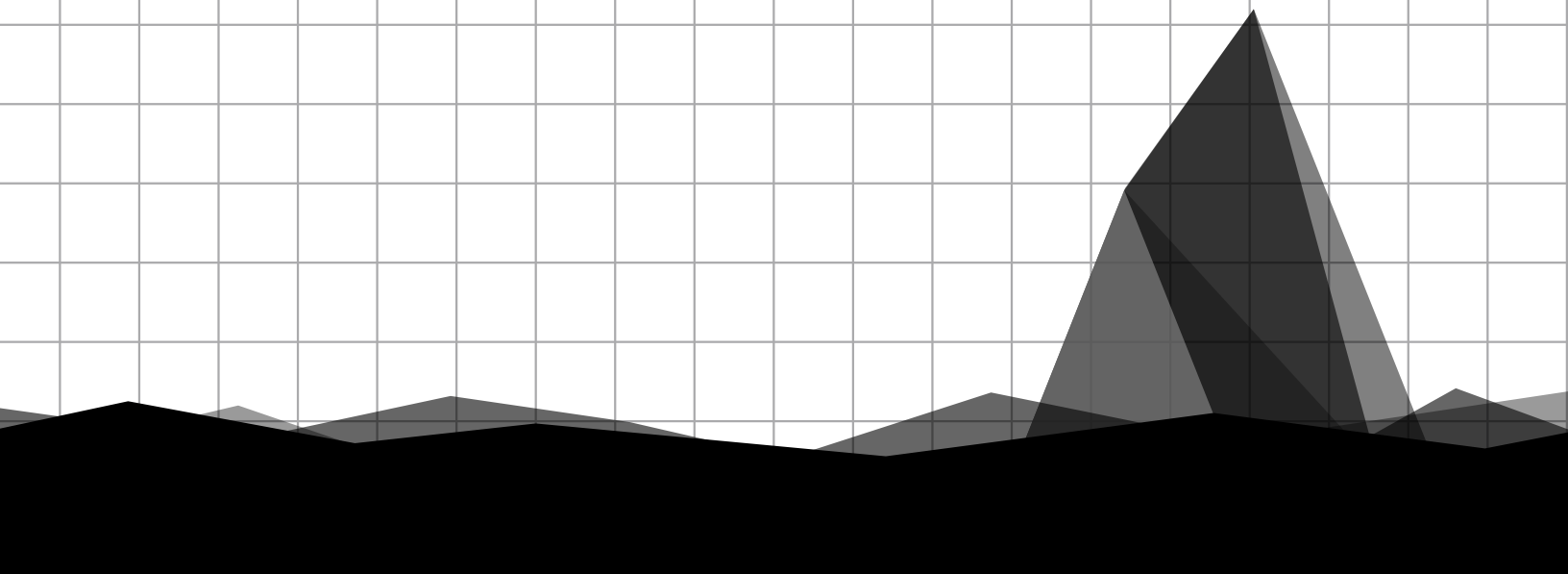


# Building your startup guide.

Own Your Hill<sup>®</sup>



# PETAL 1962

AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

BUSINESS WILL THRIVE  
The Friendly City!

MISSISSIPPI Resources

PERMITS  
Strategic Growth

Reason why you start a business will do more...  
Give your business purpose and a business plan...  
Remember your why...  
es, and making...  
you set...

SMALL BUSINESS  
Start-Up

JOIN THE PACC TODAY AT  
[www.PetalChamber.com](http://www.PetalChamber.com)



## PACC MEMBERSHIP FEATURES ...

- ⊕ Membership Directory Listing
- ⊕ Membership Listing on PACC Website
- ⊕ Listing in the "Petal Visitor's Guide"
- ⊕ "Shop Petal First" Program Listing
- ⊕ Coupons, hot deals and advertising job postings on the PACC website
- ⊕ Listing in "The Petal Guide" distributed to over 5,000 members, businesses, visitors, and newcomers annually.
- ⊕ Business Referrals
- ⊕ Ribbon Cuttings & Ground Breakings
- ⊕ Space in the PACC's high traffic office to display promotional materials
- ⊕ Sponsorship Opportunities
- ⊕ Special Advertising Opportunities
- ⊕ Website Banner Ads
- ⊕ Free subscription to the Petal News

Made With ❤️ by.  
**Own Your Hill**®  
Laurel, Mississippi

# **Content.**

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# If you were going to start a business today - right now - what is the **first step** you would take?

Would you work on your business plan, call the bank, or start looking for a realtor? What about business licenses, or permits, or sales tax? Sole prop, LLC, Scorp... what happens if you get it wrong?

