

# Easy-to-Use Business Plan Template for Micro and Small Businesses

## SPECIALIST SERVICES FOR THE SELF-EMPLOYED

Did you know? There are more than 2 million self-employed people in Australia.

When you are in business for yourself you need all the help you can find. At Independent Contractors of Australia we specialize in issues for the self-employed/micro-business person.

To assist we have produced a series of easy to use templates and practical advice covering:

- Business Plans
- Marketing Plans/Audits
- Marketing Research
- Finance
- Promotional Hints
- Contracts

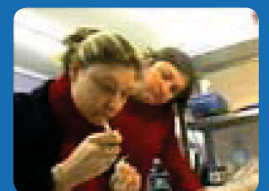
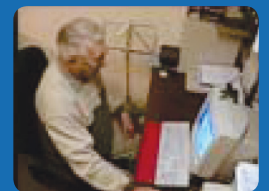
We have also produced a series of short video clips. We've interviewed self-employed people about what they say are the most important things to do in operating your own business. They talk about:

- Cash flow and debt management
- Work-life interface and balance
- Facing difficult times
- And more

You can find all these practical tools and information at:

[www.contractworld.com.au](http://www.contractworld.com.au)

We also keep you up to date on issues for the self-employed.



# Easy-to-Use Business Plan Template for Micro and Small Businesses

A Business Plan is a valuable document to assist in guiding and developing a business to reach its desired objectives. It can also be shared with interested parties (eg. a bank) to assist in gaining support for the (proposed) business activity.

Easy to read and useful business plans are typically constructed in a bullet point format or approach as opposed to a narrative (or sentence and paragraph) style.

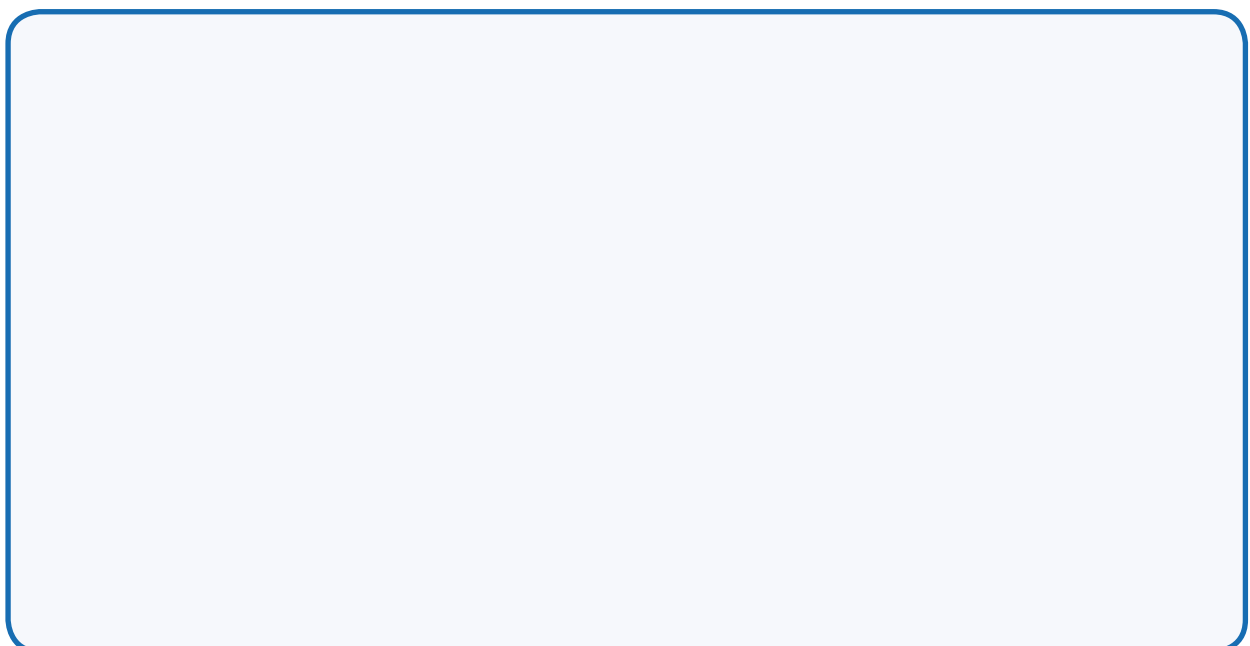
The Business Plan can be for two or three years depending on the needs and preference of the business owner(s). Due to the external environment being highly prone to change a business plan of no more than three years is recommended.

