

STARTUP DMV:

The Entrepreneur's Guide to Doing Business in DC, Maryland & Virginia (DMV)

Presented by DMV CEO

Table of Contents

INTRO.....	4
ABOUT DMVCEO.COM.....	5
WHY WASHINGTON D.C. IS A GREAT PLACE TO BE AN ENTREPRENEUR.....	6
5 RESOURCES ENTREPRENEURS & BUSINESS OWNERS SHOULD CHECK OUT IN DC, MARYLAND & VIRGINIA.....	8
7 BUSINESS OWNERS EXPLAIN WHY THE DMV IS A GOOD PLACE TO BE AN ENTREPRENEUR.....	10
1) OUTSIDE INVESTORS	10
2) ACCESS TO CAPITAL.....	10
3) A DYNAMIC UPWARD TREND	11
4) INTELLECTUAL LEVEL	11
5) THREE REASONS	12
6) YOUNG AND DRIVEN.....	13
7) THE STREETS ARE PAVED WITH ACRONYMS.....	13
HOW TO START A BUSINESS IN WASHINGTON D.C., MARYLAND OR VIRGINIA.....	14
STEP 1: HAVE AN IDEA	14
STEP 2: HAVE A GOAL.....	14
STEP 3: COME UP WITH A NAME	14
STEP 4: FIND A TEAM	15
STEP 5: PERFORM RESEARCH.....	15
STEP 6: LEVERAGE RESOURCES.....	15
STEP 7: WRITE A BUSINESS PLAN	15
STEP 8: TALK TO AN ATTORNEY.....	16
STEP 9: HIRE AN ACCOUNTANT/CPA.....	16
STEP 10: OPEN A SEPARATE BUSINESS BANK ACCOUNT & CREDIT CARD (OPTIONAL)	16
STEP 11: PURCHASE INSURANCE, LICENSES AND PERMITS	16
STEP 12: FINANCING	16
STEP 13: SALES, MARKETING & ADVERTISING	17
STEP 14: FIND A PLACE.....	17
STEP 15: CREATING PRODUCT & SERVICES.....	17
STEP 16: CONGRATULATIONS! NOW THE WORK BEGINS!	17
10 DMV TWITTER HANDLES ENTREPRENEURS SHOULD BE FOLLOWING	18

WHAT CAN ENTREPRENEURS LEARN FROM RG3? 3 THINGS.....	20
WHAT ENTREPRENEURS CAN LEARN FROM KEVIN DURANT.....	21
WHAT ENTREPRENEURS CAN LEARN FROM BRYCE HARPER.....	22
WHAT ENTREPRENEURS CAN LEARN FROM MICHAEL PHELPS.....	24
WHY IS THE DMV A GREAT PLACE TO BE AN ENTREPRENEUR? (COMPILATION).....	26
WHAT ENTREPRENEURS & BUSINESS OWNERS SHOULD DO AT HOWARD UNIVERSITY HOMECOMING.....	28
3 THINGS ENTREPRENEURS CAN LEARN FROM THE WASHINGTON NATIONALS	29
10 THRIVING STARTUP COMPANIES IN THE DMV.....	30
HOW TO START A BUSINESS IN PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY, VA.....	32
HOW TO START A BUSINESS IN FREDERICKSBURG, VA.....	34
HOW TO START A BUSINESS IN STAFFORD COUNTY, VA	36

INTRO

Entrepreneurship is alive and well in the Nation's Capital. That's why we created DMV CEO and why we launched DMV CEO. For entrepreneurs and business owners in the Washington D.C. area we wanted to compile some of our best posts so that you can get an idea of Washington D.C., Maryland and Virginia (DMV) and what makes it so great to be an entrepreneur and start a business.

Packed in this eBook are some of our best posts from DMVCEO.com including lessons to learn from local sports stars such as Michael Phelps and Kevin Durant and we also have compilations directly from entrepreneurs and business owners in the area on why they think the DMV is such a good place to be a business owner. Finally, you will find Twitter handles that you should be following including @dmvceo and step-by-step guides for starting a small business.

As always, we appreciate what you do and we hope this helps you to experience success in your business and we hope you come visit us at www.dmvceo.com, your #1 guide for news, events and information for entrepreneurs and business owners in Washington D.C., Maryland & Virginia.

Gresham W. Harkless Jr.
DMV CEO



News for entrepreneurs and business owners in the Nation's Capital

About DMVCEO.com

Blog Site: DMV CEO

URL: <http://dmvceo.com>

Facebook Group: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/dmvceo>

LinkedIn

Group: http://www.linkedin.com/groups?home&gid=5076081&trk=anet_ug_hm

About: DMV CEO is a niche blog that captures the essence of entrepreneurship in Washington D.C., Maryland, and Virginia. DMV CEO is a member of [CEO Blog Nation](#).

Vision: To capture and support the DMV entrepreneur.

Mission: To improve the rate of success for entrepreneurs and the number of successful startups.

Motto: The DMV's Authority on Entrepreneurship

What does DMV stand for? The 3 areas of the country that this blog focuses on Washington **D**.C., **M**aryland and **V**irginia.

Why Washington D.C. is a Great Place to be an Entrepreneur

Venture Beat published a post about the [Washington D.C. startup scene](#). While the District has been a great place for professionals to network and advance their careers, it hasn't been known as hotbed for innovation and entrepreneurship.

That perception is changing. In celebration of [DC Entrepreneurship Week](#), DMV CEO is reminding people what makes Washington D.C. a great place to be an entrepreneur. Washington D.C. is not only America's capital, but it is also the Nation's capital when it comes to entrepreneurship and innovation.

