

KEY TO A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS PLAN:

IDENTIFY YOUR STRATEGY:

1. **Know thy business** (Identify your industry's opportunities and threats, identify your businesses strengths and weaknesses, identify competitive forces that will keep you from achieving your goals and identify a corporate strategy that will beat your competitor's)
2. **Know thy competition** (Knowing the true nature of your business is critical and so is knowing the true nature of your competition. The same rules apply when it comes to looking beyond the obvious and viewing at the marketplace from your customer's point of view. That includes not only how customers perceive your company but also how they perceive your competitors. Truly understanding the scope of your competition requires knowing the business you are in. Fail to do that and your business plan will fail to perform to your needs.)
3. **Know reasons behind the way your company does business** (is your company interested in cultivating the perception of high quality to attract high quality clientele or do you produce low price consumables that require high volumes. Knowing that will help define the corporate strategy critical for your company's success.)
4. **Identify your competitive advantages** (Every company has a few. Find those within the scope of your resources that will differentiate you from your competition and then refocus your direction to maximize those advantages.)
5. **Identify and articulate your corporate goals** (Every company wants to grow, but many fail to articulate how this growth will occur. Review and assess existing product and services, assign minimum performance standards and eliminate those failing to reach that level. Identify your company's current position and establish goals, target new products and services, base your plan on goals and mission incorporating your mission statement.)
6. **Identify key steps toward achieving these goals** (Those are the building blocks of your business plan, the action steps you will take in order to meet your objectives. Every operational step needs to be identified and you must articulate ownership for those critical step and processes. If everyone is responsible, no one is.)
7. **Know your mission statement** (This is why you are in the market, your "raison d'etre." Analyze the true mission of your company say it aloud and post it everywhere. What repeated recitation has done for most major religions work equally well in a business environment)

UNITS OF MEASURE

Your business plan is not an intellectual exercise. It must result in goals achieved and criteria met. Your plan should contain two yardsticks by which success can be measured.

- A. What Financial goals can be tied to your strategy?

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B. What is your timeline for plan completion?

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE OF PLANS

Your business plan is a road map by which you identify strategic goals and ways to meet these goals. Generally you will deal with two different kinds of Business Plans depending on the purpose of the plan.

- If your business plan's goal is to identify operational methodologies then an annual business plan in order.
- If the goal if the plan is more strategic in nature, a three to five year plan is appropriate.

PITFALLS AND PERILS

- The means is not the end
- Accuracy is everything
- More is not necessarily better
- Showcase managements accountability
- Keep the plan objective and on task

BUSINESS PLAN CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

- ✓ Executive summary and situational analysis
- ✓ Concept, mission statement
- ✓ Market/Market segmentation
- ✓ Customer analysis
- ✓ Competitive analysis
- ✓ Product and positioning statement
- ✓ Advertising/Promotion and public relations
- ✓ Sales Strategy
- ✓ Next steps toward continued product/market development
- ✓ The operation side
- ✓ Key Staff
- ✓ Financial Statements
- ✓ Payback and exit Scenario