**Business Plan Guide**



**Introduction**

This guide has been prepared as a tool to assist you in developing your business plan. A well-written business plan will enable you to obtain financing as well as achieve your goals. Careful planning will not only help you avoid costly mistakes, it will also prepare you for any problems that may arise in the future.

Your business plan will vary depending on your ideas, and you should use your best judgment on what information should be included. It may not be necessary to include all the sections covered by this guide, but you should use the “Focus Questions” in each section to help structure your thoughts around important aspects of your business. Remember to write in the third person (eg. “owner intends to….”) and not in first person (eg. “I intend to”).

While writing your business plan, you will:

* Organize your thoughts and ideas
* Identify and address important issues
* Analyze strengths and weaknesses of your business
* Assess your assumptions
* Set goals for your business

You should think of your business plan as:

* A road map of business development
* A sales document that will convince others of potential success
* An opportunity to show your enthusiasm, dedication and confidence

Finally, you should take a cautious and well-reasoned approach to this business plan. You should aim to be conservative in your financial projections and list all the assumptions that factor into your business.



**Cover Page**

You can change the layout of the cover page to suit your preferences, but keep it simple and professional. Add a logo if you have one, as well as your up-to-date contact information.

**Your Aim:**

* **A simple page with minimal details: business and contact information**
* **Making a good “first impression” to your reader**

|  |
| --- |
| Business Plan *<< Logo >>*Your Company NameOwner: Your NameAddress: Your Business AddressPhone: Your Business Phone NumberEmail: Your Business EmailDate |

**Table of Contents**

A table of contents will enable your reader to quickly locate specific information. It also helps you ensure that all the necessary information is included in your business plan. Make sure to check that each topic is listed with the correct page number.

**Your Aim:**

* **A simple list of sections with the corresponding page numbers**

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Executive Summary …………………………………………………<< page number >>
2. Business Profile ……………….………………………………………<< page number >>

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**1.0 Executive Summary**

An executive summary will provide a short recap (maximum 2 pages) of all the major topics in your business plan: Business Profile, Market Research, Marketing Strategy, Operations and Finance. For this reason, write this section last after you have completed all the sections. However, remember to place it at the beginning of your business plan.

A reader who reads only this section should still be able to know the general who, what, when, how and why of your business.

**Your Aim:**

* **A concise and confident opening pitch to your reader**

|  |
| --- |
| Focus QuestionsCompany Profile* What product(s) or service(s) do you offer?
* What is special about your product or service?

Market Research* What are the key findings about your inudstry and competitors?
* Who is your target customer?

Marketing Strategy* How will you attract customers?

Operations* What resources do you need for your business to succeed?

Finance* How much money do you need for your business?
* How will it be used?
* What are your sales expectations?
 |

**2.0 Business Profile**

A business profile will describe your product or service. It will outline all the relevant details about your business, such as set-up, ownership, structure and objectives. Since you will need to discuss numerous aspects of your business, it will be helpful to yourself and your reader to use the sub-headings provided.

**Your Aim:**

* **To convey all the key facts and details of your business**
* **To show your reader that you are an informed and confident businessperson**

**Overview of Product or Service**

Provide a description of your product or service and its value. Your reader will be interested in knowing how and why your business is special, and why it is likely to succeed.

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| --- |
| Focus Questions* What is your product/service?
* What is the key benefit of your product/service?

*Example: “Rise Clean’s home cleaning service will be socially and environmentally responsible as we will only use organic cleaning products. By choosing Rise Clean over another company, customers will know that they have reduced the amount of chemicals and waste in their environment.”** Why will people buy your product/service over others?
 |

**History**

Outline the progress of your business (not your personal history, that will be in the following section) to date – initial research, development and previous sales.

|  |
| --- |
| Focus Questions* How did this business idea first come about?
* How have you developed your business so far?
* Who were your previous customers? Describe the sales record of your product or service.
 |

**Owner Profile**

Provide an overview of your experiences, skills and attributes. Why should your reader invest in your business, and more importantly, you?