Please note: This Business Plan Template aims to be exhaustive, but that does not mean that you need to fill in every box. It all depends upon what you want from it. For some purposes, it may be enough simply to fill in a few sections. For other purposes (eg seeking finance from a lending institution) it may be wiser to complete the form in full. You can use our format or make your own.

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## 1. Executive Summary

- A summary of the main parts of the plan (eg. target customers, prime business objectives, sales forecasts, profit forecasts, etc.) which should be no more than 2 A4 pages in length.
- Easy to digest in less than five minutes by the reader.
- Importantly, an executive summary is not a description of what has been done.



## 2. Background Business Issues

### a. Key Business and Industry Issues

- What are the two, three or four major industry issues confronting your industry and business (eg. economic downturn, climate change, increasing government regulations, etc.)

### b. Background of proprietors (business owners)

- A short summary of the professional background of the business owners and their main skills

### c. Business Structure, business name and trading address

- State the style of structure of the business (eg. partnership, sole trader, private company, etc.)

- What is /are the business or trading names that are being used.

- The trading address of the business

### 3. Business Vision and Objectives

a. State the **vision** of the business in a short sharp statement of no more than 30 or 40 words (i.e. Where do the owners ideally see the business in two or three years time – what does it look like in terms of size, status in the industry, profit, customer base, etc.)

b. What are the prime **business objectives** for the ensuing two or three years ahead? The objectives should cover the following prime areas –

- Business (eg. number of customers, size, growth, staffing and related issues)

- Marketing (eg. product/service mix, positioning and market share targets)

- Finance (eg. gross sales in \$'s by year, gross profit in \$ by year, net profit in \$ by year, debt issues, etc.)

# 4. Marketing Plan

## a. Product / Service Mix

- List the product and/or service mix of your business and the relating features (tangible aspects of the product/service) and benefits (the feelings/intangibles of the product/service) of each major product or service offering

*Products/Services Benefits*

## b. Market Segmentation (Could sell to)

- This is about defining a list of the type of customers your business could sell to. Could is the key word here, as such the list should be extensive.
- There are fundamentally three types of markets that can be segmented and many businesses can have activities with more than one, they are –
  1. Consumer
  2. Organisational (Business to Business)
  3. International

## c. Target Market(s) (Will sell to)

- From research and analysis who will the business direct its products and/or services towards (over consumer, organisational and international areas)
- Successful businesses develop distinct target markets (profile your targets here)



4. Cultural & Social Issues (what is occurring with cultural and social tastes and preferences in your industry)

5. Technology (what is the impact now and in the near term from a technology perspective in your industry)

6. Competition (what competitive forces are at play, are the barriers to entry to your industry increasing or diminishing)

7. Pressure Groups (what role do pressure groups play in your industry)

8. Natural Environment (what role does the natural environment play in your industry)

## f. Specific Business Market Research Information

- Detail any specific research findings that the business has access to, such as survey results, focus groups findings, etc.

- What are the implications to the business from the research information?

## g. Competitor Reviews

- Research competition in your industry, is it growing/expanding or diminishing. What is the outlook over the coming two or so years?
- Profile your two or three major competitors (including both direct – like or similar to your business and indirect – where the competitors may have some overlap with your type of business activity in some limited but important areas of the market)



## h. SWOT Analysis

- Conduct a review of your business related **strengths** (what are the main four to six things that your business does well or possesses) and **weaknesses** (where your business has identifiable deficiencies)
- Where are the business **opportunities** for you and your competitors in the markets that you operate within? Additionally, where are the **threats** to your business (that are common to you and your competitors)

*Strengths*

*Weaknesses*

*Opportunities*

*Threats*

- How do you minimise the impact and/or negative influence of weaknesses on your business, as well as the impact of the identified threats

## i. Competitive Advantage

- Does your business have an identifiable and/or sustainable advantage or edge in the market place? What is it, how can it be exploited to support your business?

