



Guide to opening a new business
“Concept thru Completion—avoid the common mistakes”

NOVA Retail Solutions has experienced project managers that offer free consulting thru these steps and will provide you with a free construction estimate at the end of the process. We can help find a real estate broker to fit your needs or we will work with your existing broker.

Step 1: Selecting a leasing broker

- Questions to ask the broker before signing the agreement
 - Are they familiar with the shopping center or buildings you are looking at?
 - Have they worked with similar business before—do they understand your store requirements and customer demographics?
- **Key Strategy: Find a broker that you are comfortable with that will work on negotiating the best deal with the property owners keeping your interest as the priority.**

Step 2: Finding the perfect location

- Identify your store requirements
 - What size HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning) do you need?
 - What are the electrical requirements?
 - What size space do you need? (calculated in Square Feet)
 - What are the existing conditions? Is there a previous build out that can be utilized for your new concept?
 - Is the space ADA compliant?
 - What is the ceiling heights?
 - How many restrooms does the building code require?
 - Rule of thumb: Anything over 1,500 SF will most likely require (2) ADA Restrooms.
- Visit the site during peak hours
 - Does shopping center have a lot of potential customers?
 - How is the traffic?
 - Is the shopping center easily accessible from the main roads?
 - Will there be enough convenient parking?
- Does the shopping center consist of synergetic tenants or will you be competing with an existing tenant?
- **Key Strategy: Find a location that is the right fit. Sometimes patience is the key. If the HVAC or electrical systems do not work for your business requirements, these can be very costly to upgrade. Make sure this is brought up during the lease negotiations.**

Step 3: Making the Offer / Negotiating the Lease

- At this point, your leasing agent should be handling this.
- The following questions should be answered at this time:
 - What tenant allowances are available?
 - What are the CAM expenses (Common Area Maintenance Expenses)
 - What specification is the store to be delivered in from the landlord?
 - White box, Vanilla Shell, “As-Is”, Cold Shell
 - Refer to the glossary for definitions
 - If the HVAC is existing, make sure there is a warranty on the unit(s)
 - Request the latest maintenance information:
 - Age, Tonnage, Repairs needed
 - Does the space of an existing gas service?
 - Can you get a non-compete clause?
 - Is outdoor seating allowed or prohibited?



- The saying goes “If it is not in writing, than it is not approved or agreed upon”—GET EVERYTHING IN WRITING!
- Some Landlords will offer a “test fit” where a design professional will layout your store’s design concept with the new space to see if your business will work before wasting a lot of time and money on a full design. **(NOVA Retail Solutions can provide this service)**
- **Key Strategy: At this stage it is important to identify what the condition of the store will be in at time of acceptance, and the cost to build the store to operate your new business. You want to make sure your budget allows for the construction cost, a contingency for the unexpected, and have remaining funds to operate & market your business until the business can support itself.**

Step 4: Selecting the design team

- Establish the design criteria.
 - What are the bare minimum requirements:
 - Seating requirements?
 - Reception Area?
 - How many restrooms are required?
 - Rule of thumb: Over 1,500 SF there is a good chance you will be required to have two restrooms.
 - HVAC Requirements:
 - 1 Ton / 150 average for restaurants
 - 1 Ton / 300 SF average for Offices
 - Electrical Service Requirements:
 - 200 amp typical for office space
 - 400 amp typical for restaurants
 - Egress requirements
- Determine how involved you want to be:
 - Do you want to select the floor and wall finishes? This can save a lot of money.
 - Do you want to have an interior designer provide the final store concept?
- How detailed do the drawings need to be? With a qualified contractor, a lot of the details can be figured out onsite during the construction phase, saving time and money with the architect.
- **Key Strategy: Determining the correct level of detail necessary to completely display the design requirements to obtain permitting and contractor pricing. The less detail provided can lead to potential scope changes and cost increases from the contractor if not managed properly.**

Step 5: Selecting your General Contractor

- Make sure they have a Class A Contractor licensed to perform commercial construction
- Make sure they have proper insurance coverage
- Ask for similar completed projects to insure they have experience with your type of business.
- Are they available to start immediately?
- Request a detailed cost summary to back up their proposal? This will insure they have a complete scope of work.
- Make sure the contract includes details of the payment schedule, construction schedule, provisions for any delays & disputes, insurance coverage, and liquidated damages.
- **Key Strategy: Make sure all the cost and scope of work is clearly defined in a written contract. The contract should reference the latest set of construction documents from the design team.**

“By now, hopefully NOVA Retail Solutions has demonstrated their wide range of experience with all phases of your business needs. Please contact us today to insure you have a seamless process from concept to completion.....we look forward to being a part of your success!!”