**SAMPLE SALES BUSINESS PLAN TEMPLATE**

Set out your sales objectives

Start by setting out sales objectives for each of your products. What do you want to sell, who is your target market and what are the timescales involved? Decide where your focus will lie - whether that's on a specific product or a client base, and what needs to change for you to meet these objectives.

For each sales objective, list the steps you will have to take in order to meet them. There should be five or six steps for each objective. Think SMART when you are coming up with them:

Specific

Measurable

Achievable

Realistic

Time-sensitive

Consider how you will remove barriers to sales rather than asking how you will make sales when you're coming up with your objectives. Barriers can be anything from not making enough calls or customer visits to the need to give your sales team better training or the need to recruit another sales person.

Look at the marketing and sales activities your business has undertaken and try to work out what your most profitable activities have been. This could be over the course of the last month, three months or year.

**Analyse your market**

Find out why your clients need your company. Find out who they are and the problem they needed to solve when they first approached your business. Identifying why your customers use your business will help you to approach new customers.

Make a list of five or six reasons why customers are better off using your business. Differentiate between your business' features (what it has) and benefits (what it does). Put yourself in your customer's shoes and try to work out what they are looking for, and then try to match your proposition to their needs. Make sure you emphasise the benefits as well as the features in your promotional material.

List your clients' similarities and differences to help you create profiles for each type of client. If you are starting a new business, try to find out about competitors' clients: who are your existing, potential and key customers? Rank the groups in order of profitability to give you an idea of where you should be aiming to spend money.

If a client is costing you more than you are making from them, make sure you have a good reason for selling to them. For example, if you are selling to a large company, it might be that they are providing you with regular revenue or drawing attention to your business in their promotional activities.

Analyse your sales costs and try to cut down on your sales costs to unprofitable customers. This might be by using an alternative distribution method or cheaper sales channels.

Decide on your sales channels

Reaching the right customers is easier said than down. Once you have worked out what your market is and how it's broken down, you need to decide which sales channels to use:

Direct or on-site sales are face-to-face, and is the model used by most retailers

The internet is a versatile way to sell

Telesales can be effective for business-to-business and repeat sales, but generally has a low conversion rate

Direct mail also has quite a low conversion rate but is less intrusive than telesales

If you are a manufacturer, you might want to sell through an agent or intermediary. This could be a retailer, or it could be an agent abroad.