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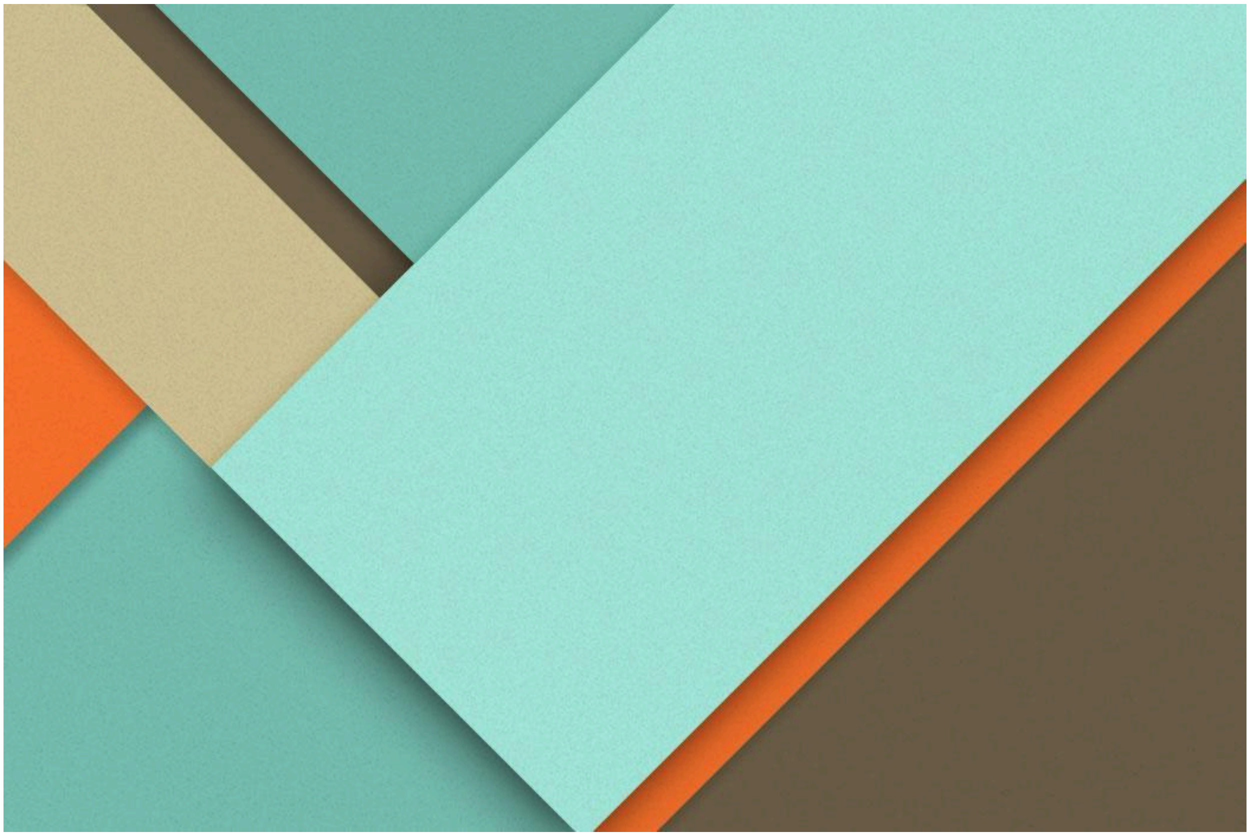


Business Plan: YOUR COMPANY NAME

DATE

—

Your Names

Business Name

Address

City, State, Zip

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Confidentiality Agreement

The undersigned reader acknowledges that any information provided by ___________________________ in this business plan, other than information that is in the public domain, is confidential in nature, and that any disclosure or use of same by the reader may cause serious harm or damage to __________________________. Therefore, the undersigned agrees not to disclose it without express written permission from __________________________________.

Upon request, the undersigned reader will immediately return this document to _____________________________.

____
Signature

____
Name (typed or printed)

____
Date

This is a business plan. It does not imply an offering of securities.