1. **[DC Entrepreneurship Week](#)** – Throughout the week, DC Entrepreneurship Week will connect entrepreneurs with local leaders, capital and resources so they may successfully collaborate on current and future business opportunities to create new jobs and economic growth in the greater Washington D.C.
2. **Colleges and Universities** – There are very prominent colleges and universities located in the Washington D.C. area including [American University](#), [George Mason University](#), [Georgetown University](#), [George Washington University](#), [Howard University](#) and the [University of Maryland](#). College and Universities are generally a place for innovation and creativity, which are also needed in startups.
3. **[DC Tech Meetup](#)** – Founded in 2011, The DC Tech Meetup brings together technologists, entrepreneurs, investors and the innovation community to share and learn. Every month this community comes together to see demos, product launches and network.
4. **Accelerator Companies and Organizations** – [Endeavor DC](#) provides support to consumer internet startups to gain traction and funding, [Acceleprise](#) is an accelerator program that connects companies working to solve enterprise problems with mentors, partners and customers and [Fortify.vc](#), which nurtures investors and entrepreneurs.
5. **Culture** – Washington D.C. is a diverse and transient area with residents from across the world. With diversity comes the exchange of new ideas and new outlooks.

6. **Education** – Stellar colleges and universities make Washington D.C. one of the most educated places in the world. To solve the world's problems, you want the most educated people you can find. Washington D.C. has them.
7. **Affluence** – One of the most affluent places in the world, the DMV area has some of the richest counties in the world. Entrepreneurs and business owners know that access to capital is one of the reasons for failure.

5 Resources Entrepreneurs & Business Owners Should Check Out in DC, Maryland & Virginia

Being an entrepreneur can be difficult so finding support and resources are always something that entrepreneurs and business owners cherish. We put together a list of 5 resources that you might want to check out if you're doing business in Washington D.C., Maryland & Virginia.

- [BNI NOVA](#) – There are over 30 chapters across Northern Virginia and Washington D.C. to visit. BNI is a business and professional networking organization that strives to build strong trust relationships between business people that will result in qualified sales referrals. BNI allows only one person from each particular profession to join each chapter.
- [Chambers of Commerce](#) – Your local Chamber of Commerce has events, and support for small to medium sized businesses. Typically there are networking events to meet other business owners, classes and other resources available to members.
 - See the different chambers in Virginia are here:
 - [Virginia Chamber of Commerce](#)
 - [Arlington Chamber of Commerce](#)
 - [Alexandria Chamber of Commerce](#)
 - [Fredericksburg Chamber of Commerce](#).
 - Chambers located in Washington D.C. are here:
 - [DC Chamber of Commerce](#)
 - Chambers located in Maryland in here:
 - [Maryland Chamber of Commerce](#)
 - [Prince George's Chamber of Commerce](#)
 - [Baltimore City Chamber](#)
 - [Montgomery County Chamber](#)
 - [Baltimore County Chamber of Commerce](#)
 - [Annapolis & Anne Arundel Chamber of Commerce](#)
 - [Howard County Chamber of Commerce](#)
 - [Rockville Chamber of Commerce](#)
 - [Charles County Chamber of Commerce](#)
 - [Gaithersburg/Germantown Chamber of Commerce](#)
- [Community Business Partnership](#) – Created in 1995, Community Business Partnership (CBP) is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization

www.dmvceo.com - STARTUP DMV

The Entrepreneur's Guide to Doing Business in the DC, Maryland & Virginia

working in collaboration with a number of local, regional and national organizations to promote small business growth in our communities. The mission of CBP is to help small businesses start and grow and to be the premier provider of full spectrum educational and support services to small business in Fairfax County and beyond enabling them to make a significant contribution to a vibrant local economy.

- [1776](#) – Founded in January 2013, 1776 is a platform to reinvent the world by connecting the hottest startups with the resources they need to excel. From our Campus a few blocks from the White House, 1776 serves as a global hub for startups tackling major challenges in education, energy, health care, government, and other critical industries. 1776 startups receive mentorship, corporate connections, access to capital, media attention, and a pipeline of top talent—the raw materials critical for innovators to succeed.
- [Wheaton Business Innovation Center](#) – The Wheaton Business Innovation Center is located in the heart of Wheaton’s \$400 million, multiphase commercial, residential and retail complex—creating nearly 2 million square feet of new development and generating over \$280 million in private investment. It is in one of the County’s Enterprise Zones, offering special tax incentives to eligible businesses and is literally across the street from the Wheaton Metro Station. This Center is ideally suited for current, locally based business service, government contracting and/or professional trade businesses looking to grow.

7 Business Owners Explain Why the DMV is a Good Place to Be an Entrepreneur

There are few areas more energized and engaging with entrepreneurs than DMV. Short for D.C., Maryland, and Virginia, DMV is quickly becoming *the* haven if you're looking to form your own company or find bright minds to partner with. The proximity to large cities and an ever-evolving entrepreneurial spirit makes the area a perfect place to be if you're in the business of starting a business. We wanted to hear from some of those business owners on why they believe the DMV area is such a good place for being an entrepreneur.

1) Outside Investors

I believe the Baltimore/Washington region is about to attract significant attention from outside investors. Venture capitalists are tiring of the high sticker price valuations coming out of New York and Silicon Valley startups, and they are craving companies that serve distinct niches. Maryland and Virginia entrepreneurs have significant expertise in areas like ed-tech, medical research, and government relationships. Our entrepreneurs dive deeper and offer meatier products and services than the standard app of the month. The DMV CEO is bootstrapping and keeping their costs so low and that's incredibly attractive to investors. If there is anything I would encourage our founders to do more of, it's dream bigger and scale faster.

Thanks to Kelly Keenan Trumbour, [See Jane Invest!](#)

2) Access to Capital

Though for the time we've moved our company to Austin for the TechStars program and to expand our operations, Washington DC remains the catalyst that allowed our business to reach the point it's at today. We founders all met at Virginia Tech, where we had a variety of amazing resources to help us start the business. We tested our product in Arlington because we grew up around there, and we realized the need for disruption. Nobody I knew liked dealing with seedy lawn care companies,

so we created a technological solution to fix the kinks in billing, customer service, and scheduling. It turned out, Arlington was the perfect test market because of the variety of different consumer profiles in the area, and the lessons we learned there have allowed us to expand. The DC area is great for entrepreneurs because of the access to capital and the access to some of the nation's top talent through great Universities. Young people rolling out of consulting firms, government roles, cyber security jobs make this a great place to attract talent. There's a reason DC is one of the fastest growing tech scenes, and we're glad we started there.

