

# Focused Business plan guide

# Table of contents

<b>1. COMPANY PROFILE</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 Business Overview	3
1.2 Product / Service Description (s)	3
1.3 Ownership	4
1.4 Progress to date	4
1.5 Legal Structure	5
1.6 S.M.A.R.T. Goals	5
<b>2. MARKET RESEARCH</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1 Target Market	6
2.2 Local Market	6
2.3 Competitor Analysis	7
<b>3. MARKETING / SALES</b>	<b>9</b>
3.1 Value Proposition-Key Benefit	9
3.2 Pricing Analysis	9
3.3 Marketing Plan	10
3.4 Sales Plan	13
3.5 Sales Forecast Assumptions	15
<b>4. OPERATIONS</b>	<b>16</b>
4.1 Location (If applicable)	16
4.2 Insurance / Regulatory Issues	17
4.3 Human Resources / Contractors	18
4.4 Systems and Processes	19
4.5 Equipment and Suppliers	19
4.6 Risk Mitigation Plan	20
<b>5. FINANCIALS</b>	<b>22</b>

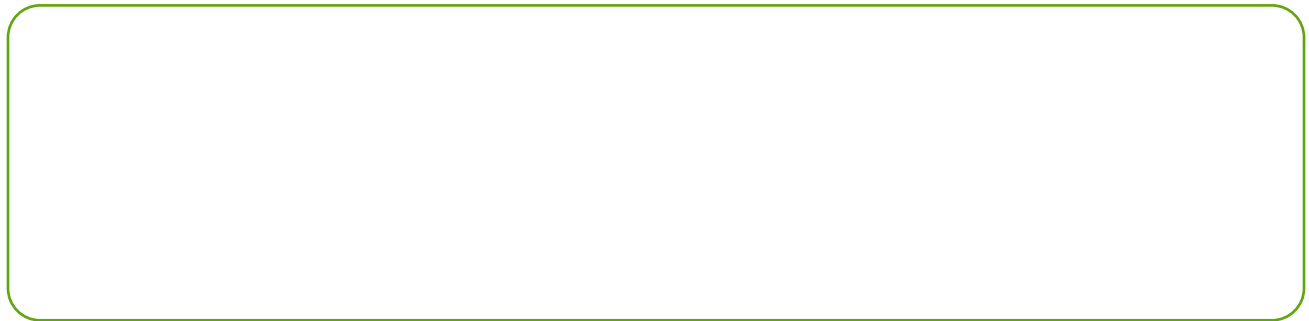
# 1. Company Profile

## 1.1 Business Overview

What is your business idea in simple clear language (aim for clarity)? Too many entrepreneurs tend to be too vague in the description of their business idea. Please be as specific as you possibly can and keep it in simple language that anyone can understand.

**Product Example:** If you're doing an online clothing store – be specific in your niche i.e. women's athletic wear.

**Service Example:** If you're doing an IT consulting business then state your niche or focus i.e. Network Security. It's always best to focus on your main offerings. If you are planning on opening a retail store/restaurant, please specify what type it is. i. e. Thai restaurant, a used bookstore etc. and the address you have in mind.



## 1.2 Product / Service Description(s)

List the products and/or services people will be paying for. It should be clear exactly what people will be purchasing from you. Think of this in terms of packaging up your offerings into no more than 3 or 4 categories. Consider these your 'units of sale'.

**Product Example:** If you are importing men's clothing, focus on your top 3 or 4 sellers by category i.e. Pants, Suits, Accessories (instead of listing many different products)

**Service Example:** If you're doing an IT consulting business and your niche is Network Security then state how you sell your services, i.e. on an hourly rate, minimum project amount, retainer fee etc.

### 1.3 Ownership

Ownership refers to the owner(s) of the business. In this section we are looking at what experience (formal or informal), contacts, and credibility (relevant to your business) you have in the field to ensure you are successful. List the following for each owner:

- List your level of education as it relates to your business idea (degrees, diplomas, certification)
- List the level of practical industry experience in the field (be specific name companies worked for, types of projects, even clients where possible and if you are relying on the experience of others (i.e. other owners or employees) please specify.
- Do you have contacts in the industry? Explain? For how long?
- List Any other experience that you believe would be useful to know about you that relates to your business idea.

