

Business Credit Building — Workbook

This workbook turns the course into action. Each section mirrors a course module, moving you from separating personal and business credit to registering with Dun & Bradstreet and qualifying for trade lines. Work through the exercises, worksheets, and checklists in order, and use the templates to track your D-U-N-S Number, tradelines, and PAYDEX progress over time.

The Foundation: Separating Business and Personal Credit

Set up the legal entity, EIN, bank account, and identity markers that make your business credit independent and verifiable.

Exercise: Audit Your Current Commingling

Pull your last three months of statements and identify every business expense currently running through personal accounts. This shows you exactly what to migrate once your business banking is live.

- List every business charge currently on a personal card and its monthly total.

- Calculate your current personal credit utilization and estimate it without the business spend.

- Which accounts, if any, are in your personal name but used only for the business?

- What is the single biggest liability risk from your current commingling?

Worksheet: Entity and Identity Setup Record

Complete each field as you finish that setup step. Use the exact legal name everywhere; copy it character for character into every future application.

Exact legal business name (with LLC or Inc.)

Entity type (LLC, S-Corp, C-Corp)

State of formation and formation date

EIN (federal tax ID)

Business address (no PO Box)

Published business phone number

Business email and domain

Business website URL

Checklist: Separation Foundation Checklist

- Formed a registered LLC or corporation with the Secretary of State
- Obtained an EIN free directly from irs.gov and saved the CP 575 letter
- Opened a dedicated business checking account in the legal name
- Established a real business address that is not a PO Box
- Set up a published, dedicated business phone number
- Registered a domain with matching business email and live website
- Confirmed name, address, and phone match exactly across all of the above

Registering with the Credit Bureaus and Dun & Bradstreet

Get your business onto all three commercial bureaus and secure the D-U-N-S Number that anchors your Dun & Bradstreet file.

Worksheet: D-U-N-S Number Request Tracker

Fill this in as you request your D-U-N-S Number from Dun & Bradstreet. Record exactly what you submitted so later tradelines can be matched to the same identity.

Date D-U-N-S request submitted

Processing option chosen (free standard or expedited)

Legal name submitted

Address and phone submitted

Verification call or email date

D-U-N-S Number issued (nine digits)

Date D-U-N-S Number received

Exercise: Map Your Three Bureau Files

Research and note how each business bureau will build your file so you know what triggers reporting and what score each produces.

- What identifier and score does Dun & Bradstreet use for your business?

- How does an Experian Business file typically open, and what is its main score?

- What scores does Equifax Business produce, and what triggers your file there?

- Which bureau are you most exposed on if a lender pulls it today, and why?

Checklist: Bureau Registration Checklist

- Searched D&B to confirm you do not already have a D-U-N-S Number
- Submitted the D-U-N-S request with exact legal name, address, and phone
- Responded promptly to any D&B verification touchpoint
- Recorded the nine-digit D-U-N-S Number with your EIN and formation docs

- Confirmed your SIC and NAICS industry codes are accurate on the D&B file
- Set up free CreditSignal alerts or a monitoring plan to watch your D&B file
- Noted that Experian and Equifax files will open once tradelines report

Qualifying for Your First Trade Lines

Open reporting Net-30 starter vendors and pay them early to build a PAYDEX score from nothing.

Worksheet: Starter Vendor Application Log

Track each Tier 1 vendor account from application through first report. Aim for at least three reporting accounts so your file crosses the scoring threshold.

Vendor name

Reports to which bureau(s)

Date account applied for

Approved limit and terms (e.g., Net-30)

First purchase date and amount

Invoice due date

Date actually paid (target 10+ days early)

Date tradeline confirmed on file

Exercise: Plan Your First Three Purchases

Choose real supplies your business needs from reporting starter vendors, so building credit costs you nothing extra. Keep each purchase small but genuine.

- Which three to five reporting vendors will you open first, and why those?

- What real, needed item will you buy on each account?

- What early-payment date will you set for each Net-30 invoice?

- How will you confirm each tradeline actually reported within 60 days?

Checklist: First Tradelines Checklist

- Confirmed foundation is complete: entity, EIN, bank, address, phone, D-U-N-S
- Opened at least three reporting Tier 1 vendor accounts
- Made a real purchase on each account to create a balance and due date
- Paid every invoice at least 10 days before its due date
- Logged each invoice date, amount, and due date the day it arrived
- Waited one to two cycles and confirmed tradelines appear on your files
- Verified a PAYDEX score has generated and is at or above 80

Climbing the Ladder: Store, Fleet, and Cash Credit

Graduate from starter vendors to store and fleet accounts, then to cash credit, while monitoring and protecting your profile.

Worksheet: Tradeline Ladder Tracker

Record each account by tier as you climb. Use it to confirm you have enough history at one tier before applying to the next.

Tier (1 starter, 2 store, 3 fleet, 4 cash)

Account or card name

Reports to which bureau(s)

Credit limit

Current reported balance and utilization percent

Personal guarantee required (yes or no)

Date opened and current PAYDEX at that time

Exercise: Design Your No-PG Roadmap

Map the milestones that move you toward no-personal-guarantee credit so your applications are timed for approval rather than declines.

- What is your current PAYDEX and bank rating, and what are the next targets?
- Which Tier 2 store and Tier 3 fleet accounts fit your actual spending?
- How many months of clean history do you need before pursuing no-PG cash credit?
- Where do you already bank, and how can that relationship improve your odds?

Checklist: Monitor and Protect Checklist

- Reviewed all three bureau reports at least once this quarter
- Kept reported utilization on revolving accounts under about 30 percent
- Disputed any misreported payment, wrong code, or unrecognized account
- Maintained a Low-5 bank rating or better in the business account
- Continued paying every reporting account early to defend PAYDEX
- Checked for unfamiliar tradelines or inquiries as possible fraud
- Scheduled an annual review to add reporting accounts as the business grows

Your Action Plan

1. Form your LLC or corporation and obtain your EIN free from irs.gov, saving all documents.
2. Open a dedicated business bank account and build a balance toward a Low-5 bank rating.
3. Establish a non-PO-Box address, published phone, domain email, and a live website, all matching exactly.
4. Request your free D-U-N-S Number from Dun & Bradstreet and record it with your EIN.
5. Set up CreditSignal alerts and confirm your industry codes are accurate on your D&B file.
6. Open three to five reporting Tier 1 vendor accounts and make a small real purchase on each.
7. Pay every vendor invoice 10 to 15 days early and confirm tradelines report within 60 days.
8. Reach a PAYDEX of 80 or higher, then apply for one or two reporting Tier 2 store accounts.
9. Add a Tier 3 fleet or fuel card if you have vehicle spend, keeping utilization modest.
10. After one to two years of clean history, pursue Tier 4 cash credit and negotiate no-PG terms.

