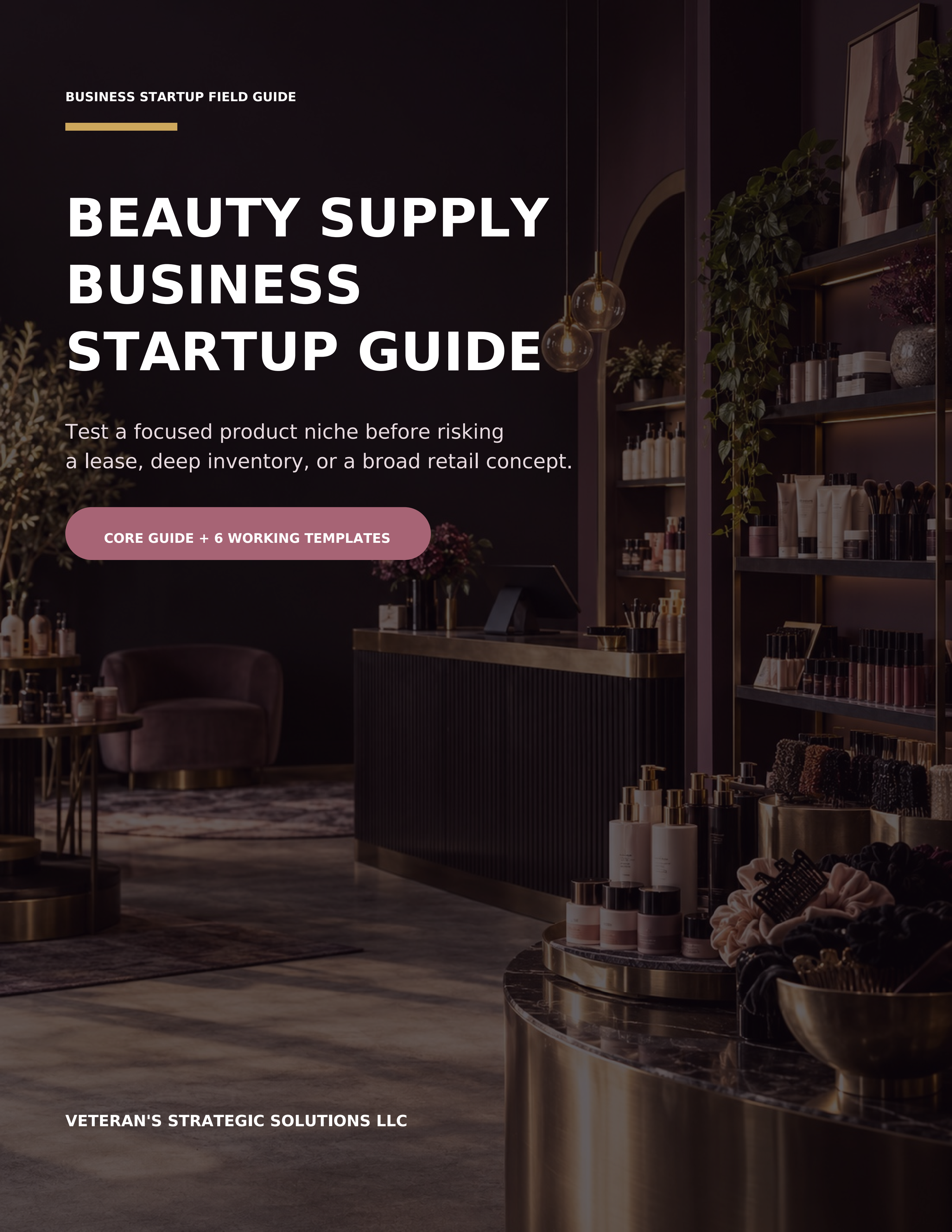


BUSINESS STARTUP FIELD GUIDE

BEAUTY SUPPLY BUSINESS STARTUP GUIDE

Test a focused product niche before risking
a lease, deep inventory, or a broad retail concept.

