

Tool

Business Plan Guide

These useful guides provide a structure for your business plan. The importance of each section is somewhat dependent upon the nature of your business and your goals in writing a business plan. You will need to tailor each section to the needs of your situation, providing relevant detail when possible.

Templates Include:

- 3 Full Business Plan Guide**
- 14 Lean Business Plan Guide**



Tool

Business Plan Guide

What you will need

Hammermill® Paper

Highlighter, Pens or Markers for Coloring and Personalization

What Is a Business Plan?

An effective business plan tells people who you are, what you are going to do, and what the result will be. It presents a credible story, something others can believe in. It is grounded in reality, not wishful thinking, and entails doing some homework so that you can prove that your plans are sound. It can be as thorough or as high-level as you want, but should include enough detail to be convincing.

Business Plan Guide

Full Business Plan

Print out the following template. It will help serve as a guide in what you need to create a business plan. Add and edit list as needed.

Traditional Full Business Plan

This is the most common form of business plan. It can be as long as you need it to be, up to dozens of pages including support material. It should have a one-page summary overview so that people can get the idea quickly and then look through the details if they are interested. The elements of a typical business plan include company information, capabilities and resources, context, strategy, funding and projected outcome.

What is Your Business? [Company Description]

A good business plan begins with a succinct outline of your business. Explain exactly what your business does, what kinds of clients or customers you have, and the value you provide to them.

How Do You Do It? [Capabilities and Resources]

The next section walks the reader through the capabilities of your business, and how they align with client/customer wants and needs. To give the reader a better understanding of how you meet those needs, present the resources of your business—the organization and management, number of employees, and legal structure.

Context [Market Analysis]

Describe the landscape of the situation your business is in. How old is your business, what is happening in the industry and among competitors. Are there new or significant developments in your customer base, the technologies they use or their behaviors? Are there new or unexplored opportunities for engaging new customers?

What Makes You Different? [USP - Unique Selling Point]

Again the background of context, show how your business is uniquely positioned to take advantage of specific opportunities. What makes your business different? How can you position your capabilities to stand out from the competition?

Strategy

Having defined what makes your business different, clearly present your business goals and your strategy for achieving them. This can include your marketing plans, your sales strategy, or opportunities for expansion, merger or acquisition. This is where you present your vision of the future of your business and your plan for achieving it.

Business Plan Guide: Full Business Plan Tips Continued

Funding

This section presents a snapshot of the current financial position of your business and a clear assessment of the funding required to implement your strategy and achieve your goals. Details are critical for this section. Potential sources of funding will want to see how exactly you plan to use funds to achieve your goals, e.g. the purchase of equipment and/or materials, making new hires, paying salaries, acquiring new capabilities, etc.

Outcome [Financial Projections]

Present a financial projection of the likely outcomes of different levels of funding, and a timetable for when those outcomes are likely to occur. A tiered approach gives potential sources of funding more options to consider when looking at your business while also demonstrating that the ability of your business to meet its goals is directly related to the amount of funds it has to do so.

Additional Information [Appendix]

Put detailed analytics or other important supporting information into this section. This provides the reader with the background information on which your plans are based so that they can assess the validity of your assumptions and the likelihood of your projected outcomes.

Summary

With the above sections completed, work to summarize each one into a sentence or two. The Summary you provide should be one page and should be placed at the beginning of your document. It is the 30,000-foot overview that gives the reader the big picture. A good Summary presents the essential information that allows the reader to determine whether they are interested in learning more.

Executive Summary: Full Business Plan

Company:

Summary:

Management Team:

Products & Services:

Customers:

Marketing & Sales Teams:

Financial Forecast:

Required Funds:

Company & Financing: Full Business Plan

Company:

Company Overview:

Company History:

Management Team:

Mission Statement:

Locations & Facilities:

Required Funds:

Exit Strategy:

Products & Services: Full Business Plan

Company:

Products & Services:

Sourcing & Fulfillment:

Competitors:

Technology:

Intellectual Property:

Future Products & Services:

Customers: Full Business Plan

Company:

Market Overview:

Market Needs:

Market Trends:

Market Growth:

Industry Analysis:

Key Customers:

Strategy & Implementation: Full Business Plan Company:

Milestones:

SWOT Analysis:

Competitive Edge:

Strategic Alliances:

Financial Plan: Full Business Plan

Company:

Sales Forecast:

Key Metrics For Success:

Personal Plan:

Loans & Investments:

Budget:

Starting Balances:

Cash Flow Assumptions:

Historical Financials:

Profit & Loss Statement Table:

Balance Sheet Table:

Cash Flow Statement Table:

Financial Ratio Table:

Business Plan Guide

Lean Business Plan

Print out the following template. It will help serve as a guide in what you need to create a business plan. Add and edit list as needed.

Lean Business Plan

A lean business plan can be useful to very small, simple or startup businesses. As the name implies, this is a much less detailed form of business plan. As such it can be done more quickly, but is limited in the amount of information it provides. A lean business plan is also useful if you are in the initial planning stages of a business and need to compare different possible scenarios or approaches, or need to regularly update or change your business plan due to external developments.

There are many different kinds of lean business plan templates, often called “lean startup templates” available on the internet. These include the Business Model Canvas, which has nine components:

- **Key Partnerships**
Suppliers, manufacturers, subcontractors, etc.
- **Key Activities**
What will your business do to gain competitive advantage?
- **Key Resources**
Staff, capital, intellectual property, support from gov’t programs, etc
- **Value Proposition:**
What is the unique value of your business?
- **Customer Relationships:**
How will customers interact with your business?
- **Customer Segments:**
Who are your customers? Be specific.
- **Channels:**
How will you reach your customers?
- **Cost Structure:**
What is your strategy and what will it cost to do it?
- **Revenue Streams:**
How will your business make money and when?

Financial Statements: Full Business Plan

In planning a new business, the lean startup model allows you to quickly see the trade-offs of different approaches and can be very useful in helping you clarify the direction of a new business.

A good business plan can help you clarify your business goals and plan of action as well as raise the funding to achieve them. For more detailed information about business plans you can also check the Small Business Administration's website.

Business Plan Guide: Lean Business Plan

Company:

Value Proposition:

Channels:

Key Resources:

Customer Relationships:

Key Activities:

Cost Structure:

Customer Segments:

Key Partnerships:

Revenue Streams: