

Business Planning Simplified

Craft Your Roadmap from Vision to Execution



Student Course Book

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Sample

Introduction

As a small business owner or an entrepreneur starting a new business or side hustle, launching a new product or service, or changing direction in an existing business, a simple business plan is an invaluable tool.

You're probably familiar with the concept of a business plan: it's a comprehensive written document that outlines your business objectives and the strategies and tactics needed to reach them. It encompasses vital details such as product/service offerings, target audience, marketing approaches, financial forecasts, and more.

So, how does a simple business plan differ from the standard version? Unlike its more traditional counterparts – often bulky, elaborate, and primarily designed to secure funding – a simple business plan is, first and foremost, a roadmap for you and your team. It's a practical guide that breathes life into your business goals and provides clear direction.

Why Do You Need a Simple Business Plan?

For some people, pausing to create a business plan feels like a delay tactic or procrastination. They don't want to reflect on their business and write about it, they want to get down to the 'real work' of launching it. This view couldn't be more misguided.

There are several compelling and *practical* reasons to create a simple business plan.

A simple business plan provides you with a clear direction and purpose. While you're developing your plan, you'll identify potential challenges and opportunities. You can then develop strategies to proactively respond to both. A well-crafted business plan reduces the stress of decision-making, giving you the ability to weigh your options and make informed choices.

A simple business plan also helps you to track your progress and measure success. It acts as a starting point, allowing you to assess your achievements and then make necessary adjustments in the future. In addition, having a clear business plan promotes accountability within your organization, even if it's just you for now. It ensures that you and your team are aligned with, and working toward, common objectives.

The Key Sections of Your Simple Business Plan

As you go through this course, you'll see that many of the elements of your business plan sound similar to a traditional one. However, you're going to approach them with a different mindset. Your goal is to do just enough planning to put your business on the best path for growth, without spending any more time than necessary on details that aren't critical.

The following business plan sections cover the basics – the bare minimum that you'll need to get clear on your direction:



- **Executive Summary** – A summary of your plan, to be completed last
- **Business Snapshot** – The fundamentals of your business, such as audience and products
- **Market Analysis** – The business environment you’re competing in
- **Marketing Plan** – Your core tactics for attracting prospects and making sales of your main product/service
- **Operations** – How you’ll run your business, including producing products and serving customers
- **Financial Plan** – Your projections for revenue and expenses
- **Key Metrics** – How you’ll track your progress

Don’t worry if some of those sound like a lot of work, or if they’re things you haven’t done before. In this course, you’ll follow a streamlined, actionable blueprint for each section. Your focus will be on crafting an effective plan in as little time as possible that can steer your business for up to a year.

Here is your roadmap through the course:



Course Outcomes:

- Develop a snapshot summary of your business that communicates its core elements while keeping you focused on what's important when it comes to decision-making.
- Analyze your business environment so that you can smoothly navigate the complexities of your market, seize opportunities, and mitigate challenges, ensuring long-term success and growth.
- Outline a goal-oriented marketing plan that fine-tunes your brand's value and positioning while setting the stage for targeted growth and strong personal connections with your audience.
- Develop a streamlined operational blueprint for efficient product creation, delivery, and support so you can free up resources and maximize your growth potential.

- Draft a straightforward financial projection, estimating revenue and expenses, to guide your resource allocation and ensure your business will be profitable.
- Track your business plan's success so you can adapt and adjust it over time, keeping it relevant and effective.
- Craft a compelling executive summary that concisely communicates the key parts of your business plan for both yourself and anyone you need to share it with.

This course is broken down into 8 major modules and individual lessons to take you step-by-step through the process of creating a simple, powerful business plan without getting bogged down in complicated and time-intensive tasks. This process will conquer your decision paralysis and business overwhelm by providing clarity, focus, and the ability to prioritize.

When you complete the course, you'll have a straightforward and concise plan that's ready to implement right away.