### 1.4 Progress to date

- In this section we are looking into how much time, effort and resources you have invested to date on your business idea. Include any money spent, marketing efforts tried, even things that didn't work out. What stage is your product or service development at? Do you have any sales? Or any customer testing validation? (i.e. surveys, waiting lists, letters of intent, contracts, or pop-up shops) What have you done to date (including money spent, sales, insights, contacts etc.)?

- How did this idea come about (only fill this in if you are past the 'idea stage')?

### 1.5 Legal Structure

Simply decide on a legal structure and explain why you think this structure makes the most sense for you and your business currently. Common structures include:

- Sole Proprietorship
- Partnership
- Incorporation

**List any partners (if any) and their voting share in the company:**

YOUR NAME:  % SHARE

PARTNER 2:  % SHARE

PARTNER 3:  % SHARE

### 1.6 S.M.A.R.T. Goals

List 3 goals you want to achieve. A smart goal is Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and has a Timeline i.e. \$20,000 in sales by Nov. 1, launch website by April 5 etc.

## 2. Market Research

### 2.1 Target Market

Who is your best customer (target market)? These are people who will pay for your services. Be specific – i.e. ‘anyone who wants to buy my product or service’ is a poor answer.

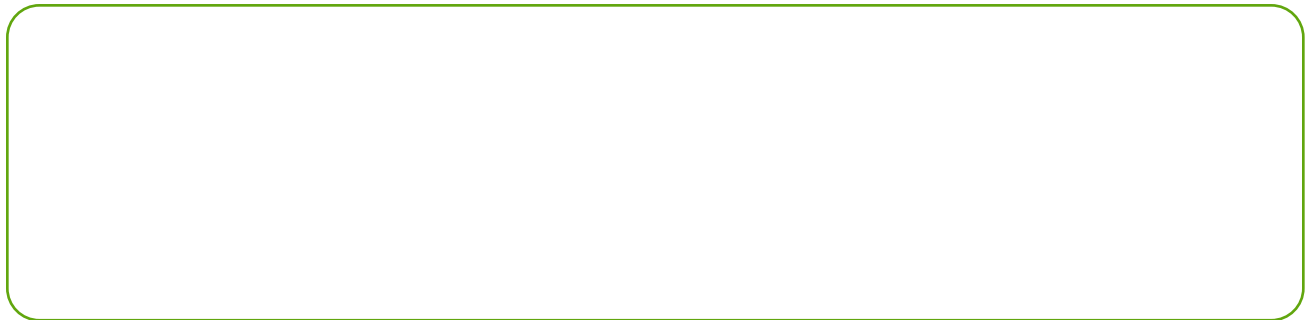
It’s also important to be selective with one key distribution channel when you start (make a choice B2B or B2C; direct selling or online – a poor choice is to say you will do everything).

#### **Business to Consumer (B2C):**

Demographics: Provide a range i.e. women between 28 - 38, who have a degree and make between 40-90 k/yr. Lifestyle (values): what’s important to them? i.e. travel, adventure. Behavior (triggers to buy) i.e. most likely to buy in early Fall and late Spring.  
Scope (geographic area) i.e. GTA + Hamilton.

#### **Business to Business (B2B):**

Industry type. Min. to max. size of biz (sales or employees): i.e. over 250 k but under 4 M in sales. Decision maker. Scope (geographic area).



### 2.2 Local Market

Who is currently serving this market locally – the area of focus you will start with? If you are an online business that makes sure you still start with a local market (i.e. the whole world is not your market).

## 2.3 Competitor Analysis

List **3-5 companies** that are ideally slightly ahead of you (1 - 3 years) that you aspire to, admire or see as competitors. For each company list (list a specific company by name):

- Company name : List a specific company name
- Strengths: what do you observe as their key strengths?
- Weakness: what do you observe as their key weakness – avoid personal judgments?
- Opportunities: what is this company doing so that YOUR company can do better or differently (doesn't mean you will do them)?
- Threats: what can this company change about themselves to make it more difficult for you (doesn't they will do them)?

Company name	Strengths	Weakness	Opportunities	Threats

**Make sure you do a SWOT Analysis as well on your own company**

## 3. Marketing / Sales

### 3.1 Value Proposition-Key Benefit

What is the ONE key benefit (keep the benefit short – a long list of benefits may dilute your offering) Describe the **number one** thing you think your customers will think of as the main benefit about your products or services. Rather than selling on price, try to focus on other qualities such as highest quality wool, shorter delivery times, easier to use, etc. You may also want to consider the problem your product/service is trying to solve.

