

*Create
your
Business
Plan*

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Overview of A Business Plan

A formal written business plan is for investors and for loan applications. I suggest if you need that you do much more research. I'm going to walk you through how to do this just for you.

The parts of a business plan include... Executive Summary, Company Description, Target Market Description, Competitive Analysis, Marketing and Sales Plan, Operation Plan, Management Team, Development Plan and Milestones, and Financials.

I'll discuss each of these and give you some room to write.

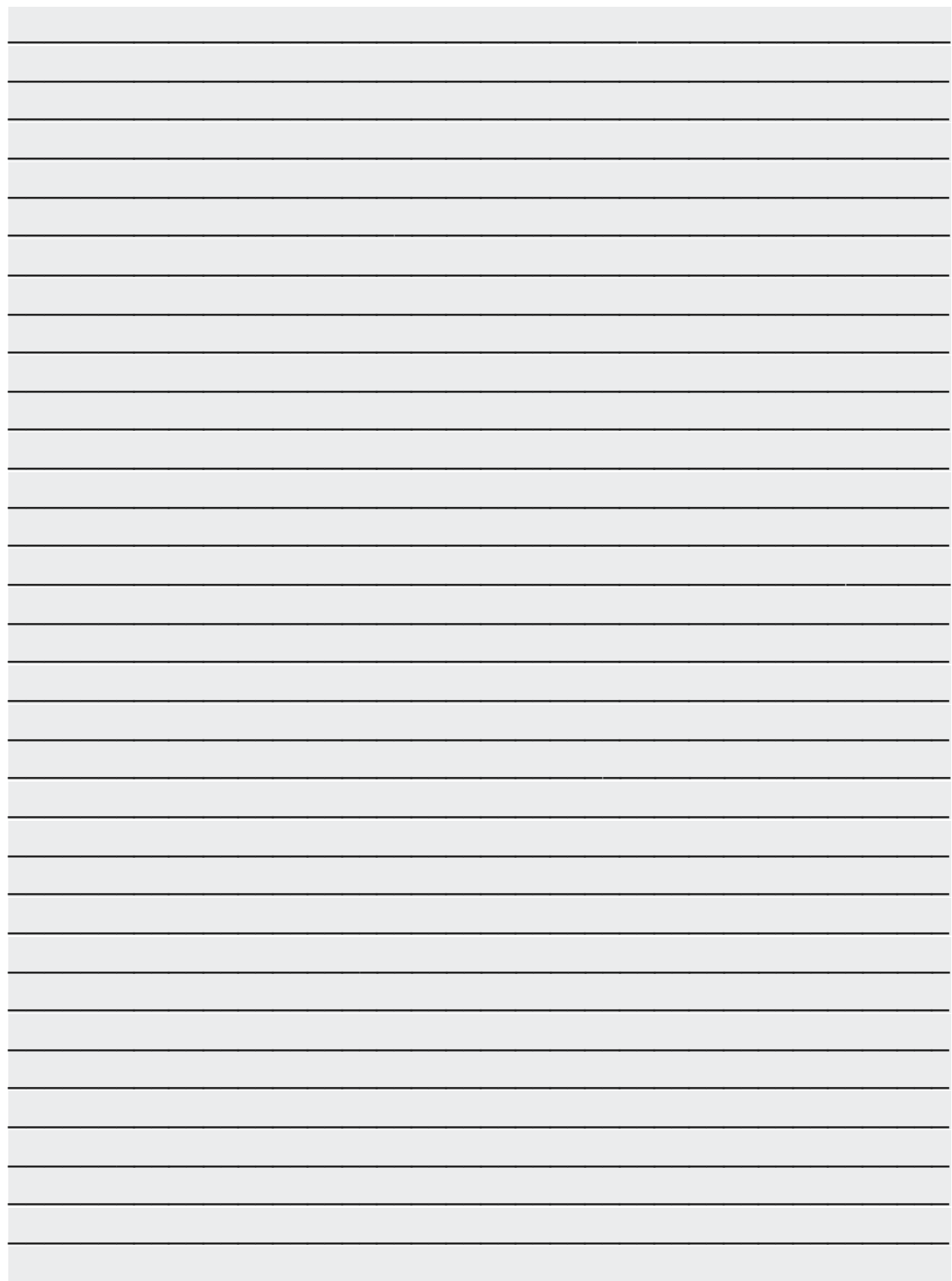
Executive Summary

This is best written after you've completed all the others. It's a summary of the most important parts of your business plan.

