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| [Insert Date] | Business | **Plan** |

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# Executive Summary

Tell a story to open up the concept for your company. Then present the vision, mission, and key products and services. If you have any required investments, include them in the closing paragraph. The Executive Summary should be no more than one page. It’s designed for the executive you meet first. He/she will likely pass on the full document to someone else for a full evaluation. The Business Plan is also your key document to refer back to as you build your company. It includes your dreams as well as the practical goals and objectives to get there. So remember that it’s a “living” document, changing quarterly as you adjust to the market and operational circumstances that require adjustment. But if you’ve designed the Business Plan well, these adjustments won’t change the overall direction for the company. Tactics are added and dropped but you’ll always keep your eye on your vision seated firmly on the horizon.

Consider using the diagram (or some other visual) below to outline your vision, mission, and activities.

[HINT: Try leaving all the headings in this document and just changing the paragraphs. Apply the styles of Heading 1 and Heading 2 to new headings to automatically have them update the Table of Contents (TOC) on the next page when you right-click on the existing TOC and select *Update*]

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# Business Model

Tell a story outlining the value proposition you bring to customers. This could be describing a problem for which you have a solution, a benefit your customers have not considered or a customer need that you are satisfying. It’s the reason for your company. Feel free to include some of the reasons for the values you hold, your background for starting the company or anything else that captures the heart of your business. Use pictures, diagrams and statistics. Make the case for why your company should exist at all and why it’s absolutely essential to the future of the world (or at least your world).

## Vision

Out of the value propositions your company will fulfill comes a new reality that you envision for the distant future. Think about how your product or service changes a whole group of people or an industry. Be specific. This could be a growth vision (to be the biggest widget company in your region), a quality vision (to be the best widget maker) or even something beyond your company’s direct control (to provide the opportunity for everyone to experience the power of a widget). In any case, dream big and beyond what your current resources can achieve. Think at least 10 years down the road.

## Mission

Include your mission statement here. If the vision is “why” your company existing then the mission is “how” or “what.” What is your company doing to achieve the vision? How will your company contribute to the fulfilling of the vision. The mission is often comprised of two or three strategic statements of key goals or activities. For instance, the vision of being the best widget maker will be completed by manufacturing the best parts, attracting the brightest employees and delivering the most pleasant experience to the customer. Again… try to be specific and have a mission that is directly and explicitly aligned to your vision. Steer clear of slushy, generic statements that would apply to every company (like the ones I used in the example).

## Values

Every company has it’s own culture, whether it’s by design or just formed by working. A culture is a set of norms that express what everyone believes about a group. In a company, the set of values become normative experiences and form the culture of the company. As the founder or director of your company, there may be some things that you hold dear about how you operate or relate with others. List your values here. They are an important part of who you are and how you will present yourself to others.

# Strategy

## The Need

## The Solution

What value does the company create for the client or customer?

Which of the problems are we helping to solve?

## Methodology/Product/Services

What approach is taken to provide the solution or fill the need?

What sets of services and products are we offering to each type of customer? No need to state much about each type of customer in this section. Target markets are covered below in the Marketing Plan.

What resources are needed to develop the product, deliver the service, maintain the offering, etc.?

## Unique Characteristics

Describe any unique features of the corporation. Use contrast stories of competitors to make your point.

## Partners/Suppliers

Describe your key partners and suppliers, the resources acquired from them and how these resources are required for operating the company. Include a description of any key activities they perform.

# Goals and Objectives

These are taken from your Strategic Plan that outlines the key goals and objectives you have to build the company. Common strategic goals and objectives are:

* Revenue goals - $$$ sales/donations raised
* Marketing goals - ### customers reached, ### participants at events, ### new email contacts
* Cost reduction goals - $$$ saved through improvements, % net profit increase
* Capacity-building goals - #new programs operational, needed staff hired, new capacity added

Remember that a well-designed goal has the greatest success for improving your company. Use SMART goals that are Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound. For instance, “To make money” is a bad goal. To increase sales from new markets by 50% within the next two years is a better goal.

# Marketing Plan

## Target Market

Describe the types of customers you will target (by geography, demographic, need, attitude, grouping, etc.)

