



Building A Bridge
to Self Employment
for People with Disabilities

Exploring Self Employment Opportunities For People With Disabilities

Business Plan Development Guide



WELCOME

Welcome to Business Plan Development Guide for People With Disabilities!

Most people give some thought to owning and managing their own business at some point in their lives. Starting a new business is risky at the best of times, but your chances of succeeding will be better if you first spend time evaluating your personal situation and circumstances; and, then taking that information and applying it to the step-by-step business plan development included in this guide.

This guide is designed to provide a business planning tool to assist people with disabilities who have done some initial assessment around starting their own full or part time business, and are now ready to take the next step and develop a comprehensive plan for their business idea.

What is a Business Plan

A Business Plan is a detailed written document that describes the nature of the business, the target market, the resources and qualifications of the owner(s), the advantages the business will have over competitors, the objectives of the business, and much more.

It is a formal document that should be typewritten and reader friendly with attention to style and format.

Reasons for Doing a Business Plan

- Forces you to think through your business idea.
- Helps you judge and evaluate a business idea so there is less risk.
- Shows you where you need help or information.
- Organizes and presents information about your business so you can progress logically and not get off track.
- Increases your self-confidence.
- Lessens the risk of oversights or errors.
- Organizes ideas so you can communicate them to others.
- Increases chances of business success once established.
- Reminds you of good ideas and ways to save time or money, especially important as you get busier.
- Helps you obtain necessary financing.



INTRODUCTION

This Business Plan Development Guide is supplemental to ‘*Exploring Self Employment Opportunities For People With Disabilities – A Self Assessment Workbook Course*’, produced by SEDI (Social and Enterprise Development Innovations).

The Self Assessment Workbook Course is free. To join the course, you need a user account. To register, go to http://cfdlearn.ca/courses/olt_module/register.shtml. Complete and submit the registration to set up your user name and password.

The *Self Assessment Workbook Course* is intended to lead prospective self-employed people and entrepreneurs with disabilities in a logical and sequential way through the stages involved in assessing their potential for self employment as a career option. The information and tools contained in the *Course* will provide you with a solid base to help you decide whether to pursue self-employment.

The *Course* is divided into two sections with 8 modules. Each module is designed to take you step-by-step in assessing the viability of your business ideas and how your background and experience support your business ideas.

SECTION ONE – MODULE 1 PERSONAL ENTREPRENEURIAL TRAITS

Various tools to assist you in assessing your personal traits; entrepreneurial similarities; and entrepreneurial readiness.

SECTION ONE – MODULE 2 BUSINESS KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS

Analysis of background information about your education and work history. Identification of knowledge & skills you have and areas that may need further development.

SECTION ONE – MODULE 3 BUSINESS IDEA(S)

Development of a description of your potential product(s) &/or service(s), and the features/benefits to your potential customers.

SECTION ONE – MODULE 4 ACCESS/ACCOMMODATION

Special Needs planning and development of an Accommodation Plan.

SECTION ONE – MODULE 5 ACTION PLAN I

Next Steps in pursuing self employment.

SECTION TWO – MODULE 1 MARKET RESEARCH

Identification of your target market and potential customers. How to survey prospective customers.

SECTION TWO – MODULE 2 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Itemizing anticipated start-up costs. Developing your personal financial profile and assessment of applying for a loan.

SECTION TWO – MODULE 3 ACTION PLAN II

Next Steps in pursuing self employment.

After you have completed the *Course*, as a further determination that self-employment is right for you, we provide the following Self Employment Readiness Assessment.

SELF EMPLOYMENT READINESS ASSESSMENT	YES	NO
1. Are committed to operating a business.		
2. Have developed a business idea and description of product(s)/service(s).		
3. Have related business experience &/or transferable life/work experience, supported by a resume.		
4. Have done self-assessment utilizing SEDI Self Assessment Workbook (or equivalent proprietary materials).		
5. Have established a need/demand for related product(s)/service(s) and ability to compete, through market research.		
6. Have ideas of how to market the product(s)/service(s).		
7. Have assessed/identified accommodation needs.		
8. Have developed a listing and estimated cost of start-up needs including accommodations.		
9. Have the required resources available or attainable for business start-up.		
10. Have established that the business is able to generate revenue within a reasonable time period, i.e. 3 – 6 months.		

