

# How to Start a Bookkeeping Business

By the [BizMove.com](http://BizMove.com) Team

Copyright © by BizMove.com. All rights reserved.

## Other Free Books and Tools from BizMove.com That May Interest You:

- \* [The Entrepreneur Quiz](#) (Find Out whether You Have What it Takes to be an Entrepreneur)
- \* [The Complete Guide to Running a Business](#) (Everything You Need to Know to Start and Manage Your Own Business)
- \* [How to Improve Your Leadership and Management Skills](#) (Effective Strategies for Business Managers)
- \* [Small Business Management](#) (Essential Ingredients for Success)
- \* [Business Plan Template](#) (Complete Fill in the Blanks Sample Business Plan)
- \* [How to Sharpen Your Managerial Skills](#) (Good Management and Leadership Skills for Aspiring Managers)
- \* [How to Create a Marketing Plan For a Small Business](#) (A Step by Step Guide to Marketing Planning)

## Table of Contents

[1. Determining the Feasibility of Your New Business](#)

[2. Starting Your Business Step by Step](#)

[3. Complete Bookkeeping Business Plan Template](#)

## 1. Determining the Feasibility of Your New Business

### A. Preliminary Analysis

This guide is a checklist for the owner/manager of a business enterprise or for one contemplating going into business for the first time. The questions concentrate on areas you must consider seriously to determine if your idea represents a real business opportunity and if

you can really know what you are getting into. You can use it to evaluate a completely new venture proposal or an apparent opportunity in your existing business.

Perhaps the most crucial problem you will face after expressing an interest in starting a new business or capitalizing on an apparent opportunity in your existing business will be determining the feasibility of your idea. Getting into the right business at the right time is simple advice, but advice that is extremely difficult to implement. The high failure rate of new businesses and products indicates that very few ideas result in successful business ventures, even when introduced by well established firm. Too many entrepreneurs strike out on a business venture so convinced of its merits that they fail to thoroughly evaluate its potential.

This checklist should be useful to you in evaluating a business idea. It is designed to help you screen out ideas that are likely to fail before you invest extensive time, money, and effort in them.

### **Preliminary Analysis**

A feasibility study involves gathering, analyzing and evaluating information with the purpose of answering the question: "Should I go into this business?" Answering this question involves first a preliminary assessment of both personal and project considerations.

### **General Personal Considerations**

The first seven questions ask you to do a little introspection. Are your personality characteristics such that you can both adapt to and enjoy business ownership/management?

1. Do you like to make your own decisions?
2. Do you enjoy competition?
3. Do you have will power and self-discipline?
4. Do you plan ahead?
5. Do you get things done on time?
6. Can you take advise from others?
7. Are you adaptable to changing conditions?

The next series of questions stress the physical, emotional, and financial strains of a new business.

8. Do you understand that owning your own business may entail working 12 to 16 hours a day, probably six days a week, and maybe on holidays?
9. Do you have the physical stamina to handle a business?
10. Do you have the emotional strength to withstand the strain?
11. Are you prepared to lower your standard of living for several months or years?

12. Are you prepared to lose your savings?

#### Specific Personal Considerations

1. Do you know which skills and areas of expertise are critical to the success of your project?
2. Do you have these skills?
3. Does your idea effectively utilize your own skills and abilities?
4. Can you find personnel that have the expertise you lack?
5. Do you know why you are considering this project?
6. Will your project effectively meet your career aspirations?

The next three questions emphasize the point that very few people can claim expertise in all phases of a feasibility study. You should realize your personal limitations and seek appropriate assistance where necessary (i.e. marketing, legal, financial).

7. Do you have the ability to perform the feasibility study?
8. Do you have the time to perform the feasibility study?
9. Do you have the money to pay for the feasibility study done?

#### General Project Description

1. Briefly describe the business you want to enter.

---

---

2. List the products and/or services you want to sell

---

3. Describe who will use your products/services

---

4. Why would someone buy your product/service?

---

5. What kind of location do you need in terms of type of neighborhood, traffic count, nearby firms, etc.?

---

6. List your product/services suppliers.

\_\_\_\_\_

7. List your major competitors - those who sell or provide like products/services.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. List the labor and staff you require to provide your products/services. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **B. Requirements For Success**

To determine whether your idea meets the basic requirements for a successful new project, you must be able to answer at least one of the following questions with a "yes."

1. Does the product/service/business serve a presently unserved need?
2. Does the product/service/business serve an existing market in which demand exceeds supply?
3. Can the product/service/business successfully compete with an existing competition because of an "advantageous situation," such as better price, location, etc.?

### Major Flaws

A "Yes" response to questions such as the following would indicate that the idea has little chance for success.

1. Are there any causes (i.e., restrictions, monopolies, shortages) that make any of the required factors of production unavailable (i.e., unreasonable cost, scarce skills, energy, material, equipment, processes, technology, or personnel)?
2. Are capital requirements for entry or continuing operations excessive?
3. Is adequate financing hard to obtain?
4. Are there potential detrimental environmental effects?
5. Are there factors that prevent effective marketing?

## **C. Desired Income**

The following questions should remind you that you must seek both a return on your investment in your own business as well as a reasonable salary for the time you spend in operating that business.

1. How much income do you desire?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Are you prepared to earn less income in the first 1-3 years?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What minimum income do you require?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What financial investment will be required for your business?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. How much could you earn by investing this money?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. How much could you earn by working for someone else?

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Add the amounts in 5 and 6. If this income is greater than what you can realistically expect from your business, are you prepared to forego this additional income just to be your own boss with the only prospects of more substantial profit/income in future years?

\_\_\_\_\_

8. What is the average return on investment for a business of your type? \_\_\_\_\_

#### **D. Preliminary Income Statement**

Besides return on investment, you need to know the income and expenses for your business. You show profit or loss and derive operating ratios on the income statement. Dollars are the (actual, estimated, or industry average) amounts for income and expense categories. Operating ratios are expressed as percentages of net sales and show relationships of expenses and net sales.

For instance 50,000 in net sales equals 100% of sales income (revenue). Net profit after taxes equals 3.14% of net sales. The hypothetical "X" industry average after tax net profit might be 5% in a given year for firms with 50,000 in net sales. First you estimate or forecast income (revenue) and expense dollars and ratios for your business. Then compare your estimated or actual performance with your industry average. Analyze differences to see why you are doing better or worse than the competition or why your venture does or doesn't look like it will float.

These basic financial statistics are generally available for most businesses from trade and industry associations, government agencies, universities and private companies and banks

Forecast your own income statement. Do not be influenced by industry figures. Your estimates must be as accurate as possible or else you will have a false impression.

1. What is the normal markup in this line of business. i.e., the dollar difference between the cost of goods sold and sales, expressed as a percentage of sales?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What is the average cost of goods sold percentage of sales?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What is the average inventory turnover, i.e., the number of times the average inventory is sold each year?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What is the average gross profit as a percentage of sales?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. What are the average expenses as a percentage of sales?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. What is the average net profit as a percent of sales?

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Take the preceding figures and work backwards using a standard income statement format and determine the level of sales necessary to support your desired income level.

\_\_\_\_\_

8. From an objective, practical standpoint, is this level of sales, expenses and profit attainable?

\_\_\_\_\_

**ANY BUSINESS, INC.**  
 Condensed Hypothetical Income Statement  
 For year ending December 31

Item	Amount	Percent
Gross sales	773,888	
Less returns, allowances, and cash discounts	14,872	
Net sales	759,016	100.00
Cost of goods sold	589,392	77.65
Gross profit on sales	169,624	22.35
Selling expenses	41,916	5.52
Administrative expenses	28,010	3.69
General expenses	50,030	6.59
Financial expenses	5,248	0.69
Total expenses	125,204	16.50
Operating profit	44,220	5.85
Extraordinary expenses	1,200	0.16
Net profit before taxes	43,220	5.69
taxes	19,542	2.57
Net profit after taxes	23,678	3.12

**E. Market Analysis**

The primary objective of a market analysis is to arrive at a realistic projection of sales. after answering the following questions you will be in a better positions to answer question eight immediately above.

