

Business Plan Template

Executive Summary

Begin with a brief description of your company to give background and context. Tell the reader why you have embarked on this new venture.

Then, move into a description of the opportunity. Explain your project from the broadest to most narrow context. Tell readers what product or service you plan to offer, how it fits into the industry you'll operate within, who your target customers are, and what you expect from the market in the future. Explain your *value proposition*, and give an overview of the market.

Briefly describe your management team to help potential investors understand the skills and experience your company brings to the table. Next, move into a description of how your business will operate on a day-to-day basis.

Then, describe how you will promote your new product/service. You don't need to go into detail here, but you should provide enough information to illustrate the marketing methods you will use and how you will attract new customers.

Describe the cost structure and financial aspects of the business. You'll need to explain the kind and amount of investment that you need, what you will use the money for, and how you envision your business becoming profitable.

Next, you should move into a description of how you will implement your business plan. How will you roll out your new business? What is the expected timeline?

Finally, close this section with a clear, pithy explanation of your project, why it is needed, and how it will benefit future customers and investors.

HubSpot Tip: Write this section last, after you have written all of the other sections. It should summarize your entire business plan in a page or two (at most).

Company Description

Provide a description of your organization. Include the company's name, what type of entity it is, who owns it, and note any significant assets.

This is a good place to talk about why you do what you do. What is your company's mission statement? What are your goals and objectives?

What product or service do you provide? Who are your customers? Do you have a geographic focus? If so, where?

Briefly describe the industry, the opportunities it offers, and the growth it is experiencing.

Note some of your company's main strengths and briefly explain where you fit into the industry. You will delve more deeply into this later.

HubSpot Tip: Keep this section brief. You will have plenty of time to talk about the details of your company and the business opportunity later in the document.

The Opportunity

Describe the need in the market that your business idea will fill. How did this need arise and why has it not been filled yet?

Explain how you identified the need and how your product/service will meet it.

Describe your products/services here. You can include diagrams or pictures to help illustrate your offering.

You should also include a description of the features and benefits of your product/service to your customer. Consider capturing this in a simple table like the one below.

Product/Service Feature	Benefit to the Customer

HubSpot Tip: Be sure to include your *value proposition* in this section - describe how your service/product is attractive to customers.

Industry Analysis

In this section, you'll want to talk about the key environmental trends in your industry. What are the barriers to entry (e.g., high production or marketing costs, tariff barriers, regulatory challenges, extensive training)? How is the industry progressing? What is changing?

Then think about your business' competitive advantage. Are there other companies providing the same good/service that you will be offering? If so, are customers likely to switch to your product/service? How do you compare with your competitors?

HubSpot Tip: Note the key factors for success in this industry, and show that your company has them.

Target Market Research and Definition

Based on the market research that you previously conducted, provide an explanation of the market in which your business will reside. How big is the market? How fast is it growing? Will your product/service be a major factor in the market?

Define your target customers. Who do you expect to buy your product/service?

You should identify and describe your major competitors in this section, as well.

Identify what defines your product/service in the marketplace. What distinctive competencies or offerings do you offer that other companies do not?

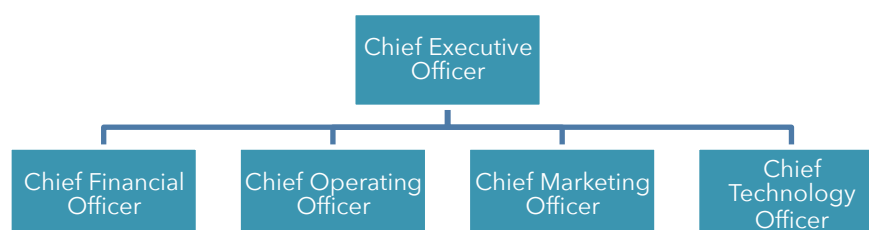
HubSpot Tip: Though you want to mention some competitors, make sure the focus is on your business and how it will serve your target customers.

Management Team & Organization

Your readers will want to know that your team has the skills and qualifications to implement what you have outlined in the business plan. Include brief biographical sketches of your leadership, including the board of directors (if you have one) and any high-level external advisors that your company uses.