**Product Example:** if you are selling dairy-free ice cream and you feel there are many benefits you still need to stay focused on the main one your customers will appreciate most i.e. The taste is just as rich and creamy as dairy ice cream.

**Service Example:** If you're doing a restaurant your key benefit could be a popular chef, high-quality ingredients, or a menu that resonates with a specific niche clientele – mention what applies to your business.

### 3.2 Pricing Analysis

Please list what prices you will charge (on average)? What's your rationale? What do your competitors charge (name the competitors) Is your pricing aligned, if not- why?



### 3.3 Marketing Plan

The key here is to have an action plan that will start to generate sales quickly. List your **top three** marketing activities and the results you foresee in sales. You must be specific (i.e. not social media but a specific app i.e. Facebook). For **each marketing activity** state, the details:

- 1) what you will do
- 2) how often
- 3) how much will it cost or how much time will need to be spent (monthly)
- 4) what you can expect in terms of interest / sales from that activity (monthly)

For example, if Facebook is one of your marketing activities, then what will you be posting, how often, how much time will it take, and how many likes you will get and of those how many will buy. Most of your energy will be spent on marketing when you launch. This is a critical piece (you are estimating sales metrics for your business). Saying it “depends” and having vague answers is not an option. You need to focus when you start. You can also list an existing customer base that you have. In the case of retail also list the amount of traffic you believe will come into the store/restaurant. Also mention any surveys you have done to determine interest in your business, any waitlists, etc.

**Marketing Budget:** What is your marketing budget? What will it be for? Be specific.

#### MARKETING ACTIVITIES

##### Marketing activity 1

Name of activity:

1. What will you do?

2. How often will you do it? (e.g., weekly, monthly)

3. Estimated monthly cost or time required:

4. Expected monthly results (interest/sales):

### **Marketing activity 2**

Name of activity:

1. What will you do?

2. How often will you do it? (e.g., weekly, monthly)

3. Estimated monthly cost or time required:

4. Expected monthly results (interest/sales):

### Marketing activity 3

Name of activity:

1. What will you do?

2. How often will you do it? (e.g., weekly, monthly)

3. Estimated monthly cost or time required:

4. Expected monthly results (interest/sales):

Additional Marketing Activities (if applicable)

## EXISTING CUSTOMER BASE / ANTICIPATED STORE TRAFFIC / MARKET INTEREST

Do you have an existing customer base? If so, describe it:

Estimated in-store or restaurant traffic (if applicable):

Have you conducted surveys or collected interest data (e.g., waitlists)? If yes, describe:

## MARKETING BUDGET

What is your total marketing budget?

Breakdown: What will this budget be used for? (Be specific)

### 3.4 Sales Plan

Your sales plan will include strategies that are more active and relationship-based than marketing or advertising. For example, social media, paid advertising, signage and other print ads are best organized into your marketing plan. More direct efforts such as networking, referral partnerships, strategic partnerships, cold-calling, pop-up shops, local markets, door to door, etc. are best organized

into your Sales Plan. Again, include details about each strategy such as how long it will take, how much it will cost, how often you will do it, how much reach and how many sales you believe you will make every month from each strategy. These estimates should align with your numbers in your cashflow projections.

### Strategy 1

Description of the strategy

Timeline (when you'll start, for how long and how often)

Estimated cost

Frequency

Estimated monthly reach

Estimated monthly sales

## Strategy 2

Description of the strategy

Timeline (when you'll start, for how long and how often)

Estimated cost

Frequency

Estimated monthly reach

Estimated monthly sales

### **Strategy 3**

Description of the strategy

Timeline (when you'll start, for how long and how often)

Estimated cost

Frequency

Estimated monthly reach

Estimated monthly sales

Additional strategies (if applicable)

### 3.5 Sales Forecast Assumptions

A business plan is about the future. You are estimating sales based on assumptions you need to make. The best way to do this is to take the average sale or have at maximum three different products/services that you estimate for.

#### Sales Forecast Assumptions (example)

Peak/slow season: Busy season: Sept – Dec., slow season: July & Aug.  
Average dollar amount per sale: \$50 per sale



Average duration/or repeat: an average customer will buy the product once a year

Major marketing initiative: Attend major trade show in November

**List the first 3 months** of sales with a rationale for each month. Always start with the month you believe you'll get the loan.