**Population**

1. Define the geographical areas from which you can realistically expect to draw customers.

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What is the population of these areas?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What do you know about the population growth trend in these areas? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What is the average family size?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. What is the age distribution?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. What is the per capita income?

\_\_\_\_\_

7. What are the consumers' attitudes toward business like yours?

\_\_\_\_\_

8. What do you know about consumer shopping and spending patterns relative to your type of business?

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Is the price of your product/service especially important to your target market?

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Can you appeal to the entire market?

\_\_\_\_\_

11. If you appeal to only a market segment, is it large enough to be profitable?

\_\_\_\_\_

## **F. Competition**

1. Who are your major competitors?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What are the major strengths of each?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What are the major weaknesses of each?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Are you familiar with the following factors concerning your competitors:

Price structure?

\_\_\_\_\_

Product lines (quality, breadth, width)?

\_\_\_\_\_

Location?

---

Promotional activities?

---

Sources of supply?

---

Image from a consumer's viewpoint?

---

5. Do you know of any new competitors?

---

6. Do you know of any competitor's plans for expansion?

---

7. Have any firms of your type gone out of business lately?

---

8. If so, why?

---

9. Do you know the sales and market share of each competitor?

---

10. Do you know whether the sales and market share of each competitor are increasing, decreasing, or stable?

---

11. Do you know the profit levels of each competitor?

---

12. Are your competitors' profits increasing, decreasing, or stable?

---

13. Can you compete with your competition?

---

**G. Sales**

1. Determine the total sales volume in your market area.

\_\_\_\_\_

2. How accurate do you think your forecast of total sales is?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Did you base your forecast on concrete data?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Is the estimated sales figure "normal" for your market area?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Is the sales per square foot for your competitors above the normal average?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Are there conditions, or trends, that could change your forecast of total sales?

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Do you expect to carry items in inventory from season to season, or do you plan to mark down products occasionally to eliminate inventories? If you do not carry over inventory, have you adequately considered the effect of mark-down in your pricing? (Your gross profits margin may be too low.)

\_\_\_\_\_

8. How do you plan to advertise and promote your product/service/business?

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Forecast the share of the total market that you can realistically expect - as a dollar amount and as a percentage of your market.

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Are you sure that you can create enough competitive advantages to achieve the market share in your forecast of the previous question?

\_\_\_\_\_

11. Is your forecast of dollar sales greater than the sales amount needed to guarantee your desired or minimum income?

\_\_\_\_\_

12. Have you been optimistic or pessimistic in your forecast of sales? \_\_\_\_\_

13. Do you need to hire an expert to refine the sales forecast?

\_\_\_\_\_

14. Are you willing to hire an expert to refine the sales forecast?

\_\_\_\_\_

## **H. Supply**

1. Can you make a list of every item of inventory and operating supplies needed?
2. Do you know the quantity, quality, technical specifications, and price ranges desired?
3. Do you know the name and location of each potential source of supply?
4. Do you know the price ranges available for each product from each supplier?
5. Do you know about the delivery schedules for each supplier?
6. Do you know the sales terms of each supplier?
7. Do you know the credit terms of each supplier?
8. Do you know the financial condition of each supplier?
9. Is there a risk of shortage for any critical materials or merchandise?
10. Are you aware of which supplies have an advantage relative to transportation costs?
11. Will the price available allow you to achieve an adequate markup?

## **I. Expenses**

1. Do you know what your expenses will be for: rent, wages, insurance, utilities, advertising, interest, etc?
2. Do you need to know which expenses are Direct, Indirect, or Fixed?
3. Do you know how much your overhead will be?
4. Do you know how much your selling expenses will be?

### Miscellaneous

1. Are you aware of the major risks associated with your product? Service Business?

2. Can you minimize any of these major risks?
3. Are there major risks beyond your control?
4. Can these risks bankrupt you? (fatal flaws)

### **J. Venture Feasibility**

1. Are there any major questions remaining about your proposed venture?
2. Do the above questions arise because of a lack of data?
3. Do the above questions arise because of a lack of management skills?
4. Do the above questions arise because of a "fatal flaw" in your idea?
5. Can you obtain the additional data needed?

[Go to Top](#)

## **2. Starting Your Business Step by Step**

### **A. Things to Consider Before You Start**

This guide will walk you step by step through all the essential phases of starting a successful service business. To profit in a service based business, you need to consider the following questions: What business am I in? What services do I provide? Where is my market? Who will buy? Who is my competition? What is my sales strategy? What merchandising methods will I use? How much money is needed to operate my firm? How will I get the work done? What management controls are needed? How can they be carried out? When should I revise my plan? And many more.

No one can answer such questions for you. As the owner-manager you have to answer them and draw up your business plan. The pages of this guide are a combination of text and workspaces so you can write in the information you gather in developing your business plan - a logical progression from a commonsense starting point to a commonsense ending point.

It takes time and energy and patience to draw up a satisfactory business plan. Use this Guide to get your ideas and the supporting facts down on paper. And, above all, make changes in your plan on these pages as that plan unfolds and you see the need for changes.

Bear in mind that anything you leave out of the picture will create an additional cost, or drain on your money, when it crops up later on. If you leave out or ignore enough items, your business is headed for disaster.

Keep in mind too, that your final goal is to put your plan into action. More will be said about this near the end of this Guide.

### **What's in this for Me?**

You may be thinking: Why should I spend my time drawing up a business plan? What's in it for me? If you've never drawn up a plan, you are right in wanting to hear about the possible benefits before you do your work.

A business plan offers at least four benefits. You may find others as you make and use such a plan. The four are:

(1) The first, and most important, benefit is that a plan gives you a path to follow. A plan makes the future what you want it to be. A plan with goals and action steps allows you to guide your business through turbulent economic seas and into harbors of your choice. The alternative is drifting into "any old port in a storm."

(2) A plan makes it easy to let your banker in on the action. By reading, or hearing, the details of your plan he will have real insight into your situation if he is to lend you money.

(3) A plan can be a communications tool when you need to orient sales personnel, suppliers, and others about your operations and goals.

(4) A plan can help you develop as a manager. It can give you practice in thinking about competitive conditions, promotional opportunities, and situation that seem to be advantageous to your business. Such practice over a period of time can help increase an owner-manager's ability to make judgments.

### **Why am I in Business?**

Many enterprising people are drawn into starting their own business by the possibilities of making money and being their own boss. But the long hours, hard work, and responsibilities of being the boss quickly dispel and preconceived glamour.

Profit is the reward for satisfying consumer needs. But it must be worked for. Sometimes a new business might need two years before it shows a profit. So where, then, are reasons for having your own business?

Every business owner-manager will have his or her own individual reasons for being in business. For some, satisfaction come from serving their community. They take pride in serving their neighbors and giving them quality work which they stand behind. For others, their business offers them a chance to contribute to their employees' financial security.

There are as many rewards and reasons for being in business as there are business owners. Why are you in business?

---

---

---

## **What business am I in?**

In making your business plan, the first question to consider is: What business am I really in. At the first reading this question may seem silly. "If there is one thing I know," you say to yourself, "it is what business I'm in." But hold on. Some owner-managers go broke and others waste their saving because they are confused about the business they are in.

The changeover of barbershops from cutting hair to styling hair is one example of thinking about what business you're really in.

Consider this example, also. Joe Riley had a small radio and TV store. He thought of his business as a retail store though he also serviced and repaired anything he sold. As his suburb grew, appliance stores emerged and cut heavily into his sales. However, there was an increased call for quality repair work.

When Mr. Riley considered his situation, he decided that he was in the repair business. As a result of thinking about what business he was really in, he profitably built up his repair business and has a contract to take care of the servicing and repair business for one of the appliance stores.

Decide what business you are in and write your answer in the following spaces. To help you decide, think of the answers to questions such as: What inventory of parts and materials must you keep on hand? What services do you offer? What services do people ask for that you do not offer? What is it you are trying to do better, more of, or differently from your competitors?