Thanks to Steve Corcoran, [LawnStarter](#)!

3) A Dynamic Upward Trend

Having launched Solo Trekker 4 U on Dec. 12, 2012, I find Washington ideal for entrepreneurs. The District and suburbs have been on a dynamic upward trend in the past decade. The large number of technologists and networking options make for synergy for everyone from millennials to Baby Boomers looking to create the next disruptive technology. For those of us connecting solo travelers with well-priced 4-5 star travel services, the numerous embassy delegations provide a direct connection globally without leaving home. The local universities have global reach and provide both research options and access to a well-qualified pool of potential employees. Lastly, Metro DC is less expensive for self-funding entrepreneurs than Silicon Alley and Silicon Valley. As a result, the image of Washington as a government-only town is now completely outdated.

Thanks to Elizabeth Avery, [Solo Trekker 4 U](#)!

4) Intellectual Level

Most people would probably say that Washington's geo-location attracts or at least forces top talent in the world of finance, politics, policy and health to at least come through the city a minimum of once or twice a year. This exposure is great for any entrepreneur. To me personally, the higher than average intellectual level of the general DC population is the main attraction. It almost seems as if majority of the residents

possess at least a master's degree in a particular field and a whole lot have a doctorate. If you can get this type of demographic to buy into the concept, scaling out should not be a terrible problem. The insight and advice received along the way is also priceless.

Thanks to Zlatan Beca, [Repair Jungle](#)!

5) Three Reasons

The Talent: The D.C. area is home to a ton of young talent. Lots of recent college grads gravitate to the D.C. area because it is a cool/fun place to be, with lots of free activities and nightlife available along an expansive network of public transportation. Many of these recent grads are looking for jobs in marketing, sales, and customer service. While there is a bit of a tech-talent shortage in the area (when will Georgetown start an engineering school?), where isn't there a tech shortage? *The Resources:* The D.C. metro region has a solid and growing network of resources for entrepreneurs, particularly tech entrepreneurs. The Internet itself was born here, companies like AOL and UUNet were started here, and today many web and software companies are thriving in the D.C. area. Entrepreneur networking groups such as Mindshare and EO are very active. Startup accelerators and shared office spaces such as 1776 and The Fort went from being virtually nonexistent when we started Capterra in 1999 to now being great options for getting started in a collaborative and entrepreneurial environment. *The Most Bang for Your Buck:* Office space and overall cost of living in the D.C. area, while not cheap, is a fraction of the cost of the major tech hubs – San Francisco, Silicon Valley, and NYC. There are many viable options for setting up shop, ranging from downtown D.C., to Arlington, the Dulles Corridor, and the I-270 Corridor. This helps to keep prices in check. It's also worth mentioning that D.C. offers lots of opportunities unavailable elsewhere. We have amazing restaurants and museums, the Monuments, and we're less than two hours from both the beach and the mountains. Entrepreneurs need to take breaks too!

Thanks to Mike Ortner, [Capterra](#)!

6) Young and Driven

There are two major advantages for starting and owning a business in the D.C. area. First, the area is a hub for young, driven and well-educated talent. A lot of recent college graduates from great institutions flock to the area, and businesses – especially startups – benefit from that. The second major advantage in the area’s proximity. It is centrally located on the East Coast, so If you look at a map, there are a lot of major cities within a three-hour flight or less – New York, Boston, Chicago, Miami, Detroit, Atlanta, even Toronto and Montreal. You can set up meetings in these cities and be in and out in the same day.

Thanks to David Boice, [Tier10](#)!

7) The Streets Are Paved With Acronyms

In spite of the extreme polarization that characterizes Washington today, we’re here because everyone agrees that open and transparent government is a high priority goal that we must strive mightily to achieve. Incomprehensible government jargon is a persistent problem. James Madison once said, “A popular government without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy; or, perhaps both.” Our GovlishR program is dedicated to preventing the farce and tragedy that Madison so feared. When we cannot understand what our government is saying, democracy ceases to function. Govlish deciphers the language of government. We are a data-driven solution to navigating the inscrutable government maze. We aggregate, analyze, organize, format, contextualize, and curate about 100,000 government terms. That includes acronyms, initialisms, abbreviations, codes, cryptonyms, aka’s, dba’s, and other terms that defy classification. Successfully mapping the language of government can only be done from here, where decision makers grasp the seriousness of the problem and the need to fix it. If we fail, government risks going down a road toward irrelevance and alienation, the consequences of which are very scary indeed.

Thanks to Robert R. Mander, [GovlishR](#)!

How to Start a Business in Washington D.C., Maryland or Virginia

For entrepreneurs and business owners, starting a business is one of the most exciting things that you can do. Below are the steps that you can take when starting a business in Washington D.C., Maryland or Virginia. It is important to speak to an expert when starting a business, below are general guidelines but because each business and situation is unique it is important to contact an expert. These steps are from one of our products in our bookstore.

Step 1: Have an idea

Typically when businesses are started, it is because there is something missing in the market or something that people need. It may not have been created yet or you might be building a better version of an already existing product or service, but as a business owner you must have the vision to create what the market needs. Sometimes, businesses develop around an entrepreneur's passion. Have a brainstorming session where you just generate ideas. Some will be great and some will be good and others will be horrible. It's important to try to find a good balance between passion and an opportunity in the market.

Step 2: Have a goal

Why are you starting your business? Do you want to sell it to another company? Do you want it to replace the job you lost? Is it a part-time business to bring in extra cash? Are you planning on leaving your job? These are questions entrepreneurs should have answered before they get started so that they know their "Why."

Step 3: Come up with a name

When deciding on your businesses name, you want to make sure that it is available when you register it online and available if you have to register it in the state or county you do business in. Typically, you want your business name to explain what you do but be unique enough that it won't be confused with other businesses.

Step 4: Find a team

It's very important to build a strong team. As the saying goes, if you are the smartest person in the room, you are in the wrong room. Being a great entrepreneur and business owner means being a great leader and hiring the best people and getting out of their way. The most successful entrepreneurs don't do everything; rather, they focus on what they do best and what will help grow their business. It is also important to have a mentor and/or advisor so your business is more likely to succeed.

