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About the Author

Alice Graham worked closely with many successful business people in a variety of fields.

She says **all** of them developed and continued to use their own [Business Plan](#).

“They would not make any major moves without referring to it.” “I wondered why other people don’t follow their example.”

“I researched the problems which business people had with preparing and using a Business Plan.”

“I explain the many advantages of a good plan and help you through its development.”

If your business is not giving you the results you need, don’t blame the Business Plan.”

“Let me help you find ways to fix it and get everything on track.”

“I will show you other ways to use it that get much more value from your business as your venture grows. The right plan will help you when you are seeking financial [support](#).”

“Then it can keep on helping you right through the life of your business.”

I want to help people find better and easier ways to make a new business plan or review your current one. That will give you a clearer idea what you can and should do to get better results in the future.”

“My book will help you set up a plan which works for your particular venture, and make the [process](#) much easier than you may think.”

“Every business, whether it is a one-person, part time venture or a long-established one with its own premises needs a good plan to make the most of its potential.”

“With all the rapid changes in the economy and technology, we keep updating our Business Plan so it helps to [guide](#) us forward to greater success.”

Introduction

This book will help you understand why every business needs a Business [Plan](#).

You will soon understand the benefits it can give you if you don't already have one.

If your current progress is less than you hoped, I will help you review your current Business Plan to make it more useful to you.

If this will be the first time you wrote a Business Plan, don't worry. It's much easier than you might think!

And, there is much *moiré* you can get from having a good Business Plan than what you may have been told.

To get the best results, your Plan needs to fit closely with your venture at its current stage of development. The Plan will help you prepare realistic forecasts and strategies.

I will suggest what you put in your Business Plan and ways to improve on the traditional format.

If you already have your own Business Plan, my [eBook](#) will help you focus the Plan better, so you improve the value you get from it.

That will quickly help you improve your planning and the results you get.

This Plan will be your [Map](#) to success.

It will be a great foundation for the exciting developments that power your business through the future.

Your Business Plan:

Will keep evolving as your business does.

Can help reduce, or even prevent, costly problems!

Will fit your particular venture, so it is easy to review as you move forward.

The improved results and reduced [stress](#) will repay that effort many times over!

What is a Business Plan?

Your Business Plan is an overview of all the important aspects of your business at its present stage and how you see it developing.



It will also include information about its connections, competition, special advantages of its [products](#) or services and supporting information.

Everyone who has any kind of business, beyond a few hours casual work, will benefit from setting down an appropriate Business Plan.

Even if you are just starting to plan any sort of business, learning to set out a simple Business Plan like I explore in [this guide](#) will help put a firm foundation under your new venture at the [start](#).

The common view of a Business Plan is that it's only needed when you approach investors or banks for funds to start or expand your business.

Some guides and advisors focus largely on the start-up area. That is a constant source of customers for them.

But, a good Business Plan has much more potential than that.

Most established businesses got where they are by using their Business Plan as a sort of map through the life of the [company](#).

When you review your Business Plan after a year of operation, you will be able to see the benefits of using the Plan.

What's Wrong with Business Plans?

When people get poor results from their Business Plans, they tend to feel that the fault is in the Plan. That is only one thing, but it's a common [claim](#).

This section show explains some of the most common complaints about Business Plans and what can be done to avoid problems where they exist.

Good for absorbing Information, but ...

A friend has a middle of the road view about this point.

She feels the simple, plain text Business Plan is useful for quickly reviewing information and editing it where required.

Mistakes or other problems can be picked up very quickly.

But, the more advanced systems do a better [job](#) of keeping the attention of younger people that have grown up with them.

You may lose their attention if you use mostly black and white unless the material is very appealing.

Traditional Format is Out of Date

A common claim is that technology has made the traditional form of Business Plans out-dated and unappealing to the [finance](#) providers and other people we show them to.

There are some areas involved with advanced technology and cutting-edge entertainment production where applicants for funding will show some examples of the skills which are behind the products or services which the applicant provides or produces.

But, most of the major organizations which are the target of Business Plans accept Business Plans in the traditional format without discounting their value.

The format is also easy for people with limited technical knowledge to put together and understand.

One size fits all

Another complaint is that the format is too rigid.

Most people who have difficulty with the format tried to fit their information into a standard template which has been provided to them.