---

## **How to Plan Your Marketing**

When you have decided what business you're in, you have made your first marketing decision. Now you are ready for other important considerations.

Successful marketing starts with the owner-manager. You have to know your service and the needs of your customers.

The narrative and work blocks that follow are designed to help you work out a marketing plan for your firm. The blocks are divided into three sections:

Section One - Determining the Sales Potential

Section Two - Attracting Customers

Section Three - Selling to Customers

### **Section One - Determining the Sales Potential**

In the service business, your sales potential will depend on the area you serve. That is, how many customers in this area will need your services? Will your customers be industrial, commercial, consumer, or all of these?

When picking a site to locate your business, consider the nature of your service. If you pick up and deliver, you will want a site where the travel time will be low and you may later install a radio dispatch system. Or, if the customer must come to your place of business, the site must be conveniently located and easy to find.

You must pick the site that offers the best possibilities of being profitable. The following questions will help you think through this problem.

In selecting an area to serve, consider the following:

Population and its growth potential

Income, age, occupation of population

Number of competitive services in and around your proposed location

Local ordinances and zoning regulations

Type of trading area (commercial, industrial, residential, seasonal)

For additional help in choosing an area, you might try the local chamber of commerce and the manufacturer and distributor of any equipment and supplies you will be using.

You will want to consider the next list of questions in picking the specific site for your business:

Will the customer come to your place of business?

How much space do you need?

Will you want to expand later on?

Do you need any special features required in lighting, heating, ventilation?

Is parking available?

Is public transportation available?

Is the location conducive to drop-in customers?

Will you pick up and deliver?

Will travel time be excessive?

Will you prorate travel time to service call?

Would a location close to an expressway or main artery cut down on travel time?

If you choose a remote location, will savings in rent off-set the inconvenience?

If you choose a remote location, will you have to pay as much as you save in rent for advertising to make your service known?

If you choose a remote location, will the customer be able to readily locate your business?

Will the supply of labor be adequate and the necessary skills available?

What are the zoning regulations of the area?

Will there be adequate fire and police protection?

Will crime insurance be needed and be available at a reasonable rate?

I plan to locate in \_\_\_\_\_ because:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Is the area in which you plan to locate supported by a strong economic base? For example, are nearby industries working full time? Only part time? Did any industries go out of business in the past several months? Are new industries scheduled to open in the next several months?

Write your opinion of the area's economic base and your reason for that opinion here.:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Will you build? \_\_\_\_\_ What are the terms of the loan or mortgage?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Will you rent? \_\_\_\_\_ What are the terms of the lease?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Is the building attractive? \_\_\_\_\_ In good repair? \_\_\_\_\_

Will it need remodeling? \_\_\_\_\_ Cost of remodeling? \_\_\_\_\_

What services does the landlord provide?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What is the competition in the area you have picked?

The number of firms that handle my service \_\_\_\_\_

Does the area appear to be saturated? \_\_\_\_\_

How many of these firms look prosperous? \_\_\_\_\_

Do they have any apparent advantages over you? \_\_\_\_\_

How many look as though they're barely getting by? \_\_\_\_\_

How many similar services went out of business in the area last year? \_\_\_\_\_

Can you find out why they failed? \_\_\_\_\_

How many new services opened up in the last year? \_\_\_\_\_

How much do your competitors charge for your service? \_\_\_\_\_

Which firm or firms in the area will be your biggest competition? \_\_\_\_\_

List the reasons for your opinion here:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **Section Two - Attracting Customers**

When you have a location in mind, you should work through another aspect of marketing. How will you attract customers to your business? How will you pull customers away from your competition?

It is working with this aspect of marketing that many service firms find competitive advantages. The ideas which they develop are as good and often better, than those which large companies develop with hired brains. The workbooks that follow are designed to help you think about image, pricing, customer service policies, and advertising.

### **Image**

Whether you like it or not, your service business is going to have an image. The way people think of your firm will be influenced by the way you conduct your business. If people come to your place of business for your service, the cleanliness of the floors, the manner in which they are treated, and the quality of your work will help form your image. If you take your service to the customer, the conduct of your employees will influence your image. Pleasant, prompt, courteous service before and after the sale will help make satisfied customers your best form of advertising.

Thus, you can control your image, Whatever image you seek to develop. It should be concrete enough to promote in your advertising. For example, "service with a smile" is an often used image.

Write out what image you want customers to have of your business.

---

---

## **Pricing**

In setting prices for your service, there are four main elements you must consider:

- (1) Materials and supplies
- (2) Labor and operating expenses
- (3) Planned profit
- (4) Competition

Further along in this Guide you will have the opportunity to figure out the specifics of materials, supplies, labor, and operating expenses. From there you may want the assistance of your accountant in developing a price structure that will not only be fair to the customer, but also fair to yourself. This means that not only must you cover all expenses but also allow enough margin to pay yourself a salary.

One other thing to consider. Will you offer credit? \_\_\_\_\_ Most businesses use a credit card system. These credit costs have to come from somewhere. Plan for them. If you use a credit card system, what will it cost you? \_\_\_\_\_

Can you add to your prices to absorb this cost?

Some trade association have a schedule for service charges. It would be a good idea to check with the trade association for your line of business. Their figures will make a good yardstick to make sure your prices are competitive.

And, of course, your prices must be competitive. You've already found out your competitors' prices. Keep these in mind when you are working with your accountant. If you will not be able to make an adequate return, now is the time to find out.

## **Customer Service Policies**

Customers expect certain services or conveniences, for example, parking. These services may be free to the customer, but not to you. If you do provide parking, you either pay for your own lot or pick up your part of the cost of a lot which you share with other businesses. Since these conveniences will be an expense, plan for them.

List the services that your competitors provide to customers:

---

---

---

Now list the services that you will provide your customers:

**Service / Estimated Cost**

---

---

---

---

**Planning Your Advertising Activities**

In this section on attracting customers, advertising was saved until last because you have to have something to say before advertising can be effective. When you have an image, price range, and customers services, you are ready to tell prospective customers why they should use your services.

When the money you can spend on advertising is limited it is vital that your advertising be on target. Before you can think about how much money you can afford for advertising, take time to determine what jobs you want advertising to do for your business. The work blanks that follow should be helpful to your thinking.

The strong points about my service business are:

---

My service business is different from my competition in the following ways:

---

My advertising should tell customers and prospective customers the following facts about my business and services:

---

When you have these facts in mind, you now need to determine who you are going to tell it to. Your advertising needs to be aimed at a target audience - those people who are most likely to use your services. In the space below, describe your customers in terms of age, sex, occupation, and whatever else is necessary depending on the nature of your business. This is your customer profile of "male and female automobile owners, 18 years old and above." Thus, for this repair business, anyone over 18 who owns a car is likely to need its service.

The customer profile for my business is

---

Now you are ready to think about the form your advertising should take and its cost. You are looking for the most effective means to tell your story to those most likely to use your service. Ask the local media (newspapers, radio and television, and the printers of direct mail pieces) for information about the services and the results they offer for your money.

How you spend advertising money is your decision, but don't fall into the trap that snares many advertisers. As one consultant describes this pitfall: It is amazing the way many managers consider themselves experts on advertising copy and media selection without any experience in these areas.

The following blanks should be useful in determining what advertising is needed to sell your strong points to prospective customers.

Form of Advertising	Size of Audience	Frequency of Use	Cost of A Single Ad	Estimated Cost
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
			<b>Total</b>	_____

When you have a figure on what your advertising for the next 12 months will cost, check it against one of the operating ratios (expenses as a percentage of sales) which trade associations and other organizations gather. If your estimated cost for advertising is substantially higher than this average for your line of service, take a second look. No single expense item should be allowed to get way out of line if you want to make a profit. Your task in determining comes down to: How much can I afford to spend and still do the job that needs to be done?

### **Section Three - Selling to Customers**

To complete your work on marketing, you need to think about what you want to happen after you get a customer. Your goal is to provide your service, satisfy customers, and put money into the cash register.