The modules are organized in a logical sequence, so it's strongly recommended that you work through them in order.

As you go through each module, use your Action Guide to help you complete the Action Steps at the end of each lesson.

Action Steps:

Before we start the course, take a minute to think about what you want to get out of it.

In the Action Guide, write down three skills you expect to gain.

Now let's get started!

Module 1 – Establish Your Business Foundations

In this module, you will create a Business Snapshot and craft your vision and mission statements.

The snapshot will allow you to easily describe your business to others and gain a deeper understanding of its key components. It forces you to distill the essence of your business – what it stands for, what you do, and who you serve. That process gives you a reference point when making important decisions and assessing your progress toward your goals.

Developing vision and mission statements goes beyond just words on paper. They act as guiding principles that shape your business's direction and influence your future choices. These statements provide a clear path, aligning your actions with long-term goals and values, inspiring motivation, and giving your business a sense of purpose.

Including a snapshot and vision and mission statements in your business plan keeps you focused and helps you navigate the changing business landscape with confidence.

- **Lesson 1: What Business Are You In?**
- **Lesson 2: What's Your Vision?**
- **Lesson 3: What's Your Mission?**

Lesson 1: What Business Are You In?

In this lesson, we'll focus on creating a simple snapshot of your business that includes a business overview, a list of your products and services, a summary of the markets you serve, the problems that you solve, and sales results or growth potential.

The Purpose of a Business Snapshot

The business snapshot gives business owners a way to assess their current situation and set a starting point to begin crafting their simple business plan.

A business snapshot also...

Provides a high-level view of your business

Empowers you to make informed decisions and devise effective strategies

Establishes a foundation to evaluate your business's performance

Fosters goal setting and prioritization

- Provides a high-level summary of your business – its history, products/services, markets served, and target market.
- Empowers you to make informed decisions and devise effective strategies as you work through your simple business plan.
- Establishes a foundation to evaluate your business's performance.
- Fosters goal setting and prioritization.

When crafting your business snapshot, aim for simplicity without sacrificing vital business information. Put down the most important points and keep moving – you can always come back and refine it once the business plan is complete. These words aren't for use in a presentation or an ad – they're primarily for your reference.

Components of a Business Snapshot

The following are the sections you'll include in your business snapshot, along with content and length recommendations.

History

Summarize your company's history in 1-2 paragraphs, highlighting key milestones and significant achievements. If your business is new or in the launch phase, focus on its founding, founders, and early milestones.

Some questions to ask yourself when drafting your history:



- **When** was your business launched? (If new, when do you plan to launch it?)
- **Why** did you establish this business? (Or why are you planning to?)

- **What** are some of your key milestones and significant achievements? (Or what are any early milestones if you're new or in the launch phase?)

The following is an example of a brief history, using the hypothetical example of a newly-launched financial coaching business:

"Creative Financial Empowerment was established in 2023 by Jane Doe, a passionate financial expert dedicated to helping creative freelancers and small business owners achieve financial stability and prosperity. After spending more than a decade working in financial services and witnessing the significant impact that financial education and guidance can have on people's lives, Jane started a coaching business dedicated to helping creatives gain control of their finances.

The idea behind Creative Financial Empowerment was born of Jane's belief that financial literacy and empowerment are crucial for everyone – especially people who are convinced they're 'not good with numbers.' By providing comprehensive financial coaching services, Jane envisioned a way to assist clients in overcoming financial and mental hurdles and creating a path toward a brighter financial future.

Since our inception, Creative Financial Empowerment has guided creative freelancers and business owners to successfully tackle debt, develop effective budgeting strategies, and make informed investment decisions."

ATTENTION:

This is only an excerpt from our full course **Business Planning Simplified**. The full, customizable course contains 8 major modules and Action Steps.

When you purchase a license for the course, you'll receive the editable files for the Course Book, Action Guide, graphics, social posts, and other resources.

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