Starting a business is terrifying. Sure, there is a ton to be gained - and a lot of fun to be had in the process. But it's very easy to get overwhelmed by the sheer number of decisions to be made and things

to get done before they ever open their doors.

We know that entrepreneurship drives growth in our communities. We want them to start something new, achieve success, and join us as we help others to do the same. But are we doing enough to support these folks - to assuage some of their fears, and help them know for sure that they are doing all of the right things?

By creating a guide - a collection of all of the critical information

and resources new business owners need to get started in your community - you can systemize and streamline the process of supporting these folks as they chase their dreams.

The concept of a startup guide is a simple one, but the process can feel a bit overwhelming. First, we'll explore why it's worth the trouble - and how a little bit of work now can lead to a lot of reward for your organization in the very near future.

Then, I'm going to walk you through every step of the process to create your own guide - what to include, how to gather the information, and how to get it to print - so that your guide can become a killer resource in your community as soon as possible.

Let's go.

Bethany Byrd



Bethany Byrd is **Own Your Hill**®'s founder and strategy lead.

Recognized as Mississippi Main Street's Premier Creative Partner of the Year in 2016 for her role in the resurrection of Downtown Laurel, Bethany is passionate about the power of strategic leadership and inspiring creative to fuel real change in our businesses, organizations, and communities.

**Reach her:**

bethany@ownyourhill.com  
601.549.3857



# Stop repeating yourself.

Say it once and let the guide do the rest. No need to keep giving out the inspector's number over and over (and over) again.

# Systemize to optimize.

By making a system out of all of that info you keep in your head, you'll find blind spots, opportunities to improve, and stuff that just isn't useful - because you know people are gonna let you know.

# Let 'em shine.

You know those volunteers, partners, and merchants who like to have all the answers? Get this thing in their hands and help them become the resource they work so hard to be.

# Before you start to gather information, you and your team need to dive deep into the **true process** of starting a business in your town.

Because your guide is only as useful as the information it contains, spend some time brainstorming, strategizing, and most importantly, listening, to get down to the real truth of the situation. Let's explore some questions to set you on your way:

## **Why you should start your business here:**

When we create a brand story for a community, we always start by seeking out the hidden gems that set a place apart. In this case, your town is competing for the heart of the entrepreneur. What is it about your town that will give them a solid foundation, what will reduce their risk, and what will make them feel like a part of something bigger.

For some communities - you'll include growth demographics and reveal opportunities hidden in the data. For others - perhaps there is a tourism draw or a consistent source of new customers just waiting to step into their business. Find the uniqueness that translates to business growth, and bring it to the forefront within your guide.

## **What resources do you need to hit the ground running:**

Here, we want to simplify and categorize. Gather all of the contact information and necessary people within your town's government, banking, legal, consulting, and creative ecosystems and compile it together to build a one-sheet guide to everyone they need to know to hit the ground running.

Some of these folks are obvious - who do I call to get a business license? - some less so. You'll find this is an awesome opportunity to support growth for your professional services partners by sharing their info, and you'll be supporting your new businesses with reputable help in the process.

## **What extra resources are available to help you grow:**

This is a question of opportunity - a prompt to examine both your own program and the abundance or lack of growth resources in your town. Perhaps you have a Facade Grant program in place just waiting to be utilized, or your local college offers small business resources, or your new seminar series is ready for its first attendees.

Perhaps you have none of these - and this is your motivator to get the ball rolling. Use this question to both continue the conversation about "Why here?" as well as to shine a light on how your organization will continue to support this business after the doors are opened.

**continued.**

## **Why you should join us in helping others like you:**

Yep, another opportunity to take a hard look at ourselves. If this person does take your advice and starts their business here, our next hope is that they will become involved in our efforts and support the success of the next entrepreneur waiting in the wings.

Use this question to examine your membership process, benefits, and opportunities to get involved.

**TIP: Ensure that all of the information you include is “evergreen,” or useful for a long period of time.**

**Gather your  
information.**

# extras.

## Show us what you've got.

Remember as you are gathering this information together, that there might already be printed resources available to help flesh out some of these answers or to simply show that folks are succeeding in your town. Also, you might have an opportunity to shine a light on partner organizations or businesses that have worked hard to create their own resources.

### Some extras you might include:

- + Publications featuring your town or residents.
- + History pieces that shine a light on where you came from.
- + Relevant business topic resources developed by your partners.
- + Tourism maps & resources.
- + Contact information for relevant staff.

### Don't include:

- + Hyper-promotional resources from partners or merchants such as brochures lacking educational information.
- + Anything too bulky or cumbersome - your guide should be easy to carry.

