

Online Services Business Starter Checklist

Thinking of starting an online services business?

Below is a helpful starter checklist that can be used to assess your progress, covering everything from building, to marketing, to scaling your online business.

When going through the list, think about where you feel most comfortable and where you feel most challenged. Also consider where you are in your journey now and what you need to prioritise. If you're just starting out, the first sections will be most important. This is what we support students with in the ImagineThat Academy.

1. Business Foundations

- Do I know the purpose that sits at the heart of my business and its reason for existence?
- Have I articulated the deeper impact my service will have on clients?
- Do I know why I am the best placed person to offer this service?
- Am I clear on how I want my business to run and what my vision is for it?

2. Niche And Customer Research

- Is my understanding of the market based on thorough research, including competitor analysis and a customer needs assessment?
- Have I spoken to potential customers and run customer interviews?
- Have I identified and developed an ICA (Ideal Customer Avatar) and know what their main pain points are?
- Do I have a niche and value proposition that sets me apart from others in my space?

3. Digital Service Offer

- Does my product or service clearly deliver impact and what does that look like?
- Is my product or service structured with a distinctive framework?
- Have I considered different tiering and offers that can help prospective clients at different stages of their journey?
- Have I priced my services accordingly and thought about how I can keep clients in the longer term, for example by introducing a monthly retainer?

4. Brand Identity

- Do I know how to position my brand in the market so I can stand out?
- Have I got a clear brand identity, persona and set of values that aligns with both my mission and niche?
- Have I refined my personal brand and considered how that links to my service?
- Do I have a website that stands out and communicates my brand immediately?

5. Social Media And Marketing Messaging

- Have I defined my strategy for using social media to attract prospects?
- Do I know what platforms my prospects are using and how they typically interact with these platforms?
- Is my content aligned with my mission, brand and niche?
- Does my messaging either entertain, inform or inspire others?

6. Lead Gen Training

- Have I created compelling lead magnets to attract potential clients and do they deliver value and showcase my expertise?
- Have I put together a free structured masterclass to attract leads?
- Am I running the masterclass on a regular basis and gaining consistent feedback to improve so I can eventually automate it?
- Have I considered other resources that can help sell my services and nurture prospects?

7. Sales Strategy

- Do I have a sales funnel that is well-defined, guiding people from awareness through to consideration and eventually conversion?
- Have I practiced my pitch and how to communicate my offer?
- Have I got a set of case studies, reviews, or testimonials I can use to evidence the value I can give?
- Am I confident in my approach to sales and how to take a lead to close, knowing how to handle sales objections and negotiations?

8. Business Operations And Implications

- Do I have the right tools and systems in place to run my business fully remote and as smoothly as possible?
- Have I addressed important legal requirements such as contracts, privacy policies, and terms of service?
- Have I worked through other important factors such as business setup and tax considerations?
- Am I aware of the implications of running a business as a digital nomad and what this means for me?

9. Scale And Iteration

- Have I implemented a feedback system to gain reviews from my customers?
- Am I consistently iterating and improving my offering based on this feedback?
- Have I brought in automation to help my business grow more efficiently?
- Do I know what my vision is for scaling the business and how I want to do that in the long term, for example by building a team or developing a digital offer that can be bought on demand?