## j. Marketing Strategies

- Product / Service range
1. Describe the offerings your business will take to market
  2. Any new product / service development plans for years two or three
  3. Branding options, design, packaging details

- Pricing
4. What is the pricing strategy per range(s) that the business will take to market (i.e. Going market rate; penetration; premium)

- Place
5. How will the business go to market (i.e. Via direct methods or indirect or a combination of both), list the routes –

- Promotion
6. What are the main messages you will promote to underpin your business and/or brands

7. What are the main methods of promotion (eg. internet, radio, newspapers, signage, etc.)?

## k. Implementation, monitoring and evaluation

- Develop an implementation plan for the strategies in the previous section and any other aspects of the plan (this is done month by month and strategy by strategy –
- Regularly monitor progress of the business (eg. sales, responses to advertising, responses to pricing, competitor reviews, etc.)
- Evaluate progress in relation to prime business objectives in section 3 and if necessary take corrective action for either positive non-conformance or negative non-conformance

# 5. Operations Plan

## a. Insurances

- Detail the business insurances that your business has (eg. public liability, contents, building, window breakage, key person, etc.) and who the policies are with and their renewal dates

## b. Regulatory requirements

- Detail any regulatory requirements (legal) of your business. These could include local, state and federal government legislative or regulatory requirements (eg. food handling, specific licenses to operate, ABN, GST, work cover, local council permits, etc.)

## c. Risk management

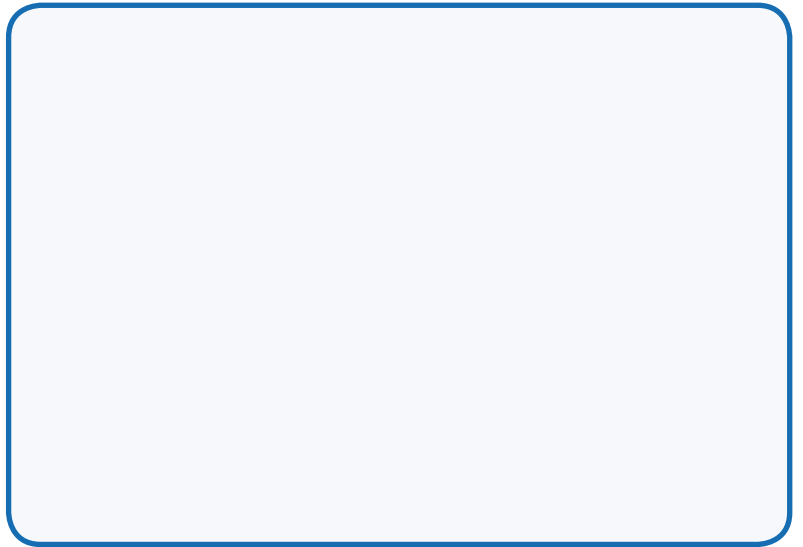
- Detail obligations with respect to work cover and OH&S issues to your business (check your state gov't web site for work cover)

## d. Professional advisors

- Detail the names of the firms and/or organisations you will engage for –
  1. Accounting & tax advice
  2. Legal matters
  3. Industry associations
  4. Other (eg. business mentor?)

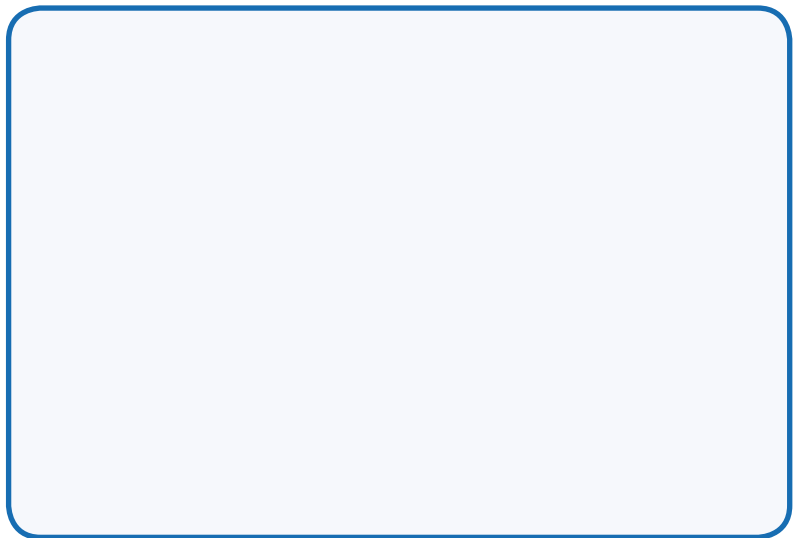
## e. Operations details

- State trading days and hours
- Trading terms for payments (eg. cash, trading accounts, etc.)
- Warranties/guarantees information



