

10 LEGAL ESSENTIALS EVERY BUSINESS OWNER NEEDS.

Starting a business requires vision, discipline, and a willingness to take risks. What many creators fail to realize, though, is how much of that risk can be avoided with the right legal foundation.

This guide is designed to give you a clear understanding of the legal essentials every business owner should both have in place from the start and revisit as you grow.



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THE 10 LEGAL ESSENTIALS EVERY BUSINESS OWNER NEEDS TO PROTECT THEIR BUSINESS

1. **Proper Business Formation**

Choosing between an LLC, S Corporation, or other structure isn't just a formality. The structure you ultimately choose affects:

- Liability protection
- Tax treatment
- Ownership structure
- Long-term scalability

A thoughtful formation strategy, on the other hand, can save thousands over time.

2. **An Operating Agreement (Yes, even for Single-Member LLCs)**

An Operating Agreement governs how your business operates by:

- Defining ownership
- Establishing decision-making authority
- Protecting your limited liability status

Without it, your business is more vulnerable than you may think.

3. **Separate Business Finances**

Maintaining separation between personal and business finances is crucial.

Separation looks like:

- Dedicated business bank accounts
- Clear expense tracking
- No commingling of funds

Failure to do this can undermine your liability protection.

4. **Client Services Agreement**

If you provide services, this one is non-negotiable.

A strong agreement addresses:

- Scope of work



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Client Services Agreement (continued)

- Payment terms
- Revisions and timelines
- Liability limitations
- Termination rights

5. Independent Contractor Agreements

If you hire freelancers or contractors, you need clear agreements in place. Verbal agreements (even among friends and family) simply aren't enough.

Independent Contractor Agreements should address:

- Scope of services
- Payment
- Ownership of work product
- Confidentiality

Without this, you may not actually own what you paid for

6. Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs)

NDAs protect sensitive information. You should use them when:

- Sharing business ideas
- Working with contractors
- Discussing partnerships

7. Trademark Protection

Your business name, logo, and brand identity are assets. But do they truly belong to you?

Without the protection of a trademark others can use or lay claim to your name, which means:

- You may be forced to rebrand
- You may lose rights to your own brand

Trademark strategy should be intentional and proactive, not reactive.

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8. **Website Policies**

If you have a website, you should have:

- Terms of Use
- Privacy Policy
- Disclaimer
- ADA Compliance

These aren't optional. They protect you and help ensure compliance.

9. **Vendor Agreements**

Whether you work with suppliers, collaborators, or service providers, your agreements should clearly define:

- Deliverables
- Timelines
- Payment
- Liability

10. **Periodic Legal Review**

Your business will evolve and your legal documents should too. Regular reviews by a legal professional can help:

- Identify gaps
- Update outdated terms
- Strengthen protections



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Common Mistakes to Avoid:

- Using free templates without understanding them
- Forming an LLC without an operating agreement
- Failing to trademark your brand early
- Signing contracts without reviewing (or adding) key clauses
- Hiring contractors without written agreements



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When to Hire an Attorney

While you don't need an attorney for every decision, you should consider one when:

- You're forming your business strategically
- You're entering significant contracts
- You are scaling or hiring
- You want to avoid costly mistakes



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Next Steps

If you're unsure whether your business is properly protected, or you'd like a second set of eyes on your contracts, brand, or structure, schedule a consultation with Attorney Brantley at J Brantley Law today. Call (210)742-2435 or book your FREE consultation here: <https://jenniferbrantleylaw.com/book>.

J Brantley Law, PLLC

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