Step 5: Perform research

Measure twice and cut once. This saying means that it is important to do research about your business and even your industry. This is not a one-time action; it is important to constantly read and stay abreast of news and changes in your industry. It is important to be an expert about your business and an expert in your industry.

Step 6: Leverage resources

There are resources for entrepreneurs including CEO Blog Nation, the Small Business Administration, SCORE offices, small business development centers and Chamber of Commerce's in Washington D.C., Maryland & Virginia. It is also important to reach out to advisors, mentors and experts in the industry.

Step 7: Write a business plan

It is very important to plan out your business and take the steps to be successful. While a traditional 30-40-page business plan may not be necessary for success, unless you are trying to obtain financing from a bank, it is important to have a plan in place for how you are going to run your business. Your business plan is essentially a map for how you are going to reach your goal. It doesn't have to be long. It could be 1-3 pages. A traditional business plan should include an Executive Summary, a general company description, buyer's description, competitive analysis, marketing strategy, overview of your products and services, overview of your industry and competitors, operations plan, management and organization plan, development plan, risk analysis, personal financial statements, financial history, financial plan and technology plan. Also, check out our eBook for

entrepreneurs and business owners called Business Plan 101 in the CEO Blog Nation store.

Step 8: Talk to an attorney

Incorporating a business is a very important step for business owners to protect themselves. There are different options including sole proprietorship, LLC, LLP, S Corp and C Corp and they all have different advantages and disadvantages, which is why it is very important to consult an attorney and possibly an accountant for advice. An attorney can help with everything including permits, state requirements, taxes, partnerships, shares, contracts and more.

Step 9: Hire an accountant/CPA

It's important to hire an accountant not just for filing taxes but so that you are able to keep your books in order the entire year. Because taxes can get complicated, it is important to have someone trustworthy to handle your finances.

Step 10: Open a separate business bank account & credit card (optional)

So that funds are separate, it is important to have a separate account away from your personal checking and savings account. Also, opening a business credit card account is a good way to keep things separate if you have a personal credit card.

Step 11: Purchase insurance, licenses and permits

For entrepreneurs and business owners having things like workers compensation, insurance and local licenses and permits may have to be purchased. It is important to consult with a professional because requirements might vary from each state and county.

Step 12: Financing

For entrepreneurs and business owners financing is vital. One of the reasons that businesses fail is due to lack of capital. There are many options for business owners including bootstrapping, venture capital, angel

investment, commercial banks, the Small Business Administration, crowd funding and friends and family.

Step 13: Sales, marketing & advertising

One of the overlooked parts of business is marketing, advertising and even sales. While it is very important to have a great product and service and provide exceptional customer service, it is also very important to drive traffic to your website or storefront and let people know that you are in business. There are many options including social media, Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Pay-Per-Click (PPC) advertising, Display Advertising, direct mail, networking and e-mail marketing.

Step 14: Find a place

Deciding whether to lease an office is a very important decision for entrepreneurs to consider. There are various options such as a shared space that entrepreneurs can rent to lower overhead costs. Also, businesses must determine whether to have a storefront or consider running an online store with a home office. There are a lot of options that entrepreneurs and business owners have to choose from.

Step 15: Creating product & services

One of the most important parts of owning a business is having a product or service to sell. It is important to have an inventory and a simple, streamlined way for potential customers to buy your product and services. While this can develop as you bring your product to market, it is very important to at least have something to sell.

Step 16: Congratulations! Now the work begins!

Once you have completed these steps you are ready to start your business. Understand that you might have to revisit some of these steps while you are running your business or introduce new products and services after you get feedback from the market. The important part is that once you have these things in order, you are ready to start!

10 DMV Twitter Handles Entrepreneurs Should Be Following

The amount of Twitter users is staggering. You can find anything from a Twitter about clothing to one about pet grooming. For business owners throughout the D.M.V area, making the most of Twitter follows means you might find yourself with a surplus of great information and ideas from fellow owners and entrepreneurs. Here is a list of 10 Twitter handles you should definitely be following.

- **@DCTechMeetup** - Twitter handle for monthly meetup that brings together technology startups in Washington D.C., Maryland & Virginia.
- **@1776dc** -1776 is a platform to reinvent the world by connecting the hottest startups with the resources they need to excel. From our Campus a few blocks from the White House, 1776 serves as a global hub for startups tackling major challenges in education, energy, health care, government, and other critical industries. 1776 startups receive mentorship, corporate connections, access to capital, media attention, and a pipeline of top talent—the raw materials critical for innovators to succeed.
- **@KidsAreHeroes** -Based in Frederick, Maryland, Kids Are Heroes is an organization, which takes a look at child social entrepreneurs and gives inspiration and advice for any young person looking to make a difference and an early splash in the world of entrepreneurship.
- **@StartupHoyas** -Startup Hoyas has a strong belief that the world needs more entrepreneurs! Follow this Twitter to stay up to date on entrepreneurship events, resources, and networking opportunities.
- **@NAWBONational** - Female entrepreneurs in the area of Washington take notice of this Twitter page. The National Association of Women Business Owners helps women entrepreneurs find their way into economic, social and political positions of power around the world.
- **@NFIBYEF** - Another great source of information for young entrepreneurs, this Twitter page is dedicated to building next generation of small biz owners and entrepreneurs. They strive to educate young people about critical role of small biz.
- **@StartupGrindDC** - Looking for some startup inspiration? Startup Grind is an event series and website designed to help educate,

inspire, and connect local entrepreneurs through monthly speaker and networking events.

