

[YOUR COMPANY NAME]

BUSINESS PLAN

[Date]

CONFIDENTIAL

SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

To kick off your business plan, provide some background history and a brief summary about your business.

When was it set up and who by? Why was it set up? What exactly does your business offer and who to? Are there other people in the business besides yourself? Are you successful so far, or struggling in some areas?

This will be helpful to paint a picture of your current situation when you look back on this document.

VISION

Do not only discuss the vision of your business (we all know it's to make a profit, right?), but seriously think about the vision of your brand. What is your overall aim and vision for the business in years to come?

This should be your 'guiding light' for everything you do in your business.

MISSION STATEMENT

Mission statements are very important to your business, if not only to keep yourself on track! It can be helpful to define exactly what you offer and who to, as well as what makes you stand out from the competition.

What is your Unique Selling Point (USP)? Why should your customers love you? Why do you love your customers?

Creating a brand 'Onliness Statement' can seriously help with this task. [Find out how to create one.](#)

This will help you with your Elevator Pitch; a short, snappy sentence to introduce your business to new acquaintances.

GOALS

2016 OBJECTIVES

Include your financial objectives, and operational objectives here. And make sure they're SMART!

Eg.

Increase monthly product sales to £3000 by August.

The objectives will help to keep you on track throughout the year, especially if they are measurable.

TACTICS

Your tactics are your smaller, more descriptive steps to achieving the above Objectives. So, how are you going to increase your monthly product sales?

Eg.

Increase website shopping cart conversions to at least 400 per month by August.
Increase website traffic to at least 10,000 unique visitors per month by August.

These tactics are even more useful for understanding what needs to be done on a monthly, or weekly basis!

FUTURE EXPANSION

What are your goals for the future? Do you plan to branch out into new markets, or launch a new range of products?

This may not necessarily be purely for this year, but think further ahead!

CUSTOMERS

IDEAL CUSTOMER

Deeply explore your ideal client (or clients). Need help? [I've created a worksheet and explanation on this.](#)

Outlining this information helps you with positioning and promoting your brand.

NON-IDEAL CUSTOMER

This may sound strange, but I think it's important to outline who you *aren't* targeting as well, because you really want to provide maximum benefit to all your customers, and if they aren't the right customers, they won't get all the benefits.

Consider which ages won't benefit from your products/services, and maybe which income levels wouldn't suit too. If you have a luxury service to offer, penny pinchers will be more hassle than they're worth.

This will also help you focus when promoting your business, and will help you avoid potentially difficult client situations too.

RETENTION

Once you have sold to your ideal customers, or have had the opportunity to work with several ideal clients, how do you plan to keep them coming back for more?

First off, excellent customer service is a must, of course! And secondly, adding your customers to an email list so you can contact them again is paramount (with their permission!).

But what else can you do? Include added extras in your product/service? Send them a hand-written thank you note? Give them discounts for more products or services? Start a referral/affiliate scheme?

Customer loyalty is such an important factor for repeat business and referrals, that this section is key!

COMPETITORS

CORE COMPETITORS

List your top 5 - 10 competitors, with a brief explanation of each of them and a link to their websites too.

Having a list on hand is great for any future market research you may want to do.

COMPETITOR SWOT ANALYSIS

This is actually kinda fun (I think anyway... does that make me weird?). Discuss the areas where your competitors are strong and weak, to find actions and opportunities for yourself.

[Here's my explanation and worksheet on how to do it.](#)

ACTIONS

Using your SWOT analysis above, highlight the key actions you need to make in 2016 to match up to your competitor's strengths!

Of course, you must never copy or plagiarise, but taking inspiration from others' strengths and weaknesses is purely a formula for growth and success.

SERVICES & PRODUCTS

SERVICES

What?

What exactly are you offering? If it's more complex, feel free to include a description or diagram of the process for the service.

Why?

I always like to ask 'why' in anything I do to ensure I'm being efficient and intentional. Why are you offering this service and how is it benefitting your brand and business?

Where?

Where will you be hosting this service (a location or online)? And importantly, where can your customers book or find out more about this service?

Who?

If you have several slightly different ideal customers/target audiences, which one is this service targeted towards?

How much?

How much are you charging for this service, and why? Is it a random number plucked from the air?

PRODUCTS

What?

What is your product, how does it work, and how does it benefit the customer? Is it made out of anything specific? Does it require instructions?

Why?

Why are you offering this product and how is it benefitting your brand and business?

Where?

Where will you be selling this product (a location or online)? And where can customers find it or get more information about it?

Who?

If you have several slightly different ideal customers/target audiences, which one is this product targeted towards?

How much?

How much are you charging for this product, and why?

FUTURE SERVICES & PRODUCTS

As with talking about your future expansion plans, this is useful to mention when you're planning on reinvesting money into your business.

PROMOTION

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Social Updates & Content

Firstly, consider your audience and potential customers - where are they hanging out?

Social media marketing takes time and effort, so it's much better to focus on 2 - 3 platforms where your potential customers are on a daily basis, than to spread yourself thin across 6! So...

Which platforms will you be using?

How often will you posting? At what times?

What will you posting? Where will you get this content from?

Will you be using any tools to help you manage, analyse and schedule your updates?

