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## Small Business Development: Business Plan Development Fundamentals for the Entrepreneur

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Tristan Tzara once wrote, “Words are only postage stamps delivering the object for you to unwrap.” Similarly, the written business plan is a construct of diligence, a derivative of hundreds of hours of blood, sweat, and tears. Research, phone calls, sleepless nights, early mornings, analysis and re-analysis—the business plan becomes your best friend and your worst enemy. It is essential to keep in mind that the written business plan is not the business. The business plan is a medium for communication, merely a reflection of your dedication and strategy. It is a large part of your representation when you finally stand in front of the potential investor to whom you will sell your idea.

The business plan is an interface between you and your investors; it is the evidence of your thorough research. Investors will know in an instant the difference between a plan stuffed with filler and a well-researched operation. As this chapter will stress, focus on the logistics of the business, the market, the economics, the product, the risks, and constant analysis of the industry. A successful business plan will follow.

Your business plan should be subject to constant revision. In today’s Internet age, technologies and industries no longer evolve but see drastic turnovers in the way business is done. It has been said that the plan is obsolete at the printer; some would argue that it is obsolete before it even gets there! If one were to look at the business practices of new ventures today, none of them would match what was specified in the plan a year ago. Suffice it to say that your business plan is forever a work in progress.

To begin, the fundamental components of a business plan should include every aspect of your young venture. The document should be as lean as possible, containing only the essential information in the text. Necessary appendices may be added to the rear and referenced appropriately. The plan should be appealing and must not overwhelm the reader with technical lingo. Too much jargon could contribute to the ambiguity of the plan. One must be able to explain in common language the principal functions of the operation, the economics of the business, and the main idea without hiding behind fancy terms in order to remain vague and camouflage your lack of detail with rhetoric. Say what you want to say, and include genuine content. Do not make unsubstantiated claims such as estimating sales on the basis of what your company would like to produce. These claims will be sniffed out and will leave you high and dry as your would-be investor passes you over for a more truthful, realistic candidate.

### Plan Format

The physical plan should follow the general format that is familiar to venture capitalists. Uniform formatting of the business plan will aid in establishing your credibility as a worthy candidate for capital. The following format was developed by two colleagues at the Venture Founders Corporation and is based on a over 20 years of observing entrepreneurs as well as actually preparing hundreds of plans (Timmons, 1999). This is not to say that the guidelines must be followed to the letter, because there are no absolutes in preparing a business plan. Every young venture is different, and some of the aspects of that venture could require a different take on the suggested outline.

1. Cover
2. Executive Summary
  - a. Description of the Business Concept and the Business
  - b. The opportunity and strategy
  - c. The target market projections
  - d. The competitive advantage
  - e. The economics, profitability, and harvest potential
  - f. The team
  - g. The offering

3. The industry and the company and its product(s) and/or service(s)
  - a. The industry
  - b. The company and the concept
  - c. The product(s) and/or service(s)
  - d. Technology
  - e. Entry and growth strategy
4. Market research and analysis
  - a. Customers
  - b. Market size and trends
  - c. Competition and competitive advantage
  - d. Estimated market share and sales
  - e. Ongoing market evaluation
5. The economics of the business
  - a. Gross and operation margins
  - b. Profit and potential durability
  - c. Fixed, variable, and semi-variable costs
  - d. Months to break-even
  - e. Months to reach positive cash flow
6. Marketing plan
  - a. Overall marketing strategy
  - b. Pricing
  - c. Sales tactics
  - d. Service and warranty policies
  - e. Advertising and promotion
  - f. Distribution
7. Design and development plans
  - a. Development status and tasks
  - b. Difficulties and risks
  - c. Product improvement and new products
  - d. Costs
  - e. Proprietary issues
8. Manufacturing and operations plans
  - a. Geographic location
  - b. Facilities and improvements
  - c. Operating cycle
  - d. Manufacture process
  - e. Regulatory and legal issues
9. Management team
  - a. Organization
  - b. Key management personnel
  - c. Management compensation and ownership
  - d. Other investors
  - e. Employment and other agreements and stock options and bonus plans
  - f. Board of directors
  - g. Supporting professional advisors and services
10. Overall schedule
11. Critical risks, problems, and assumptions
12. The financial plan
  - a. Actual income statements and balance sheets
  - b. *Pro forma* income statements
  - c. *Pro forma* balance sheets
  - d. *Pro forma* cash flow analysis
  - e. Break-even chart and calculation
  - f. Cost control
  - g. Highlights