Based on your self-assessment that Self Employment is right for you, your next step will be development of a Business Plan.

To assist you in your Business Plan Development, we have provided references to the applicable Sections of the *Course* where it relates to the Business Plan content.



BEGINNING YOUR BUSINESS PLAN

Cover – Title Page

This will include: the Business Name, address, phone number, fax number, email address and the name of the principal owner(s). Also include the date of publication.

Notes:

As you are writing your business plan think of the business as an entity and write in the 3rd Person. This provides a tone of objective professionalism to your plan.

Example:

XYZ Company provides computer consulting services to small businesses. It is a home based business with an emphasis on customer service, etc.

XYZ Company is a retailer of imported gift products. The business is located in a major mall and has an extensive range of products, etc.

Also use the 3rd person when you are referring to yourself in the Business Plan.

Example:

Mary/John Smith, the principal of XYZ Company, has significant experience in computer hardware/software. This is represented by both her/his educational background and work experience.

Peggy/Jim Jones, the owner of XYZ Company, has a diverse background that supports the business. Her/his work experience includes import/export, sales and customer service. She/he previously operated a successful retail business.

*The following page has a **Business Plan – Table of Content**. After completion of the Plan the page numbers of the various sections are inserted.*

Business Plan - Table of Contents

PAGE NUMBER

Executive Summary

Insert Page number

Business Profile

Management Plan

Product and/or Service Descriptions

Long Term Objectives

Marketing Plan

- Results of Research
- The Market
- Competition
- Marketing Strategies
 - Product
 - Pricing
 - Place
 - Promotion

Operations Plan

Risk Analysis

Start-Up Requirements

Action Plan

Financial Statements

- Sales Forecasts
- Income Statement Forecasts
- Cash Flow Forecasts

Addendum

- Marketing material
- Survey analysis
- Owner's resume
- Other information supporting business ideas



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Executive Summary highlights the key points in your Business Plan. It must 'sell' the viability of your business to the reader and make them want to learn more about your plan.

The Executive Summary includes:

- A brief description of the business;
- Who you are and why your background, experience and education make this venture more likely to succeed;
- Key business objectives;
- Key information i.e. who are the customers, major competitors, industry trends;
- Selling strategies; and,
- How much money is needed to start the business, and when the business will break even.

Be concise and precise and highlight the essence of your business in the summary. You want to capture the reader's interest and get them excited about your business!

**The Executive Summary should be written last,
after the Plan has been developed. One page
preferred, two pages maximum**

BUSINESS PROFILE

The Business Profile describes your business clearly. Is this a new business, a franchise or the purchase of an existing business?

The Business Profile identifies:

- The type of business i.e. retail, manufacturing, service;
- Location of business;
- Product(s) you will be selling and/or services you will be providing. Mention your product(s)/service(s) here, but do not provide too much detail as you will be describing your product(s)/service(s) later in the plan;
- Type of business organization (proprietorship, partnership, incorporation);
- Ownership - names of principal owner(s) and percentage of the business each owns;
- History of business (if applicable);
- Relevant dates i.e. start-up, expansion;
- How you determined that this business would be appropriate, profitable and possible;
- What you have done to date on the development of your business. Steps you have taken;
- When you expect to generate the first revenues; and,
- Is the business year-round or seasonal? If seasonal, what you will do during the off season to maintain revenues.

*The next Content segment of your Business Plan is 'Management'. To assist you in developing this Content, refer to Section 1 Module 2 **Business Knowledge and Skills of the Course.***

MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Management Plan details your ability to successfully operate your business. Be sure to:

- Outline the credentials of the principal owner(s);
- Remember to include the 3 E's;
 - Education
 - Experience
 - Expertise
- Include non-work related experiences; and,
- Provide a brief description of associates, support personnel and network support.

Use this as a promotional tool that reinforces your business idea(s) and gives credibility to you and the viability of your business

*The next Content segment of your Business Plan is 'Product &/or Service Descriptions'. To assist you in developing this Content, refer to Section 1 Module 3 **Business Idea(s)** of the Course.*

PRODUCT AND/OR SERVICE DESCRIPTIONS

It is important that you clearly describe why your product(s) and/or service(s) are going to be in demand. Include the following:

- A complete description of the product(s)/service(s) and the benefits to your customers;
- Identify their uniqueness in the market; and,
- If, like many businesses, you have a primary and a secondary product(s) or service(s), segregate them into a primary or secondary list and provide complete descriptions of how the secondary product(s)/service(s) relate to the primary ones. For example, the secondary product(s)/services(s) may only generate small sales, but are offered as a convenience to the customer and are profitable.

