

Kayak Rental Business Startup Checklist

By The River Town Program

What You Need to Know Before you start:

- This is a seasonal business and you will likely need to have another source of income from Labor Day to Memorial Day.
- Expect about 50 people/day when you create your business plan.
- A kayak rental business on the Mon is not likely to be your primary source of income
- According to our market research, an entirely private kayak startup rental business would have a difficult time succeeding in this market. Therefore, we would advise to use the supplied contacts to work with municipalities to find public or private partnership that already exists within the community.
- Understand that this is a lifestyle business, which means that you will probably achieve a certain level of income after paying off necessities, but your interest in the business and growth of the community will likely be your main motivation, not profit.
- You will need to create a business plan to qualify for any loans. A template can be found [here](#).
- Cash up front is likely a must for opening a kayak rental business, and you will likely have to be patient to achieve a modest income from this entrepreneurial venture.
- According to our market research, the most likely kayak rental business that would succeed on the Mon is going to be small, weekend/holiday/school-group focused, and will need to be supported by a combination of your personal investment with the help of a community institution or a private business that will allow the attachment of the rental business to their establishment.

So, if you're willing to accept the parameters above, you can start thinking about...

Land

- So far, both Brownsville and Greensboro have great spaces in which to house a kayak rental business. Contact Norma Ryan (njryan49@gmail.com) or Darlene Garrett (greensboropa@atlanticbbn.net) for more information.
- No State Permits needed if it's on private land
- Access to Restrooms. Best if you can find an existing set you can use. Multiple people will need room to change, and they should be equipped with adequate drainage for potentially wet clothing and equipment.
- Building. Don't mortgage storage space. Boats can live outside in season. If you have personal access to store boats in offseason, that would be ideal. Need adequate life jacket storage that will accommodate numbers below. Airflow and ease of cleaning are a must.

Taxes and Government Compliance Expenses

- Sales Tax license with the community. Your contact person can properly direct you.
- If you're going to be transporting people. By shuttle, you need to talk to the Department of Transportation <http://www.dmv.state.pa.us/>. Don't charge for the shuttle, but make

sure you have a separate waiver for shuttle, just in case. You'll also need USDOT compliance and #s on vans and Commercial Driver's Licenses for shuttle drivers which can be obtained [here](#).

- If you use PA Fish and Boat commission ramps, you'll need to register each boat with the state, so try to avoid this
- After you are registered with the IRS with an EIN#, you can open a bank account. That can be done here: <https://irs-ein-number.com/?gclid=CLe5oo7U-LgCFY2Z4AodIzUAEQ>

Financing

- As was stated above, assume 100% up front investment; startup seasonal businesses are unlikely to be financed by Mon Valley institutions according to market research.
- That said, loans can be secured through the PA Small Business Association, who have affiliations with nearly every bank in the area. <http://www.sba.gov/tools/local-assistance>
- Also, you can get special rates if you are opening your business in a Blueprint Community (Brownsville) <http://www.blueprintcommunities.com/pa/indepth.html>
- The FayPenn Economic Development Council's entire purpose is to help develop businesses in Fayette County <http://www.faypenn.org/>.
- The Progress Fund has helped the successful Wilderness Voyageurs on the Yough, and is a great place to start for startup advice and funding. <http://www.progressfund.org/main.htm>

Kayaks

- Buy Used! Recreational Kayaks \$250+ New
- Attend the America Outdoors Convention and Trade Show http://www.americaoutdoors.org/america_outdoors/hot_topics/2/hot_america_outdoors_vacation_outfitter_topics.php
- 25-35 total kayaks, maybe 5 two-person, 20% Kids kayaks
- Probably need 100 PFDs; think of school groups and tour groups
- Decide whether you want pedals or rudders (+\$) which will help steering
- Make sure you buy a variety of lengths and widths. Paddlers are not the same size.
- Need one kayak paddle for each person
- Most people will want to sit-inside rather than on-top

Accessories

- Once again, buy used! (est. prices are for new)
- Paddles - \$50+
- Personal Flotation Devices for Boating (Adult \$20-75, Child's \$15-50); have 100 on hand to handle different sizes of paddlers.
- Make sure you have Paddling Jackets for cold days. Daily Max +20-30%. Make sure you have a variety of sizes.
- In your building, make sure you have storage space for all the above items
- Waivers http://www.berkeleyrowingclub.org/pdfs/USACK_waiver.pdf
- Office Supplies (Pens, Clipboards, Register, Computer, Phones)

- Services (Accounting Software, Internet, Phone)
- Drains with space to hang wet PFDs w/dunk tank to wash <http://www.plastic-mart.com/product/2187/500-gallon-open-top-cylindrical-tank-op0500-56>
- Sink the Stink Deodorizer <http://www.sinkthestink.com/>

Places to Buy - America Outdoors is a great place to buy, sell, and trade http://www.americaoutdoors.org/america_outdoors/, Wilderness Voyageurs, Ohiopyle; Saltsburg River and Trail, Saltsburg; Exkursion Outfitters, Monroeville; www.paddling.net; www.dickssportinggoods.com;

Transportation

- Bus or Vans (2) Start at \$30,000 New; Used much cheaper
- Trailers (2) \$1500-2500ea. (capacity: large commute trailer for busload 10/per trailer)
- Federal DOT very complex. Educate yourself on their website. Maybe you don't need it on a bus. Pair with information above in Tax & Expenses section.
- Need CDL
- Avoid two shuttles: Either shuttle to the put-in or have the outfitter at the put-in and shuttle back.

Staff (Probably 7-10 total employees)

- Reservations/planning
- Bookkeeping/office work
- Shuttle drivers
- Trip guides
- Equipment cleaning and maintenance

Certifications/Insurance/Permits for You and Staff

- First Aid**
- CPR**
- PA Boater Safety Course** (\$35ea., \$10ea. for license) Not necessary unless for fishing guides. PA offers on site training to outfitters
- PA Water Rescue Certification** (Costs Vary; 66hrs of training); Not really necessary. Mostly for firefighters
- Outfitter insurance** - Thompson Gusick and CBiz (min. \$3500/yr. Generally paid up front.)
- American Canoeing Association** (\$40ea + \$25 annual SEIC Dues for instructors); \$125-\$2500/yr membership for organization http://aca.site-ym.com/?page=Affiliate_Benefits; Instructor insurance (\$20/training course (3) + \$20 for each instructor trained http://aca.site-ym.com/?page=Insurance_Instructor; Hull Property Insurance (3% of equipment value +\$500 deductible http://aca.site-ym.com/?page=Insurance_Hull). This is much more up to you for marketing and insurance purposes. America Outdoors offers similar services. Call both to compare and contrast.

PA Launch Permit (\$10/yr/boat or \$18/2yr/boat) Only if you use a Fish & Boat Commission

Contacts

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