

# 16 Steps to Hanging Out My Own Shingle

By Nathaniel W. Sears

Step 1:

**Choose a designated  
credit card (with perks).**

## Step 2:

Use your new credit card to **buy a laptop** that you can easily fit into your briefcase to bring with you to court.

## Step 3:

Use your new credit card to **buy a color laser printer** with scanning capability and a top loader.

## Step 4:

**Upgrade your cell phone**, preferably one that syncs easily with your laptop via cloud storage. You need speed and memory.

## Step 5:

**Increase your cloud storage to meet your needs** (you can afford 99¢/month).

# Step 6:

**Find an office.** This is a huge decision. It is often your private clients' first impression of you as a lawyer. Is it easy to get to for you? Is it easy for your clients to find? Is it accessible? Is there parking? Is there a receptionist? A waiting area? Consider going virtual office: All you need is conference room availability and a mailbox.

## Step 7:

**What is your office phone number going to be? Do you want a land line? Should you use your own cell phone #? Or should you get an internet-based cell # that forwards to your cell phone?**



# Step 8:

**Get an internet based fax number.** This allows you to send and receive faxes (as .pdf files) anywhere you are, including with your new cell phone. It is cheaper than a land line, and much, much, much more convenient.

# Step 9:

## **Choose an email address**

Nsearslaw@gmail.com

## Step 10:

**Start a webpage.** You can do it yourself with an internet template-based site, or you can hire a professional to design one for you.

# The Law office of Nathaniel W. Sears

[Nsearslaw.com](http://Nsearslaw.com)

**Criminal Defense**

**Firearms Licensing**



# Step 11:

**Order business cards.** There are several companies on the internet. Spend the extra few bucks for heavier cardstock.

## Step 12:

**Register your business** (don't forget to name your law practice!) at the City or Town Hall where your office will be. You will receive a Business Certificate (sometimes referred to a DBA (Doing Business As) Certificate. Danvers = \$25. Valid for 4 years.

# Step 13:

**Open two business bank accounts: 1. Your Operating Account; 2. Your IOLTA Account.** I recommend choosing a small, local bank. You'll get great service, no monthly fees, and you will always get a friendly, helpful human being on the phone if you need to call them. Download their app onto your phone so that you can manage and keep an eye on your account whenever and wherever you are.

Step 14:

**Design your fee agreement.**



Step 15:

Get paid!

Seriously, this is the best advice  
I've gotten yet.

# Step 16:

## **Get to work!**

Bar Advocates Program (criminal defense)?

Advertising?

Niche practice?

Chamber of Commerce?

Local Business Organizations?