Social Media Advertising

So you're focused on 2 - 3 key platforms. Will you be doing paid advertising on these? It's getting harder and harder to get organic views Facebook now, so it is recommended that you dedicate some money towards sponsoring posts and promoting your page each month if you plan on making that one of your big networks.

Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest all offer great advertising options too (Pinterest is yet to be available in the UK unfortunately), so it's worth testing out which options work best for your business and target audience.

OTHER DIGITAL MARKETING

Blogging

Ahh blogging. An incredibly useful, and arguably necessary, form of content marketing. There are so many reasons why your business will benefit from having a blog or news section on your website, including:

- Potential customers can find out more about your company's values and personality if you include behind-the-scenes, personalised content
- You can position yourself as a specialist or industry thought leader by writing informative articles about topics in your niche
- It gives your audience the opportunity to engage with you in the comments, and to do some marketing for you by sharing your posts

- Having a regularly updated blog is good for SEO; Google sees that your website is active, and if people share your content you will also be getting links back to your site

And lots more reasons!

If you're up for it, consider how regularly you will update your blog and what types of content you will post about (how long will it be? How visual will it be? How will you find images for each post?).

You should also make a note of how you will promote your blog posts too. [I have put together a 'Post-publish' checklist here.](#)

Email Marketing

Many will argue that you should concentrate on building your email list *more* than you focus on getting followers on social media, because you *own* that email data (rather than Facebook being in charge of your popularity).

Firstly, how will you get people to sign up to your email list? Gone are the days when interested audiences will give away their details to a random box in your sidebar; you need to offer them something of value in return.

This is called an 'opt-in offer', and could be an entry into a giveaway or competition, a juicy discount code, an ebook, worksheet, or template, like this one!

It takes a bit of time to create an opt-in offer, but once you do, you can set it up on your email marketing software so that people who sign up to your email list receive it straight to their inbox.

So that's how to get the emails, but then what? You'll need to put together a bit of a content calendar (you can also do this with your blog posts too), to keep track of your email newsletter ideas and planning. [Here's an example of how to do this in a free tool called Trello.](#)

SEO and Link-Building

Yikes. This sounds scary but I promise it isn't. There are some great resources online with loads of information on how to improve your search engine appearance, but the main things to note are:

- Get links back to your website from other *high quality* websites (you can do this by blogging and sharing your content, guest blogging, advertising on high ranking websites, and sponsoring blog posts on high ranking blogs). [Here are some tips on collaborating with bloggers.](#)
- Keep your website up to date regularly
- Make sure your website is properly 'mapped out' and listed with Google
- Make sure your website is mobile responsive

If you think your website may need an update, get in touch! My website design packages are quick and affordable, specifically for small businesses and entrepreneurs.

Website Advertising

As previously mentioned, advertising on high ranking websites can help your own search engine ranking, as it is a link back to your site.

Are there any websites your ideal customers visit often? Perhaps there are some blogs or websites that share the same audience as you. If you can't find an advertising/media kit on their site, consider contacting them to ask if you can place an advert on their site, and if you'd be able to see their statistics too so that you can see how valuable it will be to your business.

Video Marketing

Video marketing gets bigger by the year, and it could be a very valuable tool for your business.

Okay, it requires some effort, but because of that, it's usually the case that *less businesses will be doing it* in your industry, which is a great opportunity for you.

If you're serious about it, consider making a content calendar for videos too, whether you're posting on YouTube, Facebook or Instagram Stories/Lives!

OFFLINE MARKETING

Direct Marketing & Print

You're probably going to want business cards at some point, so that's just the basics. But is your business targeting local people? Consider flyers and posters! It can require extra manpower to get these out and around, but you may find it even more useful than social media - people can't ignore it if it's in their hand.

Brochures and catalogues are another option; costly, but it could be right for your business depending on what you offer.

Public & Press Relations

Other than sending out press releases to relevant newspapers, magazines and publications in your industry, the options are limitless with regards to PR. The only restriction is your own imagination!

Events

Whether you're exhibiting, sponsoring or presenting at a conference or tradeshow, or planning to host your own event, this is an awesome way to boost the profile of your business!

Yes, it can get expensive, but as long as it's done right, it can be so worth it.

[YOUR COMPANY LOGO]

Here are some tips for getting the most out of conferences.

FINANCIAL

EXPECTED MONTHLY EXPENSES

Mobile phone	
Website Hosting	
Computer Software	
Bank fees	
Materials	
Marketing budget	
Wage	
Total	£0

EXPECTED MONTHLY INCOME

Services sales	
Product sales	
Total	£0

Minus 20% tax	£0
Minus Expenses	£0
Net Monthly	£0

MEASUREMENT

WEBSITE TRAFFIC

Month	Unique Visitors	Pages per Session	Bounce Rate	Most Popular Page
January				
February				
March				
April				

WEBSITE CONVERSIONS

Month	Contact Form Enquiries	Enquiry Conversions	Shopping Cart Sales
January			
February			
March			
April			

SOCIAL MEDIA

Month	Facebook Fans	Twitter Followers	Instagram Followers	Pinterest Followers
January				
February				
March				
April				

EMAIL LIST

Month	List Size	Average Open Rate	Average Click-Through-Rate	Conversions
January				
February				
March				
April				