- **@masonsocent** - This spot on the list is a haven for social entrepreneurs on a mission. The Mason Center for Social Entrepreneurship serves as a catalyst for social innovation, sparking entrepreneurial solutions to society's pressing challenges.
- **@Femworking** - Female entrepreneurs showing off how empowering they can be! Call out, help out, and shout out! It's how a networking organization for women, bloggers, and business owners makes a difference and inspires others.
- **@mitefdc** - This is a general Twitter for all entrepreneurs great and small. MIT Enterprise Forum DC is a non-profit, volunteer organization promotes the growth, education, and success of the entrepreneur and business community

What Can Entrepreneurs Learn from RG3? 3 Things

Has the excitement from the NFL Draft left your town? Not in Washington D.C. In the April Draft, the Washington Redskins made Robert Griffin, III also known as RGIII their number one overall selection in the draft. The excitement from the draft came long before the actual selection when the Redskins “leapfrogged” the Cleveland Browns to select the coveted Baylor quarterback. The Redskins gave up three number one picks and a second rounder for their new starting quarterback.

Now that RGIII has found a home and starting to work with his new team, entrepreneurs can learn 3 things from RG3.

1. **Protect your brand.** Have you heard of Robert Griffin, III? Well, there’s a good chance that you’ve also heard of RGIII. After being drafted, the astute quarterback decided to protect his name and brand by trademarking RGIII. Through his company Thr3escompany, LLC, he submitted applications to the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) for four trademarks – RGIII, RG3, Robert Griffin III, and Unbelievably Believable. (Via [Change Legal](#)) Once entrepreneurs understand how valuable their brand is, they must take the necessary steps to safeguard their brand.
2. **Work Hard.** Ever seen a successful entrepreneur (or person) that hasn’t cited hard work and dedication with a reason for their success? Griffin isn’t any different. Upon winning the Heisman trophy, he famously coined the phrase ” ‘Unbelievably Believable.’ This is unbelievably believable. It’s unbelievable because in the moment we’re all amazed when great things happen. But it’s believable because great things don’t happen without hard work.” Entrepreneurs should take this same work ethic to their everyday activities so that they can experience moments that are “Unbelievably Believable.”
3. **Be Confident.** Confidence is often a result of hard work. [RG3 in his talk with Jon Gruden](#) showed that he was confident and that is the same confidence that entrepreneurs should possess. Working hard to know your industry statistics and industry trends will make entrepreneurs and business owners confident.

What Entrepreneurs Can Learn from Kevin Durant

Anyone that has watched the NBA Playoffs has “witnessed” the blossoming of Kevin Durant. The 6’9” Small Forward with a 7’5” wingspan has put on a display, which has taken him from a great player to a household name. Leading his team to the NBA Finals, Durant is 4 wins away from bringing the Larry O’Brien trophy to Oklahoma City. Kevin Durant was born in Washington D.C. and attended high school in Maryland and Virginia. The road hasn’t been easy, but there are a few things that entrepreneurs can learn from this year’s scoring champion:

1. **Hard Work Beats Talent When Talent Fails to Work Hard** – Kevin Durant understand the importance of working hard so that he can get better and reach his goal of being the best to ever play the game. Success is preceded by hard work and Durant has put hours and hours of time in the gym, which has translated to his overall game. Entrepreneurs should take the same mindset to their ventures. The time spent growing and improving yourself and your business will translate to the success of your venture. It might be sales, leadership, or any particular skill you want to improve. Taking time to hone your craft just like the Oklahoma City Thunder Star will only pay off in the long run.
2. **Humility Goes A Long Way** – Durant is a confident player, but he is also very humble and works hard to be successful. Even though he works hard, he does not find the need to boast or brag; he is one of the most humble athletes. Entrepreneurs don’t have to be arrogant about their abilities or their ventures, they should practice humility.
3. **You’re Only As Good As Your Team** – One of the most maligned athletes is on Durant’s own team—Russell Westbrook. The media continues to question Westbrook’s decision, but Durant understands it takes teams to win and to reach that goal Durant has to lean on his teammates. It has been his leadership and support for his teammates, which have helped Oklahoma City, get to the Finals. Entrepreneurs have to understand that your success and ability will only take you so far. If you can’t lead and recruit talented people, your venture will only go so far.

What Entrepreneurs Can Learn from Bryce Harper

Bryce Harper the 6 foot 3 inches tall phenom that plays outfielder for the Washington Nationals has been heralded since he was a teenage prospect. In 2009, Sports Illustrated featured Harper on its cover as the "Chosen One" comparing him to NBA Star LeBron James. While Harper can't legally drink and does offer the occasional [sound bite](#), the 19-year old star is better known for what has done in the MLB. His rookie year Harper became the youngest All-Star in baseball history and his story is something entrepreneurs can learn from.

Here are 3/4 ideas for the Nationals star that wears number "34":

"Just don't let that go to your head. "Keep working, cause those guys [Ken Griffey Jr. and Alex Rodriguez] made it, you ain't yet." - Ron Harper, Bryce's father, when Bryce was asked a question about his similarities to Ken Griffey Jr. and Alex Rodriguez

"I hope so. I'm just going to go into camp, work as hard as I can, like I did last year. Just try to prove to everybody that I can play in the big leagues, and if I have to deal with adversity a little bit, I'm going to deal with it." - Bryce Harper when asked if he was ready for the Major Leagues

- **Work Hard:** Entrepreneurs have to understand the hard work and dedication pay off over time. While the long hours in the office may not pay dividends initially, the seeds that are planted will pay off over time. Long before he was selected for the Washington Nationals and played in his first All-Star Game, Bryce Harper had a rigorous schedule. He worked hard at his craft and knew how much work it would take to reach his goal of being the "Best of All Time."
- **Follow Your Goals/Dreams:** Often entrepreneurs can allow outside influences to affect their belief in following their dreams and setting goals. Bryce Harper heard his fair share of critics and doubters when he dropped out after his sophomore year at Las Vegas High School and earned his General Education Degree (GED). Thereafter, the eventual #1 overall pick, enrolled in the College of Southern Nevada. This decision made him eligible for the June 2010 amateur draft to begin his professional baseball career. Rather than listen to the critics

and maintain a negative outlook, Harper believed in himself and knew what his goal was and he followed it.

