

You'll also need to know who your competitors are and how you stack up against them—why are you sure there's room for you in this market?

4. Execution

Use this section to outline your marketing plan, your sales plan, and the other logistics involved in actually running your business.

You'll want to cover the technology you plan on using, your business location and other facilities, special equipment you might need, and your roadmap for getting your business up and running. Finally, you'll want to outline the key metrics you'll be tracking to make sure your business is headed in the right direction.

5. Company and management summary

This section is an overview of who you are.

It should describe the organization of your business, and the key members of the management team, but it should also ground the reader with the nuts and bolts: when your company was founded, who is/are the owner(s), what state your company is registered in and where you do business, and when/if your company was incorporated.

Be sure to include summaries of your managers' backgrounds and experience—these should act like brief resumes—and describe their functions with the company. Full-length resumes should be appended to the plan.

6. Financial plan - Finally, if you are raising money or taking out loans, you should highlight the money you need to launch the business. At the very least this section should include your projected profit and loss and cash flow tables, and a brief description of the assumptions you're making with your projections. You may also want to include your balance sheet, your sales forecast, business ratios, and a break-even analysis.