

PART I: BUSINESS PLAN PROPOSAL

ROLE: The BCI Group is accepting business plans for products and/or services. In order to match potential investors to have an opportunity to provide financing in exchange for a stake in your company. Your team will take on the form of a company or consulting group. Your team will need to make up a company or consulting team (firm) name along with some hypothetical background of the organization in order to establish credibility. NOTE: You will need to “make up” an address, phone number, and a website address; plus, create company letterhead with a logo (or graphic(s) representing your company.

AUDIENCE: Your company/consulting team will be briefly presenting your business plan proposals to a panel of investment brokers and venture capitalists. Try to KNOW your audience. Refer to links below, which are basically “job descriptions” of these individuals, so that you can better understand your audience and their demographics, etc.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Venture_capitalist
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Investment_broker

Consider the links above as an insight to what your AUDIENCE knows. However, even though your audience is comprised of experts, you must also address the layperson who may not understand various terms or certain aspects of an effective business plan or of the industry you are addressing. *No matter what...you want to make sure that your proposal is “appealing” to your audience.*

THE PROPOSAL:

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL—no page number

You will need to include a letter of transmittal to be located on your COMPANY LETTERHEAD (.3 top, .3 bottom, 1.0 right, 1.0 left). A letter of transmittal is a letter that gives the “gist” of the business plan proposal. This letter is a message of goodwill and information. It is not meant to be persuasive. You should use a DIRECT APPROACH...by including the main points first and supporting them with evidence in the body and/or conclusion.

- Paragraph 1: Indicate the purpose of the proposal and the intended audience (who will receive the report)
- Paragraph 2: Summarize the product/service idea, include important details such as the competitive advantage, proposed investment amount, along with justification of the product/service’s need in the marketplace.

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- Paragraph 3: Conclude the letter by indicating your availability to be contacted for additional information or clarification. Include your contact information (you can make this up), but it should include the partners' names.

This letter must be properly formatted. Create a letterhead for your company. This letter will be on the letterhead with .3 top/.3 bottom/1.0 right/1.0 left margins. Use the same font as the proposal. This is NOT to be indicated in the Table of Contents.

COVER PAGE—no page number

Your cover page will need to look extremely professional. You may want to put a border around the cover page. Include the name of your product/service with your company logo. The title should indicate that it is a proposal (i.e. BUSINESS PLAN FOR (PRODUCT AND/OR SERVICE)). The names of your team and the date (Summer 2010) will need to be included on the cover page. Do NOT put our course number or my name on it as it is not important and takes away from the professionalism of your purpose, which is responding to the RFP.

TABLE OF CONTENTS—no page number

You will need to include a table of contents. You may want each major section to have its own page, or number each major section with Roman numerals or numbers. You may want to go online to research/view proposals to see which format your team prefers.

When you create your table of contents, you will need to use the “tab” function in Microsoft Word and use a “dot” leader (explanation of how to do this will be provided). The table of contents should be double spaced between major sections and single spaced between sub-sections (i.e. areas of focus, recommendations, etc.)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY—page number (this is the FIRST PAGE)

THIS IS COMPLETED LAST. The executive summary is the LAST thing you do with the exception of the table of contents and possibly the letter of transmittal. The executive summary is the summary of your entire proposal. You will provide the reader with a snapshot of what is to follow. ***This statement will contain all of the key information and can be considered “a sales document” designed to convince the reader that this business plan proposal should be considered for support.*** You will need to include in a narrative format:

- Introduction of the Proposal (Paragraph 1)

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- Statement of Need (Paragraph 2)—This paragraph briefly describes the need for your product/service and the benefits it will provide your target audience. (Refer to the Statement of Need Section)
- Product/Service Description (Paragraph 3)—This paragraph is a brief introduction to your product/service. Consider that this paragraph offers a solution to the needs and/or desires of your targeted audience. (Refer to the Product/Service Description Section)
- Market Analysis (Paragraph 4)—This paragraph briefly mentions your company’s research into “WHO” is your market, customer needs, where they are, and how to reach them. (Refer to the Market Analysis Section)
- Financial Analysis (Paragraph 5)—This paragraph briefly describes the financial state of your company and your need for funding through this investment (what your company plans to “do” with the money if BCI provides the funding desired. (Refer to the Financial Analysis Section)
- Conclusion/Your Team (Paragraph 6)—This paragraph is the final paragraph of this section. Indicate how your company is a “good” investment based on research, experience, previous sales, etc. Establish your team’s credibility briefly here. (Refer t the Company Background Section).