For example: May - \$1,200

Each sale is on average \$50 - 24 customers

10 customers will come from the existing database of 150 contacts currently on hand

4 from Facebook (see marketing plan - and/or explain it here)

10 from coupons (1,000 coupons disbursed - see marketing plan - and/or explain it here)

24 customers TOTAL

June - \$1,600 Etc.

We are looking for your **realistic** sales assumptions.

Month	Average amount per sale	Total # of customers	Customers sources	How You Will Reach These Customers

## 4. OPERATIONS

### 4.1 Location (If applicable)

#### Location

i. What is the exact location you have in mind (state the square footage).

ii. Why do you want to locate there?

iii. What is the rent and the length of the lease? (Generally, a two-year minimum term is recommended particularly if you have invested in leasehold improvements)

iv. If a sub-let arrangement, you must demonstrate that the agreement/ landlord allows this.

v. If it's a home-based business, simply mention that provide the address and explain why that makes the most sense for your business. Do not account for commercial rent in your cashflow projections (unless it is in fact, a commercially zoned space with a lease that is separate from your personal

rent). Personal rent will be reflected in your Owners' Salary number.

## 4.2 Insurance / Regulatory Issues

What permits and legal documents will you need? When will you get them? Do you have insurance? Where and how much will it cost? Get a quote, describe the coverage here and make sure the quote is aligned with the number in your cashflow projections.

i. Permits and licenses required

ii. Timeline for obtaining them

iii. Type of insurance needed

iv. Provider (if known)

v. Coverage details

vi. Estimated cost (must align with your cashflow projections)

### 4.3 Human Resources / Contractors

If you are hiring contractors/employees, who do you have in mind (state role and any potential candidates)? Describe roles and responsibilities, how much you will pay them, hours required to work, and will they be on the payroll as employees or will they be paid as contractors? At what point do you need to hire them? \*Note: Construction contractors for leasehold improvements with a value above \$5,000 will require an estimate or a quote from a licensed contractor. Describe the work that needs to be done here and ensure these numbers align with your cashflow projections.

**Provide details about any employees or contractors you plan to hire.**

Include:

Role/title	Responsibilities	Name of potential candidate(s) (if any)	Employee or contractor status	Hourly wage or salary	Estimated hours per week / month	Hiring timeline

Additional information:

4.4 Systems and Processes

Do you need any inventory? Please list the cost to make them (buy them), shipping and storage fees, and any import fees or taxes (on average). What is the average mark-up in your industry? What will yours be?

Do you have costs associated with making a sale (if so, what are they)?

Inventory item	Cost per item	Shipping	Storage fees	Import fees / Taxes	Average mark-up in your industry	Your mark-up

4.5 Equipment and Suppliers

Who are your key suppliers? Why did you select them? Provide details for each such as location, turnaround time, pricing, volume discounts, etc.

Any equipment over \$5,000 you will need an estimate or a quote included in this section. Ensure that the estimate is aligned with your expenses in your cashflow projections. Lower priced items can be listed here with a product link to something similar in lieu of an official quote.

## Key suppliers

Key supplier	Location	Reason for selection	Turnaround time	Pricing / Volume discount	Additional information

## Equipment

Equipment	Cost estimate	Product link or link to estimate	Additional information

### 4.6 Risk Mitigation Plan

Answer each in a short paragraph or a couple of sentences.

- i. Marketing – what will you do if your marketing efforts aren’t working?  
Do you have plan B?

ii. Operations – what will you do if you cannot deliver what you promised?  
Do you have plan B?

iii. Finance – no matter how much you want this business to succeed (and we do too) there is always a risk it may not work. At what point will you have to close the business? Think of not reaching a minimum number of sales by a certain date (i.e. the business will close if there is less than \$15,000 in sales by the 10th month of business operation).

## 5. Financials

Only use Futurpreneur's cash flow template.

Download the cash flow template [here](#).

Watch the three-part tutorial here: [Cashflow Video Tutorials](#)

The table sections include:

- 5.0 Past Purchases
- 5.1 Start Up Costs
- 5.2 Cash Flow - Year 1
- 5.3 Cash Flow - Year 2
- 5.4 Income Statement