

# Startup Bakers' Dozen: 13 most asked questions

*A prudent question is one-half of wisdom.* [Francis Bacon](#)

Questions, questions, questions, racing through the minds of startups every day. For the last two decades, your small business coach helped startups find their answers and the coach can help you, too. Here are the coach's answers to the lucky 13 most-asked startup questions.

## 1. Do I have what it takes to own a small business?

Yes, you do! I know this because you are running a small business now - it's called your life. You acquire supplies and perform services, have revenues and expenses, pay bills and taxes.

The only difference between a owning a business and running your life is finding a market -- so get started!



## 2. What business should I choose?

You should start a **business that relieves a pain, satisfies a need, fills a gap or solves a problem that now exists in a market you can serve.** People need services like lawn mowing and window washing and oil changes and pet care and literally hundreds of other services every day.

People have problems like needing things picked up or delivered, electronic gadgets set up, cooking a meal for 50 guests, needing to learn a new skill or practice an old one. **It's not what you want to do; it's doing what the market wants that will make you successful** so find out what the market wants.

People face all kinds of problems every day and **if your new business helps customers solve problems then your business will thrive.**

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### 3. What is a business plan?

Nothing more than action steps, a road map or a diagram that will keep you focused on, and help you make progress towards, **your goals**. Your business plan can start as a few lines scribbled on a napkin or a list on a piece of scratch paper or a text message you send to yourself. It's where you write the story of your business. *The most important part of a business plan is getting started!*

### 4. Why do I need a business plan?

Startups need business plans to stay focused on the path to reach important goals. Business plans help track progress as you to reach your goals and helps you share your ideas with others.

### 5. Do I need a computer to be in business?

No, you need business information to make business decisions, just like you do in real life. Many people use computers for this task, but some don't.

### 6. How much money do I need to get started?

A better question is "how much money do you have?" because that's what you've got. The absolute fastest way to start a business is to start one that only needs the money you have or can easily get.

Rather than having a business idea and looking for the money to start, **look at your money and find a business you can start immediately.**

Use your favorite search engine to look for 'businesses I can start with \$...' for ideas. **Start where you are, use what you have, do what you can!**



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## 7. Can I get a business loan?

No, you can't. No one lends money to people to start a new business, especially people without business experience. Would you loan startup money to someone who had never been in business before?

Here is something else to consider - Tech billionaire, NBA team owner and Shark Tank investor [Mark Cuban](#) says [only morons start a business on a loan](#). If you want to work for yourself then work for yourself. If you get a loan then you work for the bank, not for yourself.

Image Credit: [Gage Skidmore, CC BY-SA 3.0](#), via Wikimedia Commons



## 8. Can I get a grant to start a business?

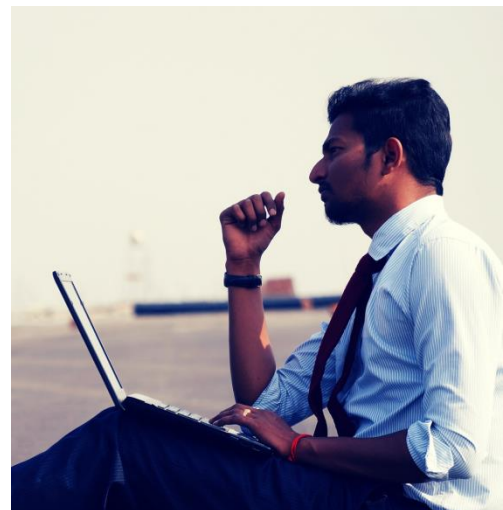
That would be the funniest thing I've ever heard if it wasn't so sad.

It's funny because why would anyone award a grant to a person to set up a business to make a profit?

It's sad because scammers use this myth to [mercilessly rip people off](#). I get 10 - 15 calls every year from shocked people who were ghosted by silver tongued thieves who promised their victims grants (or loans!) and then disappeared after receiving four and even five-figure 'application fees.'

Sorry to put it this way but suckers are still being born every minute so just don't be one.

Reach out to someone you trust if something doesn't look or feel right.



## 9. How much money will I make?

As much as you can, of course! That's usually one of the first things you should assess when planning your business, because if it doesn't make dollars, it doesn't make sense!

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### 10. What do I need to know about bookkeeping?

You need the phone number of a good bookkeeper. Really, think about it - you could do your own dentistry if you wanted to but most of us go to a professional. Other business owners can show you how to find a good bookkeeper. Then all you'll need to do is follow instructions - just like with a dentist. *And*, bookkeepers are much less expensive than dentists, thank heavens!

### 11. How much do I charge?

I coach my clients to survey what competitors are charging and then to charge 10% to 25% more. Yes, you read that right, I want my clients to charge more than the competition. **Charging less than your competition** is called *buying market share* and frequently **leads to financial disaster**. Develop your **unique selling proposition** to make prospects *price elastic* so you can get paid what you're really worth. That's how that coffee company gets people to pay \$5.00 for a \$2.00 cup of coffee!



### 12. How can I find customers?

If you solve the right problems (see question 2), your customers will want to know how to find you! The startup that fills urgent needs or solves the right problems will have plenty of customers. The startup that fails in those efforts will struggle and die. Work to find and solve the right customer problems.

### 13. Can I run a business from my home?

Many startup businesses can be run from home. Unfortunately there are often limits on business activities in residential areas. There are also many benefits to an affordable business premise, even if you run a business online.