Attaching a 1-2 page resume to this section is highly recommended. You may decide to include it as an appendix at the end of the business plan. If so, refer your reader to the correct Appendix and page. Your resume should include some or all of the following: employment history, education, contact information, volunteering, and interests.

**Your Aim:**

* **To highlight your relevant expertise and experience**

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| Focus QuestionsWhenever possible, provide examples (stories) of work/business success or application of new skills rather than general descriptions.* What is your previous work experience? How will this help you in running your business?
* Describe any previous experiences running a business.
* What relevant training programs, certificates, diplomas, and/or degrees have you completed? What skills did you learn?
 |

**Vision and Mission**

Reflect on the meaning of your business. Your reader will be interested in knowing your ideas on the future of your business, as well as your current motivation.

Generally, both the vision and the mission should not be more than 2-3 lines each. Remember that not everything about the business has to be contained in this section. This is more about your aspirations and beliefs, rather than a detailed strategy.

**Your Aim:**

* **Convey “who we are, what we do, and where we are headed”**

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| --- |
| Focus QuestionsVision (Future): your end result and ideal position* How do you see the business 5 to 10 years from now?
* How will your business be known?

*Example: “Rise Clean will be the go-to company for environmentally-conscious homeowners seeking cleaning services that does not harm the Earth with harsh chemicals and waste.With trustworthy and timely service, Rise Clean will be known for using only organic products and environmentally-friendly methods.”*Mission (Present): your current motivation* What belief, idea or principle is guiding your business?

*Example: “Rise Clean’s mission is to provide customers with an option where they can contribute to a healthy Earth while maintaining their homes.”* |

**Structure**

Provide information on the legal structure of your business.

|  |
| --- |
| Focus QuestionsStructure* Who is the owner?
* What is the legal structure of your business (eg. sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation, cooperative)?
* Why did you choose this structure?

Employees* Will your business have employees in the first year?
 |

**Professional Advisors**

List the names and contact information of people, organizations or businesses which has helped or are helping you develop your business. Your reader will be interested in knowing who has supported your business with professional advice or business referrals.

|  |
| --- |
| Your list may have the some or all of the following: Professional Advisors (give the name, company and contact information)* Business Advisor or Mentor
* Financial Advisor or Bank
* Accountant
* Consultant
* Lawyer
* Technical Support
* Other Businesses
 |

**Year 1 Business Goals**

Discuss 3-5 goals for your business for your first year of operation. This is much more specific than your vision and mission.

**Your Aim:**

* **Turn ideas into SMART goals (Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely)**

|  |
| --- |
| Focus Questions* What are your goals for your business?
* What business milestones would you like to achieve?

*Example:** *Non-SMART goal: “Rise Clean will offer more services than home cleaning in the future”*
* *SMART goal: “Rise Clean will add gardening to available services by July 2013”*

You might want to consider sales targets, number of clients, changes in costs, creating new partnerships, launching a website, purchasing new equipment as basis for goals.  |

**3.0 Market Research**

In this section, you will analyze your industry, competitors, and customers. It is crucial to understand your market so that you can improve and strengthen your business.

**Your Aim:**

* **A candid assessment of your market**

**Industry**

|  |
| --- |
| Focus Questions* What industry are you in? *(eg. home cleaning, photography, tourism)*
* What are the major trends in your industry?
* How do you think your industry will change in the next 5-10 years?
* How will these changes affect your business? How will you prepare for these changes?
 |

**Customers**

Describe findings from your primary market research. Thorough research will enable you to choose effective marketing strategies to efficiently find and reach your target market.

|  |
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| Focus QuestionsDescribe your primary market research (possible methods below). What were your results? * Test marketing
* Focus groups
* Surveys
* Interviews
* Speaking to similar businesses
* Existing customers
* Previous experience

What are customers willing to pay for products or services like yours?How do customers find products or services like yours (possible search options below)?* Friend or family recommendation
* Online websites, blogs or reviews
* Print advertising
* Web searches