Anybody can pull the ball nine miles to right. I wanted to be able to hit the ball the same way to left that I do to right. All my home runs that you see are usually left-center to center. If you can hit the ball that way you're going to hit .300, if you're not, you're going to hit .260. - Bryce Harper

- **Know Your Craft:** Entrepreneurs should be an expert at their craft. It's important for entrepreneurs and business owners to stay on top of their industry and their market. Through reading books and taking courses, entrepreneurs become experts in their field. Harper works hard to not just be good, but to be legendary.
- **Discipline:** Entrepreneurs should always appreciate the discipline and focus of athletes. Harper played over 100 games a year as a teenager and as his mom said after a weekend of playing 10 games he would still end up going to the batting cages when he came home.

What Entrepreneurs Can Learn from Michael Phelps

Over the weekend those who tuned in might have witnessed the greatest Olympian of all time. With 22 Gold Medals, it is hard to argue that Michael Phelps isn't. The American Swimmer who has dominated swimming at the age of 27 has been nothing short of remarkable in his ability to beat every competitor that has come his way. The Baltimore native has inspired millions of people around the world who tuned in to watch him swim his way to victory after victory in London.

With his dominance, entrepreneurs and business owners can learn 22 things from Phelps:

1. **When you reach success (and even before then) don't forget to give back.** Michael Phelps recently retired and plans to devote more time to [helping others through his foundation](#).
2. **Go for first. There's no sense in playing for second place.** Phelps' mentality is to win and entrepreneurs should want to be the best that they can be.
3. **Don't like losing.** When it becomes okay to lose, you begin to lose. Michael Phelps detests losing and it shows in his relentless work ethic and dedication to his craft.
4. **Be ambitious.** No goal is too far or too ambitious. It is Phelps ambition, which has continually pushed the envelope of what was considered possible.
5. **Be mentally tough.** Phelps basically lives in the pool and the mental and physical drain can be a lot, but maintain the fortitude through the most difficult times to be successful.
6. **Dedicate yourself.** *"If you want to be the best, you have to do things that other people aren't willing to do."*
7. **Don't limit yourself.** Impossible is a limiting term and if it is used in your vocabulary it limits what you are capable of. Michael Phelps didn't allow experts or analyst to dictate what he was capable of accomplishing.
8. **Prepare for all scenarios.** *"I would visualize the best- and worst-case scenarios. Whether I get disqualified or my goggles fill up with water or I lose my goggles or I come in last, I'm ready for anything."*
9. **Set goals and reach for them.** Michael Phelps set a goal and he worked hard and put in the time to achieve those goals.

- 10.**Train and work hard.** The races are won before Phelps hit the water. He worked extremely hard to practice every scenario.
- 11.**Stay determined.** *“Being able to do something that’s never been done before, that’s what I’ve always wanted to do. . . . There was nothing that was going to stand in my way of being the first.”*
- 12.**Dream big.** *“You can’t put a limit on anything. The more you dream, the further you get.”*
- 13.**Find the gold standard and beat it.** 8 gold medals in Beijing helped Phelps beat Mark Spitz.
- 14.**Own up to your mistakes.** Michael Phelps has made his fair share of mistakes outside of the pool, and he owns up to them.
- 15.**Focus.** In order to reach your goals Phelps had to “dial in” day after day, after day.
- 16.**Celebrate the wins.** When you work hard to achieve and reach your goals, don’t forget to celebrate.
- 17.**Have fun.**
- 18.**Leave a legacy.** What Phelps was able to accomplish will be remembered forever. That’s leaving a legacy.
- 19.**If you demand and expect excellence of yourself,** you will always be competing against yourself.
- 20.**Be able to work together and individually.** The “Baltimore Bullet” was able to win relay races, which required him to rely on his teammates.
- 21.**Fight until it’s over.** Phelps was not always lead every race, sometimes he had to fight from behind to win, but he did not give up.
- 22.**Just win.** At the end of the day it’s about wins and losses. Do the former.

Why is the DMV a Great Place to be an Entrepreneur? (Compilation)

First, Baltimore is relatively small in size and a smaller economy compared to others in its region is both a plus and a minus. It's much easier here to get visibility in front of the local market, media, and customers. The region has significant strength in education, health, government (especially around security), and hospitality. There are some major universities and schools here pumping out not only great talent but also investment and connections, so that's a plus. But, the city often plays second (or third) fiddle to other cities as far as attracting software technical talent, venture capital and angel investment, acquisitions, and national press attention.

Despite this, the best way to be a Baltimore-based company is to participate in the whole 'Lower Acela' corridor region. We often participate in DC, Philly, and New York networking and investment events. We position ourselves as a regional player rather than as a Baltimore-only startup. I think this region (Mid-Atlantic to NY) has significant strength and that Baltimore companies are well served to be an active participant across the whole region.

Name: Ron Schmelzer, Bizelo

After growing up and attending college in Tennessee, I have lived and worked in the DMV for 12 years. Being here converted me into an entrepreneur. Now, the area feeds my entrepreneurial appetite each and every day. Being an entrepreneur means seeking, pursuing, and embracing a plethora of opportunities all around you. The DMV creates an incredibly dynamic environment for this. The for-profit, non-profit, organic, and complex programs that exist for start-ups, emerging companies, and even well established companies are innumerable. For me, my early resources included the Women's Business Center of Northern Virginia and the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority. Similar programs are also present in Maryland and DC. I then moved on to an accelerator program facilitated by a Maryland organization, ACTIVATE, which partners with George Washington University. Today, I am tapping directly into programs provided by the White House and StartUp America. The

combination of these elements has been amazingly valuable for Intelligent Ethos. I have also built out a formidable team of advisors, administrators, clients and supporters that is reflective of the talent-rich community that we have here. These dynamics exists nowhere else in the country.

Moving forward, healthcare, energy, and education will be strong areas for business in our current economy. These fields are well represented by the private and public sectors, as well as exceptional academic and research institutions. I am so thankful to be in the DMV with its limitless opportunities and the resources to achieve true growth as an entrepreneur.

Name: Dana Taylor, Intelligent Ethos®, Inc.

The DMV is a great place to be an entrepreneur because there is a solid network of people, resources, and infrastructure in place to ensure success. The DC area is one of the wealthiest areas in the country due to the government, technology, and number of prestigious universities and colleges. It's within hours to two major cities (New York and Philadelphia) yet compact enough to support a solid network for growth. Although it is often viewed as a conservative city; as a blogger and successful media strategist, I've witnessed a perfect marriage of both traditional business and the creative. That's why I'm glad to be a DMV entrepreneur.

