

Computer services

Business start-up guide

Computer services industry overview

Computer services business operators provide computer maintenance and repair services, including the repair of computer equipment such as servers. Repairs also include diagnosing and fixing problems, such as poorly designed or installed software and hardware.

Starting or buying a computer services business involves many essential steps. Legally, you must ensure that you apply for and receive the correct licences.

This guide explains how to start a computer services business in Queensland. It will help you understand the challenges and opportunities of entering the computer services industry so you can make good business decisions.

Getting into the computer services industry

Before you start a computer services business in Queensland, you need to understand how the industry works, what things you need to consider in your planning and the legal requirements you must meet.

Finding a competitive edge in Queensland's computer services industry

Queensland's computer services industry is moderately competitive with a large number of small operators.

Competition for repair projects and outsourced contracts from major players and computer retailers is fierce. Net income margins are relatively low because many companies compete on price.

You can find a competitive edge by providing excellent customer service and by pricing your services competitively.

Key success factors for a computer services business

To start a successful computer services business, you need to:

- provide quality services
- manage your stock effectively
- make contacts within key markets, such as networking
- access niche markets
- have good technical knowledge of your products.

Computer services industry entry barriers

The main entry barrier in this industry is the low demand for small, specialist computer service providers. This is partly because companies that sell and lease computers usually offer free servicing as part of any contract. It is also because it can be difficult for small operators to cover all different forms of computing.

However, if you have a competitive edge, it can be relatively easy to enter the industry. Start-up costs are relatively low because you only need to buy suitable repair equipment and software. There's also minimal regulation for the industry.

(Source IBISWorld, March 2012)

Computer services industry requirements

A number of licensing and registration requirements govern the computer services industry. When starting a computer services business you need to consider the following requirements.

Useful industry contacts

A website address

To set up a website address, you may need a domain name from [AusRegistry](#). An Australian (.au) internet domain name must be derived from your business name. Search company or business name and trademark databases to make sure the business name you want is not already taken.

Importing computer-related equipment from overseas

If you import computer-related equipment from overseas, you will be subject to import controls from the [Australian Customs and Border Protection Service](#). Duties and taxes may be applied to product as it arrives. Check with customs if goods being imported are permitted in Australia. Goods being imported into Australia without the necessary permits may be seized on arrival.

Selling second-hand equipment

To sell second-hand equipment, you may need a Second-Hand Dealers Licence from the [Office of Fair Trading](#). The Licence costs \$615 for 1 year or \$1405 for 3 years. It can take the Office of Fair Trading 4 weeks to process your application. This licence is required to buy, sell or exchange second-hand goods as part of your business. Some exemptions apply. If you have registered as a second-hand dealer in another Australian state, you may apply to have this licence transferred.

Legislation that may apply to your business

- *Customs Act 1901*
- *Duties Act 2001*
- *Fair Trading Act 1989*
- *Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990*
- *Local Government Act 2009*
- *Retail Shop Leases Act 1994*
- *Sale of Goods (Vienna Convention) Act 1986*
- *Second-hand Dealers and Pawnbrokers Act 2003*
- *Trading Hours (Allowable Hours) Act 1990*
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*

To access copies of legislation, visit www.legislation.qld.gov.au.

Business Support Unit

For more information on licences, regulations, market research, business planning and other support services phone 13 25 23 or visit business.qld.gov.au

Australian Computer Society Inc.

Phone (02) 9299 3666

Visit www.acs.org.au