What benefits are customers looking for? What is the most important feature about the product or service to the customer (examples below)?* Low price
* Longevity
* Popularity
* Name or brand recognition
* Customer service
* Trustworthiness
* High quality or handmade
* Customized
 |

**Competition**

Identify and analyze your key competitors. Choose 2-3 of your competitors and complete the following comparison chart:

|  |
| --- |
| **Competition Comparison Chart** |
| **Business Name** | **XY Clean** | **Competitor 2** | **Competitor 3** |
| Product or Service | Home cleaning service |  |  |
| Value or quality of P/S | Known for quick and basic cleaning, can accommodate last-minute appointments |  |  |
| Pricing | $50/hr (but usually finished in 2 hours or less) |  |  |
| Marketing strategies | Strong online presence, interactive website for easy bookings/cancellations |  |  |
| Branding/Positioning | Similar to “McDonalds” of cleaning services, simple/no frills look |  |  |
| Key weaknesses | $50 cancellation fee if less than 72 hour notice, has faced bad reviews online  |  |  |
| Plans for growth  | May expand to Brampton |  |  |
| Other |  |  |  |

**SWOT Analysis**

Following the previous analysis of your competitors, you will conduct a SWOT analysis to determine the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of your business. This will enable you to compare your business against competitors when considering options for marketing and development. It is important to be thorough and honest in your evaluation, as you can increase the chances of success with your knowledge. You will want to take advantage of your strengths and opportunities, while minimizing the impact of your weaknesses and potential threats.

**Your Aim:**

* **A concise evaluation of yourself and your competition**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| You may wish to use a chart to organize your findings.Strengths* What strengths does the business have from a customer’s point of view?
* What are the positive attributes that may attract customers?

Weaknesses* What can the business improve on?
* What are the negative attributes that may turn away customers?

Opportunities* What gaps can you identify in your competitors (refer to previous section) that you can turn into an advantage?

Threats* What might the competition do to make it difficult for your business?
* What might happen in the industry (eg. new legislation)?

|  |
| --- |
| **Your Business** |
| Strengths |  |
| Weaknesses |  |
| Opportunities |  |
| Threats |  |

 |

**Target Market**

Describe your intended customers based on your primary market research. Identifying a target market will help you develop a much more effective marketing strategy. The aim is to find your ideal customer and clearly describe their common traits. Your reader will want to see that you have a specified group of customers that will be the focus of your marketing strategies. Remember, your “ideal customer” is your best paying customer – not who needs it the most, but who values it the most and is most willing to pay for it.

**Your Aim:**

* **A list of 6-10 common traits of your ideal customer**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Use the following groups of traits to help guide your thinking.Individual * Who is your ideal customer?
1. Demographics: age, gender, income, education, nationality, occupation
2. Lifestyle: hobbies, interests, values, purchasing style
3. Behaviour: common activities
4. Location: where they live and spend most of their time

|  |
| --- |
| *Example: Target Market (Customers) profile for Rise Clean Services*1. *Families with both parents working full-time (demographic)*
2. *Both parents holding a university or college degree (demographic)*
3. *Family income: $70,000 plus (demographic)*
4. *Concerned about the environment (lifestyle)*
5. *Dislikes cleaning and housework (lifestyle)*
6. *Values relaxation and getting out of the house (lifestyle)*
7. *Purchases organic fruit/vegetables, fair-trade goods (behaviour)*
8. *Located in Thornhill (scope)*
 |

Business * If you want to sell your product at a store or business (eg. products at a supermarket, perfoming at a nightclub), you can also make a target market profile for business clients:
1. Industry or specialty
2. Size or organization of business (eg. sales, # of employee, budget)
3. Contact person (eg. owner, marketing manager)
4. Budget (how much can they spend on your product/service?)
5. Their customer base
6. Location
 |

**4.0 Marketing Strategy**

Keeping in mind your competition and industry, you will now determine how you will market to your target group. What is the most effective way to reach your customers? Your reader will want to know how, when, where and at what cost, you will reach your target.

