

Launch Sequence

Posted on: November 12, 2025

Getting involved in a startup can be a bit like new love, exciting and full of hope. But just like with new love, if you don't act with care at the start it can lead to broken relationships and expensive litigation.

As every entrepreneur knows, the beginning of your startup journey is when you're the most cash-poor. So we have built the Launch Sequence to ensure cash poor, but concept and talent rich startups can obtain quality legal advice from their inception without drowning in legal costs.

"Many startups come to us once something goes wrong or they reach a certain level of

critical mass," explains Cooney Lees Morgan Partner Campbell Izzard. "But if we'd been there from the beginning, they may be better positioned with the basic legal necessities meaning they need to spend less money on lawyers and are able to focus more on their business growth."

Standard template legal documents are commonly available for things like shareholder agreements, constitutions, employment agreements, supplier contracts and so on. However, this DIY approach can go wrong – eroding precious value and potentially costing substantial sums of money in the long-run.

Common legal foot faults include managing your own share register and mistakenly issuing shares in the wrong percentages; misinterpreting incentive contracts and giving away value to someone unnecessarily; and making governance structures more complicated than they need to be.

"Going back and changing those things becomes legally difficult and can impact your chances of having, for example, a successful capital raise when you were planning to have it" Campbell explains. "One size doesn't fit all startups – they are all very different – which is why it's never a good idea to use 'off the shelf' documents instead of seeking tailored legal advice."

To support local innovation and get new products and services to market, Cooney Lees Morgan is proud to launch a new programme called *Fast Forward* which will offer generous discounts on legal fees, flexible payment terms and priceless advice and mentoring led by their experienced Corporate & Commercial team.

Eligible startups who have a great idea and the right skills and people in place will be pro-actively supported to become a fully commercialised reality. They will also get access to employment law advice, privacy, debt recovery, civil litigation, commercial leasing and other property expertise.

"We want to give people our time and help them put something in place that really works for them. It's hard to make it as a startup. We want to help people succeed and make things as easy as possible so they're not overspending their precious capital or having to go back and fix things up."

Cooney Lees Morgan has a long track record of supporting local startups such as Rockit

Apples, Femmi and Heilala Vanilla. Consultant, Carolyn Culliney, is the current Board Chair of Enterprise Angels and the firm is a Strategic Partner, helping to connect experienced early stage investors with entrepreneurs and innovators.

“What really excites us is helping someone turn a great idea into a really fantastic business. That’s the best form of productivity and enrichment. It’s so good for the local economy. If we can help more people do that through *Launch Sequence*, it’s good for everyone.”

To find out more about CLM’s *Launch Sequence* programme, contact Campbell Izzard on cizzard@clmlaw.co.nz or phone (07) 927 0586.