Describe and answer these...

- 1) Describe your business in detail
- 2) What products do you offer or plan to offer?
- 3) Who are your customers?
- 4) Who is your competition?
- 5) What is your competitive edge?
- 6) What are your marketing strategies?
- 7) What are your qualifications and those of your team?
- 8) what are your goals?
- 9) What are your financial expectations?

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Company Description

This can be a short description. It should include your name, your business name (DBA, LLC, or any other companies associated with it), and your website. And should answer these questions...

- 1) Where is your company located? Do you have more locations? Are you an online business?
- 2) What is your business entity... DBA, LLC, Partnership, Sole Proprietor, S or C incorporated?
- 3) Who owns your company?
- 4) Do you have any trademarks or patents?
- 5) Describe your business history.... When was it founded?
- 6) What phase of development is your business in? (seed, start-up, expanding, stable, or retrenchment)
- 7) Have you achieved any milestones thus far?
- 8) What products do you offer? And what do those products do? What products do you plan to offer in the future?
- 9) What are the trends in the industry? What challenges will the industry face? How do you plan to overcome the challenges and take advantage of the trends?

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Target Market

Your goal is to meet the needs of your customers, and to show that these customers exist to sustain and grow your business. I have the target market workbook in the files also that will really help you. This will take it the next step.

Do some market research.... Talk to people and ask them what they want and need. But remember people never really know what they want or need... so ask them what problems they have that you can solve? (Henry Ford said if he had asked people what they wanted, they would have said a faster horse.)

Do surveys... Ask people to fill out surveys online or on paper at vendor shows. Find out what they like, what they don't, and what their problems are. Your success as an entrepreneur relies on finding a problem you can solve and marketing it well.

Check out what other successful business do... check their websites, stores and social media. You can see what's working and what you might need to change.

Dig deep into market research! Big corporations do this too (that's why you see so many same type stores in the same area in your town. Like mine Walmart, Target, and Hy-Vee are all next to each other). You might benefit from it also. You can check stats, and compile them.

Check out www.census.gov

<http://quickfacts.census.gov>

For Canada www.statcan.gc.ca

Or for international stats www.worldbank.org

Your target market might change after reviewing stats, and it might change your outlook.

Think about your customers buying habits... how often they buy, where they buy, how long it takes them to make decisions etc...

Work on the Target Market workbook in the files if you haven't ☺

The Competition

If you think you have no competition... you have no market for your products. If you are sure you have a market... you have competition. Others want your customers.

Answer these questions...

- 1) Who are your major competitors?
- 2) How does your business compare? (convenience, customer service, price)
- 3) How do your products compare?
- 4) How many like businesses have entered the market?
- 5) How many new competitors will enter into the market?
- 6) What are your competition's strengths and weaknesses? What do you do that's different?... better?
- 7) Honestly evaluate your competition. You can rate different ones.

Think about all the Burger chains. How do they compete and compare? Do you know of any that went out of business in your area? Which ones are thriving? What are they doing that's right?

Think about your favorite stores... What do they offer or do that makes them your favorite? How is their customer service?

Your goal is to be YOU! No one else is you, and no one else will do it like you! I suggest you pay attention to trends, competition, and whatever else you can... However, do not do things like your competition. It's good to know what's going on just so you are prepared. Always do you! I don't suggest your pricing be like your competition's... Go over the pricing workbook in the files.

I just want to be clear that even though it's suggested to compare your competition to you, that it's only so you know where you can rise above and do things differently... most importantly.... BE YOU! You want to become a market leader that people look to, to see what they should be doing. Find your competitive edge.



Marketing and Sales Plan

So you've done all your product research and testing, and you've read all the books you can and watched all the videos possible. You've perfected your craft and are ready to tell everyone about it... Now what?

I don't recommend going after newspaper ads anymore unless that's where your target market gets their news. I sold newspaper advertising for a while, and all though I blew their sales numbers away I felt like it was just businesses donating to the paper. If local radio ads make sense for you and are in your budget... go for it.

I suggest starting with vendor shows if you can and that's where you want to be... locally. And I suggest really studying social media, and learning how to use those to your advantage. I recommend Gary Vaynerchuk's book... "Jab, Jab, Jab, Right Hook". He's your social media expert. I also recommend Amy Porterfield and Rick Mulready for learning how to do Facebook ads. You can target your exact market with FB ads, but they have to be done right.

