

# How To Start A Successful Online Boutique: The Ultimate Step-By-Step Checklist – Part 1/2

---

 [www.brazenprofitlab.com/how-to-start-a-successful-online-boutique-12/](http://www.brazenprofitlab.com/how-to-start-a-successful-online-boutique-12/)  
Stacey

How to start an online boutique, ha?

Well that seems to be the question of the hour, and in this guide you'll learn step-by step exactly what you need to do so you can **turn your dream of running a buzzing online store into a reality.**

[Update May 2016] A FREE online boutique checklist download has now been added.

\*\*\*[CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD YOUR FREE ONLINE BOUTIQUE CHECKLIST](#)\*\*\*

## How to Start an online boutique – the ultimate step-by-step guide

- **Get your legal ducks in a row – it's was the pros do!**

As this differs from country to country and state to state I won't got into specifics here. But there are some very important and necessary documents you are going to need before you can open your online boutique for business—especially if you plan to [buy your inventory](#) through registered wholesalers or to drop-ship products.

At the very least you'll need a DBA (doing business as) license, and an [EIN number](#). But you'll need to [check with your local offices](#) to find out exactly what's needed for you. If you're in the USA, [Legal Zoom](#) is a great place to start your research on your legal obligations.

- **Get a business plan – 'Cos failing to plan is planning to fail**

This doesn't need to be some 50-page document which forecasts revenue for the next 24-months. Keep it simple and focused. Goals, objectives, projections, and timelines.

If you're bootstrapping your online boutique having a documented business plan will help you get a 10'000ft view of how you're going to **go from idea-to-income** – which is what it's really all about, right?

It's also worth remembering that your business plan may change as you actually start *running the business*, and that's okay too.

- **Chose a name for your business – keep it simple**

The name of your online boutique is important. It needs to be **memorable, easy to spell, easy to say**, but equally importantly, it needs to reflect the kind of brand you're trying to create.

Let me ask you a quick Q? Does [www.jennyzchicthreadz.com](http://www.jennyzchicthreadz.com) have quite the same level of panache and memorability as [www.therow.com](http://www.therow.com) ?

No!

I don't think so either!

With that being said, make sure you choose a name you can live with and won't feel embarrassed saying in your out-loud-voice.

Another thing I will say, is: **don't let deciding on a name take up weeks and months of your time.** Pick a name and keep it movin'.

### **Stuck for ideas?**

This [name generator](#) is a great place to start. I also recently discovered the [Hipster name generator](#), which spits out names for you, and you can just keep going through them until you find one that you like or are inspired by.

The best thing about both of these options is they give you names where the domain is still available to purchase.

Maybe you already know how irritating it is to spend time coming up with a name for your online boutique, only to find out the domain has already been taken? Yeah. Me too.

- **Get a logo, and get on with it.**

Designing your logo is another thing which, if you let it, can eat away lots of time – especially if you don't have any design skills and Photoshop gives you heart palpitations. I'm speaking about myself here.

Having a logo is not a necessity, in fact, design trends for typography based logos are huge right now.

It's also worth mentioning that when you're just starting out having the dopest logo on the interwebz is not going to influence whether your online boutique actually makes money or not.

Although the last thing you want is a cheap looking logo, don't be afraid to hop on a website like Fiverr and grab yourself a low-cost vector or text based logo. Check out some of these free or very economically priced logo generators below.

- [Tailor brands](#)
- [Squarespace Logo generator](#),
- [Logoshi](#),

These will all help you get a logo designed for your online boutique quickly and efficiently without breaking the marketing budget. You do have one of those, right?

**\*\*\*[CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD YOUR FREE ONLINE BOUTIQUE CHECKLIST](#)\*\*\***

- **Brand or bland?**

Creating a brand isn't just about a [fancy, schmancy logo](#) and some gold lettering. In fact, it's less about how your website looks and more about how your website makes people feel. However, good brands all have these two characteristics:

**They are:**

- Easy to identify and easy to recognise
- Make your ideal customer want to be associated with you

As you probably already know, we use our association with brands to make small, subtle statements about who we

are as people and consumers.

You'll find more people are likely to share your online boutique with others if shopping with you makes them seem **cooler, more cutting edge, and/or more stylish.**

### **So what does that mean in practice?**

Well if you can afford it, you'll probably want to hire a branding specialist to help you get crystal clear about your visual identity for your online boutique and your brands messaging.

But, let's say you're starting your online store on a shoestring budget and hiring a specialist is just out of the question?