STATEMENT OF NEED—page number

This section is the first and most important part. Developing this section sets the stage for all other aspects of the business plan. This section narratively indicates WHY this product/service is needed and desired by your selected target market(s). Your team will need to provide “EVIDENCE” in the form(s) of statistics, testimony, comparison and/or analogies, recent news in the media, journal articles reinforcing the need, etc. You will need to find or “make up” this evidence.

Think about these questions:

- What is the history of the product/service industry you are proposing when considering the need/desire in the marketplace?
- What types of benefits does/can your target market(s) expect from a product/service?
- How will your product/service address your target market(s) needs and requirements (based on the product /service benefits and features)?
- Why does this product/service matter (or make a difference) in their industry?
- Why is what you propose necessary or desired?
- Who benefits? Make sure you consider all stakeholders
- Why hasn’t this been addressed sufficiently in the past? What are other companies doing to address this need/desire? Are they effective?

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A & B: Find supporting data/evidence related to your product/service and/or target market(s). Use citations in APA format and include in the REFERENCES section. Plus, any other additions you find to support your proposal.

Example. ...at the end of a sentence where you've included "cited" information, include a citation such as this (Author, Year, Page #). NOTE: If there isn't an author, then type the webpage or article title/name and the year. If there is no specific year (which usually there is a date/year indicated, then put a n.d. for no date). If there isn't a particular page number (i.e. webpage), then eliminate the page number and include just the Author then a comma, then date/year.

This section will need an introduction paragraph, which is a few sentences describing the important components of this section. Preparing the reader for what will be included. Also, this section will need a concluding paragraph, which is a few sentences highlighting the section and the fact that this is a good investment based on the facts presented.

COMPANY BACKGROUND—page number

This section helps to describe the background of the company. NOTE: This is where your company/consulting team will need to PROVE your credibility. The following aspects must be included in this section:

Introduction

- This is a few sentences describing the important components of this section. Preparing the reader for what will be included.

Company Values

- Where did the idea for the service/product come from? Is there a personal reason for this product/service?
- Indicate the owner's experience and competence in this industry or with these types of products/services?
- Describe the "types" of employees your company consists of (including management)—styles of communication, what your company looks for in an employee, etc.).
- Explain the importance of your company's ethics and integrity (establish trustworthiness).
- How does your company plan to build or maintain its professional image in the marketplace.

Internal and External Communications

- Indicate how your company "communicates" with their employees, clients, vendors, etc. (tone, motivation, frequency, etc.). Procedures for decision making, team work, etc.

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- Explain the “company culture” of how all employees (including management) value effective communication through interpersonal communication. Possibly include procedures for decision making, team work, team effectiveness, etc.
- Describe the importance of “listening” and “nonverbal communication” in your company towards other employees as well as clients/vendors.

Additionally, in this section, you will indicate the company’s:

- Mission Statement
- Vision Statement
- Company Goals & Objectives
- Company’s Keys to Success...what/will make(s) YOUR company successful and a good investment

Conclusion

- End the section by indicating “In closing,” “In summary,” “In conclusion,” etc. along with a few sentences highlighting the section and the fact that this is a good investment based on the facts presented.

To assist you in this section, you may want to go to a company on the internet or think about a company you know (and/or respect) to find out what makes them successful and consider some of their practices and develop them into this proposal.

PRODUCT/SERVICE DESCRIPTION—page number

This section helps to describe the product/service. You will need to include:

Introduction

- This is a few sentences describing the important components of this section. Preparing the reader for what will be included.

Features and Benefits

- Description of benefits and features. You **MUST** be descriptive. A&B: prototype (model or photo), feature & benefit chart, any types of “sales literature,” etc.