USE THIS TEMPLATE AS A GUIDE FOR WRITING YOUR BUSINESS PLAN. DELETE ALL ASSIGNMENT INSTRUCTIONS.,BUT KEEP THE WORKSHEETS AND TABLES. RETAIN ALL SUBJECT HEADINGS. THE SECTIONS DO NOT HAVE TO BE LONG AND WORDY, BUT SHOULD ADDRESS THE QUESTIONS. FEEL FREE TO CHANGE THE TEMPLATE.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Executive Summary is the most important part of your business plan. Often, it's the only part that a prospective investor or lender reads before deciding whether or not to read the rest of your plan. It should convey your enthusiasm for your business idea and get readers excited about it, too.

Write your Executive Summary LAST, after you have completed the rest of the business plan. That way, you'll have thought through all the elements of your startup and be prepared to summarize them.

The Executive Summary should briefly explain each of the below.

- **An overview of your business** idea (one or two sentences).
- **A description of your product and/or service.** What problems are you solving for your target customers?
- **Your goals for the business.** Where do you expect the business to be in one year, three years, five years?
- **Your proposed target market.** Who are your ideal customers?
- **Your competition and what differentiates your business.** Who are you up against, and what unique selling proposition will help you succeed?
- **Your management team and their prior experience.** What do they bring to the table that will give your business a competitive edge?
- **Financial outlook for the business.** If you're using the business plan for financing purposes, explain exactly how much money you want, how you will use it, and how that will make your business more profitable.

Limit your Executive Summary to one or two pages in total.

After reading the Executive Summary, readers should have a basic understanding of your business, should be excited about its potential, and should be interested enough to read further.

After you've completed your business plan, come back to this section to write your

executive summary on the next page.

II. COMPANY DESCRIPTION

This section explains the basic elements of your business. Include each of the below:

1. Name of your business.
2. Name of founders
   - o What type of business are you starting? (service, retail, wholesale, products).
   - o Include your industry's SIC code (search the SIC Manual at: https://www.osha.gov/pls/imis/sicsearch.html
3. 1 paragraph summary of your business concept (use the Business Concept Paper as a reference).
4. **Company mission statement**
   A mission statement is a brief explanation of your company's reason for being. It can be as short as a marketing tagline ("*MoreDough is an app that helps consumers manage their personal finances in a fun, convenient way*") or more involved: ("*Doggie Tales is a dog daycare and grooming salon specializing in convenient services for urban pet lovers. Our mission is to provide service, safety and a family atmosphere, enabling busy dog owners to spend less time taking care of their dog's basic needs and more time having fun with their pet.") In general, it's best to keep your mission statement to one or two sentences.*

5. **Company philosophy and vision**
   - What values does your business live by? *Honesty, integrity, fun*, *innovation* and *community* are values that might be important to your business philosophy.
   - What will your business's image be? (quality and price of my products or services, the location and appearance of my facilities, level of employee assistance to customers, types of customers I will sell to).
   - What's your unique selling proposition (Why will the market buy from YOU? More value? Better? Unique? Lower cost? Quality? Unique? Faster?)
   - *Vision* refers to the long-term outlook for your business. What do you ultimately want it to become? For instance, your vision for your doggie day-care center might be to become a national chain, franchise or to sell to a larger company.

6. **Company goals**

   Specify your long- and short-term goals as well as any milestones or benchmarks you will use to measure your progress. For instance, if one of your goals is to open a second location, milestones might include reaching a specific sales volume or signing contracts with a certain number of clients in the new market.

7. **Target market**
   You will cover this in-depth in the Marketing Plan section. Here, briefly explain who your target customers are.

8. **Legal structure**
   Is your business a sole proprietorship, LLC, partnership or corporation? Why did you choose this particular form of business?

After reading the Company Description, the reader should have a basic understanding of your business's mission and vision, goals, target market, competitive landscape and legal structure.

Company Description Worksheet

Use the worksheet as a guide to writing your company description.

Business Name	
Company Mission Statement	
Company Philosophy/ Values	
Company Vision	
Goals & Milestones	1. 2. 3.
Target Market	

Legal Structure/ Ownership	

III. Products & Services

This section is an assessment of the overall appeal of the product or service being proposed. Expand on the basic information about your products and services included in the Executive Summary and Company Description. Explain in detail each of the below:

1. **Your company's products and/or services:** What do you sell, and how is it manufactured or provided? Include details of relationships with suppliers, manufacturers and/or partners that are essential to delivering the product or service to customers.

2. **The problem the product or service solves**: Every business needs to solve a problem that its customers face. Explain what the problem is and how your product or service solves it. What is the need for your product or service?