CORE GUIDE + 6 WORKING TEMPLATES

VETERAN'S STRATEGIC SOLUTIONS LLC

Start with the product gap

A beauty supply business wins by carrying a specific product mix for a defined customer — not by filling shelves and hoping demand appears. The lowest-risk path tests one narrow category before adding rent, fixtures, and deep inventory.

NARROW NICHE

One category, one customer.

SMALL BATCH

Protect cash from dead stock.

PROVE REPEAT

Reorder only after real sales.

INSIDE THE GUIDE

The inventory risk operating system

Demand evidence comes before assortment depth

01
SELECT
Choose one category

02
TEST
Sell a small batch

03
MEASURE
Track sell-through

04
EXPAND
Reorder winners

This guide converts the verified assessment into a practical launch kit for an online, event, wholesale, or carefully tested retail beauty supply concept. Use the worksheets to plan inventory, calculate pricing, invoice wholesale buyers, and track product performance.

CORE GUIDE	WORKING KIT
Market test and competitive pressure	Startup checklist
Smallest viable offer	Inventory and budget worksheet
Pricing and revenue limits	Pricing and invoice templates
Honest assessment	Product test tracker and compliance

CORE GUIDE 01

The Bet

Prove an unserved need before buying inventory

Core assumption that must be true: That your market has room for another beauty supply retailer. The answer depends on whether a specific customer or product category is underserved — not whether beauty products sell in general.

01
OBSERVE
Visit current options

02
LISTEN
Record missing items

03
TEST
Offer a small batch

04
DECIDE
Reorder or stop

Fastest zero-budget way to test it: visit existing retailers, read customer feedback, and record repeated requests for products that are unavailable, inconvenient to buy, or poorly served. A strong incumbent may already satisfy the exact customer voice the business would need to win.

RISK	WHAT IT MEANS	FIRST RESPONSE
Strong incumbents	Customers may already have trusted options.	Find a narrow gap, not a broad category.
Chain buying power	A new store may not win on mainstream price.	Compete through selection, access, or service.
Inventory exposure	Unsold trend-sensitive products tie up cash.	Test small batches and track sell-through.

CHECK LICENSING, ZONING, AND TAX RULES FOR YOUR OWN CITY AND STATE BEFORE STARTING.

CORE GUIDE 02

Who Pays In Their Own Words

Customer language must reveal a real opening

“I cannot find this product locally.”

“I need a seller who understands what works for my hair or skin needs.”

“I want reliable stock, clear options, and convenient pickup or delivery.”

The useful customer voice is not generic praise for variety. It is a repeated, specific problem that current sellers do not solve: an unavailable product, unreliable stock, poor guidance, inconvenient access, or a clearly underserved product category.

CUSTOMER SIGNAL	SERVICE RESPONSE
Specific product repeatedly missing	Test a limited quantity
Needs product guidance	Create a curated, explained assortment
Wants convenient access	Offer pickup, delivery, events, or online ordering
Returns to the same item	Prioritize reliable replenishment

CORE GUIDE 03

The Smallest Version You Can Charge For

A narrow niche without a storefront

There is not a truly zero-inventory version of a retail beauty supply store. A storefront requires a lease, fixtures, and enough inventory to look complete before a single item sells. That creates a fundamental capital and inventory-risk problem.

TESTABLE VERSION

- One specific category
- Online, event, or wholesale sales
- Minimal initial quantity
- Reorder only from evidence

HIGH-RISK VERSION

- Broad general assortment
- Long retail lease
- Deep trend-sensitive inventory
- Competition based only on price

If there is a version worth considering, it is a narrow wholesale or online niche — for example, one specific product category sold online, at events, or to service providers, with no storefront lease and limited inventory risk.

01
SOURCE
Small quantity

02
LIST
Clear offer

03
SELL
Real customers

04
REORDER
Only winners

CORE GUIDE 04

What It Would Actually Take

Storefront scale adds five layers of risk

INVENTORY Cash tied to products	Track age, sell-through, and reorder rate.
LEASE Fixed monthly occupancy	Starts before revenue and continues monthly.
FIXTURES Shelving and displays	Adds cost before proving product demand.
OPERATIONS Sales tax, insurance, systems	Confirm local and state obligations.
ACQUISITION Win customers from established sellers	Requires a real reason to switch.