Remember that any marketing activity should convey the “personality” (characteristics, skills, image) you’ve created for your business. Develop your marketing strategy based on the findings of your primary market research.

**Your Aim:**

* **Activities to promote key aspects of your business (eg. pricing, presentation, web)**
* **A consistent image or message for your business**

**Positioning Statement**

Positioning is a marketing concept which refers to how customers think about your product or service. You want to be at the number one “position” when customers look for solutions in your industry so that they will choose you over competitors. Positioning reflects the “personality” of your business. It may be helpful to refer back to your Vision or Mission in developing your positioning statement.

**Your Aim:**

* **A key message that you want your customers to hear: who you are, what you do, for whom and to what end**

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| --- |
| Focus Questions * How do you want your business to be perceived by your customers?

You may wish to use the following sample template:“For [*targeted customers*], my business is the [*point of reference ie. business category, type of business or service*], that does/provides/makes/brings [*benefit*] better than the competition because of [*difference between you and competitor*].” |

**Product or Service Presentation**

This section will focus on the visual aspect of your product or service. You may wish to attach any designs, drawings or detailed layouts in the appendix of your business plan. Make sure to reference the appropriate Appendix and page number.

|  |
| --- |
| Focus Questions * Describe your product or service.
* What are the features of your product or service? What are the benefits of those features?
 |

**Pricing**

Outline your pricing for each of your products or services. Your reader will want to know the rationale behind your price choices, as well the justification for any differences in price between you and your competitor.

Pricing should match rest of your marketing strategy. For example, if you are trying to attract a high-end market, then it should be priced accordingly to fit with rest of the products at that end of the market. Furthermore, when considering your pricing, remember that prices should be relative to your costs – at minimum, it must cover all of your costs. It may also be helpful to note that once established, it could be difficult to significantly raise your prices later on without adding value to your products or services.

**Your Aim:**

* **A well-reasoned pricing strategy**

|  |
| --- |
| Focus Questions* What are your prices? List them by specific product or service.
* How do your prices compare to those of your competitors?
* Why have you chosen these prices (low-mid-high end of market)?
 |

**Marketing**

List all of your marketing efforts and prioritize each method. You might want to consider marketing activities such as networking, posters, signs, advertisements, free samples, cold-calling or online/social media. Remember to refer back to your positioning statement.

**Your Aim:**

* **Identify how to best sell your product/service**

|  |
| --- |
| Focus QuestionsWhat is the best method to reach your best customers? * Examine your marketing activities. Identify the most important marketing activity as well as other supporting efforts. List details on how, why and at what cost you will be implementing them.
* For each of your marketing activities, set a specific and measureable goal. These goals may be expressed in terms of monthly or annual sales, number of clients, website hits, events, tickets etc.
 |

You may wish to present your information in the following chart:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Activity**  | **Implementation**  | **Goals** | **Materials needed** | **Cost** |
| Main: make a Twitter account | Tweet 2 times a day  | Increase website hits (to 50/day) | Computer (already obtained) | $0  |
| Main: |  |  |  |  |
| Support: |  |  |  |  |
| Support: |  |  |  |  |
| Support:  |  |  |  |  |

Using the chart below, create a 12-month Marketing Calendar. This will help you plan out when you will implement each of the activities above, and for what duration. Calculate your marketing costs on a monthly basis. This information should later be inserted under Marketing costs in the Cashflow sheet of the Financial Plan section.

|  |
| --- |
| **Marketing Calendar** |
| Months | Activity | Activity | Activity | Monthly Cost ($) |
| 1 |  |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |  |  |
| 5 |  |  |  |  |
| 6 |  |  |  |  |
| 7 |  |  |  |  |
| 8 |  |  |  |  |
| 9 |  |  |  |  |
| 10 |  |  |  |  |
| 11 |  |  |  |  |
| 12 |  |  |  |  |
| **Total Cost** | **$** |

1. **Operations**

In this section, you will provide details on exactly how and where your business will be run. Your reader will want a focused breakdown of costs, risks, production as well as attention to management issues. This section should contain more technical information on the process from production to customer sale.

