

COMPONENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS PLAN

This tool details the content of a successful business plan. It provides a valuable checklist of information that you will need to gather – and poses questions that savvy investors will ask.

Outline

1. Executive summary: One or two pages describing the vision, goals, marketing strategies and projected financial results. Describe what will make you stand out from your competitors and cause you to be successful.
2. Business definition: Purpose, vision, and goals of the organization. Background and history of its founding
3. The market opportunity:
 - What is the market?
 - How will you take advantage of positive trends?
 - How will you counter negative trends?
 - What is your product/market segment analysis?
4. The business strategy
 - What are your strengths in relation to the market opportunity (e.g. are you building more, better products from a proven base? Are you diversifying into new products, new markets? Are you leveraging unique capabilities or intellectual property?)
 - How will you concentrate resources in ways that your competition won't?
 - How will you compensate for your weaknesses?
5. The management team
 - Provide an overview of experience
 - Give profiles of top executives
 - Describe gaps that need to be filled
6. Projected financial results
 - Provide income statements: revenues/expenses/profitability projections
 - Provide cash flow/sources and uses
7. Investment required, expected payback
 - Include 3-year, 5-year, and 7-year payback projections
 - Show staged investments, with equity levels and dilution factors at each level
8. Appendix
 - Organizational structure
 - Back-up financials
 - Other documentation as appropriate