Pricing and Revenue

Use unit economics, not top-line projections

PREMIUM

Curated or hard-to-find item

Price for access and service

MID

Small bundle or routine set

Increase order value through fit

ENTRY

Single test product

Validate demand first

Large annual revenue and margin figures describe an established, multi-year retail operation with a built customer base. They are not a realistic first-year picture. Build the price from landed cost, transaction cost, fulfillment, expected markdowns, and required contribution.

PRICE INPUT	RECORD BEFORE LISTING
Landed unit cost	Product, inbound freight, and duties if applicable
Selling costs	Marketplace, payment, and event fees
Fulfillment	Packaging, labor, delivery, and returns
Markdown risk	Expected discount or unsold inventory
Required contribution	Amount left to cover overhead and profit

CORE GUIDE 06

The Product Test and the One Metric

Measure sell-through before assortment growth

STEP 1
Choose category

STEP 2
Buy small batch

STEP 3
Sell and learn

STEP 4
Reorder or exit

TEST WINDOW	ACTION
Before purchase	Document the exact customer, product problem, source, unit cost, and target price.
First batch	Buy the smallest practical quantity and avoid expanding the assortment.
During the test	Track units sold, days to sell, repeat requests, returns, markdowns, and questions.
At the decision point	Reorder only products that demonstrate acceptable sell-through and contribution.

The one metric that matters: sell-through rate by product. A broad revenue total can hide dead inventory. Product-level performance shows whether cash is returning fast enough to justify a reorder.

RECEIVED

Units available

SOLD

Units purchased

SELL-THROUGH

Sold ÷ received

CORE GUIDE 07

Honest Assessment

The storefront must earn the right to exist

A general beauty supply storefront is a high-capital business in a category where a well-served market and strong incumbents can make broad entry unattractive. The safer version is narrow and specific: an online, event, or wholesale single-category niche that avoids a long lease and limits inventory exposure.

DOES THE SMALL TEST SHOW REPEAT DEMAND?

YES

NO

REORDER

Stay narrow and repeat the test.

STOP

Protect cash and exit the item.

DO NOT SIGN A STOREFRONT LEASE FROM PRODUCT INTEREST ALONE

Demand, cash cycle, assortment depth, and occupancy must all work.

TOOLKIT 01

Startup Checklist

Complete before placing the first inventory order

01	02	03	04	05
NICHE Customer defined	SOURCE Supplier checked	PRICE Unit economics	SELL Channel ready	MEASURE Tracker active

- [ ] Choose one customer segment and one product category.
- [ ] Record the specific unmet need using real customer language.
- [ ] Check licensing, zoning, and tax rules for your own city and state before starting.
- [ ] Choose the sales channel: online, event, wholesale, pickup, or storefront.
- [ ] Confirm supplier terms, minimum order, shipping, lead time, and return policy.
- [ ] Create a product receiving and inspection procedure.
- [ ] Calculate landed cost, selling cost, fulfillment, markdown risk, and contribution.
- [ ] Set an initial order limit and cash-at-risk ceiling.
- [ ] Set up business banking, payment processing, and bookkeeping.
- [ ] Prepare product listings, photos, descriptions, and customer policies.
- [ ] Create inventory records for units received, sold, returned, and damaged.
- [ ] Define the test window and reorder threshold.
- [ ] Confirm insurance and any category-specific obligations.
- [ ] Launch the smallest practical batch.
- [ ] Review product-level sell-through before expanding.