One-time customers can't do the job. You need repeat customers to build a profitable annual sales volume. When someone returns for your service, it is probably because he was satisfied by his previous experience. Satisfied customers are the best form of advertising.

If you previously decided to work only for cash, take a hard look at your decision. Americans like to buy on credit. Often a credit card, or other system of credit and collections, is needed to attract and hold customers.

Based on this description and the dollar amount of business you indicated that you intend to do this year, fill in the following workblocks.

### **Fixtures and Equipment**

No matter whether or not customers will come to your place of business, there will be certain equipment and furniture you will need in your place of business which will allow you to perform your service.

### **Parts and Material**

You will probably need some kind of parts or material to provide your service.

I plan to buy parts and material from:

---

Before you make any supply arrangements, examine the supplier's obsolescence policy. This can be a vital factor in service parts purchasing. You also look at the supplier's warranty policy.

Now that you have determined the parts and materials you'll need, you should think about the type of stock control system you'll use. A stock control system should enable you to determine what needs to be ordered on the basis of: (1) what is on hand, (2) what is on order, (3) what has been used. (Some trade associations and suppliers provide systems to members and customers.)

When you have decided on a system for stock control, estimate its cost. My system for stock control will cost me \_\_\_\_\_ for the first year.

### **Overhead**

List the overhead items which will be needed. Examples are: rent, utilities, office help, insurance, interest, telephone, postage, accountant, payroll taxes, and licenses or other local taxes. If you plan to hire others to help you manage, their salaries should be listed as overhead.

---

### **Getting the Work Done**

An important step in setting up your business is to find and hire capable employees. Then you must train them to work together to get the job done. Obviously, organization is needed if your business is to produce what you expect it to produce, namely profits.

Organization is essential because you as the owner-manager cannot do all the work. As your organization grows, you have to delegate work, responsibility and authority. A helpful tool in getting this done is the organization chart. It shows at a glance who is responsible for the major activities of a business.

As an additional aid in determining both what needs to be done and who will do it, list each activity that is involved in your business. Next to the activity indicate who will do it. You may do this by name or some other designation such as "worker #1", Remember that a name may appear more than once.

**Activity / Name**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**How Much Money Will You Need**

At this point, take some time to think about what your business plan means in terms of dollars. This section is designed to help you put your plan into dollars.

The first question concerns the source of dollars. After your initial capital investment, the major source of money is the sale of your services. What dollar volume of business do you expect to do in the next 12 months? \_\_\_\_\_

**Expenses**

In connection with your annual dollar volume of business, you need to think about expenses. If, for example you plan to do 100,000 in business, what will it cost you to do this amount of servicing? And even more important, what will be left over as profit at the end of the year? Never lose sight of the fact that profit is your pay. Even if you pay yourself a salary for living expenses, your business must make a profit if it is to continue year after year and pay back the money you invested in it.

The following workblock is designed to help you make a quick estimate of your expenses. To use this formula, you need to get only one figure - the cost of sales figure for your line of business. If you don't have this operating ratio, check with your trade association.

	Expressed in percentage	Expressed in dollars	your percentage	your dollars
1. Sales	100	100,000	100	\$ _____
2. Cost of sales	-61.7	-61,700	_____	-\$ _____
3. Gross margin	38.3	38,300	_____	\$ _____

### Start-Up Costs

If you are starting a new business, list the following estimated start-up costs:

Fixtures and equipment	_____
Starting inventory	_____
Office supplies	_____
Decorating and remodeling	_____
Installation of equipment	_____
Deposits for utilities	_____
Legal and professional fees	_____
Licenses and permits	_____
Advertising for the opening	_____
Operating cash	_____
Owner's withdraw during prep-start-up time	_____
<b>Total</b>	_____

Whether you have the funds (savings) or borrow them, your new business will have to pay back these start-up costs. Keep this fact in mind as you work on the "Expenses" section, and on other financial aspects of your plan.

### Break Down Your Expenses

Your quick estimate of expenses provides a starting point. The next step is to break down your expenses so they can be handled over the 12 months. Use an "Expenses Worksheet" form to make up an expense budget.

### Matching Money and Expenses

A budget helps you to see the dollar amount of your expenses each month. Then from month to month the question is: Will sales bring in enough money to pay the firm's bills on time? The answer is "maybe not" or "I hope so" unless the owner-manager prepares for the "peaks and valleys" that are in many service operations.

A cash forecast is a management tool which can eliminate much of the anxiety that can plague you if your business goes through lean months. Use a worksheet, "Estimated Cash Forecast", or ask your accountant to use it to estimate the amounts of cash you expect to flow through your business during the next 12 months.

## **Is Additional Money needed?**

Suppose at this point you have determined that your business plan needs more money than can be generated by sales. What do you do?

What you do depends on the situation. For example, the need may be for bank credit to tide your business over during the lean months. This loan can be repaid during the fat sales months when expenses are far less than sales. Adequate working capital is necessary for success and survival.

Whether an owner-manager seeks to borrow money for only a month or so or on a long-term basis, the lender needs to know whether the store's financial position is strong or weak. Your lender will ask to see a current balance sheet.

Even if you don't need to borrow, use it, to draw the "picture" of your firm's financial condition. Moreover, if you don't need to borrow money, you may want to show your plan to the bank that handles your store's checking account. It is never too early to build good relations with your banker, to show that you are a manager who knows where you want to go rather than a store owner who hopes to make a success.

## **Control and Feedback**

To make your plan work you will need feedback. For example, the year-end profit and loss statement shows whether your business made a profit or loss for the past 12 months.

But you can't wait 12 months for the score. To keep your plan on target you need readings at frequent intervals. A profit and loss statement at the end of each month or at the end of each quarter is one type of frequent feedback. However, the income statement or profit and loss statement (P and L) may be more of a loss than a profit statement if you rely only on it. You must set up management controls which will help you to insure that the right things are being done from day to day and from week to week. In a new business, the record-keeping system should be set up before your business opens. After you're in business is too late. For one thing, you may be too busy to give a record-keeping system the proper attention.

The control system which you set up should give you information about: stock, sales, and disbursement. The simpler the system, the better. Its purpose is to give you current information. You are after facts with emphasis on trouble spots. Outside advisers, such as an accountant, can be helpful.

## **Stock Control**

The purpose of controlling parts and materials inventory is to provide maximum service to your customers and to see that parts and materials are not lost through pilferage, shrinkage, errors, or waste. Your aim should be to achieve a high turnover on your inventory. The fewer dollars you tie up in inventory, the better.

In a business, inventory control helps the owner-manager to offer customers efficient service. The control system should enable you to determine what needs to be ordered on the basis of: (1) what is on hand, (2) what is on order, and (3) what has been used.

In setting up inventory controls, keep in mind that the cost of the inventory is not your only cost. You will also have costs such as the cost of purchasing, the cost of keeping control records, and the cost of receiving and storing your inventory.

## Sales

In a small business, sales slips and cash register tapes give the owner-manager feedback at the end of each day. To keep on top of sales, you will need answers to questions such as: How many sales were made? What was the dollar amount? What credit terms were given to customers?

## Disbursements

Your manager controls should also give you information about the dollars your company pays out. In checking on your bills, you do not want to know what major items, such as paying bills on time to get the supplier's discount, are being handled according to your policies. Your review system will also give you the opportunity to make judgments on the use of funds. In this manner, you can be on top of emergencies as well as routine situations. Your system should also keep you aware that tax moneys such as payroll income tax deductions, are set aside and paid out at the proper time.

## Break-Even Analysis

Break-even analysis is a management control device because the break-even point shows how much you must sell under given conditions in order to just cover your costs with No profit and No loss.

Profit depends on sales volume, selling price, and costs. Break-even analysis helps you to estimate what a change in one or more of these factors will do to your profits. To figure a break-even point, fixed costs, such as rent, must be separated from variable costs, such as the cost of sales and the other items listed under "controllable expenses" on the expense worksheet, of this Guide.

