Home Organizing Business Startup Checklist

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Key takeaways

- Start with closets, pantries and kitchens: popular and photogenic
- Charge hourly with a minimum session, then move to project packages
- Bill products separately with a markup or sourcing fee
- Before/after photos are your best marketing

1. Plan

- [ ] Choose your niche and the services you'll offer first
- [ ] Define your service area (keep it tight to cut drive time)
- [ ] Write a one-page plan: who, where, what you charge, how you'll get 10 clients
- [ ] Check local competitors' services and prices

2. Register & insure

- [ ] Pick a business name and check your state registry, trademarks and the .com domain
- [ ] Choose a structure (sole proprietor or LLC)
- [ ] Get a free EIN from the IRS (irs.gov)
- [ ] Check city/county business license requirements
- [ ] Open a separate business bank account
- [ ] Get general liability insurance before your first paid job
- [ ] Most places only require a general business license for organizing. Carry general liability insurance, since you work in clients' homes and handle their belongings, and consider a bond. Use a written agreement that covers rates, minimums, cancellations and what happens to donated or discarded items.

3. Equipment

- [ ] Label maker and labels
- [ ] Measuring tape and notebook or tablet
- [ ] Starter set of bins, baskets and drawer dividers
- [ ] Contractor bags and boxes for donations
- [ ] Cleaning wipes and a small vacuum
- [ ] Camera or phone for before/after photos

4. Pricing

- [ ] Track your real job times on your first jobs
- [ ] Set a target hourly rate that covers pay, taxes, insurance, fuel and admin time
- [ ] Create a simple price menu and a minimum charge

- [ ] Use estimate and invoice templates for every quote
- [ ] Check your numbers with the free calculator on ServiceStartKit.com

5. Get online

- [ ] Register a short domain and set up a professional email
- [ ] Launch a 4-page website: home, services & prices, reviews/photos, contact
- [ ] Create a Google Business Profile with photos and your service area

6. First clients

- [ ] Before/after photos on Instagram, Pinterest and Facebook
- [ ] Partner with realtors, movers and home stagers
- [ ] Offer a free 20-minute phone consultation
- [ ] Google Business Profile with photos of finished spaces
- [ ] Ask each client for a review and a referral after the final session
- [ ] Ask every happy client for a review and a referral

7. Money

- [ ] Invoice every job and log every expense
- [ ] Keep a mileage log for business driving
- [ ] Set money aside for taxes each month
- [ ] Review prices at least once a year

General information, not legal, tax or insurance advice. Rules vary by state and city.