

Wrenfield Home Goods — Business Plan

Online store in Columbus, OH · Startup plan

Executive summary

Wrenfield Home Goods is a new online store in Columbus, OH offering a curated line of home goods sold on the store's own website; the same line on one marketplace; gift sets and seasonal bundles built from the core range; free shipping above an order amount; and returns within 30 days on unused goods. The model is one owner's own-brand store: a curated line bought wholesale in small runs, photographed and listed on the store's own website and one marketplace, packed at home and shipped by USPS, with the email list doing the second sale.

Startup budget: \$13,614 across 11 items, funded from savings. Target: \$10,000 in monthly sales.

Twelve months from now, success looks like this: About \$10,000 a month in sales by the end of the first year — 250 orders a month at a \$40 average order — with half of them from returning customers and the email list, not ads

Products and services

Wrenfield Home Goods' core offer is a curated line of home goods sold on the store's own website. Every product is priced at double its wholesale cost, photographed the same way, shipped the day it is ordered with tracking sent automatically, and returnable within 30 days — the policies are on the page before the shopper asks.

- A curated line of home goods sold on the store's own website
 - The same line on one marketplace
 - Gift sets and seasonal bundles built from the core range
 - Free shipping above an order amount; flat-rate below it
 - Returns within 30 days on unused goods
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Market analysis

The customers are shoppers who arrive from a social post, a search or a gift and buy on their phones; the gift buyers of the holiday quarter; the returning customers on the email list, who cost nothing to reach; and the marketplace browsers who meet the brand through the card in the box.

- Shoppers who find the store from a social post, a search or a friend's gift and buy on their phone
 - Gift buyers before the holidays — the quarter most small stores count on
 - Returning customers on the email list, who buy again at a lower cost than any new one
 - Marketplace browsers who never visit the store's own site until the package arrives with a card
 - Small retailers and offices who ask for a bulk or corporate order
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Marketing strategy

Most first orders will come from social posts and from Google — the product in use, the product's name plus what it is — and from one marketplace listing; the second orders come from word of mouth and the email list, so the welcome series and the abandoned-cart email are built before the first ad runs, and the website is where every one of those paths ends.

- Instagram, Pinterest and TikTok — the product in use, the packing, the maker — and the orders they bring
 - Google Shopping and Google — the product's name plus the kind of thing it is
 - The email list: a welcome series, the back-in-stock note and the holiday sale
 - One marketplace listing, with the store's own card in every box
 - Word of mouth from the gift: the recipient who asks where it came from
 - A website with product pages, options, a cart, checkout and the order emails
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Operations plan

The owner buys, photographs, lists, packs, ships and answers in year one: small runs reordered on what sells, stock counted weekly and matched across the site and the marketplace, labels printed at home, sales tax tracked by state, and a packer hired for the holiday quarter before the owner is the bottleneck.

- Products bought wholesale in small first runs; reorder what sells, drop what doesn't by the second quarter
- Every product photographed on one background with one light, and the same angles on every page
- Orders packed the same day and shipped by USPS from home; the label printed, the tracking sent automatically
- Stock counted weekly; the website and the marketplace kept to the same numbers
- Returns answered within a day with a prepaid label; the reason recorded
- Sales tax collected where the store has to and filed on the schedule the state sets

Startup costs

What it will take to open the doors, funded from savings.

Startup costs

ITEM	AMOUNT
Business registration: a sole proprietorship, or an LLC	\$150
Sales tax permit and resale certificate	\$0
The first inventory: a curated line bought wholesale	\$6,000
Product photography: a backdrop and a light, or a half-day with a photographer	\$675
Boxes, mailers, tissue, tape and the first roll of labels	\$400
A thermal label printer and a shipping scale	\$260
Barcodes for the marketplace and wholesale buyers	\$140
General liability with product liability (first year)	\$818
Launch ads and the first influencer seeding	\$900
Website with the online store and Google Business Profile	\$0
Working capital: two months of running costs	\$4,271
Total	\$13,614

Typical range to start an online store in the US: \$5,264–\$23,964. Your list is what you decided to spend — replace estimates with real quotes as you get them. Website with the online store and Google Business Profile: Your Zarla plan includes the website and the online store — product pages, options and sale prices, a cart, checkout through your own Stripe account, the order and shipping emails and the free-shipping bar — with orders in the same dashboard as your leads; per sale you pay Stripe's card fee plus a small platform fee. A store platform on its own runs \$39 a month (Shopify Basic, or \$29 on a yearly plan) and having the store built typically costs \$1,000 to \$2,000 from a freelancer.

Financial plan

The numbers below come from your own startup list and typical monthly costs for a one-owner online store in the US. The first inventory is most of the startup; the monthly lines are the goods themselves, postage, ads, software and card fees; and the share of each order that ads take is what decides whether the month ends in profit.

Typical monthly operating costs for an online store: \$5,307–\$9,344 a month, before the owner's own pay. At \$10,000 in monthly sales, Wrenfield Home Goods would clear \$656–\$4,693 a month before owner pay and tax, and recover the \$13,614 startup budget in roughly 3–21 months.