The formula is:

Break-even point (in sales dollars) =

$$\frac{\text{Total fixed costs}}{1 - \frac{\text{.....Total variable costs}}{\text{.....Corresponding sales volume}}}$$

An example of the formula is: Bill Jackson plans to open a laundry. He estimates his fixed expenses at about \$9,000, the first year. He estimates his variable expenses at about \$700 for every \$1,000 of sales.

$$\text{BE point} = \frac{\$9,000}{1 - \frac{700}{1,000}} = \frac{\$9,000}{1 - .70} = \frac{\$9,000}{.30} = \$30,000$$

### Is Your Plan Workable?

Stop when you have worked out your break-even point. Whether the break-even point looks realistic or way off base, it is time to make sure that your plan is workable.

Take time to re-examine your plan before you back it with money. If the plan is not workable better to learn it now than to realize 6 months down the road that you are pouring money into a losing venture.

In reviewing your plan, look at the cost figures you drew up when you broke down your expenses for one year. If any of your cost items are too high or too low, change them. You can write your changes in the white spaces above or below your original entries on that worksheet. When you finish making your adjustments, you will have a Revised projected statement of sales and expenses for 12 months.

With your revised figures work out a revised break-even point. Whether the new break-even point looks good or bad, take one or more precaution. Show your plan to someone who has not been involved in working out the details.

Your banker, or other advisor outside of your business may see weaknesses that failed to appear as you pored over the details of your plan. They may put a finger on strong points which your plan should emphasize.

### Put Your Plan into Action

When your plan is as near on target as possible, you are ready to put it into action. Keep in mind that action is the difference between a plan and a dream. If a plan is not acted upon, it is of no more value than a pleasant dream that evaporates over the breakfast coffee.

A successful owner-manager does not stop after he has gathered information and drawn up a plan, as you have done in working through this Guide. He begins to use his plan.

At this point, look back over your plan. Look for things that must be done to put your plan into action.

What needs to be done will depend on your situation. For example, if your business plan calls for an increase in sales, one action to be done will be providing funds for this expansion.

Have you more money to put into this business?

Do you borrow from friends and relatives? From your bank? From your suppliers by arranging liberal commercial credit terms.

If you are starting a new business, one action step may be to get a loan for fixtures, employee salaries, and other expenses. Another action step will be to find and hire capable employees.

In the spaces that follow, list things that must be done to put your plan into action. Give each item a date so that it can be done at the appropriate time. To put my plan into action, I must do the following:

**Action / Completion Date**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**Keeping Your Plan Up To Date**

Once you put your plan into action, look out for changes. They can cripple the best made business plan if the owner-manager lets them.

Stay on top of changing conditions and adjust your business plan accordingly.

Sometimes the change is made within your company. For example, several of your employees quit their jobs. Sometimes the change is with customers: for example, their desires and tastes shift. Sometimes the change is technological as when raw materials are put on the market introducing the need for new processes and procedures.

In order to adjust your plan to account for such changes, an owner-manager must:

- (1) Be alert to the changes that come in your company, line of business, market, and customers.
- (2) Check your plan against these changes.
- (3) Determine what revisions, if any, are needed in your plan.

The method you use to keep your plan current so that your business can weather the forces of the market place is up to you. Read the trade papers and magazines for your line of business. Another suggestion concerns your time. Set some time - two hours, three hours, whatever is necessary-to review your plan periodically. Once each month, or every other month, go over your plan to see whether it needs adjusting. If revisions are needed, make them and put them into action.

[Go to Top](#)

**3. Complete Bookkeeping Business Plan Template**

## Table of Contents

1.0 Executive Summary .....	1
1.1 Objectives .....	2
1.2 Mission .....	2
1.3 Keys to Success.....	2
2.0 Company Summary.....	2
2.1 Company Ownership.....	2
2.2 Company History.....	2
Table: Past Performance.....	3
3.0 Services .....	6
4.0 Market Analysis Summary.....	6
4.1 Market Segmentation .....	7
Table: Market Analysis .....	7
4.2 Target Market Segment Strategy .....	9
4.3 Service Business Analysis .....	9
4.3.1 Competition and Buying Patterns.....	9
5.0 Strategy and Implementation Summary .....	10
5.1 Competitive Edge .....	10
5.2 Marketing Strategy .....	10
5.3 Sales Strategy.....	11
5.3.1 Sales Forecast .....	11
Table: Sales Forecast .....	11
5.4 Milestones .....	14
Table: Milestones.....	14
6.0 Management Summary.....	14
6.1 Personnel Plan.....	14
Table: Personnel .....	15

7.0 Financial Plan.....	16
7.1 Important Assumptions.....	16
7.2 Break-even Analysis.....	16
Table: Break-even Analysis.....	16
7.3 Projected Profit and Loss .....	18
Table: Profit and Loss .....	18
7.4 Projected Cash Flow .....	22
Table: Cash Flow .....	22
7.5 Projected Balance Sheet.....	25
Table: Balance Sheet.....	25
7.6 Business Ratios.....	27
Table: Ratios.....	27
Table: Sales Forecast .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Table: Personnel .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Table: Personnel .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>

## 1.0 Executive Summary

**COMPANY NAME** is a small, successful, two-person accounting and tax preparation service owned and run by **OWNER'S NAME**, CPA in Puyallup, Washington. The firm offers tax accounting, management accounting, and QuickBooks set-up and training for small business clients. To move beyond a two-person model, the business will expand its services to more small businesses. This will require an investment in marketing and staff to grow the business to include this complementary line of business. This business plan organizes the strategy and tactics for the business expansion and set objectives for growth over the next three years.

The business will offer clients bookkeeping services with the oversight of a CPA at a price they can afford. To do this involves hiring additional bookkeepers in order to handle more clientele.

**COMPANY NAME** is seeking grant funding in the amount of \$353,000 in order to pay for expansion of the current facility, hire and train new employees and add much needed additional office equipment and supplies.

**OWNER'S NAME**

[INSERT CONTACT INFO]

### *1.1 Objectives*

**COMPANY NAME** seeks to expand the company's line of services - small business bookkeeping and tax preparation - which will be offered to the same ongoing clients as **COMPANY NAME** currently seeks.

**COMPANY NAME** has set the following objectives:

- To hire additional staff to take on more clientele
- To achieve bookkeeping service annual revenues equal or greater to the current total revenues within three years (effectively doubling revenue)
- To expand and renovate the current office space

### *1.2 Mission*

**COMPANY NAME** seeks to provide a full suite of tax and management accounting services for small businesses in Puyallup, Washington, allowing business owners to not only save money over in-house accounting and ensure their compliance with tax laws, but to make valuable management decisions from their numbers.

### *1.3 Keys to Success*

The keys to success for the accounting business include:

- Building trust with clients
- Maintaining up-to-date CPA certification and education on accounting practices and laws
- Going beyond saving clients money to proposing how they can increase their revenues
- Legal and ethical practices when it comes to transparency, reporting, and taxes

## **2.0 Company Summary**

**COMPANY NAME**, established in 2004 by **OWNER'S NAME**, is a two-person CPA firm which provides tax services, management and cost consulting services. **COMPANY NAME** serves small businesses (under \$5 million in revenue) in the Puyallup, WA area, primarily in service industries. **COMPANY NAME** plans to add additional services to its suite of services to better serve its current and future clients.

### *2.1 Company Ownership*

**OWNER'S NAME** is founder and 100% owner of **COMPANY NAME**, an S-Corporation.

### *2.2 Company History*

Founded by **OWNER'S NAME**, CPA in 2004, **COMPANY NAME** has become a full-time endeavor for **OWNER'S NAME**. **OWNER'S NAME** has over 20 years bookkeeping/customer

service experience & over 14 years tax preparation experience. This is **OWNER'S NAME** 's 6th year owning her own accounting/tax office with 10% - 40% growth each year. This year we are currently between 12% - 20% growth over last year.

**COMPANY NAME** has grown significantly in past years, but has had difficulty taking on additional work due to the limits on **OWNER'S NAME** 's time. Client retention has been a positive factor, with clients repeating service.

