

11 TIPS FOR STARTING A BUSINESS AFTER PRISON

- **Get a job in the industry in which you want to own a business:** Every chance you get to see how businesses operate is helpful. Making money is crucial too.
- **Name your big 3 priorities in life, then base all of your decisions on upholding them:** For example, if providing for your family, leaving a financial legacy, and being involved at your church are your big three, then starting a business is not your only path.
- **Invest in your future business by building up your savings:** Entrepreneurship is a long game. Launching your business will be so much easier down the road with money saved.
- **Make friends with people who build you up and will help you reach your goals:** The old adage is true “You are the average of the five people you hang out with the most.” Ditch friends who drag you down.
- **Build your team of support through positive relationships with your parole officer and reentry organizations:** There are many people out there who want to see you succeed. Get to know them and they’ll help you ride the highs and the lows.
- **Set short and long term goals in an action plan:** Every successful business has a roadmap for reaching their goals. While plans are flexible, they’re also important.
- **Use a personal budget and improve your credit score:** If you can’t figure out how to make more money than you spend in your personal life, the same will be true for your business. A good credit score will help you greatly in the long run, too.
- **Do research on your type of business:** Books, podcasts, YouTube videos, conversations... there are tons of free ways to learn about your business.
- **Start drafting a business plan:** The Lean Canvas model is a great tool to use to start to get your business plan down onto paper. That’s where all great ideas start.
- **Network with existing business owners in your industry:** While business is competitive, it doesn’t have to be cutthroat. Get to know others’ stories and ask lots of questions. Starting a business is hard, but it doesn’t have to be lonely.
- **Eventually, after your foundation is built, start testing out your business idea one customer at a time:** Every business starts by testing out your idea. Keep your job while you start building your business on nights and weekends.

For help starting or growing your business, or to get connected to resources to help in your reentry journey, contact Kyle J Benson-Smith, Executive Director of Determination, Incorporated in Kansas City, MO. Email: kylejsmith@determinationincorporated.com or call/text 816-607-1873 (please leave a message with your contact information.)

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