Name: Stephanie Folling, The Cupcake Critic

What Entrepreneurs & Business Owners Should Do At Howard University Homecoming

Hip Hop artist Ludacris and The Notorious B.I.G. took Howard University Homecoming to another level when they mentioned in their lyrics that “You can’t miss the Homecoming at Howard!” Since 1924, the Homecoming celebrations has brought over 100,000 Howard University alumni, family, friends and members of the Washington D.C. community to the college also known as the “Mecca” to celebrate Howard Homecoming.

More than a typical homecoming at a school, Howard Homecoming is an experience, which typically includes a series of events leading up to the football game including Fashion Shows, Yardfest, Step Shows and concerts across multiple genres. This national event is an opportunity for individuals such as entrepreneurs and business owners to take launch new products and build brands.

DMV CEO & Bison Start-up provide 3 ways entrepreneurs can take advantage of the last most exciting days of Howard University homecoming:

1. **Pass out flyers:** Today is Yardfest and tomorrow is the game. The most people over the week will visit the yard to listen to music, grab food and paraphernalia from vendors. If you have flyers or are starting a new business, this is a prime opportunity to pass out flyers and other promotional materials to get the name out for your business.
2. **Test out products and services:** With so many potential clients in one area, it is a great way to test out your products and services to see how a large audience feels about them. Will they buy what you are selling or do you have to go back to the “lab” and work on your “formula”?
3. **Sell:** Don’t forget that with all the branding and marketing you are doing there will be clients and consumers that are ready to buy your products and services. Be prepared to make sales during the events. Sales are the lifeblood of any business.

3 Things Entrepreneurs Can Learn from the Washington Nationals

The Washington Nationals have achieved success this year. Whether they win or lose, entrepreneurs and business owners can learn a lot from the “overnight success.”

1. **Set a plan...and stick to it.** The Nationals put together a 5-year plan and they executed on it marvelously. According to the Bleacher Report “There was a five-year plan that the Nationals embarked on, and this season it finally came to fruition. Washington made the commitment to building the farm system and stocking it with live young arms. They paid dividends as Jordan Zimmerman, Ross Detweiler and John Lannan—who spent most of the year in the minors—are a combined 26-17.” Do you have a 5-year plan for your business?
2. **Draft well (or hire well).** Do the names Stephen Strasburg or [Bryce Harper](#) ring a bell? Every pick doesn’t pan out, so it is important that your team do its due diligence just like the Washington Nationals did to draft your stars. To sustain and grow your business make sure that you are constantly recruiting, cultivating and hiring talented individuals.
3. **Always Keep One Eye on the Future.** Sitting Stephen Strasburg wasn’t popular, but the franchise has kept its eye on the future in the past and will continue to look towards this future. They shut Strasburg down despite having the opportunity to win this year. The franchise instead saw the 10-15 year career of an Ace they wanted to protect.

Go Nats!

10 Thriving Startup Companies in the DMV

The Washington D.C., Maryland, and Virginia, or DMV, area is a hub of thriving startup companies. This has become so apparent that there are many investors who have focused on that area in order to help entrepreneurs get their businesses off the ground sooner. There many well-known startups from the DMV area and here's a smidgen of information on 10 of them.

1. [LivingSocial](#), a D.C. based startup, is responsible for LivingSocial Deals. This service allows participants to enjoy up to 90% off at spas, restaurants, sporting events, concerts and various local businesses in major cities. During a time when everyone is looking for a deal, this business shows no signs of slowing down anytime soon.
2. [Politico](#) is an Arlington, VA startup that specializes in political news. This web news site compiles national political headlines, videos and punditry from U.S. News providers each day. The site began covering the 2008 election season and is still going strong today.
3. [The Motley Fool](#) is rooted in Alexandria, VA. These DMV area media entrepreneurs focus on doling out investment pointers and information on finance.
4. [Wirefly.com](#) decided to get in on the cell phone market. This Reston, VA Company sells cell phones and cell phone plans online. These entrepreneurs make a cell phone upgrade less of a hassle by offering cell phones and plans from various providers on one site.
5. [SB Nation](#), like many DMV area startups, sprouted out of Washington, D.C. This sports network is comprised of over 300 separate sports websites that are managed largely by part-time writers. They compile posts, aid dialogue and respond to comments.
6. [Jobfox](#) is a job search site that allows the job seekers to be scouted through their profiles. These Mclean, VA entrepreneurs offer text messaging when a profile is viewed by a potential employer, employer-employee matches and a no scam policy. This DMV area company ensures that only legitimate employers are perusing employee profiles.
7. The well-watched [Travel Channel](#) began as a Chevy Chase, MD startup. This travel entertainment network was acquired by Scripps Networks in 2009 and is still on cable and digital television lineups today.

8. [Webs.com](#), based in the DMV area, is a service that allows users to create their own websites for business or pleasure. With over 300 templates to choose from, users are able to use the site building tools to make a site that suits their needs. VistaPrint acquired this Silver Spring, MD Company in 2011.
9. [WeddingWire Inc](#) is a leader among online marketplace startups. This Bethesda, MD service compiles information on over 150,00 wedding vendors in order to let engaged couples plan their own big day in a professional way. Best of all, this service is free.
10. The DMV area's [CustomInk](#) provides custom T-shirt printing for groups of all sorts. This company is based in Mclean, VA and allows customers to have T-shirts printed for special events. Be it a family reunion, business retreat, or local sporting event, the entrepreneurs at CustomInk can help a group be easily marked.

How to Start a Business in Prince William County, VA.

Prince William County, located on the Potomac River in Virginia, is part of the Washington Metro Area. With more than a 400k population, Prince William is one of the highest-income counties in the US. In light of this, starting a business in Prince William could be seen as a smart move due to the income traveling within and through the county on a daily basis. Below are the basics of starting a business in Prince William County.

