
PART 1

Organization

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CHAPTER 1

Business Organization

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Alert

At the time this book was printed, Congress had not extended numerous breaks for 2014 that had expired at the end of 2013. Check the online supplement in February 2015 at www.jklasser.com or www.barbaraweltman.com to see whether these breaks apply for 2014 returns.

If you have a great idea for a product or a business and are eager to get started, do not let your enthusiasm be the reason you get off on the wrong foot. Take a while to consider how you will organize your business. The form of organization your business takes controls how income and deductions are reported to the government on a tax return. Sometimes you have a choice of

the type of business organization; other times circumstances limit your choice. If you have not yet set up your business and do have a choice, this discussion will influence your decision on business organization. If you have already set up your business, you may want to consider changing to another form of organization.

According to the Tax Foundation, more than 90% of all businesses are organized as sole proprietorships, partnerships, limited liability companies (LLCs), or S corporations, all of which are “pass-through” entities. This means that the owners, rather than the businesses, pay tax on business income. Nearly 50% of the private sector workforce is employed by these pass-through entities. The way in which you set up your business impacts the effective tax rate you pay on your profits (after factoring income taxes and employment taxes). Taxes, however, are only one factor in deciding what type of entity to use for your business.

As you organize your business, consider which type of entity to use after factoring in taxes and other consequences. Also consider whether to change from your current form of business entity to a new one and what it means from a tax perspective. Finally, be sure to obtain your business’s federal tax identity number (or a new one when making certain entity changes).

For a further discussion on worker classification, see IRS Publication 15-A, *Employer’s Supplemental Tax Guide*.

Sole Proprietorships

If you go into business for yourself and do not have any partners (with the exception of a spouse, as explained shortly), you are considered a *sole proprietor*, and your business is called a *sole proprietorship*. You may think that the term *proprietor* connotes a storekeeper. For purposes of tax treatment, however, proprietor means any unincorporated business owned entirely by one person. Thus, the category includes individuals in professional practice, such as doctors, lawyers, accountants, and architects. Those who are experts in an area, such as engineering, public relations, or computers, may set up their own consulting businesses and fall under the category of sole proprietor. The designation also applies to independent contractors.

Sole proprietorships are the most common form of business. The IRS reports that one in 6 Form 1040s contains a Schedule C or C-EZ (the forms used by sole proprietorships). Most sideline businesses are run as sole proprietorships, and many start-ups commence in this business form.

There are no formalities required to become a sole proprietor; you simply conduct business. You may have to register your business with your city, town, or county government by filing a simple form stating that you are doing business as the “Quality Dry Cleaners” or some other business name other than your own (a fictitious business name, or FBN). This is sometimes referred to as a DBA, which stands for “doing business as.”

From a legal standpoint, as a sole proprietor, you are personally liable for any debts your business incurs. For example, if you borrow money and default on a loan, the lender can look not only to your business equipment and other business property but also to your personal stocks, bonds, and other property. Some states may give your house homestead protection; state or federal law may protect your pensions and even Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs). Your only protection for your personal assets is adequate insurance against accidents for your business and other liabilities and paying your debts in full.

Simplicity is the advantage to this form of business. It is the reason why over 70% of all U.S. firms operate as sole proprietorships. This form of business is commonly used for sideline ventures, as evidenced by the fact that half of all sole proprietors earn salaries and wages along with their business income. For 2012 (the most recent year for statistics), more than 23 million taxpayers filed returns as sole proprietors.

Independent Contractors

One type of sole proprietor is the *independent contractor*. To illustrate, suppose you used to work for Corporation X. You have retired, but X gives you a consulting contract under which you provide occasional services to X. In your retirement, you decide to provide consulting services not only to X, but to other customers as well. You are now a consultant. You are an independent contractor to each of the companies for which you provide services.

More precisely, an independent contractor is an individual who provides services to others outside an employment context. The providing of services becomes a business, an independent calling. In terms of claiming business deductions, classification as an independent contractor is generally more favorable than classification as an employee. (See "Tax Treatment of Income and Deductions in General," later in this chapter.) Therefore, many individuals whose employment status is not clear may wish to claim independent contractor status. Also, from the employer's perspective, hiring independent contractors is more favorable because the employer is not liable for employment taxes and need not provide employee benefits. (It costs about 30% more for an employee than an independent contractor after factoring in employment taxes, insurance, and benefits.) Federal employment taxes include Social Security and Medicare taxes under the Federal Insurance Contribution Act (FICA) as well as unemployment taxes under the Federal Unemployment Tax Act (FUTA).

You should be aware that the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) aggressively tries to reclassify workers as employees in order to collect employment taxes from employers. A discussion about worker classification can be found in Chapter 7.

There is a distinction that needs to be made between the classification of a worker for income tax purposes and the classification of a worker for

employment tax purposes. By statute, certain employees are treated as independent contractors for employment taxes even though they continue to be treated as employees for income taxes. Other employees are treated as employees for employment taxes even though they are independent contractors for income taxes.

There are 2 categories of employees that are, by statute, treated as non-employees for purposes of federal employment taxes. These 2 categories are real estate salespersons and direct sellers of consumer goods. These employees are considered independent contractors (the ramifications of which are discussed later in this chapter). Such workers are deemed independent contractors if at least 90% of the employees' compensation is determined by their output. In other words, they are independent contractors if they are paid by commission and not a fixed salary. They must also perform their services under a written contract that specifies they will not be treated as employees for federal employment tax purposes.

Statutory Employees

Some individuals who consider themselves to be in business for themselves—reporting their income and expenses as sole proprietors—may still be treated as employees for purposes of employment taxes. As such, Social Security and Medicare taxes are withheld from their compensation. These individuals include:

- Corporate officers
- Agent-drivers or commission-drivers engaged in the distribution of meat products, bakery products, produce, beverages other than milk, laundry, or dry-cleaning services
- Full-time life insurance salespersons
- Homeworkers who personally perform services according to specifications provided by the service recipient
- Traveling or city salespersons engaged on a full-time basis in the solicitation of orders from wholesalers, retailers, contractors, or operators of hotels, restaurants, or other similar businesses

Full-time life insurance salespersons, homeworkers, and traveling or city salespersons are exempt from FICA if they have made a substantial investment in the facilities used in connection with the performance of services.

Day Traders

Traders in securities may be viewed as being engaged in a trade or business in securities if they seek profit from daily market movements in the prices of securities (rather than from dividends, interest, and long-term appreciation)

and these activities are substantial, continuous, and regular. Calling yourself a day trader does not make it so; your activities must speak for themselves.

Being a trader means you report your trading expenses on Schedule C, such as subscriptions to publications and online services used in this securities business. Investment interest can be reported on Schedule C (it is not subject to the net investment income limitation that otherwise applies to individuals).

Being a trader means income is reported in a unique way—income from trading is *not* reported on Schedule C. Gains and losses are reported on Schedule D unless you make a mark-to-market election. If so, then income and losses are reported on Form 4797. The mark-to-market election is explained in Chapter 2.

Gains and losses from trading activities are not subject to self-employment tax (with or without the mark-to-market election).

Husband-Wife Joint Ventures

Usually when 2 or more people co-own a business, they are in partnership. However, husbands and wives who file jointly and conduct a joint venture can opt *not* to be treated as a partnership, which requires filing a partnership return (Form 1065) and reporting 2 Schedule K-1s (as explained later in this chapter). Instead, these “couplepreneurs” each report their share of income on Schedule C of Form 1040. To qualify for this election, each must materially participate in the business (neither can be a silent partner), and there can be no other co-owners. Making this election simplifies reporting while ensuring that each spouse receives credit for paying Social Security and Medicare taxes.

One-Member Limited Liability Companies

Every state allows a single owner to form a limited liability company (LLC) under state law. From a legal standpoint, an LLC gives the owner protection from personal liability (only business assets are at risk from the claims of creditors) as explained later in this chapter. But from a tax standpoint, a single-member LLC is treated as a “disregarded entity.” (The owner can elect to have the LLC taxed as a corporation, but this is not typical. An election may be made to be taxed as a corporation, followed by an S election, so that the owner can easily make tax payments through wage withholding rather than making estimated tax payments, as well as minimize Social Security and Medicare taxes.) If the owner is an individual (and not a corporation), all of the income and expenses of the LLC are reported on Schedule C of the owner’s Form 1040. In other words, for federal income tax purposes, the LLC is treated just like a sole proprietorship.

Tax Treatment of Income and Deductions in General

Sole proprietors, including independent contractors and statutory employees, report their income and deductions on Schedule C, see *Profit or Loss From*

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Business (Figure 1.1). The net amount (profit or loss after offsetting income with deductions) is then reported as part of the income section on page 1 of your Form 1040. Such individuals may be able to use a simplified form for reporting business income and deductions: Schedule C-EZ, Net Profit From Business (see Figure 1.2). Individuals engaged in farming activities report

SCHEDULE C (Form 1040) Profit or Loss From Business (Sole Proprietorship)

OMB No. 1545-0074
2014
Attachment Sequence No. **09**

Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service (99) ▶ Information about Schedule C and its separate instructions is at www.irs.gov/schedulec. Attach to Form 1040, 1040NR, or 1041; partnerships generally must file Form 1065.

Name of proprietor Social security number (SSN)

A Principal business or profession, including product or service (see instructions) **B** Enter code from instructions

C Business name. If no separate business name, leave blank. **D** Employer ID number (EIN), (see instr.)