People who examine Business [Plan](#) submissions are usually concerned more about the information being accurate, clearly presented and it not omitting any important information. They can accept any plan which has different titles for the various sections if the content shows the quality which they are looking for.

Takes too long to Prepare

This is a value judgment which only you can decide.

The [goal](#) is usually of high value which makes make the effort and time a cheap investment if your proposal is selected.



As you prepare, and later modify your Business Plan, you [learn](#) more about your business and also what appeals to those you offer them to.

You may not have been told about easier ways to prepare the material. Many students have been told by their instructors to always follow strict [grammar](#) and other conventions. This may cause them to produce Business Plans which appeal to the tutor but

bore the assessors. And, their focus on the grammatical rules may distract them so they leave out some important information.

There may be parts of your Business Plan which you could approach differently so that they took less of your time.

Ask someone you trust to review the current version of your Business Plan and tell you without holding back about their impressions and suggestions.

You will perhaps feel uncomfortable about some of the comments. Accept them with thanks.

Many people have lost friends when they gave honest, constructive

criticism! Those who ask often just want endorsement of their own high opinions of what they produce.

No-one reads them right through

This is actually true with most of the assessors!

They have far more Business Plans to consider and make decisions about than they have time to read right through.

But, they use their experience and knowledge to look first at the areas which they know will usually indicate the overall worth of each submitted [Business](#) Plan. Then, they can use the time they saved to give more attention to those plans which show the most relevance to the criteria which they are using.

They also eliminate some Business Plans because they are too vague, full of mistakes or not showing any merit without reading them for long.

Most of the people whose plans did not get selected could have improved their chances with a Business Plan which they put more effort into and which was more in line with the expressed needs of the company they approached.

Those that had little chance of success, have problems with their business or their [methods](#) which the plan would not, by itself, fix.

Anyone that doesn't put together a Business Plan because of the time and effort of preparation, gives their competition, who have a well prepared Business Plan, a massive advantage!

Old products and Methods did Not Produce their Success!

One critic of Business Plans said that companies which had been surveyed got their greatest success with methods and products quite different from those which they carefully laid out in their original Business Plans.

But this is not proof that the original plan was worthless. Many of the businesses I worked with had improved on their original methods as they got experience, improved their own skills and developed new products because of the knowledge they gained from careful study of their customers' attitudes and responses to what they were already [offering](#).

You will notice that most successful companies introduce variations on

their standard lines or even new products . They keep most of their earlier successful products on sale or bring them back as “classics” in special promotions which are often highly successful.

Few companies can afford to stick with their earliest products in a changing world. But, those earlier products and the way they supported the people who bought them is what ensured they stayed in business and made good [profits](#) long enough to develop their later releases!

Plan to Improve Your Marketing

The information in your Business Plan can help you significantly improve your [marketing](#) methods and your bottom line.

When you review your Business Plan next time, put some time into checking your marketing or mainly, who you are marketing to.

I mentioned a company that thought it was supplying scientific equipment to research laboratories.

But, they sent out a simple survey and found that they were actually selling more products and getting more profit from schools and other educational [organizations](#).

If you haven't contacted or evaluated your current customers for a while, you might find that your customer base has also changed significantly.

You may find you are wasting some of your sales efforts and your current customers are becoming less interested in your offers. The offers are not correctly aimed.

This goes against one of the top marketing rules: it's always easier to sell more to your current customers.

But, if you have lost touch with them!

You may even decide to put some [money](#) and staff time into increasing communication with your current customers.

It could be worthwhile to try to reconnect with previous regular customers.

Then, you would have another niche market buying from you!

None of this requires heavy computer power or specialized programs or staff.

The clues are sitting at your desk in the information you got from your Easy Business Plan!

Power up Your Pricing from Your Plan

If you look through the data collected from your reviews of your [Business Plan](#), you may see some relationship between changes in your pricing and changed sales figures.

Just dropping your prices does not always have good long-term results.

People may tend to expect your low prices to be available into the future even when they know that costs keep rising.

You may even feel some rejection from some customers when you actually remove the discounts.

The data you collect can suggest what previous promotions are revived or whether some might just be buried forever because they’re not giving you a return to match the effort involved.

Although “Black Friday” and similar promotions are popular with many retailers as well as lots of bargain-seeking consumers, these major sales events probably reduce [demand](#) for high-priced products for a couple of weeks before the sales start.