I recommend focusing on 1 or 2 social medias. If your target market is on Facebook... that's where your marketing efforts need to be.

Also, the target market workbook in the files has a lot of branding information in there... so go over that too if you haven't.

Let's talk marketing... I think the best way to build your brand and market is through blowing your customers minds with outstanding customer service. This gives you word of mouth like crazy. Build those brand advocates!

Every person has a mega phone now with social media. It's so much better if a good word spreads about you rather than bad words. You build your own brand/reputation through your acts. So do good acts and spread that good word!

Online marketing can be... website, blog, social media, newsletters, testimonials, visual branding (logos and colors) etc...

Also doing wholesale ad collaboration. What I mean is if someone buys your soap wholesale, you can collaborate on marketing. Or if your soaps are in a store... promote each other to boost sales.

Your sales come through your interactions and your customer service. Keep um coming back! I recommend reading books by Brain Tracy on sales too.

Operations

Operations are how your business is run. This includes location, production, quality control, supply, order fulfillment, customer service, equipment, good manufacturing practices, production, inventory management, batch records, supplies, financial control, and sustainability. I would also include safety, insurance, research, and any outsourcing you do.

I recommend highly getting Marie Gales Book on GMPs. In the pricing workbook in the files I talk about inventory management.

But what you want to think about here is your competitive edge for your operations. What things do you do right? What things do you need to improve on to boost your business?

If you want to list some of that out, I'll give you some space here.

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Management

In this section you want to go over your strengths and weaknesses and your staffs (if you have one). I know a lot of us are a one person show, and we wear a lot of hats in the business. I'm sure there are other people that have helped you along the way. I know I've enlisted many people to help in my family and friends too. You probably have an accountant, and maybe you have someone that designed your logos and/or website.

What I recommend to focus on here is what you can do to boost your learning, and who can you enlist to take some things off your plate. If you go over the time management workbook I have in the files that will help you a lot with this.

I'm going to give you my top rules for success in business...

- 1) Know that you are where you are because of your choices and decisions. SO if you aren't where you want to be in your life and business... you have the power to change it. You have the ability to learn any skill you need to accomplish any goal you have set for yourself.
- 2) Practice continuous learning. The moment you think you know everything... you just killed your business.
- 3) You can learn something from everyone.
- 4) Greatness happens outside your comfort zone.
- 5) Be Fearless. If there is something that really scares you, that very well could be one of the things holding your business success back. You have to push through those barriers.
- 6) Stay humble, kind, and helpful... this will build your brand/reputation

Having this understanding will help you manage your business better, and help it grow.

If you do have a bigger business with a staff. You want to break down all those roles, and make sure their jobs are clearly defined... not only to them, but the others in your business. You also need really good communication among your company. Make it a team... not employees. Business Growth happens when you don't do everything yourself. I also don't recommend hiring people until it's profitable for you.

Future Development

If you've all ready done the Goals workbook in the files... Awesome!

In this section I want you to describe your business goals for 1 year, 5 years, and 10 years. What are your financial goals? What will your product line be in the future? What will your sales be in the future? What milestones do you want to reach? What specific steps will you take to reach those milestones? I also want you to assess your risks. I want you to think about the future market. What obstacles will you have to overcome? How will you combat those obstacles?

You also need to have an exit strategy. What I mean by that is... How long are you planning on doing this business? Will you train your kids to keep running the business after you? Will you sell your business? Will you close?

You are thinking and planning about everything for your future here. This section will probably take some time.

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Financials

Getting a handle on your finances is huge in running a successful business. Even if you have an accountant it's good to know exactly where you stand financially, and have the necessary knowledge. I highly recommend having a financial advisor and/or book keeper.

If you have Excel you have access to the financial statements you need.

Such as...

- 1) Income statement/ Profit and Loss Statement (P & L)
- 2) Cash Flow Projection
- 3) Balance sheet

You can also work on Sales Projection and a Marketing Budget. Most of all find what works for you to keep track of your budget and your finances. I recommend a separate business checking account too.

There are also lots of money resources out there. One I've found recently is

www.compass1.org and they have lots of free resources and books you can buy too. I listen to their radio show, which I believe is available on their website too.

Tony Robbins book, "Money, Master the Game" is a great one too.

I also recommend Dave Ramsey's books and podcasts. One of his books is called, "The Total Money Makeover".

Also go over the pricing your soaps workbook in the files.

I also have a business start-up checklist in the files.

There is a lot in the files for you to do, and take your time with it. It's there when you need it.