How to write your business plan

A business plan is crucial for starting, running, and growing a successful business. A business plan is a tool for setting and achieving business goals.

Objectives

Some argue that a business plan should only be written if borrowing money is necessary. That is not true. A business plan can help you:

- Make the decision if your business has a chance of success
- Define your business objectives, including targets like sales/financial so that you may monitor the performance
- Clearly set out what you will do each day
- Assist in predicting future challenges and how you will mitigate those challenges
- Plan your marketing strategy

Your approach should clearly express your business idea and realistic goals. Simplify your business plan for sharing by focusing on the industry format. The audience you interact with should immediately understand what you are trying to offer and what you propose to achieve. You need to be clear and direct in your business plan, unnecessary documents and statements are not needed when presenting to a potential investor, remember presenting to an investor vs presenting to your team are different.

- You promote yourself and your business principles.
- Selling your vision to an investor can result in funding for its realization.
- Selling your vision to your staff helps them commit and contribute to making it a reality.
- While both audiences seek financial returns, their motivations and approaches differ.
- You have 15 minutes to get an investor hooked to your plan compared to a whole year to ensure that your team aligns to the plan
- Whatever the audience, your products or services, vision, mission, and goals are the same.

Your business plan will be unique, and you need to keep the following in mind:

- What are you offering?
- Who is running the business?
- Who are the customers or the market?
- The financial plan
- How we want to achieve it

Before you begin this journey to write your business plan there are few things to remember:

- ❖ Presentation is key, your business plan need to be neatly documented
- ❖ Be sure of your spelling and grammar use, use correct editing where necessary to provide an overall professional and elegant document.
- ❖ If you are going to include facts and figures, be sure that they are accurate and not outdated.

HEADINGS FOR YOUR BUSINESS PLAN

These heading can be used to guide your thinking patterns when designing your business plan, they are essential to promote your business

1. Executive summary

Tell us about the business. It is an opportunity to pitch your business idea to the audience:

- ❖ What your enterprise does
- ❖ Which industry will be your focus
- ❖ Your vision, mission and values
- ❖ What products and services you are offering
- ❖ Your capabilities and experiences

This section of the plan will be short and concise, not exceeding two pages. It will summarise the rest of your plan and will contain these few points:

- ❖ Why does your business idea, product, or service give you an advantage in the market?
- ❖ What experience do you (and your partners and employees, if any) have in this type of business?
- ❖ How do you intend to ensure that your business is profitable?
- ❖ If you should receive a loan, how will you pay it back?

In addition to the above points, include:

- ❖ Your company's name, owners and address.
- ❖ The service and products you intend to sell.
- ❖ A summary of your customers and competitors
- ❖ The amount of finance you will need, how long it will take to return the loan and what you will use the money for.

2. Table of contents

This will allow the investor/staff to navigate the document easily, these will include the main sections, page numbers and extra documents such as statements.

3. Objectives for starting a business

This section should provide answers to these type of questions about your new business or current business.

- What is your reason for going into business and what do you want out of it? The most obvious answer will be to receive an income but try to word it more to your passion of creating the certain product or providing an excellent type of service.
- Will this business supplement your main income or replace it?
- Will your business provide jobs for family members? Family businesses offer several benefits, including lower salaries, increased trust, and greater commitment from all employees. On the other hand, it may imply that poorly qualified relatives are appointed. The bank and business partners expect you to surround yourself with qualified individuals, regardless of their background.

What is your business' vision?

You decided to start a business because you wanted to achieve a goal. Your business vision should align with the priorities of customers, funders, investors, and employees.

What is your business' mission?

Your mission should be a plan of action to realize your vision. It must benefit both your business and customers. Your company's mission statement should outline the steps to achieve the vision, the methods used, and the intended audience.