

Creating a Business Plan

Business plans vary in length and complexity depending upon the size and financial needs of your company. Below is an outline of what should be included in any plan. On the following two pages is a more detailed template. And on the last page is a list of additional resources for business planning.

Title Page: The Page shows your company name, the date, copy number (mainly if you are seeking financing), and the CEO/Owner's name with title below it, address, phone number, and email.

Executive Summary: An exciting but believable snapshot of the problem, the market, and the solution. Be honest about the risks and emphasize the rewards. *Write this section last!* You will have to complete all the rest of the sections to write an effective Executive Summary.

Company Description: What type of company do you propose – manufacturing, retail, service? Where will you locate? What are your goals?

Products and Services: What products or services do you offer? How are they different from those currently on the market?

Marketing Plan: How do you know that there is a demand for your product? How will you develop a competitive edge? How will you handle marketing and sales?

Management Plan: Who will run the company? How will they be compensated? What is the company's organizational structure?

Operational Plan: What raw materials do you need? Where will you get them? What are your manufacturing requirements? What are your labor requirements?

Financial Plan: What are your money needs? How will they be met: debt or equity financing? What is your break-even point? What are your projected sales, expenses, and profits?

Appendices: This is where the resumes of key managers, product information, market research, technical reports, copies of lease or purchase agreements, detailed financial statements and assumptions.

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Business Plan Template

Executive Summary

- Snapshot of business, market and solution
- Risks and rewards
- What you want them to do – invest, loan, etc. (write last)

General Company Description

- Location
- Owned by -----
- Legal structure
- Nature and history of the business

Goals

- Short term goals are:
- Long term goals are:

Products and Services

- Products/services – what are they, how unique, different, description, need it fills
- Industry Analysis- economic health, fluctuations, forecast, is it changing rapidly, is the market large enough, is it growing
- Need in northern California
- Differentiation from the market
- Competition – who and how are you different, what are their strengths
- Describe materials and supplier sources

Marketing

- Target Market – who/how/where are you selling to (age, education, gender, income, location, lifestyle)
- Advertising, promotions
- Sales methods
- Pricing policy/credit policy

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- Affiliations
- Customer service

Facilities

- Location, size, zoning, age, condition and expansion opportunities

Management

- Management structure
- Expertise in line of business
- Positions
- Requirements/qualifications/pay
- Permanent employees
- Independent contractors – special skills
- Professional assistance – legal, accounting

Operations

- Manufacturing details or service details
- Supply and distribution logistics
- Labor requirements (current and future)
- Daily operations

Benefits to the Community

- Jobs created/retained
- Meeting community needs
- Increased tax base

Financial Plan

- Initial capital expenditures
- Overhead
- Inventory
- Credit
- Debt

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- Past financials
- Future projections
- Contingency planning
- Loans and repayment terms
- **Appendices**
Resumes

Other Business Planning Resources

Still thinking through your business model? Use the **Lean Canvas** approach to define your unique value proposition, identify who your key customers are and how to reach them, and more. Instructions [[click here](#)] and interactive Template [[click here](#)]. Other business modeling resources include: **Steve Blanks Website:** [Click Here](#) and the **Strategyzer Website:** [Click Here](#)

The **Santa Cruz SBDC Guidelines for Business Planning** [[click here](#)] and **Business Plan Template** [[click here](#)] are great for organizing a detailed package for lenders or investors.

And the **Small Business Administration** provides a useful standard in the *Build Your Business Plan Guide*, which can be found at: www.sba.gov/business-plan/1

For local logistics:

- [Download this checklist for how to start a business in Humboldt](#)
- [Download this checklist for how to start a business in Del Norte county / Crescent City.](#)

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