***Business Plan Template***

***Narrative: 4-6 pages***

1. ***Executive Summary*** *(do this section last)*
   1. One to three sentences summarizing each section plus Include…
      1. Total Start-Up Costs (if a start-Up)
      2. How much financing requested
      3. How much you’re investing
      4. How you’re going to spend the money
      5. Type of organization form (e.g. LLC, Sub Chapter S…)
   2. Address of projected business

***II. Organization & Management***

Who does what in your business? What is their background?  What are they responsible for? These may seem like unnecessary questions to answer in a one- or two-person organization, but the people reading your business plan want to know who's in charge.

A simple but effective way to lay out the structure of your company is to create an organizational chart with a narrative description. This will prove that you're leaving nothing to chance, you've thought out exactly who is doing what, and there is someone in charge of every function of your company. Nothing will fall through the cracks, and nothing will be done three or four times over. To a potential investor or employee, that is very important.

This section should also include the legal structure of your business

***III. Company Description***

This section of your business plan provides a high-level review of the different elements of your business. This is akin to an extended elevator pitch and can help readers and potential investors quickly understand the goal of your business and its unique proposition.

**What to Include in Your Company Description?**

* Describe the nature of your business and list the marketplace needs that you are trying to satisfy.
* Explain how your products and services meet these needs.
* List the specific consumers, organizations or businesses that your company serves or will serve.
* Explain the competitive advantages that you believe will make your business a success such as your location, expert personnel, efficient operations, or ability to bring value to your customers. (this is about your company and products/services)

***IV Products & Services***

Include information about the specific benefits of your product or service – from your customers' perspective. You should also talk about your product or service's ability to meet consumer needs, any advantages your product has over that of the competition, (express contrasts with competitors) and the current development stage your product is in (e.g., idea, prototype).

***V. Sales and Marketing***

Start with where to position you company, develop a mission statement (one or two sentences about what you deliver to what markets.  What market segments will you target for each of the products/services, what is the customer profile for each segment.

From a big picture perspective, you have the "brand" of the company. How will you represent the brand (through what medias/mediums?) Develop tactics to match a sales strategy to each of the customer segments that you're targeting (from products/service section above.) Point out any overlapping opportunities for cross selling to existing customers.

**VI.** **Market Analysis** **Industry Description and Outlook**–

*(A lender is looking to confirm that a market exists and that it’s large enough to support your business given existing competition. Following are issues to consider/collect when reporting on the market, but you don't need to address every issue.)*

Describe your industry, including its current size and historic growth rate as well as other trends and characteristics (e.g., life cycle stage, projected growth rate). Next, list the major customer groups within your industry.

**Information About Your Target Market** – Narrow your target market to a manageable size. Many businesses make the mistake of trying to appeal to too many target markets. Research and include the following information about your market:

**Distinguishing characteristics** – What are the critical needs of your potential customers? Are those needs being met?  What are the demographics of the group and where are they located? Are there any seasonal or cyclical purchasing trends that may impact your business?

**Size of the primary target market** – In addition to the size of your market, what data can you include about the annual purchases your market makes in your industry? What is the forecasted market growth for this group? For more information, see our [market research guide](https://www.sba.gov/content/do-your-market-research) for tips and free government resources that can help you build a market profile.

**How much market share can you gain?** – What is the market share percentage and number of customers you expect to obtain in a defined geographic area? Explain the logic behind your calculation.

**Pricing and gross margin targets** – Define your [pricing structure](https://www.sba.gov/blogs/how-price-your-small-business-products-and-services), gross margin levels, and any discount that you plan to use. (Optional)

**Competitive Analysis** – Your competitive analysis should identify your competition by product line or service and market segment. The following characteristics of the competitive landscape may be important:

* Market share (if having trouble finding you can estimate)
* Strengths and weaknesses
* How important is your target market to your competitors?
* Are there any barriers that may hinder you as you enter the market?
* What is your window of opportunity, if any, to enter the market?
* Are there any indirect or secondary competitors who may impact your success?