**How to Write a Business Plan Template**

The Executive Summary

While appearing first, this section is written last. It summarizes the key elements of the entire business plan. (Executive Summary Example)

The Industry

An overview of the industry sector that your business will be a part of, including industry trends, major players in the industry, and estimated industry sales. This section will also include a summary of your business's place within the industry. (Business Plan Example: Industry Section)

Market Analysis

An examination of the primary target market for your product or service, including geographic location, demographics, your target market's needs and how these needs are being met currently.

Competitive Analysis

An investigation of your direct and indirect competitors, with an assessment of their competitive advantage and an analysis of how you will overcome any entry barriers to your chosen market.

Marketing Plan

A detailed explanation of your sales strategy, pricing plan, proposed advertising and promotion activities, and product or service's benefits.

Management Plan

An outline of your business's legal structure and management resources, including your internal management team, external management resources, and human resources needs.

Operating Plan

A description of your business's physical location, facilities and equipment, kinds of employees needed, inventory requirements and suppliers, and any other applicable operating details, such as a description of the manufacturing process.

Financial Plan

A description of your funding requirements, your detailed financial statements, and a financial statement analysis.

Appendices And Exhibits

Any additional information that will help establish the credibility of your business idea, such as marketing studies, photographs of your product, and/or contracts or other legal agreements pertinent to your business.

Each article linked above is part of this Writing A Business Plan series and explains how to research and write a particular section of the business plan in detail. The sidebar also lists more resources you may find useful.