E Business address (including suite or room no.) ▶ City, town or post office, state, and ZIP code

F Accounting method: (1) Cash (2) Accrual (3) Other (specify) ▶

G Did you "materially participate" in the operation of this business during 2014? If "No," see instructions for limit on losses. Yes No

H If you started or acquired this business during 2014, check here Yes No

I Did you make any payments in 2014 that would require you to file Form(s) 1099? (see instructions) Yes No

J If "Yes," did you or will you file required Forms 1099? Yes No

Part I Income

1 Gross receipts or sales. See instructions for line 1 and check the box if this income was reported to you on Form W-2 and the "Statutory employee" box on that form was checked. 1

2 Returns and allowances 2

3 Subtract line 2 from line 1 3

4 Cost of goods sold (from line 42) 4

5 Gross profit. Subtract line 4 from line 3 5

6 Other income, including federal and state gasoline or fuel tax credit or refund (see instructions) 6

7 Gross income. Add lines 5 and 6 7

Part II Expenses. Enter expenses for business use of your home only on line 30.

8 Advertising 8

9 Car and truck expenses (see instructions) 9

10 Commissions and fees 10

11 Contract labor (see instructions) 11

12 Depletion 12

13 Depreciation and section 179 expense deduction (not included in Part III) (see instructions) 13

14 Employee benefit programs (other than on line 19) 14

15 Insurance (other than health) 15

16 Interest: a Mortgage (paid to banks, etc.) 16a b Other 16b

17 Legal and professional services 17

18 Office expense (see instructions) 18

19 Pension and profit-sharing plans 19

20 Rent or lease (see instructions): a Vehicles, machinery, and equipment 20a b Other business property 20b

21 Repairs and maintenance 21

22 Supplies (not included in Part III) 22

23 Taxes and licenses 23

24 Travel, meals, and entertainment: a Travel 24a b Deductible meals and entertainment (see instructions) 24b

25 Utilities 25

26 Wages (less employment credits) 26

27a Other expenses (from line 48) 27a b Reserved for future use 27b

28 Total expenses before expenses for business use of home. Add lines 8 through 27a 28

29 Tentative profit or (loss). Subtract line 28 from line 7 29

30 Expenses for business use of your home. Do not report these expenses elsewhere. Attach Form 8829 unless using the simplified method (see instructions). **Simplified method filers only:** enter the total square footage of: (a) your home: _____ and (b) the part of your home used for business: _____. Use the Simplified Method Worksheet in the instructions to figure the amount to enter on line 30 30

31 Net profit or (loss). Subtract line 30 from line 29. 31

• If a profit, enter on both Form 1040, line 12 (or Form 1040NR, line 13) and on Schedule SE, line 2. (If you checked the box on line 1, see instructions). Estates and trusts, enter on Form 1041, line 3.

• If a loss, you must go to line 32.

32 If you have a loss, check the box that describes your investment in this activity (see instructions). • If you checked 32a, enter the loss on both Form 1040, line 12, (or Form 1040NR, line 13) and on Schedule SE, line 2. (If you checked the box on line 1, see the line 31 instructions). Estates and trusts, enter on Form 1041, line 3. • If you checked 32b, you must attach Form 6198. Your loss may be limited. 32a All investment is at risk. 32b Some investment is not at risk.

For Paperwork Reduction Act Notice, see the separate instructions. Cat. No. 11334P Schedule C (Form 1040) 2014

FIGURE 1.1 Schedule C, Profit or Loss From Business

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SCHEDULE C-EZ (Form 1040) **Net Profit From Business** (Sole Proprietorship)

Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service (990) **2014** Attachment Sequence No. 09A

OMB No. 1545-0074

▶ Partnerships, joint ventures, etc., generally must file Form 1065 or 1065-B. ▶ Attach to Form 1040, 1040NR, or 1041. ▶ See instructions on page 2.

Name of proprietor _____ Social security number (SSN) _____

Part I General Information

You May Use Schedule C-EZ Instead of Schedule C Only If You:

- Had business expenses of \$5,000 or less.
- Use the cash method of accounting.
- Did not have an inventory at any time during the year.
- Did not have a net loss from your business.
- Had only one business as either a sole proprietor, qualified joint venture, or statutory employee.

And You:

- Had no employees during the year.
- Are not required to file Form 4562, Depreciation and Amortization, for this business. See the instructions for Schedule C, line 13, to find out if you must file.
- Do not deduct expenses for business use of your home.
- Do not have prior year unallowed passive activity losses from this business.

A Principal business or profession, including product or service _____

B Enter business code (see page 2) _____

C Business name. If no separate business name, leave blank. _____

D Enter your EIN (see page 2) _____

E Business address (including suite or room no.). Address not required if same as on page 1 of your tax return. _____
City, town or post office, state, and ZIP code _____

F Did you make any payments in 2014 that would require you to file Form(s) 1099? (see the Schedule C instructions) Yes No

G If "Yes," did you or will you file required Forms 1099? Yes No

Part II Figure Your Net Profit

1	Gross receipts. Caution. If this income was reported to you on Form W-2 and the "Statutory employee" box on that form was checked, see <i>Statutory employees</i> in the instructions for Schedule C, line 1, and check here <input type="checkbox"/>	1	
2	Total expenses (see page 2). If more than \$5,000, you must use Schedule C	2	
3	Net profit. Subtract line 2 from line 1. If less than zero, you must use Schedule C. Enter on both Form 1040, line 12, and Schedule SE, line 2, or on Form 1040NR, line 13 and Schedule SE, line 2 (see instructions). (Statutory employees do not report this amount on Schedule SE, line 2.) Estates and trusts, enter on Form 1041, line 3	3	

Part III Information on Your Vehicle. Complete this part only if you are claiming car or truck expenses on line 2.

4 When did you place your vehicle in service for business purposes? (month, day, year) ▶ _____

5 Of the total number of miles you drove your vehicle during 2014, enter the number of miles you used your vehicle for:

a Business _____ b Commuting (see page 2) _____ c Other _____

6 Was your vehicle available for personal use during off-duty hours? Yes No

7 Do you (or your spouse) have another vehicle available for personal use? Yes No

8a Do you have evidence to support your deduction? Yes No

b If "Yes," is the evidence written? Yes No

FIGURE 1.2 Schedule C-EZ, Net Profit From Business

Partnerships and Limited Liability Companies

If you go into business with others, then you cannot be a sole proprietor (with the exception of a husband-wife joint venture, explained earlier). You are automatically in a *partnership* if you join together with one or more people to share the profits of the business and take no formal action. Owners of a partnership are called *partners*.

There are 2 types of partnerships: *general partnerships* and *limited partnerships*. In general partnerships, all of the partners are personally liable for the debts of the business. Creditors can go after the personal assets of any and all of the partners to satisfy partnership debts. In limited partnerships (LPs), only the general partners are personally liable for the debts of the business. Limited partners are liable only to the extent of their investments in the business plus their share of recourse debts and obligations to make future investments. Some states allow LPs to become limited liability limited partnerships (LLLPs) to give general partners personal liability protection with respect to the debts of the partnership.

Example

If a partnership incurs debts of \$10,000 (none of which are recourse), a general partner is liable for the full \$10,000. A limited partner who initially contributed \$1,000 to the limited partnership is liable only to that extent. He or she can lose the \$1,000 investment, but creditors cannot go after personal assets.

General partners are jointly and severally liable for the business's debts. A creditor can go after any one partner for the full amount of the debt. That partner can seek to recoup a proportional share of the debt from other partner(s).

Partnerships can be informal agreements to share profits and losses of a business venture. More typically, however, they are organized with formal partnership agreements. These agreements detail how income, deductions, gains, losses, and credits are to be split (if there are any special allocations to be made) and what happens on the retirement, disability, bankruptcy, or death of a partner. A limited partnership must have a partnership agreement that complies with state law requirements.

Another form of organization that can be used by those joining together for business is a limited liability company (LLC). This type of business organization is formed under state law in which all owners are given limited liability. Owners of LLCs are called *members*. These companies are relatively new but have attracted great interest across the country. Every state now has LLC statutes to permit the formation of an LLC within its boundaries. Most states also permit limited liability partnerships (LLPs)—LLCs for accountants, attorneys,

doctors, and other professionals—which are easily formed by existing partnerships filing an LLP election with the state. A partner in an LLP has personal liability protection with respect to the firm's debts, but remains personally liable for his or her professional actions. And Delaware, District of Columbia, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Utah, Texas, and Wisconsin (to a limited extent) permit multiple LLCs to operate under a single LLC umbrella called a “series LLC” (each LLC is called a “cell”). The debts and liabilities of each LLC remain separate from those of the other LLCs, something that is ideal for those owning several pieces of real estate—each can be owned by a separate LLC under the master LLC as long as each LLC maintains separate bank accounts and financial records. At present, state law is evolving to determine the treatment of LLCs formed in one state but doing business in another.

As the name suggests, the creditors of LLCs can look only to the assets of the company to satisfy debts; creditors cannot go after members and hope to recover their personal assets.

Tax Treatment of Income and Deductions in General

Partnerships are *pass-through* entities. They are not separate taxpaying entities; instead, they pass income, deductions, gains, losses, and tax credits through to their owners. More than 24 million partners file over 3.6 million partnership returns each year. Of these, 64.3% are limited liability companies, representing the most prevalent type of entity filing a partnership return; more common than general partnerships or limited partnerships. The owners report

NOTE

K-1s can be distributed to partners electronically if the partnership has the partners' consent. Obtain consent by sending instructions to partners on how to obtain, complete, and submit a consent form to the partnership.

these amounts on their individual returns. While the entity does not pay taxes, it must file an information return with IRS Form 1065, *U.S. Return of Partnership Income*, to report the total pass-through amounts. Even though the return is called a *partnership return*, it is the same return filed by LLCs with 2 or more owners who do not elect to be taxed as a corporation. The entity also completes Schedule K-1 of Form 1065 (Figure 1.3), a copy of which is given to each owner. The K-1 tells the owner his or her allocable share of partnership/LLC amounts. Like W-2 forms used by the IRS to match employees' reporting of their compensation, the IRS employs computer matching of Schedules K-1 to ensure that owners are properly

reporting their share of their business's income.

