BUSINESS PLAN OUTLINE

IT ALL STARTS WITH YOUR BUSINESS PLAN

The business plan is your blueprint for success. It sets down your goals for the business, assists in analyzing the feasibility of a new business, explores the expansion of an existing business, defines your customers and competitors, and points out your strengths and weaknesses. It also details your plans for the future.

Develop your business plan yourself rather than hiring someone else to do the work. After all, it’s your business. Once the plan is developed, refer to it often. It should be updated periodically, at least once a year.

The following basic outline is an easy one to use to organize your own plan. There should be a separate paragraph with a heading that identifies each area you are discussing. It should be concise, factual, and easy to read.

1. Summary
   
   >Business Description
     +Name
     +Location and plan description
     +Product/Service
     +Market and competition
   >Business goals
   >Summary of financial needs and application of funds
   >Earnings projections

2. Market Analysis
   
   >Description of total market
   >Industry trends
   >Target market
   >Competition

3. Products or Service
   
   >Description of product line or service
   >Proprietary position
   >Comparison with competitors’ products or services

4. Marketing Strategy
   
   >Overall strategy
   >Pricing policy
   >Method of selling, distributing, and servicing products or services
5. Management Plan

> Form of business organization
> Board of Directors/Advisors composition
> Officers, organization chart and responsibilities
> Resumes of key personnel
> Staffing plan/number of capital improvements
> Facilities plan/planned capital improvements
> Operating plan/schedule of upcoming work for two years

6. Financial Data

> Personal financial statements (previous 2-3 years) if seeking a loan
> Two-year financial projections
  + Income statement (profit/loss statement)
  + Balance sheets
  + Cash flow
  + Capital expenditures
> Explanation of projections
> Key business ratios
> Explanation of use and effect of new funds (loans, etc.)