LONG TERM OBJECTIVES

Establishing your vision for your business in 3 to 5 years, (in relation to your industry, its size and potential for growth) demonstrates your commitment to your business and its future.

Long Term Objectives/Goals should include:

- Growth Targets (i.e. sales, production, market share);
- Expansion (i.e. employees, location, marketing, products/services offered); and,
- Profitability.

*The next Content segment is the **Marketing Plan**. It will be very helpful to your development of the marketing plan to review Section 2 Module 1 **Market Research** of the Course, prior to progressing to the next Content segment.*

MARKETING PLAN

The plan describes the market 'place' in which you will operate your business, and what you are going to offer to the customers in that market place in order to make sales and generate profitable income.

Results of Research

- Describe the steps you have taken to research your business, what you found out and how it relates to/and justifies your business idea.
- Identify your potential customers - how many have you talked to, what did you ask, what did you find out, how many are likely to buy from you? Has this research established that there is a 'need' for your product(s) and/or service(s) in the market place?

The Market

- Describe the market segments in which your business will operate, such as geographic, demographic, and product/service usage.
- Within the broader market is there a niche or target market(s) for your product(s)/service(s) - segments you have identified as potential customer group. Be specific and list as many characteristics as you can. What are their needs, how many customers are there?
- Identify trends in the industry. Is it in growth or decline? Outline the immediate and long term outlook of your industry, its size and potential for growth.

Competition

- What distinguishes you from your competition?
- What is your competitive advantage - your unique position in your industry?
- Identify your competitors - direct and indirect:
 - Their strengths and weaknesses;
 - Their market share (if available); and,
 - Their competitive advantage.

MARKETING PLAN (continued)

Marketing Strategies (What you are going to offer and do!)

- Your Product:
 - Include a full description of the Features and Benefits of your product(s)/service(s); and,
 - their uniqueness in the market.
- Your Place In The Market:
 - Identify the location of facilities, hours of operation; will you work at the customer's location or yours;
 - What is the planned geographic area for sales/service; and,
 - How are products delivered (if applicable) or distributed?
- Your Pricing:
 - What price will you charge for your product or service? How did you arrive at that price? Will you offer discounts - when, where, why?
 - How does your pricing strategy relate to your target customer group(s) and your competition?
- Your Promotion:
 - How will you advertise and promote your business? Be specific as to when and what advertising mediums you will use;
 - Will networking be of value – where and when?
 - Do you have the personal selling skills you will require or will you need to develop them?
 - How will you solicit repeat and referral business?

OPERATIONS PLAN

Your Operation Plan describes and details how you intend to ‘get the job done’. Your plan provides details on how your business will operate. For example, will you go to clients or will clients come to you? How will you produce and deliver the finished product(s)/service(s) you have sold to your customer? Include the following information:

- Will you be a sole proprietor, a partner or incorporate? If a partner, describe the relationship between the partners, the reason for the partnership, and the ownership percentages;
- Describe any laws, licences or regulations that affect your business and how you will meet these requirements;
- Include the names of your lawyer, accountant and bank;
- Describe operational details about the location you have chosen such as lease arrangements, cost, bylaws and parking. If a home based business - what are the advantages, and why it will work well for you?
- Describe your suppliers, (if applicable) their pricing, discounts and credit terms offered;
- Describe your equipment requirements – office and production. Will you lease or buy?
- Describe the details of the production of your product(s)/service(s). Will you be doing the work or will it be done by employees, out-sourced or sub-contracted. How will you ensure the quality of your product(s)/service(s)?
- Will you need employees? How many and with what skills?

RISK ANALYSIS

With every business, events may occur that can delay the generation of cash flow and income, or in the worst case create liability and bankruptcy. Outline to the best of your current knowledge all of the potential risk factors that you can anticipate and how you intend to deal with them. You need to consider internal risks (within the business) such as the impact of illness or injury to you, a key employee or a partner; and, external risks (outside the business) such as bankruptcy of a key supplier or customer liability to you due to an accident.