3. What are its **benefits, features and unique selling proposition**? Why is your solution is better than other companies (i.e. your business targets a customer base your competitors are ignoring, or has some other characteristic that gives it a competitive edge). Using feedback from others and the business concept tests, describe why your product or service is desirable. Why would someone buy it?

4. **Any proprietary features that give you a competitive advantage**: Do you have a patent on your product or a patent pending? Do you have exclusive agreements with suppliers or vendors to sell a product or service that none of your competitors sell? Do you have the license for a product, technology or service that's in high demand and/or short supply?

5. **How you will price your product or service**: Describe the pricing, fee, subscription or licensing structure of your product or service. How does your product or service fit into the competitive landscape in terms of pricing—are you on the low end, mid-range or high end? How will that pricing strategy help you attract customers? What is your projected profit margin (i.e. cost to produce vs. earnings)?

Include any product or service details, such as technical specifications, drawings, photos, or other support information, in the Appendices.

After reading the Products & Services section, the reader should have a clear understanding of what your business does, what problem it solves for customers, and the unique selling proposition that makes it competitive.

IV. Marketing Plan

Industry/target market research is an assessment of the overall appeal of the industry and the target market for the product or service being proposed. [Here's a link for sources to conduct market research.]

This section provides details on your industry, the competitive landscape, your target market and how you will market your business to those customers. Explain in detail each of the below.

1. **Industry attractiveness**
   - Describe the industry your business will fit into to.
   - What is the industry like now?
   - Quantify the Total market: (determine how many units of a product are consumed dollars are spent each year for the service or product).
   - Trends in the industry – is it growing or shrinking?
   - Critical success factors required to lead the industry.

2. **Barriers to entry**
   - What barriers to entry does your startup face, and how do you plan to overcome them? Barriers to entry might include:
     - High startup costs
     - High production costs
     - High marketing costs
     - Brand recognition challenges

- Finding qualified employees
- Need for specialized technology or patents

Once your business surmounts the barriers to entry you mentioned, what additional threats might it face? Explain how the following could affect your startup:

- Changes in government regulations
- Changes in technology
- Changes in the economy
- Changes in your industry
- Do these trends represent opportunities or problems?
- What factors will push the industry towards being an international or global industry or prevent it from becoming international or global?

3. **Timeliness of entry into the target market**
    - What are the benefits of starting your business at this moment in time based on the current state of your industry, and your target market? You must determine if a window of opportunity exists for the product or service. You can do this by studying your industry.

4. **Product/Service Features**
    - Describe all of your products or services, being sure to focus on the customer's point of view. For each product or service:
    - Describe the most important features. What is special about it? Will my products/services be different from what is already available? In what way? (e.g., convenience, quality, service, price)
    - Describe the most important benefits. What does it do for the customer?
        a. Consider what need or demand your product or service will satisfy in the marketplace? (An idea is only viable if people are willing to pay you for what it provides).
        b. Are these products/services already available in the marketplace? If so, how and where? If not, why not?

- In this section, explain any after-sale services you plan to provide, such as:
    - Product delivery
    - Warranty/guarantee
    - Service contracts
    - Ongoing support
    - Training
    - Refund policy

5. Target Customers

Who will buy the product or service? Are there enough customers to support the business? Most firms do not try to service their entire industry, only a specific target market within the industry. It's important to assess both the broad industry and your specific target market.

- **Describe your target (ideal) customer in detail.**
  - Age?
  - Sex?
  - Family size?
  - Income?
  - Occupation?
  - Marital status?
  - Location?
  - Occupation?
  - Education?
  - Nationality?

You may have more than one target customer group. For instance, if you sell a product to consumers and small businesses.

For businesses customers:
- Industry
- Location
- Size
- Stage in business (startup, growing, mature)
- Annual sales

Target Market Research
Include information on the follow questions:

- Why will customers buy your products or service?
  (Possibilities include need, luxury, impulse, replacement, improvement, status, pleasure, quality, price, guarantee, durability.)
- Where do my customers buy the product or service now?
- How do my customers buy the product or service?
- When will my customers buy my products/services? (Particular times of the year, month, week, day.)
- How often will customers buy my products/services? In what quantity?
- How many potential customers are in my market area?
- What are the key success factors in satisfying my clients?