13. Proposed company offering
  - a. Desired financing
  - b. Offering
  - c. Capitalization
  - d. Use of funds
  - e. Investor's return
14. Appendixes
15. The next step

## Cover

The cover of your business plan should include all pertinent information about your new business, including name, address, contact information, date, and, most importantly, a statement of confidentiality. You must note that the document has been submitted on a confidential basis and is to be returned to the specified address should an investor not agree to accept the offering.

## Executive Summary

The executive summary is usually the first substantial bit of text your investors will read, thus it should not be boring or wordy. Rather, it should describe the product or service and why it will be better than its closest competitor. Investors use the executive summary to weed out the definite "nos," so it must be convincing. You will present your description of the business concept and how exactly your company will go about delivering on your promises. Include any information that will substantiate any claims to breakthrough technology, unique capabilities, or trade secrets that will provide you with a significant competitive advantage.

Summarize the opportunity and describe your strategy. Give a brief description of the market and the way you plan to approach it. Describe your competition, and list any of their weaknesses on which you can capitalize. Paint a picture of unfulfilled need by describing the shortcomings of the current industry. Be sure to note your plans for growth, and give concrete examples of the size of your market. Is your market growing? If not, what are you doing to create a market? From the size of your market and your positioning strategy, you should be able to project unit sales and expected revenues. Also include your pricing strategy and anticipated market share.

The investors interested in your company will be most interested in the economic details, so give your best estimate of timeframes until break-even and positive cash flow. Also give any key financial projections. Briefly describe your contribution analysis and the underlying operation and cash-conversion cycle.

The investor will also be interested in the composure of the team in which he is putting his money. Therefore, do not be modest. This is your opportunity to shine. Summarize any relevant experience you have that will contribute to this particular venture. Include key attributes from every member of the management team in order to portray a well-rounded experience pool. Note previous accomplishments, specific know-how, and people- and business-management skills, including sizes of divisions and projects.

You should conclude the executive summary with your offering. State the simple math: You invest this much, here's what you get. State the amount of capital you are looking for, and what portion of the company you are willing to surrender for that capital. You might want to include a simple breakdown of how the funding will be spent so as to clarify where all of the capital will be going.

## The Industry, the Company, and its Products and/or Services

In this section of your plan, you will delve more deeply into the specifics of the industry and provide more detailed information on your product or service. This is your opportunity to tell investors why your company and product are great, and why they will do well in the market.

Present investors with an industry profile but make it concise as possible. Key points you will want to cover include industry structure and where in that structure the opportunity lies. Also discuss industry trends, overall growth of the industry, market size, and sustainability. Be sure to mention any new developments in the industry, such as new technologies that have revolutionized products or services, as well as manufacturing practices that enable more cost-effective production. What are the entry barriers? Why is everyone not starting a business in this industry?

Explain your business concept. Where in the industry are you positioning yourself as a company? You must have one (or more than one) target market. Describe your customers and what you are going to sell them. The investor also will want to know about the company's history, so include the date the business was created and the progress you have made to date. If your company has been in existence for several years, you will be liable for an explanation as to why you have not yet turned a profit, what you have learned, how your experiences have tempered your organization, and the steps you have taken to prevent future setbacks.

Next, describe the product in detail, provide a technical description, and emphasize any unique features that will carry the product to success in its market. Depending upon the product's stage of development, include either photographs or drawings and carefully describe the costs involved in development and testing.

It is important to list all of the uses of the product, including secondary uses. Is there any particular aspect of the product that equips it with a competitive advantage? If not, how are you going to beat the competition's price?