For federal income tax purposes, LLCs are treated like partnerships unless the members elect to have the LLCs taxed as corporations. This is done on IRS Form 8832, *Entity Classification Election*. See Figure 1.4. For purposes of our discussion throughout the book, it will be assumed that LLCs have not chosen corporate tax treatment and so are taxed the same way as partnerships.

651113
OMB No. 1545-0123

Final K-1 Amended K-1

Schedule K-1 (Form 1065) 2014
Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service

For calendar year 2014, or tax year beginning _____, 2014 ending _____, 20____

Part III Partner's Share of Current Year Income, Deductions, Credits, and Other Items

1	Ordinary business income (loss)	15	Credits
2	Net rental real estate income (loss)		
3	Other net rental income (loss)	16	Foreign transactions
4	Guaranteed payments		
5	Interest income		
6a	Ordinary dividends		
6b	Qualified dividends		
7	Royalties		
8	Net short-term capital gain (loss)		
9a	Net long-term capital gain (loss)	17	Alternative minimum tax (AMT) items
9b	Collectibles (28%) gain (loss)		
9c	Unrecaptured section 1250 gain		
10	Net section 1231 gain (loss)	18	Tax-exempt income and nondeductible expenses
11	Other income (loss)		
12	Section 179 deduction	19	Distributions
13	Other deductions	20	Other information
14	Self-employment earnings (loss)		

Part I Information About the Partnership

A Partnership's employer identification number _____

B Partnership's name, address, city, state, and ZIP code _____

C IRS Center where partnership filed return _____

D Check if this is a publicly traded partnership (PTP)

Part II Information About the Partner

E Partner's identifying number _____

F Partner's name, address, city, state, and ZIP code _____

G General partner or LLC member-manager Limited partner or other LLC member

H Domestic partner Foreign partner

I What type of entity is this partner? _____

I2 If this partner is a retirement plan (IRA/SEP/Keogh/etc.), check here

J Partner's share of profit, loss, and capital (see instructions):

Beginning		Ending	
Profit	%		%
Loss	%		%
Capital	%		%

K Partner's share of liabilities at year end:

Nonrecourse	\$
Qualified nonrecourse financing	\$
Recourse	\$

L Partner's capital account analysis:

Beginning capital account	\$
Capital contributed during the year	\$
Current year increase (decrease)	\$
Withdrawals & distributions	\$ ()
Ending capital account	\$

Tax basis GAAP Section 704(b) book
 Other (explain) _____

M Did the partner contribute property with a built-in gain or loss?
 Yes No
If "Yes," attach statement (see instructions)

*See attached statement for additional information.

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For Paperwork Reduction Act Notice, see Instructions for Form 1065. IRS.gov/form1065 Cat. No. 11394R Schedule K-1 (Form 1065) 2014

FIGURE 1.3 Schedule K-1, Partner's Share of Income, Deductions, Credits, etc.

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Form 8832 (Rev. December 2013) Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service	Entity Classification Election		OMB No. 1545-1516
	▶ Information about Form 8832 and its instructions is at www.irs.gov/form8832 .		2014
Type or Print	Name of eligible entity making election		Employer identification number
	Number, street, and room or suite no. If a P.O. box, see instructions.		
	City or town, state, and ZIP code. If a foreign address, enter city, province or state, postal code and country. Follow the country's practice for entering the postal code.		
▶ Check if: <input type="checkbox"/> Address change <input type="checkbox"/> Late classification relief sought under Revenue Procedure 2009-41 <input type="checkbox"/> Relief for a late change of entity classification election sought under Revenue Procedure 2010-32			
Part I Election Information			
1 Type of election (see instructions):			
a <input type="checkbox"/> Initial classification by a newly-formed entity. Skip lines 2a and 2b and go to line 3.			
b <input type="checkbox"/> Change in current classification. Go to line 2a.			
2a Has the eligible entity previously filed an entity election that had an effective date within the last 60 months?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes. Go to line 2b.			
<input type="checkbox"/> No. Skip line 2b and go to line 3.			
2b Was the eligible entity's prior election an initial classification election by a newly formed entity that was effective on the date of formation?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes. Go to line 3.			
<input type="checkbox"/> No. Stop here. You generally are not currently eligible to make the election (see instructions).			
3 Does the eligible entity have more than one owner?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes. You can elect to be classified as a partnership or an association taxable as a corporation. Skip line 4 and go to line 5.			
<input type="checkbox"/> No. You can elect to be classified as an association taxable as a corporation or to be disregarded as a separate entity. Go to line 4.			
4 If the eligible entity has only one owner, provide the following information:			
a Name of owner ▶			
b Identifying number of owner ▶			
5 If the eligible entity is owned by one or more affiliated corporations that file a consolidated return, provide the name and employer identification number of the parent corporation:			
a Name of parent corporation ▶			
b Employer identification number ▶			

For Paperwork Reduction Act Notice, see instructions.

Cat. No. 22598R

Form **8832** (Rev. 12-2013)

FIGURE 1.4 Form 8832, Entity Classification Election

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Part II Income or Loss From Partnerships and S Corporations **Note.** If you report a loss from an at-risk activity for which any amount is not at risk, you must check the box in column (e) on line 28 and attach Form 6198. See instructions.

27 Are you reporting any loss not allowed in a prior year due to the at-risk, excess farm loss, or basis limitations, a prior year unallowed loss from a passive activity (if that loss was not reported on Form 8582), or unreimbursed partnership expenses? If you answered "Yes," see instructions before completing this section. Yes No

28	(a) Name	(b) Enter P for partnership; S for S corporation	(c) Check if foreign partnership	(d) Employer identification number	(e) Check if any amount is not at risk
A			<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
B			<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
C			<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
D			<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

Passive Income and Loss		Nonpassive Income and Loss		
(f) Passive loss allowed (attach Form 8582 if required)	(g) Passive income from Schedule K-1	(h) Nonpassive loss from Schedule K-1	(i) Section 179 expense deduction from Form 4562	(j) Nonpassive income from Schedule K-1
A				
B				
C				
D				
29a Totals				
29b Totals				
30 Add columns (g) and (j) of line 29a				30
31 Add columns (f), (h), and (i) of line 29b				31
32 Total partnership and S corporation income or (loss). Combine lines 30 and 31. Enter the result here and include in the total on line 41 below				32

FIGURE 1.5 Schedule E, Part II, Income or Loss From Partnerships and S Corporations

A single-member LLC is treated for tax purposes like a sole proprietor if it is owned by an individual who reports the company's income and expenses on his or her Schedule C. Under proposed regulations, for federal tax purposes a series LLC is treated as an entity formed under local law, whether or not local law treats the series as a separate legal entity. The tax treatment of the series is then governed by the check-the-box rules.

There are 2 types of items that pass through to an owner: trade or business income or loss and separately stated items. A partner's or member's share is called the *distributive share*. Trade or business income or loss takes into account most ordinary deductions of the business—compensation, rent, taxes, interest, and so forth. Guaranteed payments to an owner are also taken into account when determining ordinary income or loss. From an owner's perspective, deductions net out against income from the business, and the owner's allocable share of the net amount is then reported on the owner's Schedule E of Form 1040. Figure 1.5 shows a sample portion of Schedule E on which a partner's or member's distributive share is reported.

Separately stated items are stand-alone items that pass through to owners apart from the net amount of trade or business income. These are items that are subject to limitations on an individual's tax return and must be segregated from the net amount of trade or business income. They are reported along with similar items on the owner's own tax return.

Example

A charitable contribution deduction made by a partnership passes through separately as a charitable contribution. The partner adds the amount of the

pass-through charitable contribution to his or her other charitable contributions. Since an individual's cash contributions are deductible only to the extent of 50% of adjusted gross income, the partner's allocable share of the partnership's charitable contribution is subject to his or her individual adjusted gross income limit.

Other items that pass through separately to owners include capital gains and losses, Section 179 (first-year expensing) deductions, investment interest deductions, and tax credits.

When a partnership or LLC has substantial expenses that exceed its operating income, a loss is passed through to the owner. A number of different rules operate to limit a loss deduction. The owner may not be able to claim the entire loss. The loss is limited by the owner's *basis*, or the amount of cash and property contributed to the partnership, in the interest in the partnership.

Example

You contributed \$2,000 to the AB Partnership. In 2014 the partnership had sizable expenses and only a small amount of revenue. Your allocable share of partnership loss is \$3,000. You may deduct only \$2,000 in 2014, which is the amount of your basis in your partnership interest. You may deduct that additional \$1,000 of loss when you have additional basis to offset it.

There may be additional limits on your write-offs from partnerships and LLCs. If you are a passive investor—a silent partner—in these businesses, your loss deduction is further limited by the passive activity loss rules. In general, these rules limit a current deduction for losses from passive activities to the extent of income from passive activities. Additionally, losses are limited by the individual's economic risk in the business. This limit is called the *at-risk rule*. The passive activity loss and at-risk rules are discussed in Chapter 4. For a further discussion of the passive activity loss rules, see IRS Publication 925, *Passive Activity and At-Risk Rules*.

S Corporations and Their Shareholder-Employees

There are about 4.5 million S corporations, making these entities the most prevalent type of corporation. About 67% of all corporations file a Form 1120S, the return for S corporations. About 78% of S corporations have only 1, 2, or 3 shareholders.

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NOTE

State laws vary on the tax treatment of S corporations for state income tax purposes. Be sure to check the laws of any state in which you do business.