Why would your potential customers pay regular sales prices when they know almost everything will be unusually cheap in a few days!

So, it is a good [idea](#) to vary the frequency of each particular sales offer for highly popular products. That way, your customers cannot be sure that their favorite high-priced dog food will always be on sale on the last week of the month, or whatever.

Why You Need a Business Plan

You can use your Business Plan to get a better understanding of the whole business as it is currently.

Some people start getting a few customers and skimp on their record keeping and organization.

That will reduce the success which they get from their early efforts and may cause problems later on when they approach potential [investors](#) with inadequate records.

The main problem is that poor records will prevent them from knowing their actual financial position. Are they getting a suitable level of sales to fund more equipment or promotion?

Is there enough provision for regular expenses like taxes, fees and [licenses](#), replacement of stores and equipment and to pay their staff’s wages and related costs?

A simple Business Plan can help you to keep a check on your actual financial position and estimate what you need to put aside so you don’t run short of [cash](#) and the flexibility it gives you.

When you see your ideas and details in solid form, any gaps, potential risks and areas which are not getting the attention they need or deserve are much more obvious.

You can use your Business Plan to explain the different parts of what you do and expect to achieve to people that might be interested in that information.

The usual first presentations are to show to finance providers or anyone interested in funding your development or even buying part of the business.

But, the Business Plan has information you can use for other people apart from potential investors.

Use it as the basis of an information sheet you give new employees in addition to the general information you give them about duties and procedures.

Regular review of the Business Plan will highlight emerging [trends](#), including potential opportunities and risks, in time to be able to deal with them effectively.

Your Plan will help you [monitor](#) changes in your business environment before they impact on you.

While people dispute the importance of a business Plan for their particular type of activity, I think it's significant the Small Business Administration heartily endorsed them if they are comprehensive and thoughtful.

I would emphasize a few other essential qualities including being accurate and focused on the values of the people you present it to.

Parts of Your Business Plan

This is a summary of sections which should appear in your Business Plan. I show you how to tailor it to more closely fit your business in a later section.

General Document Information: This includes the title, date, version number and details of the people to contact for further information.

Table of Contents: This should be included even in Business Plans over four pages. It will help reduce the time your potential [investor](#) needs to find the information they are most interested in.

After these standard sections, your Business Plan should also include most of the following sections.

Executive Summary

This section gives a brief but comprehensive description of the main points of your Business Plan. It should just be a filler-free few pages.

It is the highlights with any embellishment or hype.

That includes your financial information and the skills and duties of the team. [Check](#) that your business background, particular skills and the background, skills and achievements of the main people in the business or closely associated with it are referred to.

If you own assets such as licenses, patents and copyrights. Include them here and in the Financial Base of your business.

This is the section which potential investors will read first with full attention. It will give them a strong indication whether your business is one that could fill their expectations if they offer you finance as an [investment](#) or by buying a part of the venture.

Some may not give your plan any further consideration if this section does not feel right for their purpose.

You only write this after you have drafted the rest of your plan and thoroughly reviewed it all.

Leaving the Executive Summary until you have prepared the other sections means you will be able to show to the best advantage how the

various parts of your plan and business work together.

It’s an introduction that may set you for success or drop you out of this company’s consideration.

If this section is not clear or has any significant errors, they could delay or end their review of your [offer](#) and give preference to Business Plans from other people.

Mission Statement

This section of the Business Plan is a short statement of:

- ¾ The special attraction this business for you.
- ¾ The goals you have for your business.
- ¾ The particular [niche](#)(s) you are focused on.

A good Mission Statement can be an asset to your Business Plan.

But, most fail because they don’t connect with the hard-headed reviewers.

A Mission Statement should be no longer than a few lines.

It must be simply written so that everybody can understand the goals and aspirations of the company and its management team.

It is about what inspires you and what that is driving you to achieve.

Customer Appeals

How your [products](#) or services will help your customers.

What factors in your business will draw customers from more established competitors.

How you will build confidence and loyalty with your customers, suppliers and customers.

How you are developing your skill set and those of your employees to improve your competitiveness and ability to respond to new opportunities.

Financial Base

The financial base of your current operation.

How the new [funds](#) will be repaid, including principal and interest.

What funds you want.

Financial expectations for the next 6 months and 2 years.