**Your Aim:**

* **Overview of the “nuts and bolts” of your business**

**Location**

Provide information on where you will conduct your business (even if you are working from home).

|  |
| --- |
| Focus Questions* Where will you be located? Provide an address.
* Why have you chosen this location?
 |

**Legal**

Discuss any legal issues here such as required licences, regulatory issues, contracts or zoning bylaws. You may also wish to include details of any relevant insurance coverage.

|  |
| --- |
| Focus Questions * Do you need a specific licence or permit to operate all or part of your business? Have you obtained it? How much does it cost?
* Are there other regulatory issues or bylaws that will affect your business? How? What will you do to avoid this problem?
* Do you have or need specific insurance coverage? How much does this cost?
 |

**Process/Production**

Provide details on how exactly you will fulfill a customer’s order. Your reader will want a concise and thorough account of the beginning and end of your product or service. You will likely need to discuss all or some of the following: supply of raw materials, assembling, delivery and point of sale.

**Your Aim:**

* **Enable your reader to follow an order from beginning to the end**

|  |
| --- |
| Focus Questions* Once you receive an order, what is the first step? What will you do first to fulfill that order?
* Where and how will you get the raw materials/ supplies for your product/service?
* What is your capacity (how many orders can you fulfill each day or month)?
 |

**Breakdown of Product/Service Costs**

Provide a breakdown of costs in creating your product or service. Remember to account for your own labour costs. List the costs of each specific product or service that you offer in your business.

|  |
| --- |
| Focus Questions Cost of materials* *eg. for 1 necklace: $0.50 for string, $25 for stones, $6.50 for clasp and other beads*

Cost of labour (yourself as well as any employees)* *eg. 1 employee at $8/hour on contract basis, about 15 minutes per item = $2 per necklace*
 |

**Risk Assessment**

Discuss the potential risks in starting your business. Think back to the issues you have run into so far, as well as the problems of other similar businesses.

**Your Aim:**

* **Honest and thorough assessment of risks**
* **Realistic back-up plans to address those risks**

|  |
| --- |
| Focus Questions Marketing* What factors would make it difficult to get customers? What will you do if there are problems attracting customers?

Operations* What factors would make it difficult to fulfill orders?

Finance* What factors would make it difficult to sustain a positive cash flow?
 |

**6.0 Financial Plan**

In this section, you will address the numbers of your business. It is important to complete this section to the best of your knowledge with a realistic outlook. Planning and operating your business requires careful consideration of your business finances. Here are some key terms:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Revenue  | Money that comes into your business, usually from customer sales |
| Expenses | Money that your business must pay to others in effort to create revenue * eg. insurance, supplies, telephone, rent, advertising
 |
| Liabilities | Money your business owes to others for things needed to run your business |
| Assets | The articles of monetary value that your business owns  |
| Equity | The value in money that belongs to the owners of the business |
| Profit | Revenue – Expenses (difference in amount)* to earn a profit, your revenues must exceed your expenses
 |

Financial projections are essentially budgets of the goals you hope to attain, and the limits that you intend to stay within. Remember that everything you do in your business will cost something, and should be directed at earning revenue to increase the chance of success. These projections will guide you in making decisions on the management of your business.. It is better to veer on the side of caution with numbers and produce conservative products and have a surplus of profit rather than fall short of your aims.

**Your Aim:**

* **Realistic and detailed financial projections for your business**

**Start-Up Costs/Financing**

List the costs associated with starting your business. Make sure to account for the source of funding for each necessary expenditure.