S corporations are like regular corporations (called *C corporations*) for business law purposes. They are separate entities in the eyes of the law and exist independently from their owners. For example, if an owner dies, the S corporation's existence continues. S corporations are formed under state law in the same way as other corporations. The only difference between S corporations and other corporations is their tax treatment for federal income tax purposes.

For the most part, S corporations are treated as pass-through entities for federal income tax purposes. This means that, as with partnerships and LLCs, the income and loss pass through to owners, and their allocable share is reported by S corporation shareholders on their individual income tax returns. The tax treatment of S corporations is discussed more fully later in this chapter.

S corporation status is not automatic. A corporation must elect S status in a timely manner. This election is made on Form 2553, *Election by Small Business Corporations to Tax Corporate Income Directly to Shareholders*. It must be filed with the IRS no later than the fifteenth day of the third month of the corporation's tax year.

Example

A corporation (on a calendar year) that has been in existence for a number of years wants to elect S status. It has to file an election no later than March 17, 2014, to be effective for its 2014 tax year. If a corporation is formed on August 1, 2014, and wants an S election to be effective for its first tax year, the S election must be filed no later than November 17, 2014.

If an S election is filed after the deadline, it is automatically effective for the following year. A corporation can simply decide to make a prospective election by filing at any time during the year prior to that for which the election is to be effective.

Example

A corporation (on a calendar year) that has been in existence for a number of years wants to elect S status for its 2015 tax year. It can file an election at any time during 2014.

To be eligible for an S election, the corporation must meet certain shareholder requirements. There can be no more than 100 shareholders. For this

purpose, all family members (up to 6 generations) are treated as a single shareholder. Only certain types of trusts are permitted to be shareholders. There can be no nonresident alien shareholders.

An election cannot be made before the corporation is formed. The board of directors of the corporation must agree to the election and should indicate this assent in the minutes of a board of directors meeting.

Remember, if state law also allows S status, a separate election may have to be filed with the state. Check with all state law requirements.

Tax Treatment of Income and Deductions in General

For the most part, S corporations, like partnerships and LLCs, are pass-through entities. They are generally not separate taxpaying entities. Instead, they pass through to their shareholders' income, deductions, gains, losses, and tax credits. The shareholders report these amounts on their individual returns. The S corporation files a return with the IRS—Form 1120S, *U.S. Income Tax Return for an S Corporation*—to report the total pass-through amounts. The S corporation also completes Schedule K-1 of Form 1120S, a copy of which is given to each shareholder. The K-1 tells the shareholder his or her allocable share of S corporation amounts. The K-1 for S corporation shareholders is similar to the K-1 for partners and LLC members.

Unlike partnerships and LLCs, however, S corporations may become taxpayers if they have certain types of income. There are only 3 types of income that result in a tax on the S corporation. These 3 items cannot be reduced by any deductions:

1. **Built-in gains.** These are gains related to appreciation of assets held by a C corporation that converts to S status. Thus, if a corporation is formed and immediately elects S status, there will never be any built-in gains to worry about.
2. **Passive investment income.** This is income of a corporation that has earnings and profits from a time when it was a C corporation. A tax on the S corporation results only when this passive investment income exceeds 25% of gross receipts. Again, if a corporation is formed and immediately elects S status, or if a corporation that converted to S status does not have any earnings and profits at the time of conversion, then there will never be any tax from this source.
3. **LIFO recapture.** When a C corporation using last-in, first-out or LIFO to report inventory converts to S status, there may be recapture income that is taken into account partly on the C corporation's final return, but also on the S corporation's return. Again, if a corporation is formed and immediately elects S status, there will not be any recapture income on which the S corporation must pay tax.

To sum up, if a corporation is formed and immediately elects S status, the corporation will always be solely a pass-through entity and there will never be any tax at the corporate level. If the S corporation was, at one time, a C corporation, there may be some tax at the corporate level.

C Corporations and Their Shareholder-Employees

A *C corporation* is an entity separate and apart from its owners; it has its own legal existence. Though formed under state law, it need not be formed in the state in which the business operates. Many corporations, for example, are formed in Delaware or Nevada because the laws in these states favor the corporation, as opposed to the investors (shareholders). However, state law for the state in which the business operates may still require the corporation to make some formal notification of doing business in the state. The corporation may also be subject to tax on income generated in that state.

According to IRS data, there are about 2.3 million C corporations, more than 98% of which are small or midsize companies (with assets of \$10 million or less).

For federal tax purposes, a C corporation is a separate taxpaying entity. It files its own return (Form 1120, *U.S. Corporation Income Tax Return*) to report its income or losses. Shareholders do not report their share of the corporation's income. The tax treatment of C corporations is explained more fully later in this chapter.

Personal Service Corporations

Professionals who incorporate their practices are a special type of C corporation called **personal service corporations (PSCs)**.

Personal service corporation (PSC) A C corporation that performs personal services in the fields of health, law, accounting, engineering, architecture, actuarial science, performing arts, or consulting and meets certain ownership and service tests.

Personal service corporations are subject to special rules in the tax law. Some of these rules are beneficial; others are not. Personal service corporations:

- Cannot use graduated corporate tax rates; they are subject to a flat tax rate of 35%.
- Are generally required to use the same tax year as that of their owners. Typically, individuals report their income on a calendar year basis (explained more fully in Chapter 2), so their PSCs must also use a calendar year. However, there is a special election that can be made to use a fiscal year.

- Can use the cash method of accounting. Other C corporations cannot use the cash method and instead must use the accrual method (explained more fully in Chapter 2).
- Are subject to the passive loss limitation rules (explained in Chapter 4).
- Can have their income and deductions reallocated by the IRS between the corporation and the shareholders if it more correctly reflects the economics of the situation.
- Have a smaller exemption from the accumulated earnings penalty than other C corporations. This penalty imposes an additional tax on corporations that accumulate their income above and beyond the reasonable needs of the business instead of distributing income to shareholders.

Tax Treatment of Income and Deductions in General

The C corporation reports its own income and claims its own deductions on Form 1120, *U.S. Corporation Income Tax Return*. Shareholders in C corporations do not have to report any income of the corporation (and cannot claim any deductions of the corporation). Figure 1.6 shows a sample copy of page 1 of Form 1120.

C corporations pay taxes according to corporate tax rates that run from 15% on taxable income up to \$50,000, to 35% on taxable income over \$15 million (with very large corporations subject to a higher marginal rate that has the effect of eliminating the graduated rates so that they are eventually taxed at a flat 35%) (see Table 1.1). These brackets are not adjusted annually for inflation as are the tax brackets for individuals.

There has been sentiment in Congress to reduce the top corporate rate in order to make U.S. corporations more competitive with foreign corporations. For example, in Singapore the rate is 17%, in South Korea, 24%, in Canada 26%, and in Germany, 30%. Japan reduced its rate from 40% (the highest in industrialized countries) to 38%, leaving the United States with the highest rate (an effective rate of 40% after averaging in state corporate tax rates).

Distributions from the C corporation to its shareholders are personal items for the shareholders. For example, if a shareholder works for his or her C corporation and receives a salary, the corporation deducts that salary against corporate income. The shareholder reports the salary as income on his or her individual income tax return. If the corporation distributes a dividend to the shareholder, again, the shareholder reports the dividend as income on his or her individual income tax return. In the case of dividends, however, the corporation cannot claim a deduction. This, then, creates a 2-tier tax system, commonly referred to as *double taxation*. First, earnings are taxed at the corporate level. Then, when they are distributed to shareholders as dividends, they are taxed again, this time at the shareholder level. There has been sentiment in Congress over the years to eliminate the double taxation, but as of yet there has been

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1120 U.S. Corporation Income Tax Return
 Form 1120-1014
 Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service
 For calendar year 2014 or tax year beginning _____, 2014, ending _____, 20____
 ▶ Information about Form 1120 and its separate instructions is at www.irs.gov/form1120.

OMB No. 1545-0123
2014

A Check if:
 1a Consolidated return (attach Form 851)
 b Life/nonlife consolidated return
 2 Personal holding co. (attach Sch. PH)
 3 Personal service corp. (see instructions)
 4 Schedule M-3 attached

B Employer identification number _____

C Date incorporated _____

D Total assets (see instructions) \$ _____

E Check if: (1) Initial return (2) Final return (3) Name change (4) Address change

Income	1a	Gross receipts or sales	1a	
	b	Returns and allowances	1b	
	c	Balance. Subtract line 1b from line 1a	1c	
	2	Cost of goods sold (attach Form 1125-A)	2	
	3	Gross profit. Subtract line 2 from line 1c	3	
	4	Dividends (Schedule C, line 19)	4	
	5	Interest	5	
	6	Gross rents	6	
	7	Gross royalties	7	
	8	Capital gain net income (attach Schedule D (Form 1120))	8	
	9	Net gain or (loss) from Form 4797, Part II, line 17 (attach Form 4797)	9	
10	Other income (see instructions—attach statement)	10		
11	Total income. Add lines 3 through 10	11		
Deductions (See instructions for limitations on deductions.)	12	Compensation of officers (see instructions—attach Form 1125-E)	12	
	13	Salaries and wages (less employment credits)	13	
	14	Repairs and maintenance	14	
	15	Bad debts	15	
	16	Rents	16	
	17	Taxes and licenses	17	
	18	Interest	18	
	19	Charitable contributions	19	
	20	Depreciation from Form 4562 not claimed on Form 1125-A or elsewhere on return (attach Form 4562)	20	
	21	Depletion	21	
	22	Advertising	22	
	23	Pension, profit-sharing, etc., plans	23	
	24	Employee benefit programs	24	
	25	Domestic production activities deduction (attach Form 8903)	25	
	26	Other deductions (attach statement)	26	
	27	Total deductions. Add lines 12 through 26	27	
	28	Taxable income before net operating loss deduction and special deductions. Subtract line 27 from line 11.	28	
Tax, Refundable Credits, and Payments	29a	Net operating loss deduction (see instructions)	29a	
	b	Special deductions (Schedule C, line 20)	29b	
	c	Add lines 29a and 29b	29c	
30	Taxable income. Subtract line 29c from line 28 (see instructions)	30		
31	Total tax (Schedule J, Part I, line 11)	31		
32	Total payments and refundable credits (Schedule J, Part II, line 21)	32		
33	Estimated tax penalty (see instructions). Check if Form 2220 is attached <input type="checkbox"/>	33		
34	Amount owed. If line 32 is smaller than the total of lines 31 and 33, enter amount owed	34		
35	Overpayment. If line 32 is larger than the total of lines 31 and 33, enter amount overpaid	35		
36	Enter amount from line 35 you want: Credited to 2015 estimated tax ▶ Refunded ▶	36		

Under penalties of perjury, I declare that I have examined this return, including accompanying schedules and statements, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, it is true, correct, and complete. Declaration of preparer (other than taxpayer) is based on all information of which preparer has any knowledge.