SWOT Analysis

- Prepare a S-W-O-T Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) by narratively describing it along with a chart/figure. **You MUST create a chart or figure for this part of the section.** Prior to placing the chart into the document, you must briefly describe the chart and indicate to the reader to refer to the chart/figure, which will be below the narrative.

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Competition Comparison

- You will need to compare your product against a competitor by comparing various features and benefits of the product and/or company. A&B: Compare to more than one competitor. Create a chart/figure to illustrate differences.

Future Products/Services

- Forecast potential future products and/or services based on this original idea.

Conclusion

- End the section by indicating “In closing,” “In summary,” “In conclusion,” etc. along with a few sentences highlighting the section and the fact that this is a good investment based on the facts presented.

As you can imagine, your company/team will need to check out similar organizations with the same product/service, purpose (mission), or targeted audience for comparison purposes. Through this analysis, you will be better able to focus on your product/service’s features/benefits/potential/diversification/etc.

MARKET ANALYSIS—page number

In this section, you will “analyze” your market in order to determine your market’s needs, trends, growth. You will include:

Introduction

- This is a few sentences describing the important components of this section. Preparing the reader for what will be included.

Market Segmentation

- You will describe your target market based on:
 - Ages of your target consumer
 - Genders of your target consumer
 - Prices your consumers willing/able to pay
 - Overall interests of your target consumers

A&B: Create a chart or illustration (figure) showing the relationship between these items and/or your targeted market. Check out this link for a description of marketing segmentation: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Market_segmentation

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Marketing Mix

- Product/Service: What it will take to produce product/service? Packaging Information? Production Information?
- Price: Describe your product/service price points. What does the industry cost structure indicate? Market profitability?
- Place: Where do you plan to locate this product/service? Brick & Mortar, Internet, both? How will it be distributed? What other logistical considerations?
- Promotion: What are your promotional strategies? Public Relations? Advertising? Word-of-Mouth? Point of Sale?

A&B: Create a chart or illustration (figure) showing the relationship between these items and/or your targeted market. Check out this link for a description of this business term:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marketing_mix.

Web Presence/E-Commerce

- Indicate your website address and how long it has been in existence.
- Explain your website traffic or desired traffic.
- Describe what information your target market can find on your website regarding your company, product/service, sales, etc.

A & B: Create a “mock” website to show some of the important links, etc.

Conclusion

- End the section by indicating “In closing,” “In summary,” “In conclusion,” etc. along with a few sentences highlighting the section and the fact that this is a good investment based on the facts presented.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS—page number

In this section, you will “analyze” your financial needs and requirements. Refer to this link for more information about financial analyses (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Financial_analysis).

NOTE: You do NOT have to get as technical as you would if you were doing this “for real” ...in a real business plan, you would provide financial statements such as a break-even analysis, projected profit and loss, projected cash flow, etc.

For this section, you will include:

Introduction

- This is a few sentences describing the important components of this section. Preparing the reader for what will be included.

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Start-Up Costs

- You will need to hypothetically indicate your company/consulting team's start-up costs. Include in this section how much funding will be needed and how much your company/consulting team is seeking in terms of an investment for a certain percentage of your company/consulting team's ownership.

Important Assumptions

- You will need to describe (not provide actual financial documents) on your projected profitability, solvency, liquidity, and stability (see Wikipedia link above for descriptions). You can describe these factors in the form of a paragraph(s).

NOTE: Obviously, this section will be "hypothetical" and will be assuming the results of sales or the loss of sales. You can indicate other factors that will affect the financial status of your company such as inventory, cyclical quarters, etc.

A&B: You can create "hypothetical" charts/figures/graphs

Conclusion

- End the section by indicating "In closing," "In summary," "In conclusion," etc. along with a few sentences highlighting the section and the fact that this is a good investment based on the facts presented. **Be sure to indicate the amount your company is seeking in investment dollars for a certain percentage of your company.**

CONCLUSION—page number

Your team will need to summarize the main points of this business plan proposal. This is very similar to what you will write in your executive summary except from the understanding that your audience has ALREADY read this proposal. Whereas, the executive summary, you must write it with the understanding that the audience has NOT read the proposal.