Coping with obsolescence is a major concern in today's market. It is important that you describe exactly what it is about your product that will keep you from being replaced. Will your product line be able to grow with technology or will technology grow around your product line? You must explain in depth what technologies you are incorporating in the design and production process. Give a very brief history of the technology if it is not common knowledge as well as any trends or new developments this technology has experienced. State the life expectancy of these technologies and your current plan for sustainability when the market catches up.

Define your entry strategy. What is your strategy for introducing the product or service to the market? There are four primary strategies to entering a market. One can enter with guns a-blazin', investing huge amounts of capital in a high-risk, potentially super-profitable venture. Such was the case with Hoffman La-Roche, a Swiss Pharmaceutical company that was marginal until it decided to invest all it had (and all it could borrow) to buy the patents for vitamins, hire the best discoverers at unheard-of salaries, and manufacture and market over-the-counter vitamins for the first time, with astounding success. This all-or-nothing strategy capitalizes on being the first and the best in your market.

The second strategy capitalizes on leveraging on the ideas of others, taking a good idea and making it better, or finding a better use for it. Akio Morita of Sony flew to the United States after reading about the invention of the transistor by Bell Labs and bought a license to the transistor for \$25,000. Five years later, the Japanese were the sole providers of radios to the world.

The third strategy seeks to gain a monopoly over a certain market niche. While this strategy offers limited growth dependent on its host industry, it offers shelter from competition for the same reasons. Alcon realized a niche when it invented an enzyme that quickly became an integral part of cataract surgery worldwide. As momentous as the discovery was, the market for this enzyme totaled \$50 million per year worldwide, which was plenty for Alcon, but not enough to motivate competitors.

The fourth strategy creates a customer for itself, not by inventing a new product but by changing the utility, value, or economic characteristics of existing products. It capitalizes on creating a way to equip consumers with a good or service to which they would not otherwise have access. In the 1840s, Cyrus McCormick was one of many American who invented a harvesting machine. The American farmer, for whose benefit the machine was created, did not have the economic means to pay for it all at once, and banks were not willing to provide loans on such a new machine. All of the machines failed in the market, with the exception of Cyrus's machine, simply because Cyrus saw the need for installment buying and instituted it in his young company (Drucker, 1985).

## Market Research and Analysis

This is the most crucial step in preparing the business plan. Your marketing research and analysis will lay the foundation for your entire plan, form your strategy, and determine resource requirements. Therefore, this step should be completed before all others. Research is essential for substantiating projected sales volumes and market size as well as finding out whether this product is something that your intended customer will actually buy.

Describe your customers. What is the economic and social reality of your target market? By accurately defining your customers, you begin honing in on your marketing strategy. Part of the research should focus on past industry trends. Examine what similar companies have done and what the outcome was. Use supporting facts and statistics to outline your marketing strategy. Consumer science can be a difficult and tedious process. You must examine socioeconomic trends, political developments, and demographic changes in order to determine what marketing strategy to use.

Compare your product to that of the competitors. What weaknesses leave them vulnerable? Are you capitalizing on those weaknesses? Also state the strengths of the competitors. Briefly demonstrate why companies have dropped out of the industry in past years, and how you will prevent it from happening to your company. Examine the four "Ps" of marketing: Product, price, place, and promotion. How are you doing in each arena? (Kotler, 1999) How are the competitors doing in each arena? Explain why customers will leave the competition for you.

As part of your market research, you should determine the value added by the product, who already has a similar product, and who will buy your product anyway. Identify every major customer group, and note the size of each. Based on the industry trends and your assessment of the advantages of your product over others, interpolate unit sales over the next three years. Be sure to show all assumptions.

A good marketing plan is forever a work in progress. Changing environments call for changing strategy. You must include how you plan to continually evaluate your marketing opportunities while improving your product, expanding your product line, adjusting your pricing, or entering new markets.

## The Economics of the Business

Get out your finance textbook; this is your opportunity to impress the investor with some hard numbers. Show your gross margins and operating margins; your profit potential both before and after tax; and your fixed, variable, and semi-variable costs. Once you have laid out your entry plan, you should be able to estimate how much money you will spend, your costs, and your revenue from this. Give a timeline of your break-even analysis and explain any assumptions made. Also provide a timeline depicting when your company will run out of cash and when you will attain a positive cash flow.