Sign Here
 Signature of officer _____ Date _____ Title _____
 Print/Type preparer's name _____ Preparer's signature _____ Date _____ Check if self-employed PTIN _____

Paid Preparer Use Only
 Firm's name ▶ _____ Firm's EIN ▶ _____
 Firm's address ▶ _____ Phone no. _____

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FIGURE 1.6 Form 1120, U.S. Corporation Income Tax Return

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Schedule C Dividends and Special Deductions (see instructions)		(a) Dividends received	(b) %	(c) Special deductions (a) x (b)
1	Dividends from less-than-20%-owned domestic corporations (other than debt-financed stock)		70	
2	Dividends from 20%-or-more-owned domestic corporations (other than debt-financed stock)		80	
3	Dividends on debt-financed stock of domestic and foreign corporations		see instructions	
4	Dividends on certain preferred stock of less-than-20%-owned public utilities		42	
5	Dividends on certain preferred stock of 20%-or-more-owned public utilities		48	
6	Dividends from less-than-20%-owned foreign corporations and certain FSCs		70	
7	Dividends from 20%-or-more-owned foreign corporations and certain FSCs		80	
8	Dividends from wholly owned foreign subsidiaries		100	
9	Total. Add lines 1 through 8. See instructions for limitation			
10	Dividends from domestic corporations received by a small business investment company operating under the Small Business Investment Act of 1958		100	
11	Dividends from affiliated group members		100	
12	Dividends from certain FSCs		100	
13	Dividends from foreign corporations not included on lines 3, 6, 7, 8, 11, or 12			
14	Income from controlled foreign corporations under subpart F (attach Form(s) 5471)			
15	Foreign dividend gross-up			
16	IC-DISC and former DISC dividends not included on lines 1, 2, or 3			
17	Other dividends			
18	Deduction for dividends paid on certain preferred stock of public utilities			
19	Total dividends. Add lines 1 through 17. Enter here and on page 1, line 4			
20	Total special deductions. Add lines 9, 10, 11, 12, and 18. Enter here and on page 1, line 29b			

Form **1120** (2014)

FIGURE 1.6 (Continued)

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Schedule J Tax Computation and Payment (see instructions)

Part I—Tax Computation

1	Check if the corporation is a member of a controlled group (attach Schedule O (Form 1120))	<input type="checkbox"/>		
2	Income tax. Check if a qualified personal service corporation (see instructions)	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	
3	Alternative minimum tax (attach Form 4626)		3	
4	Add lines 2 and 3		4	
5a	Foreign tax credit (attach Form 1118)		5a	
5b	Credit from Form 8834 (see instructions)		5b	
5c	General business credit (attach Form 3800)		5c	
5d	Credit for prior year minimum tax (attach Form 8827)		5d	
5e	Bond credits from Form 8912		5e	
6	Total credits. Add lines 5a through 5e		6	
7	Subtract line 6 from line 4		7	
8	Personal holding company tax (attach Schedule PH (Form 1120))		8	
9a	Recapture of investment credit (attach Form 4255)		9a	
9b	Recapture of low-income housing credit (attach Form 8611)		9b	
9c	Interest due under the look-back method—completed long-term contracts (attach Form 8697)		9c	
9d	Interest due under the look-back method—income forecast method (attach Form 8666)		9d	
9e	Alternative tax on qualifying shipping activities (attach Form 8902)		9e	
9f	Other (see instructions—attach statement)		9f	
10	Total. Add lines 9a through 9f		10	
11	Total tax. Add lines 7, 8, and 10. Enter here and on page 1, line 31		11	

Part II—Payments and Refundable Credits

12	2013 overpayment credited to 2014		12	
13	2014 estimated tax payments		13	
14	2014 refund applied for on Form 4466		14	()
15	Combine lines 12, 13, and 14		15	
16	Tax deposited with Form 7004		16	
17	Withholding (see instructions)		17	
18	Total payments. Add lines 15, 16, and 17.		18	
19	Refundable credits from:			
a	Form 2439		19a	
b	Form 4136		19b	
c	Form 8827, line 8c		19c	
d	Other (attach statement—see instructions)		19d	
20	Total credits. Add lines 19a through 19d		20	
21	Total payments and credits. Add lines 18 and 20. Enter here and on page 1, line 32		21	

Schedule K Other Information (see instructions)

1	Check accounting method: a <input type="checkbox"/> Cash b <input type="checkbox"/> Accrual c <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) ▶	Yes	No
2	See the instructions and enter the:		
a	Business activity code no. ▶		
b	Business activity ▶		
c	Product or service ▶		
3	Is the corporation a subsidiary in an affiliated group or a parent-subsidary controlled group? If "Yes," enter name and EIN of the parent corporation ▶		
4	At the end of the tax year:		
a	Did any foreign or domestic corporation, partnership (including any entity treated as a partnership), trust, or tax-exempt organization own directly 20% or more, or own, directly or indirectly, 50% or more of the total voting power of all classes of the corporation's stock entitled to vote? If "Yes," complete Part I of Schedule G (Form 1120) (attach Schedule G)		
b	Did any individual or estate own directly 20% or more, or own, directly or indirectly, 50% or more of the total voting power of all classes of the corporation's stock entitled to vote? If "Yes," complete Part II of Schedule G (Form 1120) (attach Schedule G)		

Form 1120 (2014)

FIGURE 1.6 (Continued)

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Form 1120 (2014)

Page 4

Schedule K Other Information *continued* (see instructions)

				Yes	No
5 At the end of the tax year, did the corporation:					
a Own directly 20% or more, or own, directly or indirectly, 50% or more of the total voting power of all classes of stock entitled to vote of any foreign or domestic corporation not included on Form 851 , Affiliations Schedule? For rules of constructive ownership, see instructions. If "Yes," complete (i) through (iv) below.					
(i) Name of Corporation	(ii) Employer Identification Number (if any)	(iii) Country of Incorporation	(iv) Percentage Owned in Voting Stock		
b Own directly an interest of 20% or more, or own, directly or indirectly, an interest of 50% or more in any foreign or domestic partnership (including an entity treated as a partnership) or in the beneficial interest of a trust? For rules of constructive ownership, see instructions. If "Yes," complete (i) through (iv) below.					
(i) Name of Entity	(ii) Employer Identification Number (if any)	(iii) Country of Organization	(iv) Maximum Percentage Owned in Profit, Loss, or Capital		
6 During this tax year, did the corporation pay dividends (other than stock dividends and distributions in exchange for stock) in excess of the corporation's current and accumulated earnings and profits? (See sections 301 and 316.) If "Yes," file Form 5452 , Corporate Report of Nondividend Distributions. If this is a consolidated return, answer here for the parent corporation and on Form 851 for each subsidiary.					
7 At any time during the tax year, did one foreign person own, directly or indirectly, at least 25% of (a) the total voting power of all classes of the corporation's stock entitled to vote or (b) the total value of all classes of the corporation's stock? For rules of attribution, see section 318. If "Yes," enter: (i) Percentage owned ▶ _____ and (ii) Owner's country ▶ _____ (c) The corporation may have to file Form 5472 , Information Return of a 25% Foreign-Owned U.S. Corporation or a Foreign Corporation Engaged in a U.S. Trade or Business. Enter the number of Forms 5472 attached ▶ _____					
8 Check this box if the corporation issued publicly offered debt instruments with original issue discount <input type="checkbox"/> If checked, the corporation may have to file Form 8281 , Information Return for Publicly Offered Original Issue Discount Instruments.					
9 Enter the amount of tax-exempt interest received or accrued during the tax year ▶ \$ _____					
10 Enter the number of shareholders at the end of the tax year (if 1 or fewer) ▶ _____					
11 If the corporation has an NOL for the tax year and is electing to forego the carryback period, check here <input type="checkbox"/> If the corporation is filing a consolidated return, the statement required by Regulations section 1.1502-21(b)(3) must be attached or the election will not be valid.					
12 Enter the available NOL carryover from prior tax years (do not reduce it by any deduction on line 29a.) ▶ \$ _____					
13 Are the corporation's total receipts (page 1, line 1a, plus lines 4 through 10) for the tax year and its total assets at the end of the tax year less than \$250,000? If "Yes," the corporation is not required to complete Schedules L, M-1, and M-2. Instead, enter the total amount of cash distributions and the book value of property distributions (other than cash) made during the tax year ▶ \$ _____					
14 Is the corporation required to file Schedule UTP (Form 1120), Uncertain Tax Position Statement (see instructions)? If "Yes," complete and attach Schedule UTP.					
15a Did the corporation make any payments in 2014 that would require it to file Form(s) 1099?					
b If "Yes," did or will the corporation file required Forms 1099?					
16 During this tax year, did the corporation have an 80% or more change in ownership, including a change due to redemption of its own stock?					
17 During or subsequent to this tax year, but before the filing of this return, did the corporation dispose of more than 65% (by value) of its assets in a taxable, non-taxable, or tax deferred transaction?					
18 Did the corporation receive assets in a section 351 transfer in which any of the transferred assets had a fair market basis or fair market value of more than \$1 million?					

