

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Stop paying too much in business rates

Business rates are a tax on the right to occupy commercial property. Not only do they represent a significant overhead for businesses, but the complex and rapidly changing nature of the business rates system makes it difficult to navigate. This puts the ratepayer at an instant disadvantage.

On 1 April 2023, all commercial properties across the UK were revalued for the purposes of business rates. As a result, a considerable number of businesses will have seen a significant increase in the rates they pay. In London, this will have been particularly felt in the industrial sector, where the average increase in rateable value has been 33%. Though in certain cases, it's been much larger.

Furthermore, in November's Autumn Statement, the Chancellor announced that from 1 April 2024, rates bills will increase again by the full rate of September's inflation figure. That's almost 7% for occupiers of properties with a rateable value of £51,000 or more – a modest figure for London.

Expert advice is crucial to ensuring business rates are kept to a minimum; Lambert Smith Hampton's team of rating professionals is one of the most experienced in the industry. Their dedicated experts understand the specific challenges and complexities of valuing all types of commercial property. This means they can devise a bespoke strategy to generate maximum savings for you.

Lambert Smith Hampton



Scan the QR code, visit lsh.co.uk/explore/services/business-rates or email rating@lsh.co.uk to see if they can help.

The scandal of secret commissions paid by your energy supplier to your energy brokers



Are you an SME who has used a broker to negotiate your energy supply in the past? You may have a claim for substantial compensation from your energy supplier for secret commissions passing between the broker and the energy supplier.

For many years, brokers would sell businesses a service to get them a better deal on their energy bills. Customers were led to believe that the broker was acting with their best interests in mind and solely on their behalf. However, in many cases, the broker would have received a secret commission from the energy supplier, the detail of which was kept from the customer. That commission was then added to the energy price the customer paid.

Over the past few years, Ofgem – the energy regulator – has highlighted how inadequate brokers have been when disclosing commissions.

Thankfully, practices are finally changing, but this does not affect past claims. The payment of secret commissions give rise to a number of claims for compensation against the broker and also the supplier. Claims may go back many years.

If you have used a broker and suspect that they may have received a commission from the energy supplier without disclosing it to you, contact the energy commission team at leading law firm Edwin Coe. In cases deemed likely to succeed, they are prepared to act on a 'no win, no fee' basis.

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State-of-the-art spaces supporting life science innovation

Deciding on the right lab space can be a challenge, as can finding a partner who will give you that space, plus the support and community you need to thrive – Kadans Science Partner does all three.

Across Europe and the UK, they have created bespoke environments to empower scientific organisations. These are not just standard workspaces. They are part of a thriving ecosystem, teaming with life, where knowledge and expertise flow effortlessly.

The perfect mix of research, office, and meeting spaces, as well as laboratories, cleanrooms, and climate-controlled areas, they are filled with natural light and clear air. Their newest developments are energy-neutral, using low-energy installations and sustainable materials – all tailored to work for each tenant's needs.

The world-leading design and personalised capabilities of Kadans' buildings are crucial to tenant success. However, they provide much more than real estate. They ensure talent, research, and capital resources are available – and they advise on or add any missing elements. They understand the importance of ongoing human support, with their Ecosystem Managers and local teams ready to help on the ground. From introducing new tenants into their global network to matching companies to investors to support their growth, they support their organisations from start-up to grown-up.



Kadans' global connectivity, coupled with their local reach, enables their tenants to access world-leading research and talent. This unique geographical positioning has created a powerful community that prioritises life science success. They actively provide opportunities for tenants to engage, network and grow. They support knowledge sharing, synergy, and collaboration. Ultimately, everything they do is aimed at allowing organisations to do what they do best – innovate.



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Increase sales with ClickSlice's SEO

ClickSlice, one of London's premier search engine optimisation (SEO) agencies, excel in boosting revenue. Known for helping notable clients like the British Government and Humax, ClickSlice have significantly enhanced their online presence, leading to increased traffic and sales.

Their strategy? A tailored approach placing clients' websites at the top of search engine results. This method, known as search engine optimisation (SEO), combines technical and content tactics to align websites with search engines' algorithms. As a result, products and services gain visibility among internet users actively searching for them.

SEO's effectiveness lies in targeting specific search phrases used by potential customers. Agencies like ClickSlice funnel this targeted traffic

to clients' websites, converting it into sales or leads through effective on-page strategies.

Why choose SEO? It's a high-ROI, long-term revenue booster, driving organic traffic without the continual expenses of advertising. Organic traffic comprises of users already interested in similar offerings, discovered through their search efforts. This pre-qualified audience is more likely to convert, which can offer higher ROI compared to traditional advertising.