TOOLKIT 02

Inventory and Budget Worksheet

Separate test inventory from fixed commitments

PRODUCT

Inventory cash

CHANNEL

Selling and fulfillment

RESERVE

Markdown and reorder buffer

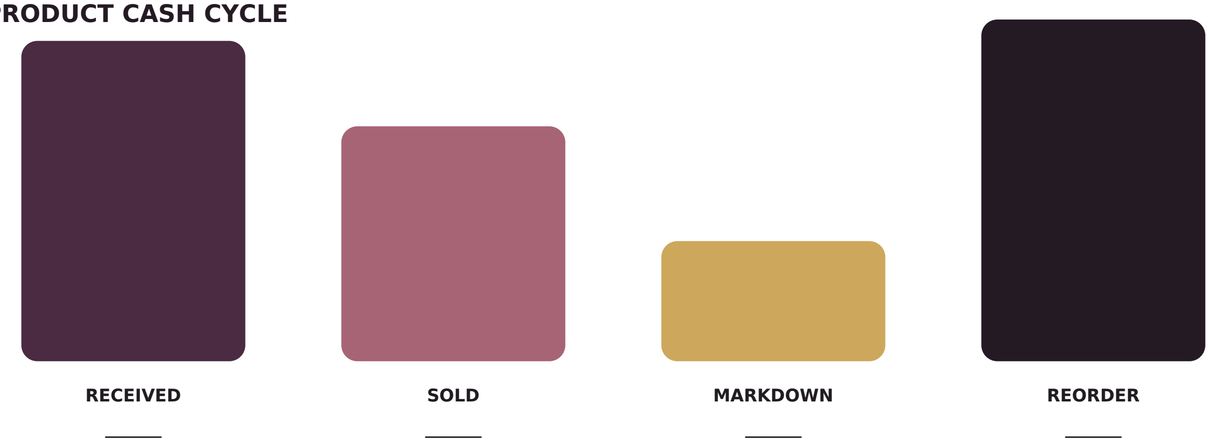
ITEM	ONE-TIME	MONTHLY	ACTUAL	NOTES
Business registration and setup	______	______	______	
Initial test inventory	______	______	______	
Inbound shipping and freight	______	______	______	
Shelving, bins, or event display	______	______	______	
Packaging and labels	______	______	______	
Website or marketplace tools	______	______	______	
Payment and selling fees	______	______	______	
Insurance	______	______	______	
Storage or occupancy	______	______	______	
Marketing and product photography	______	______	______	
Returns, damage, and markdown reserve	______	______	______	
Other	______	______	______	

TOOLKIT 02

Inventory Risk Planner

Make every product earn its reorder

PRODUCT CASH CYCLE



PRODUCT METRIC	RESULT
Units received	____________
Units sold	____________
Units returned or damaged	____________
Units marked down	____________
Sell-through rate	____________
Average contribution per unit	____________
Reorder decision	YES / NO

SELL-THROUGH FORMULA

Units sold ÷ units received = sell-through rate

TOOLKIT 03

Pricing Worksheet

Build a price from the full unit cost

01 LANDED Product + inbound	**02** SELLING Fees + channel	**03** FULFILL Packaging + labor	**04** PRICE Contribution included

PRICE DETAILS	
Product or SKU	____________________________
Supplier	____________________________
Sales channel	____________________________
Test quantity	____________________________
Target customer	____________________________

COST COMPONENT	PER UNIT
Product cost	________
Inbound freight or duty	________
Packaging and fulfillment	________
Marketplace or payment fee	________
Expected markdown or return allowance	________
Total unit cost	________

PRICE SUMMARY	AMOUNT
Planned selling price	________
Total unit cost	________
Contribution per unit	________
Contribution percentage	________

TOOLKIT 04

Wholesale Invoice Template

Use for boutiques, salons, barbers, or event buyers

01
CONFIRM
Order accepted

02
PICK
Units verified

03
INVOICE
Terms clear

04
TRACK
Payment + reorder

INVOICE DETAILS	
Invoice number	________________________
Invoice date	________________________
Due date	________________________
Buyer or business	________________________
Delivery or pickup details	________________________

