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Get started

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How to

● All great businesses start in the same place: with an idea. In this section, read the profiles of 15 young companies that have made the transition from scribbles on pieces of paper to thriving enterprises – and you might even pick up a few tips along the way.

039 — 062

50 steps to success

● An illustrated journey from inspiration to that eventual vacation (once you've done all the hard work in between, of course) for would-be business founders. Find out how to set up your company, surround yourself with the right people and make sure everyone knows how well you're doing.

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Next steps

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Training grounds

● Take a trip around the globe to visit some inspiring centres of learning that prove that qualifications are what you make of them. The end result could be art, craft or even gelato – and a healthy profit margin, all being well.

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Master and apprentice

● Learning on the job provides essential hands-on skills and is a way to pick up decades of accumulated knowledge. Here are some of the world's most coveted apprentice spots, ranging from fine porcelain production in Denmark to tailoring the perfect Italian suit.

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Essay: Use your hands

● The craft movement – rolling up your sleeves, getting out there and making things – is helping to reinvigorate economies. Aisha Speirs explains why handmade products combined with new business models are the way to go.

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Choose your set-up

● Having a grand plan doesn't necessarily mean striking out on your own: identifying and making use of resources that are already available is a shrewd move. Read the stories of family businesses such as German white-goods giant Miele and

innovative co-op schemes such as Semley Village Stores in the UK – you'll see that sometimes the assistance you need is right on your doorstep.

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Create a brand

● Every business needs an inspiring face to show the world. Branding and packaging is a delicate art and there is no country more adept at creating crisp, bold and thoughtful ideas than Japan. This section shows off a few of those wonderful concepts in action.

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Photo album: Global logos

● The logo you settle on for your business should be simple, memorable and, most of all, likeable. So, cameras at the ready – here are a few that have caught the eye, from Amsterdam to Zürich.

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Need to know

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Surprising lessons

● There are certain basic elements that you'll have thought of already when it comes to building your empire. But how about things like going for a run and coming back for lunch with your team – all with the office dog watching on?

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Essay: Business philosophy

● MBAs and management manuals have their place but have you considered following the advice of Socrates and Albert Camus instead? Sophie Grove makes an argument for being guided by the great thinkers.

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How I manage

● While running your own business is a rewarding and worthwhile pursuit, it can get lonely at the top. Here nine bosses from around the world dispense their advice for effective management from on high.

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Look the part

● Granted, there are some entrepreneurs that never get further than sitting in front of their laptop in their bedroom wearing shorts and a vest. But if you want to take your company to the next level, invest in some smart attire for those all-important meet-and-greets.

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Cities

Where will you actually start your start-up? Don't be limited by your immediate options – it's important to find somewhere that suits your niche wherever it may be.

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Essay: 'Made' movement

Andrew Tuck on why craft and graft need to have a strong presence in the city.

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Small cities

You don't necessarily have to base yourself in a major metropolis to see your business develop and prosper.

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Keen to shun urban life entirely? Perhaps a remote Swedish island or a peaceful Italian fishing town can be your ideal location.

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Explore the established and innovative workplaces of a luxury-tie maker, a cashmere specialist and a worldwide advertising giant.

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Shared spaces

It's good to share. Here are three communal offices that promote the benefits of working in harmony.

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Interiors

You've found your office – now it's time to get the inside just right. Sneak a peek at these impressive interiors for the appropriate inspiration.

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Essay: Work environment

Tom Morris on why it's vital that you make your desk as comfortable and homely as possible – and why hot-desking should be banned.

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It's the small things that count. We provide some simple ideas to help bring your office to life and enthuse potential clients.

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From pens to paper clips and chalk to cotton twine, we've got all your desktop needs covered.

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10 essential items

All offices will be set up differently but there are some staples that you can't do without (including one particularly special stapler).

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Office furniture and kit

If you're in the process of setting up your new business, you're going to be spending a lot of time in your new office – so make sure that it's kitted out just right.

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Directory: Venues

Where do you go for a business breakfast in Auckland? Is there a good spot for a working lunch in Hamburg? And where to head for a celebratory cocktail in New York? This is where you find out.

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Directory: Cities

A detailed breakdown of 12 of the most popular global destinations for doing business: find out how to make the most of your time in these cities of opportunity.