**COMPANY NAME** offers general bookkeeping/accounting services, payroll services & all types of business tax services for the small to mid-sized business owner. The company also offers tax preparation services for individuals, partnerships, corporations, estates and non-profit organizations. **COMPANY NAME** has seen consistent growth, even during the “recession”, because unlike the regular “box” stores (like H & R Block, etc), who utilize seasonal “lightly trained” staff and are motivated by the volume of customers processed, **COMPANY NAME** will ‘go the extra mile’ to build relationships and provide personal, caring customer service. This ensures that the bookkeeping or tax preparation is done with the utmost degree of integrity and skill level. **COMPANY NAME** takes pride in the quality of the work, the care of the client and the relationships built with communication on a personal, yet professional, level.

The business operates out of a small rented office which has enough room for one additional employee.

Table: Past Performance

<b>Past Performance</b>			
	2007	2008	2009
<b>Sales</b>	\$35,427	\$81,235	\$93,764
<b>Gross Margin</b>	\$35,157	\$79,834	\$92,908
<b>Gross Margin %</b>	99.24%	98.28%	99.09%
<b>Operating Expenses</b>	\$35,051	\$53,721	\$71,522
<b>Balance Sheet</b>			
	2007	2008	2009
<b>Current Assets</b>			
<b>Cash</b>	\$872	\$301	\$428

<b><i>Other Current Assets</i></b>	\$2,396	\$2,987	\$8,029
<b><i>Total Current Assets</i></b>	\$3,268	\$3,288	\$8,457
<b><i>Long-term Assets</i></b>			
<b><i>Long-term Assets</i></b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b><i>Accumulated Depreciation</i></b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b><i>Total Long-term Assets</i></b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b><i>Total Assets</i></b>	\$3,268	\$3,288	\$8,457
<b><i>Current Liabilities</i></b>			
<b><i>Accounts Payable</i></b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b><i>Current Borrowing</i></b>	\$1,322	\$2,780	\$5,394
<b><i>Other Current Liabilities (interest free)</i></b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b><i>Total Current Liabilities</i></b>	\$1,322	\$2,780	\$5,394
<b><i>Long-term Liabilities</i></b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b><i>Total Liabilities</i></b>	\$1,322	\$2,780	\$5,394
<b><i>Paid-in Capital</i></b>	\$780	(\$25,747)	(\$41,578)
<b><i>Retained Earnings</i></b>	\$11,130	\$36,113	\$28,386
<b><i>Earnings</i></b>	(\$9,964)	(\$9,858)	\$16,255
<b><i>Total Capital</i></b>	\$1,946	\$508	\$3,063
<b><i>Total Capital and Liabilities</i></b>	\$3,268	\$3,288	\$8,457

***Other Inputs***

***Payment Days***

15

15

15

### 3.0 Services

Current services offered by **COMPANY NAME** include:

#### **Tax Services:**

- Tax preparation
- Tax planning
- Addressing tax problems (audit representation, back taxes owed, payroll tax problems, IRS issues, bankruptcy)

#### **Management/Cost Accounting Services:**

- Audits
- Cost and Margin Analysis
- Financial Projection

Current services are either provided entirely by **OWNER'S NAME** or available through resources on the **COMPANY NAME** . website. Greenwood will provide referrals to credit card processing companies or some specialty consultants when the need calls for it, but focuses his work on general small business services of use to the widest variety of businesses.

Each business will have a consistent bookkeeper assigned to it. The bookkeepers will be trained by **OWNER'S NAME** directly in proper techniques.

To add additional value, **OWNER'S NAME** will supervise and audit the work of the bookkeepers, answering their questions when questions arise, and providing quality assurance. **OWNER'S NAME** will review the files and reports created by the bookkeepers to ensure that they follow proper formats and are prepared correctly.

### 4.0 Market Analysis Summary

The small business accounting market consists of virtually every small business in the United States. As businesses grow larger than one person sole proprietorships, they generally require expert help with at least their tax preparation, and often with additional bookkeeping and accounting services. Even many non-employer sole proprietorships will use accounting help at some point. While some small businesses hire bookkeepers or CFOs directly, many successfully outsource these types of services.

The accounting service market as a whole includes the following:

- Corporate accounting and auditing firms: The "Big Four" (PricewaterhouseCoopers, Ernst & Young, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu, and KPMG) and their competitors
- Small business accounting

- Personal accounting (by H & R Block and the like)

The National Society of Accountants states that it represents more than 30,000 independent practitioners who provide services to 19 million individuals and businesses. The continuing evolution of U.S. tax laws guarantees work for tax accountants on an ongoing basis. The market is somewhat recession-proof, as businesses which are contracting use accountants to help cut spending and limit tax liability just as growing businesses will use accountants to launch and prepare financials for expansion, mergers and acquisitions.

#### 4.1 Market Segmentation

The market of small businesses in Pierce County, Washington for **COMPANY NAME** represents approximately 85,000 businesses in 2010. It has been divided into three groups:

**Non-employer firms:** Without employees, these firms do not have many of the concerns of larger businesses. However, the owners must be vigilant to protect their own tax liability and sort out how their personal and business tax returns intersect. These firms are generally buyers of QuickBooks services and tax preparation services. As they grow, this group becomes ripe for outsourced bookkeeping services before they can hire a full-time in-house bookkeeper.

**Very small businesses:** Made up of businesses that are designed to stay small and those which are growing through a phase, these businesses require payroll services, bookkeeping, and tax preparation. They are concerned about losing control, but can generally be convinced of using outsourced accounting and bookkeeping with cost analysis. With the stakes higher, these businesses can make greater use of management accounting services, especially as most cannot afford a dedicated CFO. Many do not need a full-time bookkeeper, but can make do with part-time help, which limits their hiring options.

**Other small businesses:** Many of these businesses will have some in-house financial management and bookkeeping help. However, they may be able to save money by outsourcing these services, as they are not generally core to what the business seeks to do. These businesses may be comfortable with their situation as a cash producer for their owners or intent on growing or positioning themselves for sale.

Table: Market Analysis

<b>Market Analysis</b>							
		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	
<b>Potential Customers</b>	Growth						CAGR
<b>Non-employer Firms</b>	5%	50,000	52,500	55,125	57,881	60,775	5.00%
<b>Very Small Businesses (2 to</b>	5%	25,000	26,250	27,563	28,941	30,388	5.00%



## 4.2 Target Market Segment Strategy

**COMPANY NAME** will focus on the "very small business" target group for its bookkeeping services as this group can make the most consistent use of part-time bookkeepers. The type of bookkeepers whom these businesses would hire is generally employees of the same kind. However, these businesses often do not have the resources to provide proper oversight or training to their bookkeepers, and will suffer from not having the leverage to hire the cream of the crop. **COMPANY NAME** can provide the solution to these problems.

## 4.3 Service Business Analysis

The small business accounting industry consists of numerous independent accountants and bookkeepers as well as many small firms. Larger firms tend to pursue medium and large business clients.

Accounting and bookkeeping services are purchased by owners and top managers of small businesses. They will contact businesses by phone and generally meet in person (at the client's office) to interview and discuss the prospect of working together.

### 4.3.1 Competition and Buying Patterns

Major competitors in the Puyallup, Washington market include:

- **In Balance Accounting:** Provides general bookkeeping services, QuickBooks and start-up business organization. Website appears to be cold, cluttered and confusing to the prospective client as to what services are offered.
- **Summit View Accounting:** Accounting and bookkeeping services, including a computerized bill-pay services. Their major weakness is the reliance on their own software package rather than QuickBooks, the industry standard for small businesses.
- For bookkeeping services, the business also must compete indirectly against the prospect of businesses hiring their own part-time bookkeepers. This gives businesses the advantage of greater control and perhaps development of a future full-time employee. If the hire works out, the cost can be lower for a business than an outside service. However, this can lead to employees who are not as well-educated or experienced as bookkeepers through a bookkeeping service who have worked with a range of businesses. Generally, the cost is lower in the long run with a bookkeeping service, as training is done more systematically and supervisors are more regimented and experienced.

