

Business planning

Business planning

A business plan helps you to:

- Think through aspects of your organisation and plan for the future;
- Get an overview of your organisation;
- Present yourself to funders and supporters.

A business plan may be for your whole organisation or for a particular project or part of your organisation (when it is sometimes called a project plan).

Below are the common points that are usually in a business plan – add sections that you think are appropriate. Always make sure it is clearly written, that you discuss it with appropriate people and that any costs are based on real costs.

1 | A summary of the business plan

One or two pages, summing up the main points of the plan and introducing the project in an appealing way. You may find it's easier to write this last.

2 | The need for the proposed project/services

You have to show how you are meeting a clear need, and that your activities are in demand. Include evidence - your own or any research or reports.

3 | Why your organisation

Give a description and history of your organisation and why you are best placed to provide the services you are proposing. Put details of your legal and charitable status, aims and objectives, and how you are managed. Talk about your track record and highlight achievements.

4 | Description of the proposed activities

This is the creative part, where you can think about what you would like to see happen in the period of the plan. This will depend on what you are set up to do, and the objects in your constitution, but goes into more detail.

You may find it useful to do this in terms of aims and objectives. You will have to be specific about key activities and put numbers where possible on, for example, the number of people who will be helped.

5 | What outcomes the project is planned to achieve

Outline the changes and benefits that you plan to achieve through the project's activities.

6 | Resources needed for the project

From the planning you have already done, you are now in a position to decide what resources you will need to carry out the work. Resources include:

- **People:** The staff that you will need to deliver the project;
- **Money:** A budget for what it will cost to deliver the project.

When you are putting these together think about:

- **Staff:** How many staff hours will this work will need? What staff will you need to deliver this work? Full-time or part-time? What skills do they need? On what wage? What extra costs will each worker have – recruitment, training, etc.?
- **Work space and equipment:** Think about where you will carry out all your activities. Do you need to buy a building or rent space? What equipment do you need to run an office and your activities? Is the space accessible to everyone?

- **Office costs:** Bills like phone and mail costs, heating and lighting. Then costs of consumables like paper and envelopes.

A budget can be created when you have got costs and quotes for the above. A three year budget is usual, with all predicted outgoings and income. This should also be combined with a cash flow forecast, which looks at the timing of money flows in and out of the organisation to make sure you always have enough cash when needed. See **Factsheet 21: Cashflow and budgets**

7 | Management

It is always a good idea to draw out your staffing structure. Make sure people are clear what their roles are. Who will have responsibility for what? Who will people report to, and get supervision from?

8 | Funding plan

Where are you planning to raise the money from to fund the project? You should have done some research before writing the plan to identify likely sources of funding and a reasonable idea that you will be able to raise the full cost of the project.

9 | Marketing and publicity plan

How will you advertise what you do to everyone who could use your services? How will you make sure no one is excluded? How will you target the kinds of people you most want to reach? How will you promote yourself to supporters, partners and potential funders?

10 | Monitoring and evaluation

How will you measure the success of the organisation or project? How will you make sure you reach the targets you have set? How will you collect information about the work that you are doing? On paper, in a database? Who will do this and when? How will this information feed into improving the project? Who will analyse this information and act on it to make changes?

There are two types of information to collect: statistics about the quantity of work you do, and feedback to measure the effectiveness of your work.

The best business plans are a joint effort, carried out in consultation with staff, management

and other interested parties. A plan will work best with the input and support of the people who will be expected to make it happen!

Further help

Ask BVSC Helpline

0121 678 8888
askbvsc@bvsc.org

Development Agencies website

Links and information for developing voluntary and community organisations.
www.birmingham-da.org