



## Getting advice

Setting up a business should be an exciting process. But without the right advice it can also be a minefield, particularly where legal matters are concerned. Too often it is not until matters reach crisis point that people ask for a solicitor's help. But by then, if a solution is available, it is much more costly than taking simple action that could have prevented the problem in the first place.

Clearly prevention is better than cure. Getting legal advice at the start means that you can avoid crises. A solicitor can help you identify possible problems and take steps to prevent them - protecting your business from risk and saving you money.

## Choosing and using a solicitor

It is important to choose a solicitor with relevant knowledge and experience for your needs. The Lawyers For Your Business scheme is designed to provide small to medium-sized businesses with access to business-related legal advice. It also offers a free initial consultation. For a list of solicitors in your area who are Lawyers For Your Business members, call 020 7405 9075 or visit [www.lawsociety.org.uk/lfyb](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/lfyb).

Or you can visit our website at [www.lawsociety.org.uk/findasolicitor](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/findasolicitor) or call 0870 606 2555.

## Legal advice checklist

Solicitors can offer advice on all the typical problems that a new business can face. They can also help you introduce a full range of solutions. To decide what sort of help to give you, they will need to ask you a lot of questions about your business. These questions will cover the following areas.

### Company structure

The structure of your business will be vital to its success as you start up and expand. Should you trade in your own name or through a company, for example? If you are going into business with others, you need to make sure you get a fair return for your effort, so you might need a shareholders' agreement or partnership arrangement. Your solicitor can explain all the different options and advise on the best one for your business - partnership, limited company or limited liability partnership. Your solicitor can also set up the option you choose.

### Your business premises

When choosing premises for your business, it is important that you fully understand the terms of the lease. Can the landlord increase the rent? If so, by how much? Will you find yourself paying ever-increasing service charges? Will you need planning permission for a change of use? If you choose to run your business from home, what





