

A Pocket Guide to Business Planning

Compliments of

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A business plan has six major sections:

1. Executive Summary

Briefly, tell the reader:

- Who are you?
(Describe your organization.)
- What are you planning?
(Describe the service or product you are planning.)
- Why are you planning it?
(Discuss the need for the service or product.)
- How will you operate your business?
(Describe your plan.)
- When will you do it?
(Provide an overview of your timeline.)

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2. Market and Needs Assessment

- What is the need, want or interest in the community you would like to meet?
- How big a need is it? How many people have this need? How often?
- Is there anyone else currently providing for this need (potential competitors)?
- How many people would use your product or service?
- How much would they be able/willing to pay?

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3. Product or Service, Description

(Satisfying customer need.)

(Product or Service) What will you sell?

- Describe features and characteristics.
- Who and how many will buy it?

(Access) Where and when will you sell it?

- Location and hours of operation, if applicable.

(Price) How much will you charge?

(Communications) How will people learn about your product or service?

- Promotion, public relations, advertising and direct selling.

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4. Operations and Management

(Making the business work.)

Staffing

- How many people do you need to staff the business?
- How many people do you need to manage the business?

Physical Needs

- What does the business need in the way of equipment, space, materials and outside services? Both for start-up and ongoing?

Timeline

- What is the timeline for developing the business?

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5. Finances

- What are the expenses of operating your business?
- How much income will your business make?

Start-up Expenses

- *One-time costs* - These costs are for things you buy only once. They will be the same no matter how long it takes to set up your program. This list will include computer equipment and software, supplies.
- *Monthly costs* - These costs are for things which you spend money on each month. They include items such as staff time. The monthly start-up costs will continue as ongoing costs, but the amount that is spent before the program starts are part of the start-up expense section.

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On-going Expenses

Fixed costs - These costs are for things you buy every month. They will be the same no matter how many customers you serve. This list will include rent, utilities and staff time.

Variable costs - These costs depend on how many customers you serve and the level of different activities. These costs include items such as supplies, and raw materials for your business.

Income

The money you will make from selling your product or service.

Capital

The money you will need to cover start-up costs and provide for gaps in cash-flow (working capital).

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6. Issues and Solutions

- What could go wrong?
- What might you do to fix what does wrong?

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The following are some of the items you might want to include as attachments:

- Needs Assessment
- User Projections
- Equipment List
- Organization Chart
- Resumes
- Financial Projections

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