

**Business Plan Guideline**

A business plan is your guide to running a successful business. It will assist you in analyzing the feasibility of a new business, the expansion of an existing business and in a more efficient flow of your current business. Use this plan to identify your strengths and weaknesses, to evaluate your competition and to identify opportunities and threats to this industry.

Your plan **must be factual, honest, and concise yet full of the details** that will help you reach your goals in a timely, profitable and efficient manner. The following outline is designed to help you create a document that can be used for your information and planning, to obtain funds from lending sources, and to share with investors. By successfully completing the following sections, you will be prepared for the next step in your journey to business success.

**Do not start writing until you have listed your “bullet” point answers and feel you have a solid base of information to input into the final plan.**

1. Goals. Before starting any business or expanding (changing) your business, it is recommended that you have your goals, purpose, expectations and timelines clearly in focus.

1. Exit Plan. Begin with the end in mind. Why are you building or starting this

Business? How will you “exit” the business (sell, liquidate, family, or ??). This could affect how you name the business, what structure you use, etc.

--Know how to change direction if needed!

1. Business Plan Outline: (We recommend you use Word and Excel to complete this as most lenders want your personal version of your business).

1. Executive Summary. This will be a brief 1-2 page summary that can either be used as an outline for starting, or can be completed when the following data is completed, but is always placed at the beginning of the business plan.

1. Description of the business—name, business name, location

1. Description of products and services offered.

1. Your Purpose—your Mission Statement and vision

1. Business goals, personal goals, community goals, etc

1. Market research, marketing plan and strategies summary.

1. Brief description of your financial needs, start up costs and investment.

 2. Description of Your Products and / or Services. Detailed explanation.

1. Describe the features and benefits of your products. Services

1. Outline why you have chosen this (these) lines of goods / services.

1. Compare with competition. (such as price, quality, brands, etc)

1. List your suppliers and any supply issues (such as overseas, etc)

1. Check and address any zoning regulations, health department, laws and other regulations that could affect your business. (patents or ?)

1. Summarize to include floor plan, flow charts, security issues, etc.

 3. Market Research and Analysis.

1. What will be your strategy to generate or increase business?

1. What is your Quality / Service plan and issues?

1. What is your pricing policy and strategy?

1. Who are your direct and indirect competitors? How are you different?

1. What is your Marketing Plan—names, slogans, advertising, target client, media mix, marketing budget, seasonality, signage, etc.

1. How many potential clients, what demographics (age, education, income, sex, race, family size, etc).

1. Identify your SWOT’s. and competitions SWOT’s. (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats). How will your competition react to your plans and actions?

1. Summarize your overall plan and results expected.

 4. Operating Plan: How you will organize and run your business.

1. What form of ownership? Sole proprietor, corporation, partner, etc.

1. Provide an organization chart of all major functions that will need

performed, even if your name is in each box (sales, books, purchasing,

maintenance, training, marketing, etc).

1. List of “key” personnel. Put resume in appendix

1. Policies and procedures. Reporting issues, OSHA, employee manuals,

shrinkage control, discipline, etc.

1. What are your technology issues—controls, bookkeeping, websites,

phones, security systems, etc.

1. Provide a brief summary of future needs, possible expansion needs

and issues. Make sure this coordinates with financial projections.

 5. Financial Plan. Full disclosure of personal and business issues and needs.

1. Provide previous 3 years taxes and financial statements (personal/ biz)
2. Complete list of start up needs and costs. Include what, how much, why and when needed. Break into pre-start, year 1, year 2 and 3-5 yr.
3. Personal and business balance sheets
4. Source and use of funds. Show your investment and loan needs
5. **Projected Profit and loss, cash flows and balance sheet for 3 years.**

**This needs to be done monthly for years 1 & 2.**

**This is a complete budget with start up costs and needs.**

1. Personal credit reports that are within 6 months. Denote any changes.
2. Summary with ratio’s, expectations and explanations.

Your advisor will work with you on developing your plan. The more information you have available, the easier and quicker this process will be. However, the time it takes to complete this will be totally dependent on your dedication and effort.

Let us know how we can help. Keep it simply, it looks difficult, but it is worth it!