The first chart will provide an inventory of what you have already acquired for the business. This will make up your business assets.

|  |
| --- |
| **Business Assets** |
| **Item** | **Value ($)** |
| Laptop | $400 |
| Truck | $6000 |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| **Total** | **$** |

The second chart will be a list of what you still need to acquire to start your business.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item**  | **Cost ($)** | **Owner Contribution** | **Rise Loan** | **Other (specify)** |
| First/last month rent |  |  |  |  |
| Supplies |  |  |  |  |
| Labour |  |  |  |  |
| Legal fees |  |  |  |  |
| Insurance |  |  |  |  |
| New vehicle |  |  |  |  |
| Furniture |  |  |  |  |
| Electronics |  |  |  |  |
| Marketing |  |  |  |  |
| Website |  |  |  |  |
| **Total Costs** |  |  |  |  |

**Sales Forecast**

In this section, you will project future sales. It is important to provide a rationale for these numbers, as you want to set realistic estimates, not idealistic guesses. Your reader will want to see that you have considered all the necessary influencing factors, such as seasonal variations, marketing measures or price changes. Remember to tie your sales forecast to your marketing activity.

**Your Aim:**

* **A detailed outline of key sales assumptions and estimates**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| Key AssumptionsTo operate a business, you need to make some assumptions about your business and project them into the future. The more accurate your assumptions, the closer your projections will be to reality. This means that you will have a higher chance of making the right financial choices. *Example: Key Assumptions for Rise Cookies** *One table at a fair/food festival every month – minimum $200 profits*
* *Slowest months – June to August (summer – people prefer cool treats)*
* *Busiest months – December (holiday orders) and February (Valentine’s)*

Estimate of SalesWith the key assumptions in mind, state your monthly estimates. Make sure to give the rationale behind your numbers.

|  |
| --- |
| **Sales Forecast – Year One** |
| **Month** | **Sales** | **Total** | **Rationale** |
| January | $200 from Thornhill Festival$150 from catering | $350 | Thornhill Festival ($200 last year)Contract with local cafe |
| February | $500 from pre-orders$150 from catering | $650 | Valentine’s Day special ordersOnline advertising 15 posters & 50 flyers |
| March  | $300 from events$300 from catering | $300 | Attend local community bazaar Donate to children’s fair, hand out business cardsNew contract with another store begins through networking |
| April |  |  |  |
| May |  |  |  |
| June |  |  |  |
| July |  |  |  |
| August |  |  |  |
| September  |  |  |  |
| October |  |  |  |
| November |  |  |  |
| December |  |  |  |

 |

**Cash Flow**

This section will provide details on the the cash that enters (investment, loans, sales) and leaves your business banking account (expenses) on a monthly basis. You want to aim for a cash flow statement which does not show a deficit (a negative number) at the end of the month. Note: if you are creating this for Rise, remember to start the cash flow chart from the first month of the loan disbursement.

Download our Cash Flow Template here: <https://risehelps.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Rise-Cash-Flow-Template.xls>

Rise Loan ($) at 6.45% interest rate for different loan amounts – Approximate payments

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Loan Amount** | **1 year** **(12 months)** | **2 years** **(24 months)** | **3 years** **(36 months)** | **5 years** **(60 months)** |
| 500 | 44 | 22 | 16 | 10 |
| 1000 | 87 | 45 | 31 | 20 |
| 1500 | 129 | 67 | 46 | 29 |
| 2000 | 173 | 89 | 61 | 39 |
| 5000 | 431 | 222 | 153 | 98 |
| 8000 | 690 | 356 | 245 | 156 |
| 10000 | 863 | 445 | 306 | 195 |

If you are already operating your business, then you should a summary of monthly sales and/or list of customers. You may wish to refer to this information in this section and attach it to the Appendix.