6. **Competition**
   One of the biggest mistakes you can make in a business plan is to claim you have “no competition.” Every business has competitors. Your plan must show that you’ve identified yours and understand how to differentiate your business.

Consider the following questions in your description of competitors:

- Who will my major competitors be and where are they located?
- What are the major strengths of each competitor?
- What are the major weaknesses?
- Do any of my major competitors plan to expand? At what location?
- Are there any new competitors about to start operating in my market area? Where?
- Have any competitors gone out of business in the past two years? If so why?
- Will growing demand permit a new business to enter the market or will I be attempting to take business away from my competitors?
- What share of the market do you expect to capture (enter a percentage)?
- Can you define the key strategies to compete? To maintain and grow your business?

Use the Competitor Data Collection Plan on the this page to brainstorm ways you can collect information about competitors in each category.

Competitor Data Collection Plan

Price		
Benefits/Features		

Size/profitability		
Market strategy		

Once you've identified your major competitors, use the Competitive Analysis Worksheet on this page to compare your business to theirs.

Competitive Analysis Worksheet

For each factor listed in the first column, assess whether you think it's a strength or a weakness (S or W) for your business and for your competitors. Then rank how important each factor is to your target customer on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = very important; 5 = not very important). Use this information to explain your competitive advantages and disadvantages.

FACTOR	Me	Competitor A	Competitor B	Competitor C	Importance to Customer
Products					
Price					
Quality					
Selection					
Service					
Reliability					
Stability					
Expertise					
Company Reputation					
Location					
Appearance					
Sales Method					

Advertising					
Image					

SWOT Analysis

Industry/target market feasibility is an assessment of the overall appeal of the industry and the target market for the product or service being proposed.

Write your own SWOT analysis, (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) using this matrix. What advantages do you have over your competitors?

SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS MAINTAINING THESE STRENGTHS What can I do to maintain these strengths?	WEAKNESSES OVERCOMING THESE WEAKNESS What can I do to overcome these weakness?
OPPORTUNITIES TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THESE OPPORTUNITIES What can I do to take advantage of	THREATS OVERCOMING THESE THREATS What can I do to overcome these threats?

these opportunities?	

7. Positioning

Now that you've assessed your industry, product/service, customers and competition, you should have a clear understanding of your business's niche (your unique segment of the market) as well as your positioning (how you want to present your company to customers). Explain these in a short paragraph.

In this section, explain the marketing and advertising tactics you plan to use. Advertising may include:

- Online
- Print
- Radio
- Cable television
- Out-of-home
- Internet Ads

Which media will you advertise in, why and how often?

Marketing may include:

- Business website
- Social media marketing
- Email marketing
- Mobile marketing
- Search engine optimization
- Content marketing
- Print marketing materials (brochures, flyers, business cards)
- Public relations
- Trade shows
- Networking
- Word-of-mouth
- Referrals

What image do you want to project for your business brand?

What design elements will you use to market your business? (This includes your logo, signage and interior design.) Explain how they'll support your brand.

Promotional budget

How much do you plan to spend on the marketing and advertising outreach above:

- Before startup (These numbers will go into your startup budget)
- On an ongoing basis (These numbers will go into your operating plan budget)

Use the Marketing Expenses Strategy Chart on the next page to help figure out the cost of reaching different target markets.

Marketing Expenses Strategy Chart

	Target Market 1	Target Market 2	Target Market 3
One-Time Expenses			
Monthly or Annual Expenses			
Labor Costs			

Download the Annual Marketing Budget Template. Using the information you've gathered, for help creating your annual marketing budget.

8. Pricing

You explained pricing briefly in the “Products & Services” section; now it’s time to go into more detail. How do you plan to set prices? Keep in mind that few small businesses can compete on price without hurting their profit margins. Instead of offering the lowest price, it’s better to go with an average price and compete on quality and service. Describe your pricing strategy in a short paragraph.

- Does your pricing strategy reflect your positioning?
- Compare your prices with your competitors’. Are they higher, lower or the same? Why?
- How important is price to your customers? It may not be a deciding factor.
- What will your customer service and credit policies be?

Use the Pricing Strategy Worksheet on the next page to help with your pricing.