SEO can also trump regular advertising in cost-effectiveness. While advertising mostly yields temporary results, SEO delivers sustainable growth through consistent traffic generation.

ClickSlice's successful SEO strategies have consistently placed clients' websites at top organic search results. Their latest triumph? A 40% revenue increase for a business in just four months.



CLICKslice



To explore how ClickSlice's bespoke SEO can elevate your business in 2024 and beyond, book a free discovery call with Joshua George, ClickSlice's founder, by scanning the QR code or visiting clickslice.co.uk

Employee ownership becomes the fastest growing SME business ownership model

The number of employee-owned businesses has risen by almost 40% in the last year to roughly 1,400. More business owners are recognising the potential benefits of transitioning to this type of model, and the employee-owned sector is now the fastest growing among SMEs. On average, one company becomes employee-owned every single day.

The spike in the number of shareholders looking to sell their companies to Employee Ownership Trusts is due to the combined impact of a challenging M&A market, the reductions in UK Capital Gains Tax reliefs and exemptions, plus a growing appreciation of the benefits of employee ownership for the long-term prospects for the business.

An Employee Ownership Trust is a statutory trust enacted by the Government to encourage more companies to become employee-owned. UK resident shareholders are (subject to satisfying certain statutory conditions) able to sell their company for market value and claim a full UK Capital Gains Tax exemption.

Employees can receive annual tax-free cash bonuses of up to £3,600 per year for each employee, plus share-based incentive awards. Arguably, one of the most important benefits of being employee-owned is that staff have a stake in their company, resulting in greater commitment and engagement. Many have found it's also a game changer for their ability to attract and retain key talent.



BDO

Find out more about the benefits of selling your business to an employee ownership structure by contacting Matthew Emms, Partner at BDO LLP, at matthew.emms@bdo.co.uk or 07815 006030.

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Salesforce consulting for real growth



ThirdEye Consulting's Salesforce consultancy service helps you grow your business with one of the world's leading customer relationship management (CRM) systems. Using the highest standard of technical resources and expertise, they will implement a Salesforce system tailored to your needs.

As boutique Salesforce consultants, ThirdEye will work with you to establish the requirements and goals of your business, as well as listen to any ideas, concepts or requests you might have. This information will serve as a blueprint for the design and implementation of a Salesforce system that maximises growth in your business.

ThirdEye don't just set up the initial system, they provide Salesforce training to ensure

that you get the most from your fully optimised Salesforce CRM. Their goal is to help you gain maximum value from Salesforce by giving you the tools to expand use of the platform.

Their implementation and training process includes examining your current systems and operations to identify any areas for improvement, defining an overall strategy, developing a comprehensive management plan, working with key stakeholders to integrate Salesforce with your existing systems, developing a governance strategy to continue expanding the CRM and training staff on how to use the new system.

ThirdEye is a Salesforce Summit partner, helping grow and develop businesses across the UK.

Grow your business today at thirdeyeconsulting.co.uk/salesforce

ThirdEye

HR consultants for employee-owned businesses

Applying HR practice effectively in employee-owned (EO) businesses requires an understanding of what makes them different. Their culture, values and the status of employees as employee-owners are all part of this.

Wellington HR are HR consultants specialising in supporting EO businesses, and those working towards becoming employee-owned, with their HR management. The Wellington HR team are on a journey towards becoming employee-owned themselves, so they really enjoy working with other businesses that have been on this journey.

Their approach to HR involves gaining an understanding of the voice of employee-owners to inform HR approaches. Wellington HR's consultants are skilled in taking account of a range of voices and business priorities while providing advice and support. They assist EO businesses with HR strategy, policy design, training and day-to-day HR queries. Employee-owned



businesses are not immune to intrapersonal conflict, and so Wellington HR can assist with this too! They have strong and wide-ranging employment-law knowledge.

Wellington HR currently work with a number of employee-owned businesses in a range of sectors, both in London and across the UK. Local EO businesses that are supported by the Wellington team include design consultants PriestmanGoode and architects Cullinan Studio. They are also members of the Employee Ownership Association.

Wellington HR



Contact Wellington HR at hello@wellingtonhr.co.uk or read more about how they support EO businesses by visiting wellingtonhr.co.uk/eo-businesses

Unleash the potential of your online presence with a professionally designed website from London web design agency Immersive Media. The prize? A 10-page WordPress-driven gem of a website, affording you complete control over its content and management. Their 20-year legacy in web design and digital marketing guarantees a website tailored to meet your business and sales requirements, ensuring optimal customer enquiries and conversions.

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