## Marketing Plan

Describe the marketing philosophy that you will use to accompany the entry strategy that you specified in the product section of the business plan. List the distribution channels

that you will use, and support your decisions with sound reasons. Also specify geographic range; your range should not exceed that of your market research. Indicate whether you will sell nationally, internationally, or globally. Indicate the types of customers to whom your product will be sold and what that product will mean to them. What will be the main selling point of the product? Specify whether it will be the low price, the additional quality, the warranty the service, or something else.

In this section, you must include a comprehensive discussion of why you priced the product the way you did. You must discuss price in terms of cost to manufacture: How will it effect your break-even time, your gross margin, and your operating margin? Discuss price in terms of competition. If you plan to undersell your competition, how will you maintain profitability while providing value to the customer? Discuss price in relation to customer payback. Will the value provided to the customer save him or her money in the long run? Show how long it will take for the product to pay for itself. Discuss pricing in terms of market share. Decide whether you are better off making \$100 dollars from each one and selling a million of them, or making \$75 dollars from each one and selling 3 million of them.

Describe the sales tactics you will use. Explain the distribution process and how you will attain the proper channels. You must describe how you will select sales representatives and the way they will position the product for sale. Illustrate the breakdown of the selling costs and present a sales budget that includes all marketing promotion and service costs.

Service and warranty may be used as a major selling point for your product. Explain in depth the warranty or service program to be offered. Indicate how much it will cost the company to maintain the service and warranty policy. Compare your service or warranty to that of your competitors.

Describe the types of advertising that you will administer if your product is aimed at consumers and trade shows and professional organization participation if you are selling to industry. Include a schedule for the release of your ads or tradeshow appearances. Also give a detailed description of the costs of such events.

Research your distribution channels and devise a sensitivity analysis to show how sensitive your business will be to changes in distribution cost. If your product requires any special care in the shipping process, make a note of it and explain how you will accommodate that need.

## Design and Development Plans

Explain exactly where the product lies in the development phase. Give a brief report on capital already invested in the product, and explain how much more you need in order to bring the product to market. Also include the time frame in which you plan to have certain steps completed. Give yourself plenty of time, as most new ventures underestimate the amount of time needed to complete the product.

List difficulties that you have faced in the past, and any difficulties you anticipate. Describe the risks facing your project. Are all of the technologies there to complete the product? Is your product dependent on a nonexistent technology? If so, how do you plan to cope with development issues?

Your business will not last without constant improvement and innovation. How will the product improvement coincide with company growth? Will you be able to keep up the R&D cycle while turning a profit? Explain how you will finance the cost of R&D. If you have not achieved a positive cash flow by the time new development costs begin to pile up, where will you get the money? Explain how your future plans for the product line relate to the sustainability of the company.

This is also the section of the business plan in which ownership of the patent should be discussed. Will you share a patent with anyone, or does your company have exclusive rights? How much time do you have until your patent expires? Will your company have enough of a head start to get their "foot in the door" before other companies catch on?

## Manufacturing and Operations Plans

This is the section of the plan where you will list the requirements for the geography, facility type, operating cycle, manufacturing process, and legal issues concerning the production of the actual product. The logistics of operation begin with choosing a suitable location. Carefully consider proximity to resources as well as proximity to customers.

If you are operating from an existing facility, describe the facility in depth, including plant, storage, office space, accessibility, and equipment. If you are starting from scratch, describe exactly what equipment you will need for start-up and how much it will cost. Do not plan to buy everything at once! Rather, set a schedule for obtaining overhead as it is needed. Prepare a three-year time line for equipment and facility acquisition.

Your explanation of the operating cycle should include the lead and lag time that are specific to the type of manufacturing you will be doing. Discuss your inventory system and its role in coping with any seasonal fluctuations you may anticipate.

Your manufacture process should be explained in detail, including the numbers of workers and managers required to operate the plant, cost of labor, and necessary skills needed to operate the machinery. Discuss the possibility of outsourcing some of the manufacture or assembly process. Also discuss the implications of economies of scale, buying in bulk, and potential suppliers.