1) You can't do anything without the basics. Just like with any new business you first must make a plan and lay some groundwork. This groundwork may include anything as simple as picking out a unique name or deciding what kind of logo you want to have for your business. A more advanced form of groundwork includes choosing a legal structure for your business. Does your business fall into an LLC or a Corporation? Deciding this early is a jumping off point. In the case of a Corporation – head over to the [Virginia State Corporation Commission](#) for more information.

2) The next step is small but important all the same. Getting an EIN (Employer Identification Number) is required for all businesses whether or not they have employees. Applications for your EIN can be made online at the [IRS](#) website.

3) Completing your trade name registration will be next in the process. Businesses must register their 'fictitious name' before acquiring a business license and obtaining a certificate of occupancy. For more information on the requirements visit the [Prince William County Circuit Court](#) website.

4) Now comes finding which space is perfect for you. Whether you'll be working out of your basement or renting space if your own there will be zoning and occupancy regulations to follow for Prince William County. To find out what information and requirements you will need to complete this process you may visit the [Prince William County Planning Office](#) and heading to the Zoning Division section.

5) The last leg of your journey through starting a business in PWC will be obtaining your Business, Professional and Occupational License or BPOL.

Any business (including house-based) operating in the county, and expects to exceed \$100,000 in a single calendar year, must get their license. New businesses must apply and pay the license fee within 30 days from starting a business in PWC. For more information visit the [Prince William County Finance Department](#)

These are the basics you'll need to know when starting your business in Prince William County. More information can be found by visiting the [PCW Government Website](#).

How to Start a Business in Fredericksburg, VA

The city of Fredericksburg, VA is likely best known for being the place of the infamous civil war battle in 1862. These days the town doesn't have much fighting going on, but claims the motto of 'America's Most Historic Town'. Being only 49 miles south of Washington, D.C., Fredericksburg is an excellent place for business. Below is a simple guide with the basic steps of starting a business in Fredericksburg, including any special restricts the town may have for businesses.

1) For those who are in need of the most basic information regarding even getting their business plan in place the [Rappahannock Region Small Business Development Center](#) is the place to go. Its purpose is to provide assistant to small businesses and entrepreneurs through confidential consultations. Seminars, training programs, and workshops are also offered.

2) After you have your business plan and such in place you'll need to focus on satisfying federal and state requirements. This means figuring out what your business type is. This can range from a sole proprietorship to a corporation. Once you figure out which business type you have, you'll fill out forms and register with the [Virginia State Corporation Commission](#), as each type of business entity must do such.

3) Once finished with the Virginia SCC you'll need to be in contact with the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Fredericksburg. If your business will be conducted in Virginia under another name besides its legal business name, an assumed or fictitious name certificate must be filed with the Circuit Court. For this a fee of \$10.00 must be made at the time of filing. Offices must also be contacted to setup your EIN number with the IRS and [taxes applied to your business](#).

4) Next come the local business dealings. You'll need to contact the [Department of Planning and Community Development](#). Before you build or make changes to an existing building you'd like to house your business in, you must contact the Zoning Administrator to get the proper

certificates needed to begin making those changes or operating your business out of the selected location.

5) Each business operating in the city of Fredericksburg is required to obtain a business license from the city. After your zoning certificate has been obtained you can then apply for a business license. There are several steps to determining the cost of your business license, and more information can be found at the Fredericksburg website via the [Commissioner of Revenue](#).

6) If financing has not been arranged and you are looking for further assistance, resources can be found by visiting the [Virginia Small Business Financing Authority](#). There you will find a wide variety of information regarding getting financing for your new business.

These are the basics of starting a business in Fredericksburg, VA. A majority of information can be found at the [Fredericksburg, VA official government website](#). There you will find information and links to valuable resources to guide you to which department you need for your business.

How to Start a Business in Stafford County, VA

Stafford, VA, George Washington's boyhood home, is a business-friendly community with a simple, streamlined process for opening and operating a business. Those who are part of the County staff are able and willing to assist those with questions concerning permits, placements, or any number of things you may encounter while trying to build your business in Stafford. Below is a distilled guide for those interested in opening a business within Stafford.

Beyond the initial research of figuring out what sort of business you would like to pursue, Stafford County, like all places, has certain steps for you to take while on the road to owning your business. So you have your name, what kind of business it will be, a general location you wish to be in...so what's next?

1) Before you make any commitments about where your business location will be you should obtain confirmation through the [Planning and Zoning Department of Stafford](#). There, they will let you know if your intended use of the property is in compliance with the existing zoning designation. From there you may contact the Public Works Department to gather information, requirements, and permits for any physical changes you intend to make to the property you'd place to build your business on such as structure and changing the natural surroundings.

2) Registration is another important step to take before settling your business in Stafford, Va. Registering at the state level can be done through the [State Corporation Commission](#). Though the name may suggest only corporations need register, the requirement doesn't apply exclusively to corporations. Most companies are required to register with the SCC. If you plan to do business under your business name or a trade name, trademark or operate a franchise, or sell securities you must contact the SCC to ensure the proper process is met. Along with a variety of other programs, the SCC can also provide a preliminary business name check to make sure your desired business name isn't already taken.

3) As far as licensure and permits are concerned, some are regulated by the Commonwealth for some businesses. Contact the [Virginia Department of Business Assistance](#) to find the list of requirements by industry group and business type.

4) Stafford County does not require a Business License for operation. Stafford County also has no BPOL Tax. Companies must also register with the Stafford Commissioner of the Revenue by filling out a short form. To complete the registration process, business owners must have already completed three steps: Chosen an operating entity, chosen a business name, and registered the name with the IRS. After you have chosen your operating entity, you need to obtain a Certificate of Assumed or Fictitious Name with the [Stafford Circuit Court](#). This step will enable companies to open bank accounts under their commercial name.

Beyond these steps, depending on what type of business you will be starting, there will be various permits and forms to obtain and fill out to turn into the proper channels. Most information can be obtained through the [Stafford County, VA government website](#). To do so by phone you may contact Brenda Schulte, development process administrator. She'll offer a step-by-step guide through the processes and permits required to establish and open your business in Stafford at (540) 658-8677.