Pricing Strategy Worksheet

Business Name		
Which of the following pricing strategies will you employ? Circle one.		
Cost Plus *The costs of making/obtaining your product or providing your service, plus enough to make a profit*	**Value Based** *Based on your competitive advantage and brand (perceived value)*	**Other:**

9. Location or proposed location

If you have a location picked out, explain why you believe this is a good location for your startup. If you haven't chosen a location yet, explain what you'll be looking for in a location and why, including:

- Convenient location for customers. Consider, based on target customers, what location would be best for your business (if applicable)? If customers have to come to my store location, how far will they be willing to travel to get to my business?
- Adequate parking for employees and customers
- Proximity to public transportation or major roads
- Type of space (industrial, retail, etc.)
- Types of businesses nearby

Focus on the location of your building, not the physical building itself. You'll discuss that later, in the Operations section.

Distribution channels

What methods of distribution will you use to sell your products and/or services? These may include:

- Retail
- Direct sales
- Ecommerce
- Wholesale
- Inside sales force
- Outside sales representatives

If you have any strategic partnerships or key distributor relationships that will be a factor in your success, explain them here.

After reading the Marketing Plan section, the reader should understand who your target customers are, how you plan to market to them, what sales and distribution channels you will use, and how you will position your product/service relative to the competition.

V. Operational Plan

This section details what is required for your business to operate successfully. Organizational feasibility analysis determines whether a proposed business has sufficient management expertise and resources to successfully launch its business.

1. **Production**
   - How will you produce your product or deliver your service (supplies, manufacturing, equipment needed)? Describe your production methods, the equipment you'll use and how much it will cost to produce what you sell.
   - How will you maintain consistency? Describe the quality control procedures you'll use
2. **Technology**
   - This is where you list the technology required for your business.
3. **Legal environment**
   - What type of legal environment will your business operate in? How are you prepared to handle legal requirements? Include details such as:
   - Any licenses and/or permits that are needed and whether you've obtained them
   - Any trademarks, copyrights or patents to someone else's intellectual property to operate your business?
   - The insurance coverage your business requires and how much it costs
   - Any environmental, health or workplace regulations affecting your business
4. **Personnel**
   - What type of personnel will your business need? Explain details such as:
   - What types of employees? Are there any licensing or educational requirements?
   - How many employees will you need?
   - Will you ever hire freelancers or independent contractors?
   - Include job descriptions.
   - What is the pay structure (hourly, salaried, base plus commission, etc.)?
   - How do you plan to find qualified employees and contractors?
   - What type of training is needed and how will you train employees?

Download the [Job Analysis Worksheet] and use it to help you answer the questions above.

5. **Inventory**

If applicable explain your business inventory requirements:

- What kind of inventory will you keep on hand (raw materials, supplies, finished products)?
- What will be the average value of inventory (in other words, how much are you investing in inventory)?
- What rate of inventory turnover do you expect? How does this compare to industry averages?
- Will you need more inventory than normal during certain seasons? (For instance, a retailer might need additional inventory for the holiday shopping season.)
- What is your lead time for ordering inventory?

6. **Suppliers**

If applicable, list your key suppliers, including:

- Names, addresses, websites
- Type and amount of inventory furnished
- Their credit and delivery policies
- History and reliability
- Do you expect any supply shortages or short-term delivery problems? If so, how will you handle them?
- Do you have more than one supplier for critical items (as a backup)?
- Do you expect the cost of supplies to hold steady or fluctuate? If the latter, how will you deal with changing costs?
- What are your suppliers' payment terms?

7. **Credit policies**

If you plan to sell to customers on credit, explain:

- Whether this is typical in your industry (do customers expect it)?
- What your credit policies will be. How much credit will you extend? What are the criteria for extending credit?
- How will you check new customers' creditworthiness?
- What credit terms will you offer?
- Detail how much it will cost you to offer credit, and show that you've built these costs into your pricing structure.
- How will you handle slow-paying customers? Explain your policies, such as when you will follow up on late payments, and when you will get an attorney or collections agency involved.

After reading the Operational Plan section, the reader should understand how your business will operate on a day-to-day basis.

VI. Management & Organization

This section focuses on your skills and experience. Why are you qualified to start and manage this business? Passion, existing computer skills, past work experience, professional networks, experience managing money, college degrees—are all factors. If you're using your business plan to get financing, know that investors and lenders carefully assess whether you have a qualified management team.

