




WHAT IS A BUSINESS PLAN?

“Every Business should have a plan.”


A business plan is a written document which describes your Business, your goals and objectives and it tells us exactly how you are going achieve them.




When we look at writing a Business Plan, many think that its purpose is merely to assist with start-up financing and to impress potential investors. This is of course one of the reasons but your plan will play a much bigger part in helping you run and manage your business effectively. It will help you achieve your objectives and goals and it will keep you focused and guide you through the process. Writing a business plan or putting together an investor deck allows you to think more clearly about what you’re doing and where you are going. **Think of it as “a roadmap to your SUCCESS.”**

The document should detail what you plan to do and how you plan to do it. It should help you define your strategy and your growth potential and with full financial information.

You need Plan for Success : “Failing to plan is planning to fail.”



How true these words are but in order to succeed you need to ensure that you have thought your ideas through in great depth and that they are backed up with lots of research. A carefully constructed plan can ensure that you can make informed decisions concerning your new venture before committing yourself legally and financially and it can also help you define any flaws or weaknesses and equally good opportunities. Most business plans (ones which follow the advice of legal experts) include a standard set of elements but layouts and outlines can vary. It should include a description of the company, the product or service, the market, a business forecasts, details of the management structure and team and finally a financial analysis.



HOW TO WRITE A BUSINESS PLAN

Your Business Plan should include a Front Cover, a Title Page and a Table of Contents.

10 Common Key Sections of a Business Plan

1. Executive summary

Ideally your executive summary should be one or two pages long covering the following:

An overview of your Business and the concept behind it, key objectives of your business and plan, the ownership structure and the management team, information on your product or service and your target market, advantages over your competitors, your marketing strategy and a summary of financial projections.

It is advisable that you write your executive summary after you have written the rest of your plan as it will be a summary of each section detailed in the plan.

2. Business Overview (Management Structure)

We advise that you include details regarding your business's history, carefully state your vision and/or mission, and objectives. Also give full details of your background, qualifications, skills, your team and management structure.



3. Products and Services

Here we would ask you to offer more information about your products or services and include all your features and benefits and any advantages you have over your competitors. If you are marketing a product then you need to include how and where your product is going to be produced and supply a Supplier Analysis Pricing Model.



4. Industry overview

This section enables you to talk about how viable your business is in today's market. You can expand on information such as the size and growth potential. Explain key market(s) and your own target market(s) and how customers will buy your products or services.



5. Market Research & Customer Analysis.

You need to talk about what methods are used, why and how will they be implemented? Inform us which target market(s) has been identified from your research. Identify differences between the "customer" and the "end user" not forgetting the customer is the one paying for the product or service.



6. Competitor Analysis

Describe your target market(s) and your current competition and detail how your products or services will be better or different from your competitors. Detail your (USP) Unique Sales Proposition (see our "How to define your USP" download for more assistance). It is also advisable that you include a table of analysis between you and your competitors.

Discuss the product or service pricing and how you are going to promote it, including how your promotional activities will appeal to each of your target market segments.



7. Marketing Strategy

It is advisable that you provide a plan on various marketing promotions such as Digital Media, Social Media, SEO, Brochures, Press, Media or any other ideas you may have to promote your business successfully. Include the cost associated with each and describe how your products or services will be sold (e.g. storefront, online, wholesalers), and your target markets' buying cycle.

(Visit our digital marketing page for more assistance)



8. Operations Plan

Your Operations Plan should provide a profile of your management team, your human resources plan, your business location(s) and facilities, your production plan (if selling a product), and an overview of day-to-day operations.



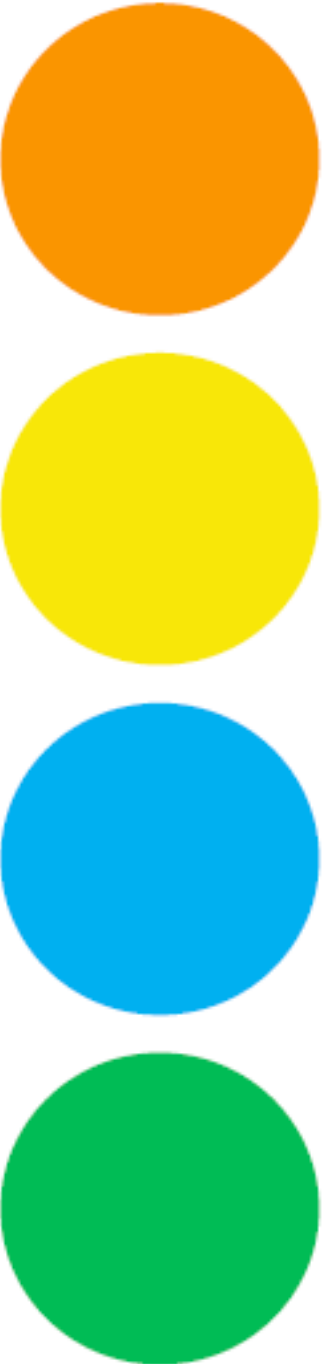
9. Financial plan

Many believe that your Financial Plan is the most important part of a Business Plan so it is worth dedicating a large percentage of your time on this section. You will need to include a three year projection of financial statements, including pro-forma balance sheets, income statements and monthly and annual cash flow statements. We would advise that you use a cover page for each statement and include an easy to read summary on each. Please also ensure that you have documented all of the assumptions you have used in forecasting your income and expenditure.



10. Appendix

You must attach your CV & Any relevant work or personal references.



Include all supporting documents that are mentioned in the Business Plan such as Lease Agreements, Sales Contracts, Supplier Contracts, Relevant certifications, Regulatory Requirements, Insurances etc. (Certificates must be attached.)

HOW LONG SHOULD YOUR BUSINESS PLAN BE?

This depends on what you're using it for but a typical business plan should be 15 to 20 pages long. . If you have a simple concept, you may be able to express it in very few words and it is better to keep it short. On the other hand, if you're proposing a new kind of business or even a new industry which requires heavy investment then it will require a large amount of explanation and convincing to get the message across and this could be up to a 100 page document. The norm is that you are just going to use your plan for initial set up funding and also internal purposes to manage an ongoing business and in this case a much more abbreviated version should be fine.

Effective business writing should be easy to read and when you are writing your plan we advise remember these tips:

- **Keep it simple** Don't use long complicated sentences, unless you have to for meaning. Short sentences are fine, and they are easier to read. Use simple, straightforward language,
- **Avoid** buzzwords, jargon and acronyms.
- **Use Bullet points for lists.** They help readers digest information more easily. Avoid "naked" bullet points. Flesh them out with brief explanations where explanations are needed. Unexplained bullet points can be frustrating



If you require information on any of our products or services

TALK TO US TODAY

Website address: www.wecanbuildyourbusiness.com

Email: hello@wecanbuildyourbusiness.com

Telephone number: 0330 133 0092