To choose between competitors, factors considered by clients include:

- Positive references (especially from known sources or other businesses in the same industry)
- CPA leadership (protects the businesses, even if work is being performed by non-CPAs)
- Price (often low on the list of considerations, as long as price is not exorbitantly high)

## 5.0 Strategy and Implementation Summary

To promote the business to its target of businesses with 2 to 10 employees, **COMPANY NAME** will:

- Expand its Web presence through website development and marketing
- Initiate a systematic client referral program to prospect within existing clients and their contacts
- Use print ads in local business publications to target small business readers

### 5.1 Competitive Edge

**COMPANY NAME** will achieve a competitive edge among Puyallup, Washington bookkeeping services due to its combination of CPA oversight with lower-level, inexpensive labor. Clients will receive the advantage of having a CPA review their books and propose additional advice when appropriate, while not paying much more than they would to hire their own part-time bookkeeper.

This is not an inimitable competitive edge, but the market in Puyallup, Washington is large enough to allow for the success of **COMPANY NAME** with this strategy. Large firms ignore the small business market because they are better positioned to serve larger businesses. They are unlikely to imitate this strategy as they will find it difficult to convince small businesses that they can offer services which are affordable to them.

### 5.2 Marketing Strategy

**COMPANY NAME** will use the following marketing tactics to reach its target market of very small businesses (2 to 10 employees) with its new bookkeeping services:

- Website marketing
- Redevelopment of the **COMPANY NAME** brochure with an additional section about the services
- Periodic advertisements in Puyallup, Washington small business publications, each tracked to determine whether they yield inquiries and clients

The marketing messages will focus on the economics of the decision to use outsourced bookkeepers from **COMPANY NAME** and the advantage of CPA oversight with **OWNER'S NAME's** experience and track record.

**5.3 Sales Strategy**

The sales strategy for **COMPANY NAME's** bookkeeping services is to attempt to sell the service predominantly to existing clients, especially at first before marketing pays off with new inquiries. This will require **OWNER'S NAME** to inform all existing clients by phone about the idea, once she has determined that they are qualified to use the service. Whenever possible, clients will be approached during regularly scheduled calls and meetings so as to not require a great deal of additional prospecting time.

**OWNER'S NAME** will then ask clients directly for referrals to other businesses and business owners they know who may be right for the bookkeeping services. **OWNER'S NAME** will seek to contact two referrals per day.

The result of this initiative of direct selling is expected to be at least five clients within the first couple of months, as many current **COMPANY NAME** clients appear extremely ready for this service and trusting of **OWNER'S NAME**.

**5.3.1 Sales Forecast**

Total sales are expected to rise significantly with the success of the bookkeeping services revenue stream. The existing revenue streams are projected to grow at slow rates, as **OWNER'S NAME** cannot take on much additional work. They are not projected to grow very much in 2010, as **OWNER'S NAME** will spend additional time on the establishment of the bookkeeping services. Furthermore, these revenues will drop by slightly in the first quarter as additional time is spent by **OWNER'S NAME** on hiring, training, office renovations and launching this revenue stream.

Direct cost of sales are very low for the business as most costs are fixed. Travel to client sites, printing and paper and other direct supplies for clients are the only direct costs for services provided directly by **OWNER'S NAME**. Wages for non-billable hours (training periods) for new bookkeepers are listed in the Personnel table.

Table: Sales Forecast

<b>Sales Forecast</b>			
	2010	2011	2012
<b>Sales</b>			
<b>Account Management</b>	\$57,098	\$62,808	\$64,692
<b>Tax Preparation</b>	\$72,300	\$79,530	\$87,483

<b>Total Sales</b>	\$129,398	\$142,338	\$152,175
<b>Direct Cost of Sales</b>	2010	2011	2012
<b>Cash Discounts</b>	\$576	\$593	\$611
<b>Advertising</b>	\$400	\$400	\$400
<b>Subtotal Direct Cost of Sales</b>	\$976	\$993	\$1,011



## 5.4 Milestones

To execute the milestones listed, **OWNER'S NAME** will make liberal use of an outside marketing service firm which will manage the execution of the marketing activities listed. **OWNER'S NAME** will directly execute the sales activities listed through her work with clients.

\$27,000 of the funds acquired will be used for the renovation and expansion of the current office in order to house new employees.

Table: Milestones

<b>Milestones</b>					
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Manager</b>	<b>Department</b>
<b>Building Renevations</b>	11/1/2010	6/1/2011	\$27,000	<b>OWNER'S NAME</b>	Owner
<b>Advertising Campaign</b>	11/1/2010	11/1/2011	\$40,000	<b>OWNER'S NAME</b>	Owner
<b>Company Auto</b>	11/1/2010	1/1/2011	\$26,000	<b>OWNER'S NAME</b>	Owner
<b>Addition of New Employees</b>	12/1/2010	12/31/2011	\$132,000	<b>OWNER'S NAME</b>	Owner
<b>Totals</b>			\$225,000		

## 6.0 Management Summary

**OWNER'S NAME** is CEO and sole manager of **COMPANY NAME**. With bookkeeping services, **OWNER'S NAME** will oversee part-time bookkeepers.

Periodically, **OWNER'S NAME** will request to audit their work directly to spot any problems before they become issues for the clients. Any issues with the bookkeepers will be reported by the clients to the **OWNER'S NAME** directly. She will either handle them herself.

### 6.1 Personnel Plan

As the Personnel Plan shows, the company expects to make gradual investments in personnel over the next three years.

Table: Personnel

<b>Personnel Plan</b>			
	2010	2011	2012
<b>Owner/Employee</b>	\$27,996	\$28,836	\$29,701
<b>Bookkeepers</b>	\$43,500	\$44,805	\$46,149
<b>Total People</b>	3	6	8
<b>Total Payroll</b>	\$71,496	\$73,641	\$75,850

7.0 Financial Plan

The financial plan of the business requires growth financed by positive cash flows from operations. Additional outside investment or owner investment is not necessary. COMPANY NAME is not capital-intensive, but will increase fixed costs of the business which must be covered almost immediately by additional revenues from bookkeeping sales. This is feasible because it is expected that at least five current clients will use the service without hesitation as they are ready to start using a bookkeeper or outsource their current bookkeeping.

7.1 Important Assumptions

The business will grow the number of part-time bookkeepers with the business over these next three years. In the first year, two bookkeepers will work at less than 20 hours per week each for several months before reaching capacity, and a third bookkeeper will join the company during the next tax season.

7.2 Break-even Analysis

COMPANY NAME. monthly revenue break-even is based on the fixed costs of running the current business along with the old lines of business. The increased marketing activity, capacity, payroll, benefits, and computer expenses for the new bookkeepers and cost of sales to hire bookkeepers drives this break-even point higher.

Table: Break-even Analysis

<b>Break-even Analysis</b>	
<b>Monthly Revenue Break-even</b>	\$8,869
<b>Assumptions:</b>	
<b>Average Percent Variable Cost</b>	1%
<b>Estimated Monthly Fixed Cost</b>	\$8,802



### 7.3 Projected Profit and Loss

As the Profit and Loss table shows, the company expects to continue its steady growth in profitability over the next three years of operations.

Table: Profit and Loss

<b>Pro Forma Profit and Loss</b>			
	2010	2011	2012
<b>Sales</b>	\$129,398	\$142,338	\$152,175
<b>Direct Cost of Sales</b>	\$976	\$993	\$1,011
<b>Other Cost of Sales</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total Cost of Sales</b>	\$976	\$993	\$1,011
<b>Gross Margin</b>	\$128,422	\$141,345	\$151,164
<b>Gross Margin %</b>	99.25%	99.30%	99.34%
<b>Expenses</b>			
<b>Payroll</b>	\$71,496	\$73,641	\$75,850
<b>Marketing/Promotion</b>	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000
<b>Depreciation</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Automotive Expenses</b>	\$2,052	\$2,114	\$2,177
<b>Professional Fees</b>	\$3,696	\$3,807	\$3,921
<b>Rent</b>	\$6,636	\$6,835	\$7,041
<b>Office Expenses</b>	\$15,744	\$16,216	\$16,703
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	\$105,624	\$108,613	\$111,692

<b><i>Profit Before Interest and Taxes</i></b>	\$22,798	\$32,732	\$39,472
<b><i>EBITDA</i></b>	\$22,798	\$32,732	\$39,472
<b><i>Interest Expense</i></b>	\$7,498	\$14,040	\$13,040
<b><i>Taxes Incurred</i></b>	\$4,590	\$5,608	\$7,929
<b><i>Net Profit</i></b>	\$10,710	\$13,084	\$18,502
<b><i>Net Profit/Sales</i></b>	8.28%	9.19%	12.16%





#### 7.4 Projected Cash Flow

The expansion of the business can be undertaken with the grant funding attained. Significant cash reserves can be built up in future years for an acquisition or additional service expansion.

