

Simple Business Plan Outline

1. Executive Summary

Write this last. It's just a page or two that highlights the points you've made elsewhere in your business plan. It's also the doorway to your plan—after looking over your executive summary, your target reader is either going to throw your business plan away or keep reading, so you'd better get it just right. Read more....

2. Company Summary

This section is an overview of who you are and what you do. It should summarize your vision and what you hope to deliver to your market, but it should also ground the reader with the nuts and bolts: when your company was founded, who is/are the owner(s), what state your company is registered in and where you do business, when/if your company was incorporated, and a bit about your recent sales and growth trajectory.

3. Products and Services

List and describe the products or services you sell. It is always a good idea to think in terms of customer needs and customer benefits as you define your product offerings, rather than thinking of your side of the equation (how much the product or service costs, and how you deliver it to the customer). Sometimes this part of the plan will include tables that provide more details, such as a bill of materials or detailed price lists, but more often than not this section is just text. Read more...

4. Market Analysis Summary

You need to explain the type of business you're in. You need to know your market and how it's changing, your customers' needs, where your customers are, how to reach them and how to deliver your product to them. You'll also need to know who your competitors are and how you stack up against them—why are you sure there's room for you in this market? Read more...