



Business Plan Outline

Categories to Include in Your Business Plan

This is just one guideline outlining major categories common to all businesses. However, because small businesses vary so widely, some relevant categories might not be included in this example, or other categories included may be irrelevant in your situation. There are many other guidelines and examples available online.¹

1) Executive Summary

- a. A one to two page summary that highlights the main points made in the plan. This document is written last.

2) Introduction/Business Description

- a. Describe what products or services your business will offer.
- b. List distinctive qualities of your business that will lead to a competitive advantage.

3) Vision Statement

- a. Describe what and how well your business should be doing in five years

4) Vision Trigger

- a. State the purpose of your business in one sentence

5) Mission Statement

- a. Describe how you will achieve your vision.

6) Business Objectives

- a. Define measurement that you will use as milestones to achieving your vision. Measurements might include sales or number of clients.

7) Industry Analysis

- a. Identify industry trends.
- b. Identify current economic activity that will help your business.

8) Market Analysis

- a. Identify characteristics of your target market.
- b. Estimate your business's market share?
- c. Describe your prices.
- d. Describe your advertising strategy.
- e. Identify your location (storefront/online) and its advantages.

¹ Sources: U.S Small Business Administration *Small Business Resource* and SBSC *Business Plan Start-Up Guide*.

9) Analysis of Competitors

- a. Describe direct competitors.
- b. Identify competitor strengths/weaknesses.
- c. List differences between your business and competitors.

10) Business Operations

- a. Explain how your business will be managed.
- b. Describe specific equipment or procedures to be used.
- c. Describe rent/ lease agreements, insurance, and other legal arrangements that are involved with your business.

11) Legal Structure

- a. Include the type of legal agreement.
- b. Identify the owner of your business's property.
- c. List the rights, duties, and powers of the firm's employees and officers.

12) Management Expertise

- a. Discuss your personal history including education.
- b. Describe your related work experience.
- c. Describe the salary, duties, and responsibilities of key personnel.

13) Support Personnel

- a. If you will be employing others, describe employee availability in community.
- b. Describe employee work hours.

14) Financial Information

- a. List personal investments.
- b. Project expected monthly cash flow for one year.
- c. Identify your break-even point.

- d. Describe your accounting methods and identify who will be performing these activities.
- e. Describe actions to be taken in "what if" situations.

15) Summary

- a. Summarize your goals of, commitment to, and confidence in your business.

16) Exhibits

- a. Include supporting information such as: letters of recommendation, resume, and other pertinent documents.