1. **Biographies**
   Include brief biographies of the owner/s and key employees. Include resumes in the Appendix. Here, summarize your experience and those of your key employees in a few paragraphs per person. Focus on the prior experience and skills that have prepared your team to succeed in this business. If anyone has previous experience starting and growing a business, explain this in detail.

2. **Gaps**
   Explain how you plan to fill in any gaps in management and/or experience. For instance, if you lack financial know-how, will you hire a CFO or retain an accountant? If you don't have sales skills, will you hire an in-house sales manager or use outside sales reps?

3. **Advisors**
   List the members of your professional/advisory support team, including:
   - Attorney
   - Accountant
   - Board of directors
   - Advisory board
   - Insurance agent
   - Consultants
   - Banker
   - Mentors and other advisors

If they have experience or specializations that will increase your chances of success, explain. For instance, does your mentor have experience launching and growing a similar business?

4. **Organization Chart**
   Develop and include an organization chart. This should include both roles that you've already filled and roles you plan to fill in the future.

After reading the Management & Organization section, the reader should feel confident that you have a qualified team leading your business.

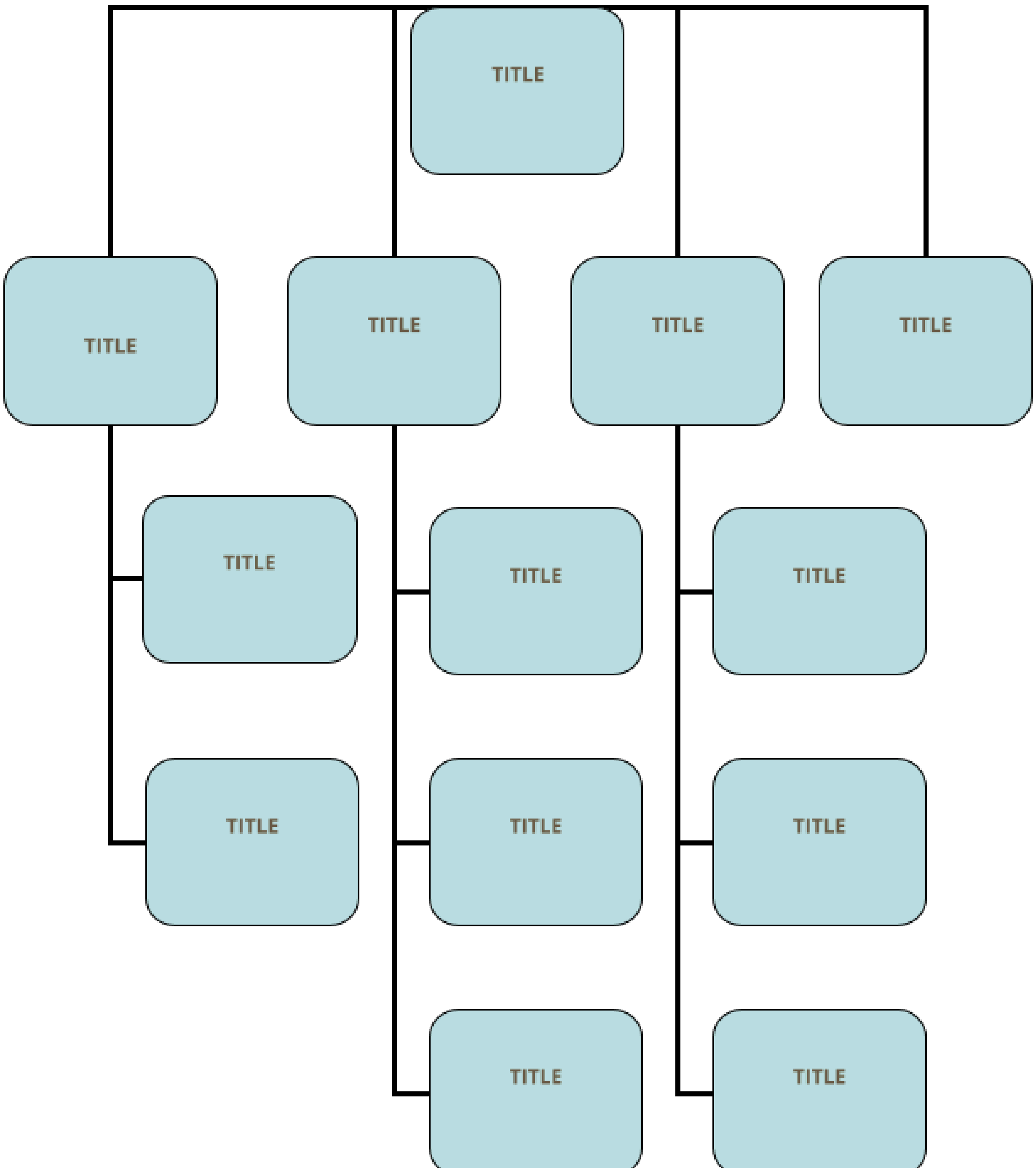
Use the Management Worksheet and Organization Chart on the next two pages to highlight your management team.

