

Slateworks Software — Business Plan

Software company in Raleigh, NC · Startup plan

Executive summary

Slateworks Software is a new software company in Raleigh, NC offering a monthly subscription to the product, one price per seat; an annual plan at two months off; onboarding and data import for new subscribers; a priority support plan for teams; and custom integrations by the hour. The model is one developer-founder's subscription product for a single trade, built from a home office and billed monthly through Stripe, with the cloud bill on the free tiers until the first paying subscribers arrive.

Startup budget: \$16,795 across 10 items, funded from savings. Target: \$8,000 in monthly sales.

Twelve months from now, success looks like this: About \$8,000 a month in subscriptions by the end of the first year — 160 paying subscribers at about \$50 a month — with churn under 4% a month and the cloud bill still under \$50

Products and services

Slateworks Software's core product is a monthly subscription to the product, one price per seat. A subscriber starts a 14-day trial with a card on file, is set up in an afternoon, pays monthly or annually, cancels in one click, and gets an answer from the founder within a business day.

- A monthly subscription to the product, one price per seat
 - An annual plan at two months off
 - Onboarding and data import for new subscribers
 - A priority support plan for teams
 - Custom integrations by the hour
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Market analysis

The customers are owner-operators in one trade who run the business from their phone and have outgrown a spreadsheet; the small teams of two to ten who need roles and permissions; the bookkeepers and consultants who set clients up on the product; and the early subscribers who answer the feedback emails.

- Owner-operators in one trade who run the business from their phone and have outgrown a spreadsheet
 - Small teams of two to ten who need the same tool with roles and permissions
 - Bookkeepers and consultants who set clients up on the product and want a partner plan
 - Subscribers who found the product by searching the problem it solves, not the category
 - Early customers who answer the feedback emails and ask for the next feature
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Marketing strategy

Most subscribers will come from Google — the problem phrases customers type, answered by how-to articles on the website that end in a free trial — with word of mouth inside the trade, the directory listings, its forums, integrations and referrals adding the rest; the website with the product pages, pricing and the articles is where a search turns into a trial.

- Google — the problem phrases your customers type, answered by how-to articles on the website that end in a free trial
 - A launch on the product directories and the trade's own forums and Facebook groups
 - Integrations and listings in the marketplaces the trade already uses
 - Referrals from subscribers, with a month free for each one who converts
 - A founder's short demo videos: the product solving one real problem in ninety seconds
 - A website with the product pages, pricing, the how-to articles and a start-a-free-trial link
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Operations plan

The founder builds, supports, bills and sells in year one: a release every week, every support email answered within a business day, Stripe billing with a trial and one-click cancellation, hosting on the managed platforms with alerts on the bill, a weekly dashboard of trials, conversions, churn and uptime, and a designer or a second developer by the hour before the first hire.

- Ship something every week; the changelog is the marketing
- One founder answers every support email within a business day in year one — the answers become the help articles
- Monthly billing through Stripe with a 14-day trial, a card up front and cancellation in one click
- Hosting on the managed platforms' free tiers until launch, then the paid tiers with alerts on the bill
- A weekly dashboard: trials, conversions, churn, support volume, uptime
- Backups tested quarterly; a status page before the first outage, not after

Startup costs

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

Startup costs

ITEM	AMOUNT
Entity filing: an LLC in your state, or a Delaware corporation	\$498
A development machine, a second monitor and a backup drive	\$2,550
Hosting, the database and a domain (first year)	\$285
GitHub, Google Workspace and the design and support tools (first year)	\$474
Terms of service, privacy policy and the subscription agreement	\$2,560
Technology E&O with cyber, and general liability or a BOP (first year)	\$1,733
Logo, interface kit, icons and the launch assets	\$1,750
Launch marketing: directory listings, the first ads, a demo video	\$1,750
Website: product pages, pricing, how-to articles, plus Google Business Profile	\$0
Working capital: three months of running costs	\$5,195
Total	\$16,795

Typical range to start a software company in the US: \$5,377–\$30,210. Your list is what you decided to spend — replace estimates with real quotes as you get them. Website: product pages, pricing, how-to articles, plus Google Business Profile: Your Zarla plan includes the marketing website — the product pages, pricing, the how-to articles that answer your customers' searches, the contact page and the link into your app's sign-up — and walks you through your Google Business Profile. Having one built typically costs \$1,000 to \$2,000 from a freelancer. The product itself — the app your subscribers log into — is yours to build.

Financial plan

The numbers below come from your own startup list and typical monthly costs for a one-founder software company in the US. The machine, insurance and the legal documents are the real startup; the monthly lines are hosting, the seats, insurance, the ads and the contractors; and the subscribers times the price — less the ones who leave — decides what is left.

Typical monthly operating costs for a software company: \$704–\$3,551 a month, before the owner's own pay.

At \$8,000 in monthly sales, Slateworks Software would clear \$4,449–\$7,296 a month before owner pay and tax, and recover the \$16,795 startup budget in roughly 3–4 months.