**Break Even Analysis**

In this section, you will calculate how much you will need to sell to generate a profit. This is particuarly useful for product-based businesses as it can show how many units must be sold. Your reader will want to see that you have calculated at what point sales will cover all expenses.

|  |
| --- |
| Formula for break-even analysis:**OH/(P—C)** * OH: Total Overhead costs (fixed costs regardless of sales volume)
* P: Average Price of products
* C: Average Cost of making the product

*Example:**Rise Cookies’ fixed costs for the year are $10,000 (phone, marketing, rent etc.). Average sale price is $10/box of cookies and average production cost is $4/box (material and labour)** *$10,000/(10-4) = $10,000/6 = 1,667 units*

*This means you would start to make a profit after selling 1667 boxes of cookies.* |

**7.0 Appendix**

You will attach any necessary supplementary documentation in this section. Make sure to refer to them in the body of your business plan so your reader knows to look for them. If you have more than one document, chart or figure, label it accordingly (eg. Appendix A, B, C).

This section may include documents such as:

* Resume
* Business registration
* Designs/packaging
* Images of product/service
* Summary of previous sales
* List of customers

**Further Resources**

**General**

* Online guide on business plan writing from Futurpreneur Canada:

<http://www.futurpreneur.ca/resources/>

* Online directory of sample business plans and templates:

<http://www.bplans.com/sample_business_plans.php>

* Webinars on how to write and develop a business plan:

<<http://www.cybf.ca/resources_category/writing-your-business-plan>>

* E-book (Chapter 4) with a detailed framework for development of business plans:

<<http://ebooks.elportal.info/theartofthestart.pdf>>

* Blog entry on how to focus your writing to be effective and engaging:

<<http://blog.guykawasaki.com/2006/01/the_zen_of_busi.html#axzz1wB41prD7>>

* Sample business plans from Government of Canada recommended sites for entrepreneurs.
<<http://www.canadabusiness.ca/eng/page/2752/>>
* Business planning FAQ’s from the Canada Business Network. <<http://www.canadabusiness.ca/eng/page/2751/>>

**Executive Summary**

* Clear tips for writing an effective Executive Summary:

<<http://suite101.com/article/how-to-write-an-executive-summary-correctly-a296844>>

* Guy Kawasaki’s take on an effective and compelling executive summary:

<<http://blog.guykawasaki.com/2006/04/the_art_of_the_.html#axzz1wB41prD7>>

* Sample of Executive Summary:

<<http://www.entrepreneur.com/formnet/form/653>>

* Video of executive summary tutorial:

<http://super-smbusiness.wonderhowto.com/blog/notes-video-write-executive-summary-0134327/>

**Business Profile**

* An overview of how to write a business profile
<<http://outright.com/blog/your-business-plan-blueprint-part-4-company-overview/>>
* If you need ideas, take the time to read the business profiles of other entrepreneurs in your industry--- there are many publicly available profiles on the internet, each demonstrating a unique way of expressing the company’s goals and purposes.

**Market Research**

* The Government of Canada’s market research website, featuring advice on effective research and links to DIY research opportunities: <<http://www.canadabusiness.ca/eng/page/2864/>>
* A how to guide to get started on effective market research: <<http://www.smallbusinessbc.ca/starting-a-business/how-research-your-market>>
* A do-it-yourself guide to market research: <<http://sbinfocanada.about.com/cs/marketing/a/marketresearch_2.htm>>
* Comprehensive list of links to articles providing ideas for inexpensive market research and understanding competition:
 <<http://www.inc.com/guides/start_biz/24018.html>>

**Marketing Strategy**

* A quick guide to developing an effective marketing strategy <<http://sbinfocanada.about.com/cs/businessplans/a/bizplanmarkplan_3.htm>>
* Blog on marketing ideas, trends and findings

<http://sethgodin.typepad.com/>

* Blog on effective marketing campaigns and analysis of trends:

<http://www.conversationagent.com/>

**Operations**

* Small business guide to creating a useful operations plan. <<http://sbinfocanada.about.com/cs/businessplans/a/bizplanoperplan.htm>>
* A how to article for creating operational plans.

<<http://www.business-plans-guide.com/operationalplan.html>>

**Financial Plan**

* Small business information for the creation of financial plans <<http://sbinfocanada.about.com/cs/businessplans/a/bizplanfinanc.htm>>