You need to identify how you intend to mitigate or overcome these risks and consider the following:

- What type of insurance does the business have or intend to obtain?
- Given the type of industry or sector you operate in, what are the normal protections that are included in contracts?
- How will you manage credit/payments with suppliers and customers?
- What employment/partnership agreements are required?

START-UP REQUIREMENTS

*Prior to developing this Content segment you will want to refer to Section 5 **Access and Accommodation** of the Course. Section 5 addresses Special Needs Accommodations as an important consideration for Business Success!*

As a person with a disability you may need some form of equipment, services or other special needs accommodation to allow you to participate as fully as possible in the activities of everyday living and in social, cultural and economic life.

This Section of the Course addresses the following areas:

- *Physical Access;*
- *Information, Communication, Business Specific Tasks, and Productivity; and,*
- *Occupational Health and Safety*

*Additionally, to assist in your development of this segment you will want to review Section 2 Module 2 **Financial Considerations** of the Course. This module provides assistance to you in assessing the financial considerations of your business start-up.*

As you are developing your Start-up Needs you will want to consider the following:

- Operational needs and costs, i.e. business registration, opening inventory if you are selling a product, office supplies, marketing materials etc.;
- Fixed assets – computer and peripherals, equipment, furniture, vehicles etc.;
- The cost (or value if they are already owned personally and are being put into the business);
- What have you established as your access and accommodation needs; and,
- Will you need a Line of Credit for business operations, if so, in what amount?



ACTION PLAN

You have now developed a significant amount of information on your business idea, why you want to start your business, and the management, marketing and operational requirements for your business. You now need to consider the specifics on when and how you will start the business, and the actions you will undertake to launch your business and introduce your company into the marketplace.

You may want to use the following format for your Action Plan

The following Actions are intended to ensure proper and timely business start-up.

ACTIVITY	START DATE	COMPLETION DATE
Registration of Business	January 1/06	January 15/06
Lease Negotiation and Lease Entry	January 1/06	January 31/06
Insurance Coverage	January 1/06	January 31/06
Leasehold Improvements	January 31/06	February 15/06
Equipment Purchase	January 31/06	February 15/06
Initial Marketing Activities	February 1/06	February 28/06
Business Opening	March 1/06	March 1/06
Grand Opening/Open House	March 15/06	April 1/06

Notes:

The above table is an example and you can use this to list the activities that you believe are necessary for your business start-up.

In addition to your own unique activities, consider the following:

- Registration of the business;
- Registration for Tax i.e. GST, PST;
- Opening bank account;
- Purchase of equipment;
- Set-up of home office; telephone; answering service;
- Business Cards;
- Brochure/Profiles; and,
- Initial inventory.



FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

A significant component of your Business Plan requires that you forecast the financial implications of the start-up and operation of your business. To assist you in developing these we have provided the following in Excel format:

Financial Forecasts - includes the following Financial Statements:

- 2 Years Sales Forecast;
- 2 Years Income Statement Forecast; and,
- 2 Years Cash Flow Forecast.

These Excel spreadsheets have formulas for calculations and various linkages from one spreadsheet to others. The file can be reviewed/printed from the site http://cfdlearn.ca/courses/olt_module/resources_pwd.shtml. We also provide 'Financial Forecasts Notes' to assist you in the development of these business financials.

ADDENDUM

Your Addendums are inserted in your Business Plan after the Financial Forecasts. Ensure that any 'Other Information' you include is relevant to and supports your business initiatives. Depending on how much you include as addendum you may want to do a Table of Contents for Addendums, for example:

- Marketing Material
- Survey Analysis
- Owner's Resume
- Other Information supporting business idea

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

In addition to this Guide, there are many resources that can be accessed to assist with Business Plan Development:

- Most banks and large accounting firms have Business Planning publications or CD-ROM's available.
- On the Internet there are significant resources available. The following resources include: Business Plan Guides, Interactive Business Planning, Samples of Business Plans, and Links to other Business Planning Resources.

Canada Business Service Centre

www.cbosc.org/ibp

Canadian Youth Business Foundation

www.cybf.ca

Small Business Information Canada

<http://sbinfoCanada.about.com/cs/businessplans>

Business Plans.com

www.bplans.com