There are some simple steps you can take to make sure you are going some way to creating a branded experience that your customers will feel connected to and won't be ashamed to share. Keep reading to discover what they are.

- **Make the vision plain by creating a mood board**

I don't know about you, but personally I'm a [visual learner](#) and find it much easier to conceptualise and see things clearly when I can picture it.

But even if you're not a visual learner, creating a visual mood board that helps you get a clear picture of the following three things, will be incredibly helpful to you as you start to build your online boutique business.

I use Pinterest for all my mood boards because it's simple to use and FREE, and you can't argue with that.

An ideal customer mood board – use this to create a visual montage of him/her life, likes, styles, desires and wants. This will help you make more accurate buying and marketing decisions

A brand mood board – Use this to play around with your colour and font story, and all the different elements you see your brand incorporating.

If you decide to work with a branding expert and or a web designer, they will also find this an invaluable resource to help them get clear about your vision for your online boutique

A stock mood board – use this to plan out your pieces BEFORE you buy them, this will help you to make sure that the items in your online boutique actually look like a collection, not some random selection of things with a price tag on them.

I love seeing other peoples mood boards as they are so inspiring, so feel free to drop a link to yours in the comments.

Ideal customer avatar, ideal customer profile, kismet customer, call it whatever the heck you want, just get clear about it.

One of the biggest causes of failure for most new online boutique owners is being wayyyyyy too vague about [who their ideal customer is](#).

When I first start working with new clients one of the first things I'll ask is: who do you want to sell to?

It's surprising how few of them are clear about who that is, yet they have already gone out and bought inventory?!?

Personally, I call that 'putting the horse before the cart', and in my experience, this results in less than stellar outcomes for your business. Why? Because **when you're trying to appeal to everybody, sadly, you usually end**

up appealing to nobody. Don't be that guy!

Take the time to get clear about who you want to sell to BEFORE you start shelling out cash on stock.

- **All hosting companies are not created equal**

If you're setting up an online boutique then you're going to need web hosting or to get your own server. Now if you're new to the online boutique business, I'm gonna hazard a guess and say you're probably going to chose the former, but don't just go for the cheapest web host you can find.

Why?

Well the answer is simple: **if your income and livelihood depends on your website** being up, fast, and functioning, then you need to go with a host that is reputable, gives you enough server space for all your images and functionality, and is reliable.

The quickest way to find out who those hosts are is to ask questions in forums and groups. But even then make sure you do your due diligence before you sign up to a host.

They are essentially the backbone to your business so you need that backbone to be strong.

- **Choose an eCommerce platform that fits your budget and growth goals**

Unless you're some coding wizard? No, thought not! You're also going to need to chose an eCommerce platform through which to run your own online boutique.

Just like with your host they are not all created equal, and going with the cheap option might seem like a good idea at the time, but **this is not something you want to save pennies on at the expense of the big money!**

You want a platform with excellent customer service that will allow you to scale up or down depending on your business needs.

It should also have great inbuilt functionality, and the ability to incorporate additional functionality as the business grows and your needs evolve.

I use and am a [big fan of Shopify](#). They have plans to suit big and small budgets, and so far, I've found their customer service to be on point. But again, due diligence is key here.

\*\*\*[CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD YOUR FREE ONLINE BOUTIQUE CHECKLIST](#)\*\*\*

Sign-up to the best platform you can afford , and don't just think about where your business is now, think about where you want it to be in 12 months time.

- **Collect the money, honey! Which payment processor will you go with?**

Payment processing is the most critical part of your online boutique, and here's why: **it doesn't matter how badass your brand and products are, if your website visitors can't buy them, then they won't.**

Most eCommerce platforms will have a payment processor that they recommend or have baked into their platform, but that doesn't mean that's the one you'll want or have to go with.

That's why this is worth thinking about soon rather than later, as this may influence your decision on what eCommerce platform to host your online store on.

With shady, slow, or complicated payment processing you're putting your business at a serious disadvantage—and there are already enough of those when you step into a crowded space like selling fashion, accessories, or lifestyle products online.

So do yourself and your business a favour and chose wisely.

Again, asking in forums and groups is a great place to start, but nothing beats a bit of due diligence and a phone call before you make a final decision.

Pheeeeew!

That's it for part-one moguls, [checkout part two here](#), and you'd be crazy if you read all of this and didn't download your free checklist.

**\*\*\*[CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD YOUR FREE ONLINE BOUTIQUE CHECKLIST](#)\*\*\***

Also, don't forget to come and tell me your thoughts, questions and challenges in the comments. I'm here to help.

Love & hustle

Stacey Brazen

xo