START HERE: HOW TO USE THIS LIBRARY

A free library of plain-language guides for first-time founders. Here's how to find what you need for where your business is today.

TYPE: GUIDE REVIEWED: NOVEMBER 2026 TIME: 5 MINUTES LEVEL: EVERYONE

AT A GLANCE

- The Project Underdogs Founder Library has **163 free guides, checklists, worksheets and templates** in 12 sections.
- It covers the whole journey: **idea, setup, money, raising money, launching, running, growing and exiting**.
- You don't need to read it in order. Find your stage below and start with the guides listed there.

Why this library exists

Many founders have the talent and drive to build a business, but no one ever explained the rules. Words like "cap table," "break-even" and "due diligence" can make it feel like the door is closed. This library opens it. Every guide explains one topic in plain words, with a real-world example and steps you can take this week.

How the library is organized

Section	Code	What you'll find
Start Here	S	Getting oriented, choosing your path, and support for immigrant and young founders
From Idea to First Customer	I	Testing your idea and making your first sale
Setting Up Your Business	B	Registering, licenses, taxes, banking, insurance and contracts
Money Basics	M	Bookkeeping, pricing, cash flow and reading your numbers
Raising Money	R	Every way to fund a business, from savings to investors
Launching	L	Brand, website, marketing, sales and opening day
Running the Business	O	Hiring, systems, suppliers and staying legal
Growing and Scaling	G	Second locations, bigger customers, bigger rounds
Exit and What Comes Next	X	Selling, passing the business on, and life after
Industry Playbooks	P	Guides for restaurants, trades, beauty, retail, apps and more
Inside the Program	UD	How Project Underdogs works
About the Library	LIB	Terms, privacy, accessibility and FAQs

Every document has a **code**, like M-08. When a guide mentions another one, it uses that code so you can find it fast.

The five kinds of documents

- **Guides** explain one topic in 3 to 5 pages.
- **Checklists** list the steps to tick off.
- **Worksheets** are fillable PDFs that do the math for you.
- **Templates** give you a starting document to edit, like a pitch deck or launch plan.
- **Playbooks** are longer guides for one type of business.

Find your starting point

"I have an idea, but I haven't started."

1. **S-02 Is Starting a Business Right for You Right Now?**
2. **S-03 Tech Startup or Main-Street Business? Choosing Your Path**
3. **I-01 Finding a Business Idea Worth Pursuing** and **I-06 Testing Your Idea Before Spending Big**
4. **I-10 The One-Page Business Plan**

"I'm testing my idea or just made my first sales."

1. I-03 Talking to Customers: Learning What They Really Need
2. I-09 Making Your First Sale
3. B-01 Choosing a Business Structure: Sole Proprietor, LLC or Corporation and B-15 Business Setup Checklist
4. M-01 Bookkeeping Basics: Tracking Money In and Out

"My business is open and selling."

1. M-04 Reading a Profit and Loss Statement
2. M-08 Costs, Margins and Break-Even
3. M-06 Cash Flow: Why Profitable Businesses Still Run Out of Money
4. L-05 Marketing Basics: Reaching Your First 100 Customers

"I'm thinking about raising money."

1. R-01 The Money Map: Every Way to Fund a Business
2. R-13 Debt vs. Equity: Borrowing vs. Selling Ownership
3. R-18 Building a Pitch Deck
4. R-23 Red Flags and Funding Scams to Avoid

"I'm ready to grow, or thinking about what comes after."

1. G-02 Knowing When You're Ready to Grow
2. G-03 Growth Numbers Investors Watch
3. X-01 What an Exit Is, and Why to Plan Early

> TIP
>
> Not sure where you stand? Take the Project Underdogs Readiness Quiz on our website. It takes about 3 minutes and points you to what to work on next.

How to get the most out of each guide

- **Start with "At a glance."** The box at the top of every guide gives you the main idea in a few lines.
- **Use the checklist.** Near the end of each guide is a short list of actions. Do one this week.
- **Follow "Where to go next."** Each guide ends with the related guides worth reading.
- **Look up words.** If a word is new, check S-10 Business Words Made Simple: Glossary A–Z.

Common mistakes

- **Trying to read everything at once.** Pick the three guides that matter most for your stage right now.
- **Reading without doing.** The worksheets and checklists are where real progress happens.
- **Skipping the basics.** Founders who skip the setup and money guides often have to fix problems later, when it's harder and costs more.

Your checklist

- ☐ Take the Readiness Quiz on our website
- ☐ Find your stage above and save the guides listed
- ☐ Read one guide and complete its checklist this week
- ☐ Bookmark the glossary (S-10)

Where to go next

- **S-04 The Life of a Business: Idea to Exit in 7 Stages**: the big picture, stage by stage.
- **S-02 Is Starting a Business Right for You Right Now?**: an honest look at whether now is the right time.
- **LIB-08 Frequently Asked Questions**: quick answers about the library.

IMPORTANT
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