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FIGURE 1.6 (Continued)

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Form 1120 (2014) Page **5**

Schedule L Balance Sheets per Books		Beginning of tax year		End of tax year	
Assets		(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
1	Cash				
2a	Trade notes and accounts receivable				
b	Less allowance for bad debts	()		()	
3	Inventories				
4	U.S. government obligations				
5	Tax-exempt securities (see instructions)				
6	Other current assets (attach statement)				
7	Loans to shareholders				
8	Mortgage and real estate loans				
9	Other investments (attach statement)				
10a	Buildings and other depreciable assets				
b	Less accumulated depreciation	()		()	
11a	Depletable assets				
b	Less accumulated depletion	()		()	
12	Land (net of any amortization)				
13a	Intangible assets (amortizable only)				
b	Less accumulated amortization	()		()	
14	Other assets (attach statement)				
15	Total assets				
Liabilities and Shareholders' Equity					
16	Accounts payable				
17	Mortgages, notes, bonds payable in less than 1 year				
18	Other current liabilities (attach statement)				
19	Loans from shareholders				
20	Mortgages, notes, bonds payable in 1 year or more				
21	Other liabilities (attach statement)				
22	Capital stock: a Preferred stock				
	b Common stock				
23	Additional paid-in capital				
24	Retained earnings—Appropriated (attach statement)				
25	Retained earnings—Unappropriated				
26	Adjustments to shareholders' equity (attach statement)				
27	Less cost of treasury stock	()		()	
28	Total liabilities and shareholders' equity				

Schedule M-1 Reconciliation of Income (Loss) per Books With Income per Return			
<small>Note: The corporation may be required to file Schedule M-3 (see instructions).</small>			
1	Net income (loss) per books		7 Income recorded on books this year not included on this return (itemize):
2	Federal income tax per books		Tax-exempt interest \$
3	Excess of capital losses over capital gains		
4	Income subject to tax not recorded on books this year (itemize):		8 Deductions on this return not charged against book income this year (itemize):
5	Expenses recorded on books this year not deducted on this return (itemize):		a Depreciation . . . \$
a	Depreciation \$		b Charitable contributions \$
b	Charitable contributions . . . \$		
c	Travel and entertainment . . . \$		9 Add lines 7 and 8
6	Add lines 1 through 5		10 Income (page 1, line 28)—line 6 less line 9

Schedule M-2 Analysis of Unappropriated Retained Earnings per Books (Line 25, Schedule L)			
1	Balance at beginning of year		5 Distributions: a Cash
2	Net income (loss) per books		b Stock
3	Other increases (itemize):		c Property
4	Add lines 1, 2, and 3		6 Other decreases (itemize):
			7 Add lines 5 and 6
			8 Balance at end of year (line 4 less line 7)

Form **1120** (2014)

FIGURE 1.6 (Continued)

TABLE 1.1 Federal Corporate Tax Rate Schedule

If taxable income is:

Over	But Not Over	Tax Is	Of the Amount Over
\$ 0	\$ 50,000	15%	\$ 0
50,000	75,000	\$ 7,500 + 25%	50,000
75,000	100,000	\$ 13,750 + 34%	75,000
100,000	335,000	\$ 22,250 + 39%	100,000
335,000	10,000,000	\$ 113,900 + 34%	335,000
10,000,000	15,000,000	\$ 3,400,000 + 35%	10,000,000
15,000,000	18,333,333	\$ 5,150,000 + 38%	15,000,000
18,333,333		35%	0

no legislation to accomplish this end other than the relief provided by capping the rate on dividends (zero for individuals in the 10% or 15% tax bracket; 15% for those in the 25%, 28%, 33%, or 35% brackets; 20% for those in the 39.6% bracket).

Other Tax Issues for C Corporations

In view of the favorable corporate rate tax structure (compared with the individual tax rates), certain tax penalties prevent businesses from using this form of business organization to optimum advantage.

- **Personal holding company penalty.** Corporations that function as a shareholder investment portfolio rather than as an operating company may fall subject to the personal holding corporation (PHC) penalty tax of 20% on certain undistributed corporate income. The tax rules strictly define a PHC according to stock ownership and adjusted gross income. The penalty may be avoided by *not* triggering the definition of PHC or by paying out certain dividends.
- **Accumulated earnings tax.** Corporations may seek to keep money in corporate accounts rather than distribute it as dividends to shareholders with the view that an eventual sale of the business will enable shareholders to extract those funds at capital gain rates. Unfortunately, the tax law imposes a penalty on excess accumulations at 20%. Excess accumulations are those above an exemption amount (\$250,000 for most businesses, but only \$150,000 for PSCs) *plus* amounts for the reasonable needs of the business. Thus, for example, amounts retained to finance planned construction costs, to pay for a possible legal liability, or to buy out a retiring owner are reasonable needs not subject to penalty regardless of amount.

Employees

If you do not own any interest in a business but are employed by one, you may still have to account for business expenses. Your salary or other compensation is reported as wages in the income section as seen on page 1 of your Form 1040. Your deductions (with a few exceptions), however, can be claimed only as miscellaneous itemized deductions on Schedule A. These deductions are subject to 2 limitations. The total is deductible only if it exceeds 2% of adjusted gross income and, if your income exceeds a threshold amount that depends on your filing status, the otherwise deductible portion of miscellaneous itemized deductions reduced by a phase-out. For 2014, the threshold amount at which itemized deductions (including miscellaneous itemized deductions) begins to phase out is \$254,200 for singles; \$279,650 for heads of households; \$305,050 for joint filers; and \$152,525 for married persons filing separately.

Under the 2% rule, only the portion of total miscellaneous deductions in excess of 2% of adjusted gross income is deductible on Schedule A. *Adjusted gross income* is the tax term for your total income subject to tax (gross income) minus business expenses (other than employee business expenses), capital losses, and certain other expenses that are deductible even if you do not claim itemized deductions, such as qualifying IRA contributions or alimony. You arrive at your adjusted gross income by completing the Income and Adjusted Gross Income sections on page 1 of Form 1040.

Example

You have business travel expenses that your employer does not pay for and other miscellaneous expenses (such as tax preparation fees) totaling \$2,000. Your adjusted gross income is \$80,000. The amount up to the 2% floor, or \$1,600 (2% of \$80,000), is disallowed. Only \$400 of the \$2,000 expenses is deductible on Schedule A.

If you fall into a special category of employees called *statutory employees*, you can deduct your business expenses on Schedule C instead of Schedule A. Statutory employees were discussed earlier in this chapter.

Factors in Choosing Your Form of Business Organization

Throughout this chapter, the differences of how income and deductions are reported have been explained for different entities, but these differences are not the only reasons for choosing a form of business organization. When you are deciding on which form of business organization to choose, tax, financial, and many other factors come into play, including:

- Personal liability
- Access to capital
- Lack of profitability
- Fringe benefits
- Nature and number of owners
- Tax rates
- Social Security and Medicare taxes
- Restrictions on accounting periods and account methods
- Owner's payment of company expenses
- Multistate operations
- Audit changes
- Filing deadlines and extensions
- Exit strategy

Each of these factors is discussed below.

Personal Liability

If your business owes money to another party, are your personal assets—home, car, investment—at risk? The answer depends on your form of business organization. You have personal liability—your personal assets are at risk—if you are a sole proprietor or a general partner in a partnership. In all other cases, you do not have personal liability. Thus, for example, if you are a shareholder in an S corporation, you do not have personal liability for the debts of your corporation.

Of course, you can protect yourself against personal liability for some types of occurrences by having adequate insurance coverage. For example, if you are a sole proprietor who runs a store, be sure that you have adequate liability coverage in the event someone is injured on your premises and sues you.

Even if your form of business organization provides personal liability protection, you can become personally liable if you agree to it in a contract. For example, some banks may not be willing to lend money to a small corporation unless you, as a principal shareholder, agree to guarantee the corporation's debt. For example, SBA loans usually require the personal guarantee of any owner with a 20% or more ownership interest in the business. In this case, you are personally liable to the extent of the loan to the corporation. If the corporation does not or cannot repay the loan, then the bank can look to you, and your personal assets, for repayment.

There is another instance in which corporate or LLC status will not provide you with personal protection. Even if you have a corporation or LLC, you can be personally liable for failing to withhold and deposit payroll taxes, which are called trust fund taxes (employees' income tax withholding and their share of

FICA taxes, which are held in trust for them) to the IRS. This liability is explained in Chapter 29.

Access to Capital

Most small businesses start up using an owner's personal resources or by turning to family and friends. However, some businesses need outside capital—equity and/or debt—to get started properly. A C corporation may make it easier to raise money, especially now. For example, access to equity crowdfunding, which allows businesses to raise small amounts from numerous investors, is effectively limited to C corporations (S corporations cannot have more than 100 investors; partnerships and LLCs would have difficulty in divvying up ownership among an ever-changing number of owners). Equity crowdfunding was not operational at the time of publication so check the Supplement for any update.

Lack of Profitability

All businesses hope to make money. But many sustain losses, especially in the start-up years and during tough economic times. The way in which a business is organized affects how losses are treated.

