

CHECKLIST: Equip Your Home-Based Office

Make sure your home-based office is ready for business. Review this list of equipment you may need to get up and running.

COMPUTER AND PERIPHERALS

- Laptop computer/Desktop computer:** Using a family computer for business puts data security at risk. Invest in a computer with the speed, storage and functionality to grow with your business in the next few years.
- Monitor:** If you buy a desktop computer you will need a monitor with appropriate screen size and resolution for your daily tasks.
- Printer or multifunction machine:** Multifunction machines that print, scan, copy and fax save space. Print-intensive businesses will need a standalone printer.

SOFTWARE APPLICATIONS

Basic software apps that most businesses need include:

- Virus protection software
- Microsoft Office or similar software suite with spreadsheet, word processing and presentation functions
- Accounting/bookkeeping/invoicing software

INTERNET CONNECTION/NETWORK

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- Router:** Look for a wireless router that has the capacity to grow with your business. Good wireless routers offer lots of features such as built-in Virtual Private Networks (VPNs), Network-Attached Storage (NAS) functionality and the ability to support printer and hard drive sharing. Of course, you'll also want one with sufficient signal strength to serve all of the computers and connected devices in your home.
- Cloud storage and backup application:** Simplify your life with cloud storage apps that automatically sync and store data from your computers and other connected devices to the cloud.
- External hard drive/s:** Even with a cloud storage and backup solution, it's a good idea to use an external hard drive as a secondary backup for each computer in your home-based office.

MOBILE DEVICES

- Tablet computer:** Assess your tablet needs, such as displaying video, making presentations or accepting mobile payments, to choose the best one for you.
- Mobile peripherals:** Portable chargers, headsets/earbuds, credit card swipers and other tools

PHONE

- Landline phone:** A landline phone still provides the best sound quality and reliability if your business is phone-intensive.
- Smartphone:** Many entrepreneurs run their businesses solely with a smartphone. Even if you do have a landline phone, you'll want a smartphone for mobility.
- VoIP:** Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP) uses digital technology to transmit voice calls. Using VoIP, you can make calls from your smartphone, computer or tablet. VoIP is cheaper than using traditional phone lines, but can sometimes compromise sound quality.
- Phone peripherals:** Headset, Bluetooth device, earbuds, chargers

FURNITURE

- Desk or work table:** Depending on your business, a table may be more functional than a traditional desk.
- Desk chair:** Invest in the best desk chair you can afford, especially if you'll be spending long hours at the computer.
- Task lighting:** Desk lamps or floor lamps can provide lighting you need for close work.
- Ergonomic accessories:** Monitor risers, wrist rests, ergonomic keyboards/computer mice, and other ergonomic devices enable you to work long hours without repetitive stress injuries.
- Filing/Storage system:** File cabinets, cupboards and containers organize the paper you'll generate.
- Guest furniture:** If clients will visit your home office, you will need guest chairs and a table or desk large enough to accommodate them.

PACKING, SHIPPING AND MAILING TOOLS

- Postal scale:** If your business involves mailing packages, invest in a postal scale to weigh packages at home.
- Packing supplies:** Boxes, bubble wrap, packaging tape and other mailing supplies
- Online mailing and shipping accounts:** Use online services to print out postage and mailing labels at home and schedule carrier pickups at your door.

INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC EQUIPMENT

Your trade association or industry publications can give you an idea of the specific equipment you will need for your new business.

List industry-specific equipment you will need below: