

REAL ESTATE BROKERAGE LAUNCH CHECKLIST

10 STEPS TO TAKE YOUR BROKERAGE FROM CONCEPT TO FULLY OPERATIONAL

Starting your own brokerage is an exciting leap in your real estate career, but success starts with a solid foundation. Follow **NAR's 10-Step Launch Roadmap** to ensure your brokerage is compliant, well branded and built for long-term growth.

1. RESEARCH & PLAN YOUR BROKERAGE

- Analyze your target market: demographics, property types and competition.
- Identify your niche: residential, commercial, luxury or team-based brokerage.
- Draft a business plan outlining your goals, growth strategy and operating budget.

KEY RESOURCE:

- [Small Business Administration – How to Write a Business Plan](#)

TIP

Use your plan to secure funding, attract partners and guide your launch timeline.

2. CHOOSE A LEGAL STRUCTURE & REGISTER YOUR BUSINESS

- Select your entity (e.g., LLC, Corporation, S-Corp) based on liability protection and tax benefits.
- Register your business with your state's real estate commission and the Secretary of State.
- Obtain an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the IRS for tax and payroll purposes.

KEY RESOURCE:

- [Small Business Administration – Choose a Business Structure](#)
- [Internal Revenue Service – Apply for EIN Online](#)

TIP

Consult a real estate attorney or CPA to ensure compliance with state brokerage ownership laws.

3. OBTAIN YOUR BROKER'S LICENSE

- Complete your state's required broker pre-licensing courses.
- Pass the broker's licensing exam.
- Verify your license with your state real estate commission before operating.

KEY RESOURCE:

- [NAR – State Licensing Info](#)

4. SET UP BROKERAGE OPERATIONS

- Choose your office type:
 - traditional
 - hybrid
 - virtual model
- Secure business insurance: Errors & Omissions (E&O), general liability and cyber liability.

KEY RESOURCE:

- [NAR Partner – Victor Insurance](#)
- [NAR Partner – Liberty Mutual](#)

TIP

Document your brokerage's operational workflow early (listing intake, compliance, marketing, etc.) to scale efficiently.

5. ESTABLISH FINANCIAL SYSTEMS

- Open a business bank account to separate personal and company finances.
- Set up accounting software or commission management systems.
- Plan for taxes and recurring expenses like insurance, MLS dues and marketing.

KEY RESOURCES:

- [QuickBooks for Real Estate Professionals](#)
- [NAR World Elite Business Mastercard](#)

TIP

Implement a clear policy for commission payments, fees and agent splits upfront.

6. DEVELOP YOUR BRAND & MARKETING STRATEGY

- Choose a memorable name and consider conducting trademark clearance for the name to ensure you are not infringing on any third-party trademark rights.
- Design your logo, signage and print collateral.
- Register your domain, build a professional website and complete your Google Business Profile.
- Establish social media accounts and start publishing market-related content.
- Make sure you are complying with NAR's trademark rules when using the REALTOR® trademarks in your business materials and accounts.

KEY RESOURCES:

- [Second City Ventures](#)
- [Realtors Property Resource® \(RPR\)](#)
- [.RealEstate](#)
- [Photofy](#)
- [NAR's Membership Marks Manual for Members](#)

TIP

Consistent branding helps agents and clients recognize and trust your brokerage faster.

7. CREATE OPERATIONAL & COMPLIANCE SYSTEM

- Draft core documents: Independent Contractor Agreements, Commission Plans and Office Policies.
- Implement transaction review and compliance workflows.
- Set up document retention and audit procedures.

KEY RESOURCE:

- [NAR – Legal Forms & Contracts](#)

8. CONSIDER JOINING AN MLS AND YOUR ASSOCIATIONS

- Join your local Multiple Listing Service (MLS) for access to property data and listings.
- Become a member in your local, state and national REALTOR® associations.

KEY RESOURCES:

- [NAR – Find an MLS Provider](#)
- [National Association of REALTORS®](#)
 - [Broker.realtor](#)

TIP

Active membership builds credibility, networking opportunities and access to resources.



9. LAUNCH YOUR BROKERAGE

- Conduct a “soft launch” to test systems, communication channels and workflows.
- Announce your opening through press releases, email marketing and social media.
- Host a launch event or open house to attract agents and local partners.
- Hire or recruit your first group of agents and administrative support.

TIP

Collect testimonials or early success stories to build brand authority.

10. GROW & SCALE

- Track KPIs: transaction units/volume, agent recruitment, marketing ROI and customer satisfaction.
- Implement retention strategies and mentorship programs to support agents.
- Plan for long-term goals such as expansion, team building or franchise opportunities.

TIP

Schedule quarterly reviews to assess progress and adjust business strategy.