What segments of the market does the company focus on (mass market, niche, multi-faceted, diverse, etc.)?

What type of relationship does each target customer expect from the company?

Describe any existing markets the company has already established relationships in.

How are existing markets integrated into the business model?

What are the main activities and costs associated with developing these markets?

## Market Research

Describe the industry of the company including the number of competitors, current total industry revenue, total number of customers, and dominant market leaders.

## Competitors or Companies with Similar Value Propositions

Provide examples of companies providing the same or similar value propositions with the same target market.

## Revenue Streams

What value-added services or products are your customers willing to pay for?

What are they currently paying? How?

How would they prefer to pay?

How much does each revenue stream provide to your total revenue?

### Pricing Structure

Include a table of services & products with their associated costs here

## Communications Channels

Which communications and relationship building channels do the market segments prefer? (website, social media, direct mail, email list, face-to-face, meetings, events, etc.)

How are we reaching them now?

Describe how the various channels being used today are integrated.

Which channels are working best (greatest response, best ROI, etc.)?

## Goals & Objectives

Setting a workable marketing strategy requires some clear goals and objectives. Try to have a mix of both financial and non-financial goals by target market and/or communications channel. Examples could be:

* To sell 100,000 units of Widget A to 500 New Customers
* To reach 50,000 new users online producing $50k in sales and 5,000 shared links
* To become the most respected company in the market

Financial goals should be the high level goals (include a breakdown below under Revenue Projections).

## Revenue Projections

Include monthly or quarterly revenue projections by revenue stream for the first year and annual projections for a multi-year plan (in alignment with your Strategic Plan).

# Operations

## Licensing and Registration

### Legal Description

Include the type of company (limited corporation/partnership/sole proprietorship) incorporation details, registration, registration date and place

### Licensing and Trademarks

Include where the company is licensed to operate, type of license and any trademarks & web domains.

## Ownership

Describe the ownership structure and name the owner(s), partner(s) and directors. Include a brief biography of individuals

## Leadership

Describe the leadership structure and include the biography of senior leaders. Include an organizational chart for medium to large companies.

## Office Location

Describe the office location including the address, hours of operation and main contact information.

## Staffing and Volunteers

Describe any key staff roles including a brief job description. If volunteers are relied upon to fulfill key functions of the company, describe the positions and how they will be filled and managed. A high-level organizational chart may be helpful if the number of staff is over ten to twelve.

## Risk and Insurance

### Potential Liabilities

List and describe any foreseeable issues that could result in a lawsuit against the company for damages and how the company plans to mitigate the risk (insurance, waivers, discloser statements, etc.)

### Health and Safety

List and describe any foreseeable health or safety issues that place staff and clients at risk of injury, theft, etc. Include a few statements about how the company plans to mitigate the risk (insurance, waivers, discloser statements, etc.)

### Economic and Industry Factors

Describe the local, regional, national or international economic factors that could affect income, costs or operations. Any industry trends, government policies or other external risks outside the control of the company should also be included here. Ensure there are solutions presented that show how the company will respond should the risk become a reality.

# Financial Plan

## Start-up Costs

Provide a narrative of the main start-up investments needed to launch the company.

Include a table of costs and how the costs will be sourced.

## Projected Income and Expenses

Provide a detailed income statement for the first year as well as two alternate income statements showing less than expected revenue (with associated cost cuts) and greater than expected revenue (with cost increases and investments). This could be included as a table here or as an attachment to the Appendix.

## Projected Cashflow

Provide a detailed projected cash flow statement here for the first year as well as two alternate cashflow statements for subsequent years.

## Breakeven Analysis

If it will take several years for revenue to cover costs (you expect to take a loss for a while), provide a breakeven analysis showing when the company will break even and start showing a profit. For non-profits, breakeven is usually the annual goal but some retain income for subsequent years to mitigate a drop in donations or save for new program launches or capacity-building projects.

# Appendix

Include any information here that (1) helps the reader understand your company better (i.e. website front page, sample brochure/flyer, pictures of the product) or (2) is too large to manage within the body of the business plan (i.e. complete financial statements, articles of incorporation)