The legal implications of firing up a manufacturing plant can be extensive. Note any federal, state, or local (e.g., zoning) laws that pertain to you as a manufacturer. Note all costs of obtaining necessary licenses and permits as well as any political activity that could affect your organization in the near future.

## Management Team

The organization of the management team must be arranged according to the need of the particular business. Your young venture most likely will find the basic functional structure

to be the most efficient. Functional structures are most effective when one product line is being manufactured, which is often the case with fledgling corporations. This structure usually includes a president who oversees R&D, manufacturing, accounting, and marketing departments. Subsequent developments upon further growth of the business and its product line may warrant evolution of the organizational tree into a matrix or divisional structure. These structures allow for product-intensive management of the business (Daft, 2000).

List the key management personnel and their relevant skills and experiences as outlined in the executive summary. Include not only resumes of the principal management players, but also an in-depth analysis of their management performance. This analysis will help to determine their value to the company, which will translate directly to monetary form, as should be indicated in this section of the plan. List the salaries to be paid and the amount of equity to be given to each. Run the salaries of the management team against salaries earned at their last jobs, to show any contrasts and to emphasize dedication.

Investors will want to know with whom they are dealing, including other investors. List anyone who has invested in the company and what type of equity they own. List any employment agreements being negotiated and their corresponding compensation packages. Describe your plan for the board of directors. Indicate the ideal size and the representation you would like on the board. Also list any board members you have already chosen, along with a brief description of why.

Your young company may find it necessary to outsource much of the legal, consulting, advertising, marketing research, banking, or accounting. Be sure to include those whom you have chosen for these tasks, and why.

## Overall Schedule

Prepare a realistic schedule for the completion of every task that is critical to the success of your venture. Do this by carefully listing all of the steps and then prioritizing them and assigning them to certain members of the team, along with due dates for each. Then lay the steps out on a time line and mark the most crucial points in the development of your venture. This will enable you to better visualize the crucial points and the necessary progress to reach those points. Discuss any weakness that you see in the time line. Point out any potential delays, and discuss how they will affect chain-reaction delays.

## Critical Risks, Problems, and Assumptions

Starting your own small business is heavily laden with risk and uncertainty. One must think objectively and must address all sources of uncertainty, as well as any assumptions being made. This is your opportunity to identify all of the weak points in your business proposal and to explain what you will do to negotiate success. It also serves as an excellent opportunity to prove to the investor that you have thought of everything, carefully calculating your risks and not making any rash decisions. Explain your reasoning for making any decisions that may seem to compromise the success of the venture.

Investors must see that the management team is capable of identifying the risks and that it is honest in portraying them to the concerned parties. Do not try to hide risks or assumptions! A poor decision here will damage your credentials and will void any chance of funding.

## Financial Plan

This section of the plan will include actual financial exhibits. If your plan involves an existing company, include actual income statements and balance sheets from the past two years to the present.

Construct *pro forma* income statements, balance sheets, and cash-flow analysis. Use your marketing research, your knowledge of the industry and seasonal trends to derive sales forecasts, production costs, and operating costs. Note all assumptions! Be sure to support your numbers with sound reasoning. Remember that every number you include in your plan is subject to the scrutiny and interrogation of the investor; make the numbers appealing, but be honest!

Building upon the information contained in your overall schedule, construct a break-even chart accompanied by a discussion of break-even sales volumes and price sensitivity (Scott et al., 1998).

## Proposed Company Offering

This section summarizes the whole deal. Using your cash-flow projections, decide how much capital you are asking for, and devise a schedule demonstrating when and how it will be used.

Explain the stock offering, type of securities, and any nondistribution agreements by which they must abide, and how many shares of common stock will remain authorized, but unissued, after the initial offering.

Don't be vague! Indicate exactly how the investor will walk away from this venture with his compensation. Identify the exit mechanism, whether it is by IPO, sale, or merger.

## Appendixes

Include any helpful material that is too lengthy or detailed to be placed in the body of the report. This may include technical drawings or descriptions, copies of permits or licenses, technical papers, research material, industry information, photographs, charts, and graphs.