Typical monthly operating costs

COST	TYPICAL RANGE
Hosting and the database	\$0–\$45
Google Workspace, GitHub and the tools	\$7–\$72
Technology E&O with cyber, and general liability, by the month	\$111–\$178
Ads, content and the directory listings	\$200–\$1,500
A designer or a second developer by the hour, as needed	\$0–\$1,000
Bookkeeping, the tax preparer and the sales tax filings	\$50–\$300
Stripe fees on about \$8,000 of subscriptions across 160 payments	\$336–\$456

US ranges for a small operation; replace with your own figures as you learn them.

Risks and honest downsides

Every software company plan should say out loud what can go wrong. For Slateworks Software, the real risks are:

- Nothing sells for months: the first hundred subscribers take longer than the product took to build
- Churn is the quiet killer — at 8% a month you replace the whole customer base every year
- One founder is support, sales and engineering; the week you are sick, all three stop
- A platform changes its terms or its price — the app store, the cloud, the API you built on
- A security incident or an outage in year one costs more trust than it costs money
- The feature a big customer demands is the one your other 159 never use

Licenses, permits and insurance

What Slateworks Software 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.

- The entity, the founders' shares and the state registrations — In the US a one-founder software company is usually an LLC in its home state (Florida \$125, Texas \$300; California \$70 plus an \$800 annual tax); a Delaware corporation (\$109 to file, a \$175 minimum franchise tax, a \$50 annual report, a registered agent) is the shape venture investors expect, and it still has to register as a foreign entity in the state you work from. Founders who take restricted stock file an 83(b) election with the IRS within 30 days of the grant. Take a free EIN, and confirm the entity choice with your accountant before the first line of code is worth anything.
- Sales tax on subscriptions — In the US software as a service is taxable in about two dozen states — New York, Pennsylvania and Washington tax it; Texas taxes 80% of the charge as a data-processing service (Rule 3.330's 20% exemption); California and Florida do not tax it (TaxJar's state table, April 24, 2026) — and since Wayfair a state can make you collect once your sales there pass its economic-nexus line, \$100,000 a year in most of them. Stripe Tax or a filing service tracks the thresholds; register where you cross one and confirm the rules with your accountant.
- Terms of service, the privacy policy and the privacy laws — In the US a subscription product needs published terms, a privacy policy and, for business customers, a data-processing agreement. California's CCPA applies once a business passes \$25 million of annual revenue or the personal information of 100,000 residents (the Attorney General's page), but California's older CalOPPA requires a posted privacy policy from any site that collects a Californian's personal information; COPPA applies to a service directed at children under 13 (the FTC's rule, amended April 22, 2025); the EU's GDPR applies to EU users from day one; and every state has a data-breach notification law. Keep the policy honest about what you store and who processes it.
- Payments, renewals and card data — In the US the card processor carries most of the PCI burden when the card never touches your server — Stripe's hosted checkout and its 2.9% + 30¢ plus 0.7% for Billing — and the automatic-renewal laws (California's Automatic Renewal Law, New York's and a growing list of states') require clear disclosure of the recurring charge, affirmative consent, a reminder before an annual renewal and a cancellation path as easy as the sign-up. Build the cancel button on day one.
- The app stores, if you ship a mobile app — In the US Apple's App Store Small Business Program takes 15% of paid apps and in-app purchases for developers under \$1 million in proceeds a year, 30% above it (Apple's program page; a \$99-a-year Developer Program membership), and Google Play has a comparable reduced tier (check its service-fee page); a product sold on the web through Stripe pays neither. Decide where the subscription is sold before the app is built.
- The tax treatment of the code you write, and the licences in it — In the US domestic software development costs are deductible in the year they are paid again — the One Big Beautiful Bill Act's section 174A restored immediate expensing for tax years beginning after December 31, 2024, and a business with \$31 million or less in average receipts may apply it back to 2022 (Baker Tilly's summary of the Act); the research credit (section 41) can sit on top. Every open-source package carries a

licence — MIT and Apache travel freely, the GPL family can reach your own code — and a trademark on the product name is \$350 a class at the USPTO. Confirm the expensing election with your accountant.

Milestones: the next 30 days

The first month's to-do list for Slateworks Software, in order:

- Write the one-sentence problem the product solves and the trade it solves it for
 - Form the LLC (or the Delaware corporation if you will raise), take the EIN, open the business account
 - Publish the terms, the privacy policy and the pricing page; set up Stripe with the trial and the cancel button
 - Bind technology E&O with cyber, and save the certificate
 - Put the website live with the product pages, the pricing and the first three how-to articles
 - Claim the Google Business Profile and the product directory listings
 - Invite twenty people from the trade to a free pilot, in exchange for a weekly call
 - Set up the weekly dashboard: trials, conversions, churn, support volume, uptime
 - Record the ninety-second demo and post it where the trade already talks
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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 formation documents, the cap table and any 83(b) elections
- Stripe's subscription report: subscribers, monthly recurring revenue, churn, by month
- The hosting and software invoices, and the insurance certificates
- The terms of service, privacy policy and customer agreement in force
- Your credit report and the business bank 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=software