Include:

Introduction

- This is a few sentences indicating the end of the proposal and how it is a great investment opportunity.

Body

- This needs to focus on some of the important facts indicated in the business plan that may "persuade" the investors to take a "stake" in your company through a financial investment. Once again...this section MUST be PERSUASIVE (A-I-D-A).

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Conclusion

- End the section by indicating “In closing,” “In summary,” “In conclusion,” etc. along with a few sentences highlighting the section and the fact that this is a good investment based on the facts presented.
- **At the end, you must create a complimentary close with EACH co-owners signature. It will look like this:**

Respectfully submitted,

(Name of Co-Owner)
Co-Owner

(Name of Co-Owner)
Co-Owner

(Name of Co-Owner)
Co-Owner

(Name of Co-Owner)
Co-Owner

REFERENCES—page number

You will need to include this in APA format. You will need to include the website and/or pages of your organization’s website in APA format along with other organizations you made comparisons to and discussed within the proposal. Also, you will need to provide “EVIDENCE OF THE NEED FOR THIS PROPOSAL.” To do this, you will have to go find articles, publications, etc. that supports either your recommendations or supports the idea of improving their organization’s communication strategies. You will need a **minimum of 4 sources** (one will be your competitors’ website).

APPENDIX—page number (only on first page, which is a cover page for the appendix section)

Your appendix will be titled EXAMPLES OF CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS. It will include four examples of corporate communications related to your company and/or product/service.

NOTE: You can also include other information in an appendix, which is too large to include in the body (such as a table, figure, article, etc.). If you do that, you will need to label the EXAMPLES OF CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS as Appendix A and the other section with the supporting evidence as Appendix B. It will also need to be indicated in the Table of Contents. If you do this, Appendix B will need its own cover page with a title.

Here are the four required examples:

- **PROMOTIONAL PIECE:** Your team will be preparing a promotional piece for your product/service. This promotional piece can be sales literature (brochure, etc.), an advertisement for a newspaper, an event announcement, coupon for product/service with description, etc. IT MUST BE PERSUASIVE...so you must have enough information to “sell” your product/service in an aesthetically-pleasing format that includes some text and graphics. It should be persuasive and illustrative. (You should include A-I-D-A)

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- **PRESS RELEASE:** Your team will be preparing a press release. You can pick the topic; here are some ideas:
 - Introduction of your new product to the marketplace
 - Introduction of the merger with the Barracuda Cove Investment Group
 - Introduction of new (technology) (innovation) (or whatever) of your product/service
 - OR...what other ideas you can think of that you would want to share with the public in the form of a press release.
- **GOOD WILL LETTER:** Your team will be preparing a letter expressing good will (you will need to use the direct approach). This letter can be related to any topic you'd like. It could be a letter to any of your stakeholders on any topic...your customer, your supplier, your investor, your employee(s), etc. **Remember that this letter must have a minimum of three paragraphs: introduction, body, close.** Be sure to use the proper formatting for a letter. It **MUST** be on your company's letterhead (which you will have to create). It should have enough content to include the situation, the solution/good news, how your company feels, etc.
- **BAD NEWS LETTER:** Your team will be preparing a letter expressing bad news (you will want to use the indirect approach). This letter can be related to any topic you'd like. It could be a letter to any of your stakeholders on any topic...your customer, your supplier, your investor, your employee(s), etc. **Remember that this letter must have a minimum of three paragraphs: introduction, body, close.** Be sure to use the proper formatting for a letter. It **MUST** be on your company's letterhead (which you will have to create). It should have enough content to include the situation, the solution/bad news, how your company feels, etc.
- **A&B:** You can add additional correspondence or promotional pieces to this appendix. This appendix is to allow your business proposal to demonstrate some of the communication strategies your company will be using. You can also include any promotional pieces related to your company such as business cards, key chains, or other give-a-ways that have your company/consulting team's name on it (you would distribute these items to your audience during your presentation).