Management Worksheet

Bio/s	
Gaps in Management or Experience	

Advisors	

Organization Chart



VII. Startup Expenses & Capitalization

In this section, detail the expenses involved in opening for business and how much capital you'll need. (Do not include ongoing expenses after your business opens; those are listed in the Financial Plan.) Estimating startup expenses as accurately as possible helps you gather enough startup capital. Include a section on the following:

- **Total Start-Up Cash Needed**. The startup costs (which include capital investments and operating expenses) should include all the costs necessary for the business to make its first sale. New firms typically need money for a host of purposes, including the hiring of personnel, office or manufacturing space, equipment, training, research and development, marketing, and the initial product rollout.
- **Financial Performance of Similar Businesses** (Compare your business to similar, established businesses. Research financial reports on those firms to find out how much revenue they generate annually).
- **Overall Financial Attractiveness of the Proposed Venture** (Multiply the number of customers you expect to have annually by the average purchase amount for each sale. Consider annual projected revenue for three years.)

Complete the following templates on finances:

Total Startup Cash Needed (to Make First Sale)

Capital Investments	*Amount*
Property	
Furniture and fixtures	
Computer equipment	
Other equipment	
Vehicles	
Operating Expenses	*Amount*
Legal, accounting, and professional services	
Advertising and promotions	
Deposits for utilities	
Licenses and permits	
Prepaid insurance	
Lease payments	
Salary and wages	
Payroll taxes	
Travel	
Signs	
Tools and supplies	
Starting inventory	
Cash (working capital)	
Other expense 1	
Other expense 2	

Total Startup Cash Needed =	

Projected Income Statement			
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Sales			
Total Sales			
Miscellaneous Income			
Cost of Sales			
Inventory Purchases			
Raw Material Purchases			
Payroll - Production			
Payroll Expenses - Production			
Commissions/Sales Bonuses			
Expenses			
Salaries			
Payroll Expenses			
Employee Health Insurance			

Worker's Compensation Insurance			
Operating Expenses			
Accounting & Legal			
Advertising/Marketing			
Auto Expense			
Bank Service Charge			
Credit Card Processing Fees			
Depreciation			
Dues and Subscriptions			
Insurance (Liability, Property)			
Lease/Rent/Building Payment			
Miscellaneous			
Office Expense			
Outside Labor			
Postage			
Repairs and Maintenance			
Research and Development			
Sales Tax Expense			
Shipping - Freight In			
Shipping - Freight Out			

Taxes and licenses			
Telephone			
Utilities			
Total Expenses			
Net Profit			

VIII. Conclusion

Discuss if and why your business can succeed. Be honest in your assessment because investors won't just look at your conclusions they will also look at the data and will question if your conclusions are unrealistic.

- Recommendations & Findings
- Conclusion should answer the question: Is this business feasible to start and why?

Use the feasibility chart as a guide.

Overall Feasibility: Summary and Conclusion

	Overall Feasibility of the Business Idea Based on Each Part	Suggestions for Improving the Feasibility
Product/Market Feasibility	Not feasible Unsure Feasible	
Industry/Market Feasibility	Not feasible Unsure Feasible	

Organizational Feasibility	Not feasible Unsure Feasible	
Financial Feasibility	Not feasible Unsure Feasible	
Overall Assessment	Not feasible Unsure Feasible	

IX. Instructions: Appendices

Below are some elements many business owners include in their Appendices.