Include their educational credentials and a description of the relevant work they have done and accomplishments they have achieved. You can also personalize this section with headshots of your staff to help put faces to the names.

If you have a complicated management structure, consider including an organizational chart like the one shown below. Tailor it to include the names and roles of your leadership team.



HubSpot Tip: You don't need to include descriptions of every position in the company, just high-level management.

Operations Plan

In this section, describe how you will manage your business and what daily operations will look like. You should cover at least the following topics, and any other relevant information that might be unique to your industry:

- *Staffing* - How many employees will you have? Where will they be located? What kinds of skills and certifications do they need?
- *Infrastructure* - What kind of physical space will your company occupy? Describe your business locations. What kinds of technologies will you require?
- *Legal Structure* - Legal issues are important in every industry. Describe the unique aspects of yours and how you will address them.
- *Regulatory* - Regulations also play a key role in most businesses. Include a discussion of the regulatory issues faced in your industry and how you will handle them.
- *Certifications or Accreditations* - Does your company require any special documentation to do business? If so, describe how you'll attain the required certification or accreditation.
- *Product/Service Delivery Process* - Describe your business processes. These might include inventory, supply chain, and accounts payable and receivable.

HubSpot Tip: This list is not exhaustive, so be sure to include enough information to help potential investors understand how your business will operate.

Marketing Strategy

Marketing is a crucial to the success of any business. Building on what you described in the Target Market Research and Definition section, define the components of your strategy to market your product/service.

Describe any challenges, including barriers to entering the market. What potential problems do you foresee? How will you address them?

Explain why you have chosen to operate your business in the selected location. Are there cost savings involved in choosing this location? Does it bring you closer to your customer base?

What is your pricing strategy? Explain and provide clear evidence for why the pricing structure you selected will lead customers to buy your products/services and will, at the same time, result in a profit for your business and investors.

Describe your plan for promoting your new business, product, or service. Will you use print, radio, television, or social media? Will you hire a marketing manager?

Be sure to indicate the budget for your marketing strategy and where you will obtain the funding for this important aspect of your business. You may need to employ consultants or an advertising agency - be sure to include these costs.

HubSpot Tip: Consider including a few mockups of your logos, packaging, and even advertisements to give potential investors a preview of your company's marketing materials.

Implementation Plan And Timeline

Describe the phases in which your business will be rolled out. Indicate which phase you are in currently, and how long it will take to bring your product/service to market.

Consider including a timeline like the one below to illustrate the steps in the process. Customize it with your dates and the specific steps for your business.



HubSpot Tip: While aiming to please potential investors, be sure to set reasonable deadlines that you are able to meet.

Financial Plan

Tell your potential investors the amount of funds you have received thus far and who provided them. How much more funding do you require?

Describe how you will use each part of the funding you are requesting. Investors often feel more comfortable if they know exactly how their money will be used.

Give readers a peek into your company's projected financial future. Include the following as appendices, but describe them in this section:

- *Cash flow projection* - An estimate of how much money you expect to flow in and out of your business.
- *Capitalization plan* - Lists the sources and uses of capital that your business plans to amass.
- *Break-even analysis* - A determination of what you need to sell in order to cover the costs of doing business.

In addition to the above, you'll need to include an income statement and balance sheet. Since these could be long and were likely developed in Excel or an accounting software, you should reference them here and include them in an appendix.

You will also want to explain any assumptions that you have made that affect your financial information. Later you will be able to point to these to explain why something may have turned out differently than expected.

HubSpot Tip: This is one of the most important sections of your business proposal. If you are not an expert in finance, be sure to seek assistance from someone who is.

Conclusion

In a few sentences, summarize the main point that you would like the reader to understand about your business. Aim to convince them that they should invest!

Describe the next steps, and give detailed contact information so that they can get in touch with you easily.

HubSpot Tip: This section should incite the reader to act. Make it easy for your potential investors by including in this section all of the information they need to move forward.

Appendices

Include any supporting documents for the previous sections here. You can reference them in the text and use them to provide additional detail without breaking up the flow of your business plan text.

HubSpot Tip: Some items you could include are: marketing materials, maps of the business location, background research, articles that have been written about the company, and financial documents.