Pass-through entities allow owners to deduct their share of the company's losses on their personal returns (subject to limits discussed in Chapter 4). If a business is set up as a C corporation, only the corporation can deduct losses. Thus, when losses are anticipated, for example in the start-up phase, a pass-through entity generally is a preferable form of business organization. However, once the business becomes profitable, the tables turn. In that situation, C corporations can offer more tax opportunities, such as fringe benefits. Companies that suffer severe losses may be forced into bankruptcy. The bankruptcy rules for corporations (C or S) are very different from the rules for other entities (see Chapter 25).

Fringe Benefits

The tax law gives employees of corporations the opportunity to enjoy special fringe benefits on a tax-free basis. They can receive employer-provided group term life insurance up to \$50,000, health insurance coverage, dependent care assistance up to \$5,000, education assistance up to \$5,250, adoption assistance, and more. They can also be covered by medical reimbursement plans. This same opportunity is not extended to sole proprietors. Remember that sole proprietors are not employees, so they cannot get the benefits given only to employees. Similarly, partners, LLC members, and even S corporation shareholders who own more than 2% of the stock in their corporations are not considered employees and thus not eligible for fringe benefits.

If the business can afford to provide these benefits, the form of business becomes important. All forms of business can offer tax-favored retirement

plans. Corporations make it possible to give ownership opportunities to employees. Corporations—both C and S—can offer employee stock ownership plans (ESOPs) in which employees receive ownership interests through a plan that is much like a qualified retirement plan (see Chapter 16). Certain C corporations can offer employees an income tax exclusion opportunity for stock they buy or receive as compensation. For 2014, 50% or 75% of the gain on qualified small business stock (explained in Chapter 7) is excludable from gross income as long as the stock has been held for more than five years. C corporations can also offer incentive stock option (ISO) plans and nonqualified stock option (NSO) plans (see Chapter 7). The tax law does not bar S corporations from offering stock option plans, but because of the 100-shareholder limit (discussed earlier in this chapter), it becomes difficult to do so.

Nature and Number of Owners

With whom you go into business affects your choice of business organization. For example, if you have any foreign investors, you cannot use an S corporation, because foreign individuals are not permitted to own S corporation stock directly (resident aliens are permitted to own S corporation stock). An S corporation also cannot be used if investors are partnerships or corporations. In other words, in order to use an S corporation, all shareholders must be individuals who are not nonresident aliens (there are exceptions for estates, certain trusts, and certain exempt organizations).

The number of owners also presents limits on your choice of business organization. If you are the only owner, then your choices are limited to a sole proprietorship or a corporation (either C or S). All states allow single-member LLCs. If you have more than one owner, you can set up the business in just about any way you choose. S corporations cannot have more than 100 shareholders, but this number provides great leeway for small businesses.

If you have a business already formed as a C corporation and want to start another corporation, you must take into consideration the impact of special tax rules for multiple corporations. These rules apply regardless of the size of the business, the number of employees you have, and the profit the businesses make. Multiple corporations are corporations under common control, meaning they are essentially owned by the same parties. The tax law limits the number of tax breaks in the case of multiple corporations. Instead of each corporation enjoying a full tax benefit, the benefit must be shared among all of the corporations in the group. For example, the tax brackets for corporations are graduated. In the case of certain multiple corporations, however, the benefit of the graduated rates must be shared. In effect, each corporation pays a slightly higher tax because it is part of a group of multiple corporations. If you want to avoid restrictions on multiple corporations, you may want to look to LLCs or some other form of business organization.

Tax Rates

Both individuals and C corporations (other than PSCs) can enjoy graduated income tax rates. The top tax rate paid by sole proprietors and owners of other pass-through businesses is 39.6%. The top corporate tax rate imposed on C corporations is 35%. (There is some political support for reducing the top corporate tax rate.) Personal service corporations are subject to a flat tax rate of 35%. (The domestic production activities deduction in Chapter 21 effectively lowers the top rate to less than 32% for corporations that are eligible to claim it.) But remember, even though the C corporation has a lower top tax rate, there is a 2-tier tax structure with which to contend if earnings are paid out to you as dividends—tax at the corporate level and again at the shareholder level.

While the so-called double taxation for C corporations has been eased by lowering the tax rate on dividends, there is still some double tax because dividends remain nondeductible at the corporate level. The rate on qualified dividends for most taxpayers is 15% (zero for taxpayers who are in the 10% or 15% tax bracket; 20% for those in the 39.6% tax bracket).

The tax rates on capital gains also differ between C corporations and other taxpayers. This is because capital gains of C corporations are not subject to special tax rates (they are taxed the same as ordinary business income), while owners of other types of businesses may pay tax on the business's capital gains at no more than 15% (zero if they are in the 10% or 15% tax bracket; 20% if they are in the 39.6% tax bracket). Of course, tax rates alone should not be the determining factor in selecting your form of business organization.

Social Security and Medicare Taxes

Owners of businesses organized any way other than as a corporation (C or S) are not employees of their businesses. As such, they are personally responsible for paying Social Security and Medicare taxes (called *self-employment* taxes for owners of unincorporated businesses). This tax is made up of the employer and employee shares of Social Security and Medicare taxes. The deduction for one-half of self-employment taxes is explained in Chapter 13.

However, owners of corporations have these taxes applied only against their salary and taxable benefits. Owners of unincorporated businesses pay self-employment tax on net earnings from self-employment. This essentially means profits, whether they are distributed to the owners or reinvested in the business. The result: Owners of unincorporated businesses can wind up paying higher Social Security and Medicare taxes than comparable owners who work for their corporations. On the other hand, in unprofitable businesses, owners of unincorporated businesses may not be able to earn any Social Security credits, while corporate owners can have salary paid to them on which Social Security credits can be generated.

There have been proposals to treat certain S corporation owner-employees like partners for purposes of self-employment tax. To date, these proposals have failed, but could be revived in the future.

The additional Medicare surtaxes on earned income and net investment income (NII) are yet another factor to consider. The 0.9% surtax on earned income applies to taxable compensation (e.g., wages, bonuses, commissions, and taxable fringe benefits) of shareholders in S or C corporations; it applies to all net earnings from self-employment for sole proprietors, partners, and limited liability company members. The 3.8% NII tax applies to business income passed through from an entity in which the owner does not materially participate (i.e., one in which the owner is effectively a silent investor).

Restrictions on Accounting Periods and Accounting Methods

As you will see in Chapter 2, the tax law limits the use of fiscal years and the cash method of accounting for certain types of business organizations. For example, partnerships and S corporations in general are required to use a calendar year to report income.

Also, C corporations generally are required to use the accrual method of accounting to report income. There are exceptions to both of these rules. However, as you can see, accounting periods and accounting methods are important considerations in choosing your form of business organization.

Owner's Payment of Company Expenses

In small businesses it is common practice for owners to pay certain business expenses out of their own pockets—either as a matter of convenience or because the company is short of cash. The type of entity dictates where owners can deduct these payments.

A partner who is not reimbursed for paying partnership expenses can deduct his or her payments of these expenses as an above-the-line deduction (on a separate line on Schedule E of the partner's Form 1040, which should be marked as "UPE"), as long as the partnership agreement requires the partner to pay specified expenses personally and includes language that no reimbursement will be made.

A shareholder in a corporation (S or C) is an employee, so that unreimbursed expenses paid on behalf of the corporation are treated as unreimbursed employee business expenses reported on Form 2106 and deducted as a miscellaneous itemized deduction on Schedule A of the shareholder's Form 1040. Only total miscellaneous itemized deductions in excess of 2% of the shareholder's adjusted gross income are allowable; if the shareholder is subject to the alternative minimum tax, the benefit from this deduction is lost.

However, shareholders can avoid this deduction problem by having the corporation adopt an accountable plan to reimburse their out-of-pocket expenses.

An accountable plan allows the corporation to deduct the expenses, while the shareholders do not report income from the reimbursement (see Chapter 8).

Multistate Operations

Each state has its own way of taxing businesses subject to its jurisdiction. The way in which a business is organized for federal income tax purposes may not necessarily control for state income tax purposes. For example, some states do not recognize S corporation elections and tax such entities as regular corporations.

A company must file a return in each state in which it does business and pay income tax on the portion of its profits earned in that state. Income tax liability is based on having a *nexus*, or connection, to a state. This is not always an easy matter to settle. Where there is a physical presence—for example, a company maintains an office—then there is a clear nexus. But when a company merely makes sales to customers within a state or offers goods for sale from a website, there is generally no nexus. (However, a growing number of states are liberalizing the definition of nexus in order to get more businesses to pay state taxes so they can increase revenue; some states are moving toward “a significant economic presence,” meaning taking advantage of a state’s economy to produce income, as a basis for taxation.)

Assuming that a company does conduct multistate business, then its form of organization becomes important. Most multistate businesses are C corporations because only one corporate income tax return needs to be filed in each state where they do business. Doing business as a pass-through entity means that each owner would have to file a tax return in each state the company does business.

Audit Chances

Each year the IRS publishes statistics on the number and type of audits it conducts. The rates for the government’s fiscal year 2013, the most recent year for which statistics are available, show a slight decrease in overall audit activity of business returns (with no change for partnerships and S corporations).

The chances of being audited vary with the type of business organization, the amount of income generated by the business, and the geographic location of the business. While the chance of an audit is not a significant reason for choosing one form of business organization over another, it is helpful to keep these statistics in mind.

Table 1.2 sheds some light on your chances of being audited, based on the most recently available statistics.

Not only does entity choice impact your chances of an audit (a sole proprietor with high gross receipts is nearly 10 times as likely to be audited as an S corporation, even one that has a single owner); your location also makes a difference.