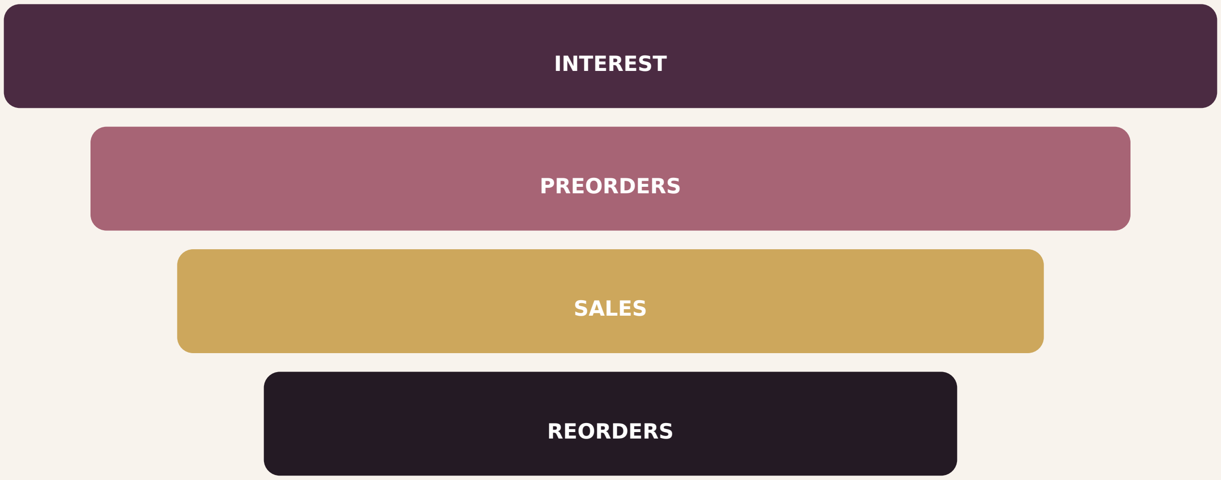
PRODUCT	QUANTITY	UNIT PRICE	AMOUNT
____________	_____	______	______
____________	_____	______	______
____________	_____	______	______
Shipping or approved fee	_____	______	______

TOTALS	AMOUNT
Subtotal	______
Taxes if applicable	______
Payments or credits	______
Balance due	______

TOOLKIT 05

Product Test and Lead Tracker

Connect customer interest to inventory decisions



DATE	CUSTOMER OR BUYER	PRODUCT	STAGE	NEXT ACTION	VALUE
___	___________	______	Interest	___________	____
___	___________	______	Preorder	___________	____
___	___________	______	Sold	___________	____
___	___________	______	Follow-up	___________	____
___	___________	______	Repeat	___________	____

PRODUCT TEST	RESULT
Units received	______
Units sold	______
Days in test	______
Returns or damage	______
Sell-through rate	______
Reorder decision	YES / NO

TOOLKIT 06

Compliance and Product Control

Protect the buyer, the records, and the inventory

A beauty supply seller must confirm the rules that apply to the business location, sales channel, taxes, product categories, labeling, storage, shipping, returns, and claims. If a requirement cannot be confirmed, mark it [VERIFY] before listing or selling the product.

SOURCE	Keep supplier and purchase records.
RECEIVE	Inspect count, seals, damage, and dates.
LABEL	Do not obscure required product information.
STORE	Follow product storage instructions.
CLAIMS	Do not invent benefits or performance claims.
RETURNS	Quarantine damaged or questionable items.

CHECK LICENSING, ZONING, AND TAX RULES FOR YOUR OWN CITY AND STATE BEFORE STARTING.

TOOLKIT 06

Pre Listing Product Check

Complete before each new product goes live

- [ ] The supplier and product source are documented.
- [ ] The received quantity, condition, packaging, and any date information are recorded.
- [ ] The listing matches the actual product and does not contain invented claims.
- [ ] Required product information remains visible and intact.
- [ ] Storage, shipping, and handling instructions are understood.
- [ ] The return, damage, and customer-service procedure is ready.
- [ ] Any uncertain category-specific requirement is marked [VERIFY] and resolved before sale.

01
SOURCE
Record supplier

02
INSPECT
Check product

03
LIST
Use accurate copy

04
TRACK
Sale + return

Launch Notes

Define the niche before committing inventory

TARGET CUSTOMER

FIRST PRODUCT CATEGORY

SALES CHANNEL

FIRST TEN CUSTOMER OR BUYER CONVERSATIONS

01

02

03

04

05

06

07

08

09

10

TEST DECISION

REORDER DECISION

EXPANSION DECISION

VSG

TEST THE NICHE

Protect cash. Track products. Reorder evidence.