Agreements (Leases, contracts, purchase orders, letters of intent, etc.)
Intellectual property (trademarks, licenses, patents, etc.)
Resumes of owners/key employees
Advertising/marketing materials
Public relations/publicity
Blueprints/plans
List of equipment
Market research studies

You can also include any other materials that will give readers a fuller picture of your business or support the projections and assumptions you make in your plan. For instance, you might want to include photos of your proposed location, illustrations or photos of a product you are patenting, or charts showing the projected growth of your market.

After reviewing the Appendices, the reader should feel satisfied that the assumptions throughout the plan are backed up by documentation and evidence.

X. REFERENCES

YOU MUST INCLUDE A REFERENCE LIST OF RESEARCH SOURCES.

Instructions: Refining the Plan

Modify your business plan for your specific needs, audience and industry. Here are some guidelines to help:

For Raising Capital from Bankers

Bankers want to know that you'll be able to repay the loan. If the business plan is for bankers or other lenders, include:

- How much money you're seeking
- How you'll use the money
- How that will make your business stronger
- Requested repayment terms (number of years to repay)

For Raising Capital from Investors

Investors are looking for dramatic growth, and they expect to share in the rewards. If the business plan is for investors, include:

- Investment amount you need short-term
- Investment amount you'll need in two to five years
- How you'll use the money and how that will help your business grow
- Estimated return on investment
- Exit strategy for investors (buyback, sale or IPO)
- Percentage of ownership you will give investors
- Milestones or conditions you will accept
- Financial reporting you will provide to investors
- How involved investors will be on the board or in management

For a Manufacturing Business

- Explain the operations involved in manufacturing your product/s.
- What equipment is needed? What are the production/capacity limits of the equipment?
- What are the production/capacity limits of the proposed physical plant?
- Is specialized labor needed?
- What raw materials do you need for manufacturing? Are there any special requirements

for storing these?
- What quality control procedures will you use?
- How will you manage inventory levels?
- What is your supply chain?
- Explain any new products you're developing, or products you plan to begin developing after startup.

For a Service Business

- Explain your prices and the methods used to set them.
- What systems and processes will you use for ensuring consistent delivery of services?
- What quality control procedures will you use?
- How will you measure employee productivity?
- Will you subcontract any work to other businesses? If so, what percentage of work will be subcontracted? Will you make a profit on subcontracting?
- Explain your credit, payment and collections policies and procedures.
- How will you maintain your client base and get long-term contracts?
- Explain any new services you're developing or services you plan to add after startup.

For a Retail Business

- List specific brands you plan to carry that will give you a competitive advantage.
- How will you manage inventory? What inventory management software will you use?
- What forms of payment will you accept? What payment processing service will you use?
- What point-of-sale software and hardware will you use?
- What are your customer service policies?
- How will you handle returns and exchanges?
- Will your retail store also have an ecommerce site, or is one planned for the future?

For an Ecommerce Business

- Will you sell a physical product, a service, a digital product (such as eBooks) or some combination of these?
- If you're selling physical products, how will you brand and package them?
- Will you sell on your own website, online marketplaces (such as Amazon) or both?
- What technology providers and platforms will you use to run your ecommerce site?
    - Web hosting service
    - Web design service
    - Shopping cart provider
    - Payment processing service
    - Fulfillment & shipping services
    - Email marketing services
- Can the solutions you've chosen quickly scale up or down as needed?
- Where will you get your products? Will you manufacture them in-house, buy them from manufacturers or use drop shippers?

- How will you handle returns and exchanges?
- What are your customer service policies? How will you provide customer service?
- Will you use any proprietary technology of your own and if so, what advantages does that give you?

For a Software business

- What is your pricing structure? Will you use a free trial, “freemium” or paid business model?
- If you offer free services or a free trial option, how will you upsell customers to a payment model? What percentage of customers are expected to become paying customers?
- Have you tested your software? Are any “early adopters” already using the product?
- How will you encourage long-term contracts in order to create recurring revenues?
- How will you manage rapidly changing markets, technologies and costs?
    - How will you keep your company competitive?
    - Will you use in-house developers or outsource this function?
    - How will you provide customer support?
    - How will you retain key personnel?
- Are you using any proprietary or exclusive software that will give you a competitive edge?
- How will you protect your intellectual property?
- What additional products or updates to current products are you planning after launch?

Now That You’re (Almost) Finished . . .

Remember to go back, and complete the Executive Summary.

Template adapted from Score Business Plan Deluxe Template