Typical monthly operating costs

COST	TYPICAL RANGE
The goods sold, at 40% to 55% of sales (restocked from sales)	\$4,000–\$5,500
Postage and tracking, net of the shipping customers pay	\$400–\$1,000
Social and search ads	\$300–\$1,200
Email marketing and sales tax filing (included with Zarla)	\$0–\$84
Packaging consumables, by the month	\$100–\$250
Insurance, by the month	\$42–\$95
Returns, refunds and damaged goods, at 1% to 4% of sales	\$100–\$400
Marketplace fees on the orders that come through one	\$0–\$300
Card fees (on about \$10,000 of sales across 250 orders)	\$365–\$515

US ranges for a small operation; replace with your own figures as you learn them. Lines marked (included with Zarla) are what those tools cost separately — with Zarla they are part of one monthly plan.

Risks and honest downsides

Every online store plan should say out loud what can go wrong. For Wrenfield Home Goods, the real risks are:

- Ads cost more than the margin: one more dollar of acquisition cost on a \$40 order and the month is gone
- The holiday quarter decides the year — buy the stock late and sell out, buy early and carry it
- A marketplace changes its fees or its search and the store's second channel halves overnight
- One supplier's recall or a mislabelled product is your liability, not theirs
- Returns on a thin-margin line eat the profit of three orders each
- Cash: the reorder is paid before the sales clear, and the stock in the spare room is money you can't spend

Licenses, permits and insurance

What Wrenfield Home Goods needs before it can legally trade in the US. Rules vary by state and city — confirm each item with your local licensing office and an accountant.

- Business registration, the sales tax permit and the resale certificate — In the US no license is needed to sell goods online; most owners trade under their own name or form an LLC (\$40 in Kentucky, \$300 in Texas, and California adds an \$800 yearly LLC tax on top of its filing fee) and take a free EIN. A state sales tax permit is required before you sell taxable goods — free in Texas and California — and the resale certificate it lets you give wholesalers (Texas Form 01-339, California CDTFA-230) is what buys the stock without paying tax on it. Check your city's home-occupation rule if the stock lives in a spare room, and confirm the rest with your accountant.
- Collecting sales tax in other states — In the US you collect sales tax in your own state from the first sale and in another state once your sales there cross its economic-nexus threshold — \$100,000 a year in most states since *South Dakota v. Wayfair* (2018), \$500,000 in California and Texas, some states still counting 200 transactions as well. A marketplace collects and remits on the orders it sells for you in all 45 sales-tax states; your own site's orders are yours to track and file. Confirm which states you have crossed with your accountant each quarter.
- Shipping promises: the FTC's Mail, Internet, or Telephone Order Merchandise Rule — In the US if you don't state a shipping time you must have a reasonable basis to ship within 30 days of a completed order, and if you can't meet the time you promised you must tell the customer and get their consent to the delay — or cancel and refund promptly without being asked (the FTC's business guide to the rule). Put the real dispatch time on the product page and the confirmation email.
- Product safety and labelling — In the US a children's product needs a Children's Product Certificate based on tests from a CPSC-accepted laboratory before it is sold, and the importer or domestic manufacturer is the one who must issue it; general-use products subject to a CPSC rule need a General Certificate of Conformity (the CPSC's certification pages). Clothing and textiles carry fiber-content, country-of-origin and care labels under the FTC's textile rules, and candles, cosmetics and food each have their own. Ask your supplier for the certificates before the first order ships.
- Selling on a marketplace: the INFORM Consumers Act — In the US a marketplace must collect and verify a bank account, contact details and a tax ID from any seller with 200 or more sales and \$5,000 or more in a 12-month period, and show buyers the seller's name and address for the higher-volume sellers (the INFORM Consumers Act, enforced by the FTC since June 27, 2023). Expect the verification request the month you cross the line.
- Your name, your terms and your insurance — In the US a federal trademark (\$350 a class at the USPTO) protects the store's name across state lines — search the register before you buy packaging; the store's own terms, returns and privacy pages are what a chargeback and a complaint are judged against; and general liability with product liability (Insureon's e-commerce median \$42 a month) covers the customer hurt by a product you sold, whoever made it. Keep the supplier's certificate of insurance on file too.

Milestones: the next 30 days

The first month's to-do list for Wrenfield Home Goods, in order:

- Choose the first line — ten products, not fifty — and price each at double the wholesale cost
- Register the business, take the free EIN, apply for the sales tax permit and hand the resale certificate to the wholesalers
- Order the first small run and the packaging, and buy the label printer and the scale
- Shoot every product on one background, and write the page copy and the shipping and returns policies
- Bind the liability policy and ask each supplier for its certificate of insurance
- Put the website and the store live — products, options, a cart, checkout through your Stripe account — and list the same ten on one marketplace
- Set up the welcome email and the abandoned-cart email before the first ad runs
- Send the first ten boxes to friends and small accounts for photos and feedback, then start the ads at \$10 a day
- Claim the Google Business Profile and submit the product feed to Google Shopping

Appendix: what a lender will ask for

This plan tells the story and shows the numbers. If you take it to a bank, expect to be asked for these documents as well:

- Two years of personal tax returns and a personal financial statement
- The supplier quotes, the inventory list and its cost
- Sales by month, by channel and by product, with the ad spend beside them
- The sales tax permit and the filing history
- Proof of product liability insurance and the suppliers' certificates
- Your credit report and the store's processing statements

Sample plan for a fictional business, written by Zarla's free business plan generator. Every figure is a typical US range or calculated from the sample's own numbers — nothing is a market projection. Make it yours in five questions:

zarla.com/business-plan-generator?industry=online-store