# How to Build Your Guide.



## Gather your info:

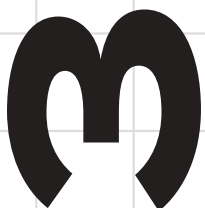
Gather together all of the information from the questions above and anything else you think could be useful. We'll decide what to include later.



## Talk to business owners:

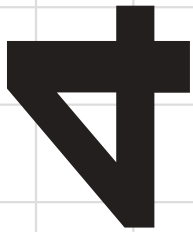
What is most valuable? What is missing?

Don't skip this step. Go straight to the source, and discover before you go to print where some of your blind spots may be. It's easy to forget that what is obvious to us may be completely new information to others.



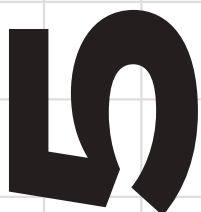
## Cull & edit your information:

Oftentimes what you choose not to say is just as important as what you do say. Cut and cull the information until you think it's perfect, then cut something else. Organize the information into sections based on the questions above.



## Write your copy:

Open a basic text file on your computer (ideally plain text like a .txt file, but Word is acceptable if you have no other option). Write your copy exactly as you want it included on each page of your guide, with notations for section headings and subheadings and grouping of information. Make it as obvious as possible to significantly speed up the proofing process with your graphic artist.



## Gather your visuals:

Create a folder on your computer where you will gather together photos, graphics, maps, and any other useful visuals. Organize them by section or purpose (background images, charts, etc).

### Graphic Tips:

**Logo files and other non-photo graphics should be in vector (EPS) format.** Call your graphic artist, website developer, or your marketing service provider for help if you do not believe you have these files. If vector is absolutely unavailable, a transparent PNG is acceptable but will result in a lower quality end result - and you should probably take this opportunity to pay your designer to build a new vector copy of your logo. \*You cannot simply convert a raster (png, jpg) logo into a vector logo. The art will need to be recreated.

**Photos should be as big as possible and released for your use.** If you do not have good photos of your town, hire a local photographer to create them for you. These will be a great resource for other purposes in the future and well worth the investment.

**Leave charts in their original program format to allow for the artist to export for their needs.**

continued.

How to build  
your guide.

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## Call your printer:

The last thing you want is to have your guide built and have to start over because your sizing and formatting are all wrong. Call your preferred printer ahead of time to get the exact design specs and preferences, and forward those to your artist.

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## Deliver to your artist:

You've gathered together all of your information, translated it into copy, and created an archive of photos, graphics, and other elements. It's time to let your graphic artist take the ball. In this case, you should have a starting file from us to get that ball rolling, but your artist will also translate your copy and instructions, graphics, and photos into something suited best to your town's brand.

### Proofing Tips:

**The proofing process is very dependent on clear and complete feedback.** Aim to say everything you need to say during the first round of proofing. Provide a hierarchy of changes - absolutes, prefer, and "here's an idea" so your artist can work efficiently and understand opportunities to guide or brainstorm with you for the most effective solution.

# Success! You built a startup guide!

## Now, what do you **do** with it?

You've done it - you've created your own startup guide that will live on for years as a wonderful resource for all of the new ideas and businesses coming your way. Let's talk about the steps you should take to ensure it gets out there so it can do its job!

### **Hand it out in person & by mail.**

This thing is a beauty! Print enough so that you feel confident to give them out at every relevant opportunity. Someone calls to inquire about a commercial building - get their address and ship them off the best promotional tool you've got to keep their eyes centered on your community.

### **Distribute to your partners & volunteers.**

Ensure that anyone related to new business ventures in your community have access to a few of these so they can distribute them when relevant. Also, ensure volunteers at your information booth or table at your events have these as well. There's nothing like a town full of visitors to inspire folks to dream big!

### **Make it available online.**

Ask your artist to provide a web-ready PDF with your print files, and get that baby loaded up and linked on your website. If you're blessed with a great web designer, consider creating a section on your website featuring the information and layout of the printed guide - but with interactive capabilities! The possibilities here are endless - video interviews and guides, links to resources, interactive maps, real estate listings - go wherever inspiration takes you.

**We're Own Your Hill<sup>®</sup> – the strategic branding agency behind Mississippi's leading entrepreneurs and innovators. Over the last decade, we've helped bring home towns back to life, turn concepts into market leaders, and mold the invisible into the iconic – time and time again. Now... strategy-loving founders and industry leaders trust us to transform and grow their projects.**

**get started.**

**brands@ownyourhill.com**

**ownyourhill.com**