Table: Cash Flow

<b>Pro Forma Cash Flow</b>			
	2010	2011	2012
<b>Cash Received</b>			
<b>Cash from Operations</b>			
<b>Cash Sales</b>	\$129,398	\$142,338	\$152,175
<b>Subtotal Cash from Operations</b>	\$129,398	\$142,338	\$152,175
<b>Additional Cash Received</b>			
<b>Sales Tax, VAT, HST/GST Received</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>New Current Borrowing</b>	\$50,000	\$0	\$0
<b>New Other Liabilities (interest-free)</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>New Long-term Liabilities</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Sales of Other Current Assets</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Sales of Long-term Assets</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>New Investment Received</b>	\$353,000	\$0	\$0
<b>Subtotal Cash Received</b>	\$532,398	\$142,338	\$152,175
<b>Expenditures</b>			
<b>Expenditures from Operations</b>			
<b>Cash Spending</b>	\$116,938	\$122,254	\$126,673

<b>Bill Payments</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Subtotal Spent on Operations</b>	\$116,938	\$122,254	\$126,673
<b>Additional Cash Spent</b>			
<b>Sales Tax, VAT, HST/GST Paid Out</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Principal Repayment of Current Borrowing</b>	\$9,996	\$9,996	\$9,996
<b>Other Liabilities Principal Repayment</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Long-term Liabilities Principal Repayment</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Purchase Other Current Assets</b>	\$83,000	\$0	\$0
<b>Purchase Long-term Assets</b>	\$53,000	\$0	\$0
<b>Dividends</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Subtotal Cash Spent</b>	\$262,934	\$132,250	\$136,669
<b>Net Cash Flow</b>	\$269,464	\$10,088	\$15,506
<b>Cash Balance</b>	\$269,892	\$279,980	\$295,487



### 7.5 Projected Balance Sheet

The net worth of the business will improve if the new business line succeeds as expected. Additional external financing will not be needed and the debt of **COMPANY NAME** will remain low.

Table: Balance Sheet

<b>Pro Forma Balance Sheet</b>			
	2010	2011	2012
<b>Assets</b>			
<b>Current Assets</b>			
<b>Cash</b>	\$368,142	\$371,230	\$379,737
<b>Other Current Assets</b>	\$91,029	\$91,029	\$91,029
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	\$459,171	\$462,259	\$470,766
<b>Long-term Assets</b>			
<b>Long-term Assets</b>	\$53,000	\$53,000	\$53,000
<b>Accumulated Depreciation</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total Long-term Assets</b>	\$53,000	\$53,000	\$53,000
<b>Total Assets</b>	\$512,171	\$515,259	\$523,766
<b>Liabilities and Capital</b>	2010	2011	2012
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
<b>Accounts Payable</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0

<b><i>Current Borrowing</i></b>	\$145,398	\$135,402	\$125,406
<b><i>Other Current Liabilities</i></b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b><i>Subtotal Current Liabilities</i></b>	\$145,398	\$135,402	\$125,406
<b><i>Long-term Liabilities</i></b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b><i>Total Liabilities</i></b>	\$145,398	\$135,402	\$125,406
<b><i>Paid-in Capital</i></b>	\$311,422	\$311,422	\$311,422
<b><i>Retained Earnings</i></b>	\$44,641	\$55,351	\$68,435
<b><i>Earnings</i></b>	\$10,710	\$13,084	\$18,502
<b><i>Total Capital</i></b>	\$366,773	\$379,857	\$398,360
<b><i>Total Liabilities and Capital</i></b>	\$512,171	\$515,259	\$523,766
<b><i>Net Worth</i></b>	\$366,773	\$379,857	\$398,360

---

## 7.6 Business Ratios

**COMPANY NAME** is compared here to the "Office Administrative Services" industry of under \$250,000 in revenues. Comparison to the other closest industry, "Tax Preparation Services," is less useful because of the differences created by the new revenue line.

**COMPANY NAME** does not hold substantial current or long-term assets, besides some office equipment. The assets of the business are primarily the human and knowledge assets of **OWNER'S NAME** and the resources presented on **COMPANY NAME** website which are not recognized here. This explains the differences in asset ratios.

Table: Ratios

<b>Ratio Analysis</b>				
	2010	2011	2012	Industry Profile
<b>Sales Growth</b>	38.00%	10.00%	6.91%	12.49%
<b>Percent of Total Assets</b>				
<b>Other Current Assets</b>	24.14%	22.78%	21.33%	47.49%
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	85.94%	86.74%	87.58%	61.28%
<b>Long-term Assets</b>	14.06%	13.26%	12.42%	38.72%
<b>Total Assets</b>	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
<b>Current Liabilities</b>				
<b>Current Liabilities</b>	1.43%	1.35%	1.26%	27.44%
<b>Long-term Liabilities</b>				
<b>Long-term Liabilities</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	21.65%
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	1.43%	1.35%	1.26%	49.09%
<b>Net Worth</b>	98.57%	98.65%	98.74%	50.91%
<b>Percent of Sales</b>				
<b>Sales</b>	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
<b>Gross Margin</b>	99.25%	99.30%	99.34%	100.00%

<b><i>Selling, General &amp; Administrative Expenses</i></b>	87.20%	83.47%	81.43%	68.73%
<b><i>Advertising Expenses</i></b>	4.64%	4.22%	3.94%	2.32%
<b><i>Profit Before Interest and Taxes</i></b>	17.62%	23.00%	25.94%	3.59%
<b><i>Main Ratios</i></b>				
<b><i>Current</i></b>	60.07	64.25	69.30	1.34
<b><i>Quick</i></b>	60.07	64.25	69.30	1.03
<b><i>Total Debt to Total Assets</i></b>	1.43%	1.35%	1.26%	64.62%
<b><i>Pre-tax Return on Net Worth</i></b>	5.99%	8.17%	9.24%	19.53%
<b><i>Pre-tax Return on Assets</i></b>	5.90%	8.06%	9.12%	6.91%

<b>Additional Ratios</b>	2010	2011	2012	
<b>Net Profit Margin</b>	12.04%	15.83%	17.91%	n.a
<b>Return on Equity</b>	4.19%	5.72%	6.47%	n.a
<b>Activity Ratios</b>				
<b>Accounts Payable Turnover</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	n.a
<b>Payment Days</b>	0	0	0	n.a
<b>Total Asset Turnover</b>	0.34	0.36	0.36	n.a
<b>Debt Ratios</b>				
<b>Debt to Net Worth</b>	0.01	0.01	0.01	n.a
<b>Current Liab. to Liab.</b>	1.00	1.00	1.00	n.a
<b>Liquidity Ratios</b>				
<b>Net Working Capital</b>	\$318,644	\$341,179	\$368,432	n.a
<b>Interest Coverage</b>	42.27	60.68	73.18	n.a
<b>Additional Ratios</b>				
<b>Assets to Sales</b>	2.91	2.81	2.80	n.a
<b>Current Debt/Total Assets</b>	1%	1%	1%	n.a
<b>Acid Test</b>	60.07	64.25	69.30	n.a
<b>Sales/Net Worth</b>	0.35	0.36	0.36	n.a
<b>Dividend Payout</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	n.a

[Go to Top](#)