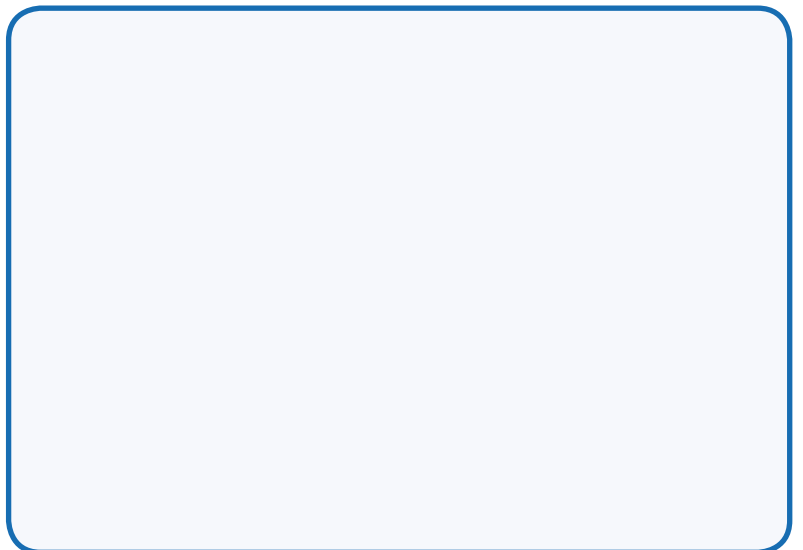
## f. Human resource strategy

- Will the business employ and/or sub-contract HR (list by major area – eg. sales, marketing, finance, operations, etc.)
- List the skills and competencies to be utilised in the business by major area



## g. Suppliers

- List the major suppliers to the business
- How often will supplier reviews take place



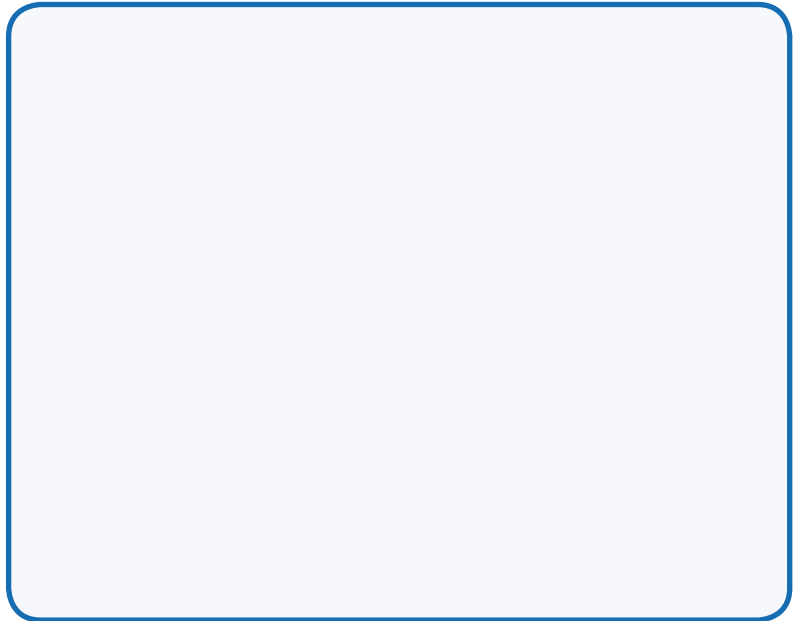
## h. Technology

- List the technologies the business will use and how it will review such technologies to ensure optimal performance from this viewpoint



## i. Physical Resources

- List the key pieces of equipment that the business owns or leases
- Are there any additional pieces of equipment that need to be purchased to assist in optimal business performance (list)



## j. Resource planning and monitoring

- Inventory – what is the process to ensure adequate inventory is on hand for sales
- Physical resources – how will your business capture resource usage (eg. electricity, machine use, vehicle use, etc.)
- Human resources – how will staff performance be measured

