

# Business Plan Template

for online startups

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## Resources

*Disclosure: Just so you know, we may sometimes earn a small commission from affiliate links in this document.*

Online business has a steep learning curve. Newbie. Intermediate. Pro. There is always a lot to do and learn. Spend time or spend money getting things done.

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Time, not money, is your most precious asset.

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Making smart decisions means finding and using services that help you earn more, fast. The faster you earn, the quicker you can grow and start making real money.

Don't get bogged down with administration, development, or anything else that takes you away from content, marketing and money.

Here's a helpful list of resources worth exploring.

- [Marketing Tools](#)
- [Small Business Services](#)

# 1. Executive Summary

An executive summary is read first by investors and banks, but completed last by the business owner (*you*).

Think of it as your elevator pitch. Once you have researched and understood every aspect of the business, it is now time to distill it all down into a professional summary.

Professional, yes. But convey your excitement and enthusiasm too. After all, *people invest in other people*. They want to know that you have the energy and drive to see it through.

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*Even if you're not looking for investment, having a good executive summary will still help you to understand the focus of your own business.*

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## Recommended Reading

- [Elevator Pitch Examples](#)
- [How to Pitch Big New Clients](#)

## 2. Company Description & Overview

Complete this section with a mission statement, a list of business objectives, and an overview of the market and your niche.

Include motivation as to why your company is going to succeed in this market. What skills and insight do you have that sets you apart?

How are you going to deliver products that people would choose over what is already available?

How are you going to compete on price? If you're not planning to compete on price, how are you going to sell?

### 3. Products (Subscriptions)

Subscriptions are not always an easy sell online – especially digital subscriptions. People are used to getting stuff for free, and tend to favor trusted brands.

It is vital that you understand exactly what the *value offering* of your products and subscriptions are to the target audience.

## 4. Marketing Plan

Online marketing is challenging and fast-changing. A lot of research required in order to succeed in this arena.

The fundamental basis of any good Internet marketing strategy (*regardless of whether it is blogging, social media, inbound, influencer, etc*) is *high quality content*. Without great content it will be difficult and expensive to generate a flow of highly targeted, high converting Web traffic.

Your plan will need to include a strategy for adding plenty of great, unique and engaging content focusing in on and around the topics of the subscriptions you offer.

### Recommended Reading

- [Small Business Marketing Tools](#)
- [Small Business Marketing Strategies](#)
- [Sales Funnels](#)
- [Influencer Marketing](#)
- [Press Releases](#)
- [Email Marketing](#)
- [Blogging](#)
- [SEO](#)

## 5. Operational Plan

Take time to study what personnel, skills, equipment and services are needed in order to manage the entire fulfillment process.

How are you going to handle deliveries as quickly and cheaply as possible?

### **Recommended Reading**

- [Small Business Services](#)
- [Free Software](#)



## 6. Organization & Management

Even if this is a one person show, it is still important to understand what tasks are needed to operate.

Who's going to create content? Who's going to manage the servers? Who's going to manage the subscribers and customer support? Who's going to handle taxes, invoices, accounting?

Do you have an accountant, or legal adviser? What about consultants?

Use this section to ensure that there is a well-defined division of labor and that job roles are clear and cover everything the business needs in order to function.

## 7. Expenses & Capitalization

Another area where Internet businesses have an advantage over traditional business is in *startup costs*, which can be very low indeed.

While your Web development costs are practically negligible (*it costs from as little as \$10 per month to host and operate a professional eCommerce website*), it is important to understand your cash flow.

For online businesses with limited resources, it is absolutely vital to make use of the latest accounting and business management software and services to help keep track of incoming and outgoing cash.

## 8. Financial Plan

Include a detailed one-year profit and loss projection. This part is often pretty frustrating because it is almost always a thumb-suck - even if you have done your homework.

Two primary points of interest are:

### *Startup costs*

- business registration fees
- business licensing and permits
- starting inventory
- rent deposits
- domains & Web hosting
- down payments on property

### *Operating costs*

- salaries
- rent or mortgage payments
- telecommunications
- utilities
- raw materials
- storage
- distribution
- promotion
- loan payments
- office supplies
- hosting
- maintenance

Also important are:

- cash flow analysis
- break-even analysis
- opening day balance sheet

Be mindful of the fact that, often, starting a new business is more expensive than you planned for.

Try build a bit of room into your calculations so that, if it takes longer to start generating revenue, or more money to get started, it's not a disaster. In other words, make sure you have enough cash to cover unforeseen circumstances – they will arise.

### **Recommended Reading**

- [Small Business Services](#)
- [Accounting Software Reviews](#)