



# Business Plan Outline

Starting a business can be a path to riches and/or uncertainty. Developing a plan is the first step before you even think about the name or location. The library has a wealth of resources from books about specific plans to the [Gale Business Plan Library](#) in reference and online at the library's website.

A business plan is a road map to your business. If we are going on vacation to Arizona, most of us would need a map to get there or have GPS. A well thought out business plan can be the GPS to the success of your business.

A typical plan will be a collection of analysis and plans. The analysis supports the reason and plans are action oriented, tractable and actionable making it easy to delegate them. Here is a simple business plan outline.

- ❖ **Cover page**
- ❖ **Table of contents**
- ❖ **Executive Summary:** The 200-500 word summary of why you are writing this plan. If it is for funding, do say how much money you need, how much you will contribute and what it will be used to purchase. This is not a mystery novel, it is often a request to get others involved, they what to read the entire plan with the ASK in mind. Keep it brief.
- ❖ **Business Description** – more detail about what this business will be, do and why it is needed.
- ❖ **Business Location** and its environmental analysis – why would you start a business here.
- ❖ **Industry Analysis** – what is your industry like now and what is its future.
- ❖ **Competitive Analysis** – who else is doing what you want to do or something similar?
- ❖ **Market Analysis** – why will customers buy from you?
- ❖ **Marketing Plan** – how will you get customers, sustain, satisfy and get them to come back with their friends?
- ❖ **Operations Plan** – when will you operate; how will the work get done; what is the process?
- ❖ **Management Plan** – how will you and others run and maintain the business with staff and/or contractors?
- ❖ **Financial Plan** – What do you need to start, ramp up and maintain this business. Proforma financial statements which include income statement for three years, balance sheet for three years and cash flow projections. Yes it is a lot of work.
- ❖ **Addendums:**
  - Your resume & resumes of partners and investors
  - Your tax return and returns of all 10%+ investors/partners
  - Other information that supports your future success.
  - Your personal investment and partners investment into this project

A plan is only as good as the information going into it and is only as successful as the actions of the people following it.