## The Next Step

Once you have all of the necessary parts and numbers, it is time to review. No matter how good you think you are, have another party look at it. Check for inconsistencies and feasibility. An outside perspective could save you thousands in costly mistakes. Finally, have the revised plan reviewed by an attorney in order that he or she may fine tune the language used and clarify any ambiguities. Now that your plan is complete, go forth and succeed!

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## Further Information

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# Engineering Primary Health Care: The Sickle Cell Business Case

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## Sickle Cell Business Case

The objective of the sickle cell disease (SCD) health management system (HMS) program is to improve health care outcomes for KP Georgia members who have SCD, and to improve care options for their caregivers and their TSPMG (The Southeast Permanente Medical Group, Inc.) and affiliated practitioners through health education, enhanced self-efficacy, and the effective use of resources.

### Market

The market for the SCD program are KP Georgia members with diagnosed SCD, TSPMG practitioners, and the KP Georgia health care delivery system. Program stakeholders are members; families and caregivers; pediatric, adult, and hematology practitioners; and the KP Georgia health care delivery system.

As of April 2002, KP Georgia provided care for 252 children and adults with SCD, or 0.04% of the membership. There were 138 members under 17 years of age and 114 members over 17 years of age. There were 149 females and 103 males. There was an approximately 25% growth in members with SCD from 1997–2001, while overall KP Georgia membership grew by about 10% during this time.

### Financial Implications

SCD medical expenses per member per month (pmpm) are 2.7 times greater for adults, and 7 times greater for the pediatric population. Total pmpm of care for SCD members increased 35% from 1997–2001, an average of 8% annually. Total in-patient pmpm for SCD members increased 60% from 1997–2001, an average of 12% annually. The number of emergency room (ER) visits was 173 in 2000, and 231 in 2001, at approximately \$500 per visit.

Current KP Georgia HMS programs for chronic diseases include asthma, diabetes, cardiovascular disease (CHF/CAD), and depression. All HMS programs have a primary care physician champion and are managed within the TSPMG PCP health care team (PCP-HCT) medical model.

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Within Kaiser Permanente's (KP) Southern California operations, the West Los Angeles (LA) Medical Center's Sickle Cell Medical Program, a national model for comprehensive and culturally sensitive pediatric and adult sickle cell treatment, was the 2001 winner of KP's national James A. Vohs Award for Quality. The program resulted in a drop of 22% in West LA emergency room (ER) visits from 1998 to 1999, compared to a 1% decrease among non-West LA ER sickle cell patients. Similarly, West LA hospital-bed days were reduced by 26% while non-West LA hospital utilization increased by 37% for the same patient population.

This chapter describes how this award-winning, "best-practice" program can be replicated in KP Georgia. It is an example of clinical engineering at the large health care systems level in which methods and processes are engineered to improve health care delivery significantly.

Sickle cell disease (SCD) is significant, affecting historically perhaps an underserved portion of the KP membership, African-Americans, and a newly emerging portion, Hispanic-Americans. Proper SCD management meets several KP Georgia cross-cutting quality improvement themes, such as continuity and coordination of care, integration of primary and specialty care, and community interest in minority health issues. SCD presents an opportunity to improve the quality of life for members with SCD while incorporating service and affordability goals. Therefore, SCD management meets our key business goal of first in quality, first in service, and first in affordability.

SCD was designated by KP Georgia's Quality Forum a health management system (HMS) in December 2001. HMS components to be developed include: evidence-based practitioner clinical practice guidelines; key people resources and roles for physician champion, project manager, and care manager, as well as clear roles for primary care practitioners (PCPs), specialty care practitioners (SCPs), and community resources; education for practitioners, staff, patient, and family members, and patient self-management techniques; data systems, including registry, population risk stratification, and ability to monitor health outcomes; and process improvements led by an implementation team for streamlined care and systems' interventions.

Main expected results are reduced hospitalization, reduced ER visits, and improved quality of life (QOL) to be demonstrated by patient, nursing, and practitioner surveys.

The program will enhance continuity of care by clearly defining the PCP's role and closing the gap on patients who are not firmly anchored to their PCPs. It will be shown how SCD care should be coordinated with PCPs, SCPs, and community resources.