
MAIL FORWARDING SOLUTIONS FOR HOME BUSINESSES

When many businesses start out they are often based at home. This is understandable for several reasons. Many business ideas stem from hobbies or interests and develop into commercial opportunities. Most new businesses start from home to keep costs down during the businesses infancy. Some businesses continue to operate from home as ecommerce, drop shipping and online shops has removed the need for an actual presence on the high street.

Most home based businesses choose to operate as a limited company or sole trader. Either way the owners of the business have to consider whether or not they want to declare their home address as their main business address. Whilst some people may not have any problems with this there are a few points that should be considered.

If you choose to use your home address for your business, this will be declared to the tax authorities, company registry, and other government organisations. All of your letter heads, adverts and other correspondence will need to show your home address. If your business is web based then most clients expect to see an address provided in the contact details. Your address is then freely available for everyone to access.

You may decide that you do not want to declare your address to the entire world. This provides you with a couple of options. Firstly you could use a post office box commonly referred to as a PO Box. These are easy to set up with a local post office or similar service provider. They are relatively inexpensive and provide a cheap alternative to using your own address. Mail can either be collected or forwarded for an additional fee. However, they are not always the right solution.

Organisations like banks, international couriers and many suppliers of goods will not accept a PO Box as a business address. It may be difficult to order supplies and deliveries if you only provide a PO Box as your contact. In addition to this, what will your clients and customers think? You may find that a PO Box deters people from using your services. Consider what a prospective customer may be thinking if your contact details online only show a PO Box and not a standard address. It may not fill them with confidence.

The second alternative is to use a mail forwarding company. Instead of using a PO Box you may prefer to use a company that specialises in forwarding mail for businesses. This removes the PO Box section from your address. Some service providers may use suite numbers instead to identify your mail. Many of the professional mail forwarding companies however, simply let you use their address. The mail is then sorted by dedicated staff and forwarded on to you the day it is received. Whilst this may not be as cheap as the first option it avoids any stigma attached to using PO Boxes and means that even international couriers will deliver to your address.

This type of mail forwarding service allows you to display your business address on your website, promotional material and business correspondence. Your customers need never know that your mail is processed through an alternative address. Your personal address is not disclosed to your clients providing you with piece of mind. Junk mail is avoided and you will never get a dissatisfied customer turn up at your family home.

A further point to consider is the urgency of your mail. If your business mail is not urgent then collecting from a PO Box can be done at your leisure. Mail forwarding service providers will delay your mail by one day. Therefore if you regularly need business correspondence the next day then neither service may be suitable to your business.

When operating your business from home consider the implications of using your own address, a post office box or a mail forwarding service provider. There are advantages and disadvantages to all solutions. It is important to remember that whatever decision you make you should minimise the impact on your customers.