TABLE 1.2 Percentage of Returns Audited

	FY 2012*	FY 2013*
Sole proprietors (Schedule C) (based on gross receipts)		
Under \$25,000	1.2%	1.0%
\$25,000 to under \$100,000	2.4	2.3
\$100,000 to under \$200,000	3.6	3.0
\$200,000 or more	3.4	2.7
Farming (Schedule F) (based on gross receipts)		
All farm returns	0.4	0.4
Partnerships		
	0.5	0.4
S corporations		
	0.5	0.4
C corporations (based on assets)		
Under \$250,000	0.9	0.8
\$250,000 to under \$1 million	1.7	1.3
\$1 million to under \$5 million	2.1	1.4
\$5 million to under \$10 million	2.5	2.0

*Fiscal year from October 1 to September 30.

Source: IRS Data Book.

High audit zones include Los Angeles, California; Houston, Texas; and Brooklyn and Manhattan, New York.

Past audit rates are no guarantee of the likelihood of future IRS examinations. The \$450 billion tax gap for 2006 (the most recent year for statistics), which represents the spread between what the government is owed and what it collects, has been blamed in part on those sole proprietors/independent contractors who underreport income or overstate deductions. In June 2008, an IRS official said publicly that the Small Business/Self-Employed (SB/SE) division would increase audits of sole proprietors with an adjusted gross income over \$200,000 as well as partnerships and S corporations; audits of sole proprietors have slightly increased while audits of partnerships and S corporations have not. However, due to budgetary constraints, the number of audits are on the decline.

Filing Deadlines and Extensions

How your business is organized dictates when its tax return must be filed, the form to use, and the additional time that can be obtained for filing the return. For instance, calendar-year S corporations must file their income tax returns by March 15 and can obtain a 6-month filing extension to September 15. In contrast, calendar-year limited liability companies must file their income tax returns by April 15 but can only obtain a 5-month filing extension to September 15. The September 15 extended due date gives S corporations, limited liability companies, and partnerships time to provide Schedule K-1 to owners so they can file their personal returns by their extended due date of October 15.

TABLE 1.3 Filing Deadlines, Extensions, and Forms

Type of Entity	Return Due Date	Income Tax Return	Automatic Filing Extension	Form to Request Filing Extension
Sole proprietorship	April 15	Schedule C of Form 1040	October 15	Form 4868
Partnership/LLC	April 15	Form 1065	September 15	Form 7004
S corporation	March 15*	Form 1120S	September 15	Form 7004
C corporation	March 15*	Form 1120	September 15	Form 7004

*The scheduled due date is March 16, 2015, because March 15 falls on a Sunday.

Table 1.3 lists the filing deadlines for calendar-year businesses, the available automatic extensions, and the forms to use in filing the return or requesting a filing extension. Note that these dates are extended to the next business day when a deadline falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday.

Exit Strategy

The tax treatment on the termination of a business is another factor to consider. While the choice of entity is made when the business starts out, you cannot ignore the tax consequences that this choice will have when the business terminates, is sold, or goes public. The liquidation of a C corporation usually produces a double tax—at the entity and owner levels. The liquidation of an S corporation produces a double tax *only* if there is a built-in gains tax issue—created by having appreciated assets in the business when an S election is made. However, the built-in gains tax problem disappears a certain number of years after the S election, so termination after that time does not result in a double tax.

If you plan to sell the business some time in the future, again your choice of entity may have an impact on the tax consequences of the sale. The sale of a sole proprietorship is viewed as a sale of the underlying assets of the business; some may produce ordinary income while others trigger capital gains. In contrast, the sale of qualified small business stock, which is stock in a C corporation, may result in tax-free treatment under certain conditions. Sales of business interests are discussed in Chapter 5.

If the termination of the business results in a loss, different tax rules come into play. Losses from partnerships and LLCs are treated as capital losses (explained in Chapter 5). A shareholder's losses from the termination of a C or S corporation may qualify as a Section 1244 loss—treated as an ordinary loss within limits (explained in Chapter 5).

If the business goes bankrupt, the entity type influences the type of bankruptcy filing to be used and whether the owners can escape personal liability for the debts of the business. Bankruptcy is discussed in Chapter 25.

Forms of Business Organization Compared

So far, you have learned about the various forms of business organization. Which form is right for your business? The answer is really a judgment call based on all the factors previously discussed. You can, of course, use different forms of business organization for your different business activities. For example, you may have a C corporation and personally own the building in which it operates—directly or through an LLC. Or you may be in partnership for your professional activities, while running a sideline business as an S corporation.

Table 1.4 summarizes 2 important considerations: how the type of business organization is formed and what effect the form of business organization has on where income and deductions are reported.

Changing Your Form of Business

Suppose you have a business that you have been running as a sole proprietorship. Now you want to make a change. Your new choice of business organization is dictated by the reason for the change. If you are taking in a partner, you would consider these alternatives: partnership, LLC, S corporation, or C corporation. If you are not taking in a partner, but want to obtain limited personal liability, you would consider an LLC (if your state permits a one-person LLC), an S corporation, or a C corporation. If you are looking to take advantage of certain fringe benefits, such as medical reimbursement plans, you would consider only a C corporation.

Whatever your reason, changing from a sole proprietorship to another type of business organization generally does not entail tax costs on making the changeover. You can set up a partnership or corporation, transfer your business assets to it, obtain an ownership interest in the new entity, and do all this on a tax-free basis. You may, however, have some tax consequences if you transfer your business liabilities to the new entity.

But what if you now have a corporation or partnership and want to change your form of business organization? This change may not be so simple. Suppose you have an S corporation or a C corporation. If you liquidate the corporation to change to another form of business organization, you may have to report gains on the liquidation. In fact, gains may have to be reported both by the business and by you as owner.

Partnerships can become corporations and elect S corporation status for their first taxable year without having any intervening short taxable year as a C corporation if corporate formation is made under a state law formless conversion statute or under the check-the-box regulations mentioned earlier in this chapter.

Before changing your form of business organization it is important to review your particular situation with a tax professional. In making any change in business, consider the legal and accounting costs involved.

TABLE 1.4 Comparison of Forms of Business Organization

Type of Business	How It Is Formed	Where Income and Deductions Are Reported
Sole proprietorship	No special requirements	On owner's Schedule C or C-EZ (Schedule F for farming)
Partnership	No special requirements	Some items taken into account in figuring trade or business income directly on Form 1065 (allocable amount claimed on partner's Schedule E); separately stated items are passed through to partners and claimed in various places on partner's tax return.
Limited special partnership	Some items taken into account in figuring partnership under state law	Trade or business income directly on Form 1065 (allocable amount claimed on partner's Schedule E); separately stated items passed through to partners and claimed in various places on partner's tax return
Limited liability company	Organized as such under state law	Some items taken into account in figuring trade or business income directly on Form 1065 (allocable amount claimed on member's Schedule E); separately stated items passed through to members and claimed in various places on member's tax return
Limited liability partnership	Organized as such under state law	Some items taken into account in figuring trade or business income directly on Form 1065 (allocable amount claimed on member's Schedule E); separately stated items passed through to members and claimed in various places on member's tax return
S corporation	Formed as corporation under state law; tax status elected by filing with IRS	Some items taken into account in figuring trade or business income directly on Form 1120S (allocable amount claimed on shareholder's Schedule E); separately stated items passed through to shareholders and claimed in various places on shareholder's tax return
C corporation	Formed under state law	Claimed by corporation in figuring its trade or business income on Form 1120
Employee	No ownership interest	Income reported as wages; deductions as itemized deductions on Schedule A (certain expenses first figured on Form 2106)
Independent contractor	No ownership interest in a business	Claimed on individual's Schedule C

Tax Identification Number

For individuals on personal returns, the federal tax identification number is the taxpayer's Social Security number. For businesses, the federal tax identification number is the employer identification number (EIN). The EIN is a 9-digit number assigned to each business. Usually, the federal EIN is used for state income tax purposes. Depending on the state, there may be a separate state tax identification number.

If you are just starting your business and do not have an EIN, you can obtain one instantaneously online using an interview-style application at www.irs.gov (search "EIN online") or by filing Form SS-4, *Application for Employer Identification Number*, with the IRS service center in the area in which your business is located. Application by mail takes several weeks. An SS-4 can be obtained from the IRS web site at www.irs.gov or by calling a special business phone number (1-800-829-4933) or the special Tele-TIN phone number. The number for your service center is listed in the instructions to Form SS-4. If you call for a number, it is assigned immediately, after which you must send or fax a signed SS-4 within 24 hours.

If you change your business entity (e.g., from a sole proprietorship to an S corporation), you usually need to obtain a new EIN. You can determine whether you need a new EIN at www.irs.gov (search "do you need a new EIN?").

SPECIAL RULES FOR SOLE PROPRIETORS

Because sole proprietors report their business income and expenses on their personal returns, they may not be required to use an EIN. Instead, they simply use their Social Security number for federal income tax reporting.

A sole proprietor *must* use an EIN if the business has any employees or maintains a qualified retirement plan. A sole proprietor *may* need an EIN to open a business bank account (it depends on the institution). An EIN can also be used in place of a Social Security number by an independent contractor for purposes of Form 1099-MISC reporting (a consideration today with concerns about identity theft). A sole proprietor *should* use an EIN as a way in which to build a business credit profile in order to qualify for credit without relying entirely on the owner's credit history and personal guarantee.

A single-member limited liability company, which is a disregarded entity taxed as a sole proprietorship (unless an election is made to be taxed as a corporation) for income tax purposes, must obtain an employer identification number if it has *any* employees. This is because the LLC, and not the member, is liable for employment taxes.