Marketing Report

Market analysis, including trends and how you are placed to take advantage of them.

The potential of the current market.

Competition currently in the same [marketplace](#).

Your advantages, if any, over them.

When you have done your Business Plan, your job has just started.

The Business Plan must be frequently reviewed and adapted to take account of changes in structure of the company, new technology, challenges and threats.

It gets easier with experience and input from your main colleagues.

As you improve your Business Plan, your business will improve around you.

Strategy

You also need a [strategy](#) which will get you to your goal.

And, most importantly, you need action to take advantage of your new product before other people produce their answer to the consumers’ problem which your product deals with.

It is common for you to only find some changes which are needed to make your product perform to its best level after the release and promotion of the first version.

If you’re lucky, you will be the first to include those improvements and it won’t require retooling the whole production process.

Your strategy should also include getting [expert](#) advice about protecting your device from imitation or claims that you copied someone else!

Competitive Analysis

Every Business Plan needs some information about the competition you have to deal with.

That is fairly easy if you start a coffee [shop](#) because you can see the

competition in the streets around you and you hear what your friends and customers like or dislike about them every day.

It is harder to check the effect of competition from other businesses when those products are also being pushed at your potential customers from competitors on the [Internet](#), who may be thousands of miles away!

Take the time to find the major competitors whose ads appear in your area.

Then, you need to identify the major appeal they have for your customers.

If you are [starting](#) out, the least effective tactic would be to try to compete on price.

If you offer low prices, your large, established competitors always win. The fight will drain your resources to a point where your business may not be able to continue operating.

In this city, someone tries that strategy every year in some type of business. But, they inevitably fail to become established with that tactic.

They don't realize the strain which their better-established competition can put on them.

Find Your Own Competitive Advantage.

Look for any competitive advantages you may have to some competitors.

Try to pinpoint weaknesses in their service, product range or other areas.

Every business has or develops weaknesses in some areas over time. The best time to look for them in your potential competitors is while you are developing your Business Plan.

Get as much [information](#) about them as you can.

Try to find areas where you can compete without putting too much strain on your budget.

Your best approach is to find a unique appeal, an unmet desire or a way to stand apart from what is already available in your area.

What are they Doing Well?

Also, find the points which you know they are getting good feedback

about.

What are the most successful competitors doing which appeals to the customers you need to attract?

Main Street – Great Source of Business Information

The closest source of information about conditions for the type of business you are setting up is often other businesses of the same type and the companies which will be your suppliers in the future.

You can get some information from going into their stores and observing the atmosphere and quality of interaction between [staff](#) and possible customers. You can also learn a lot from watching the feedback section of their [websites](#).

Always be positive when you comment about other people in your [industry](#), even if you know that there are doubts about some aspects of their business.

When you make any negative comment about them, the person that hears you will get the impression you are just unhappy about the competition.

The negativity will impact more on you than other companies.

It will also make it less likely that you could establish any sort of cooperative relationship with that company in the future.

Many companies share resources with their nominal competitors as a way to better compete with the larger competitors.

Another important source of competitive information is through the business and community groups which you are a [member](#) of.

This can be invaluable because your business’s relatively small size is not a factor in those groups.

The person who contributes to the atmosphere and activities of the group is regarded highly.

Your professional advisors such as your accountant and lawyer can also be sources of information and [advice](#) which is useful but not confidential.

How to Make an Impression

When you get the opportunity to present your Business Plan with a possibility of obtaining funding or other support, these tips will help you make a positive and professional impression.

Prepare and rehearse your presentation. Get feedback on it from people who have business [knowledge](#).

Your family and close friends want you to succeed, but their regard for you may not let them be frank about any possible flaws they see. And, that is what you want them to tell you about!

Try to get someone to video you at least twice before you have to make the presentation.

Do the first video to give you and the person [making](#) the video a chance to become comfortable with the situation and the equipment.

That will help you catch the most glaring things you want to improve. Don't let any flaws make you nervous.

Reviewers aren't usually interested in your performing ability. They do expect you to be able to speak clearly and demonstrate a good knowledge of your industry and your own special areas of it at short [notice](#).

If there are points you hope they won't raise with you, be sure to [practice](#) your responses to questions about them. Experienced reviewers will find them and you must have truthful answers to their questions.

If you don't, the rest of your presentation will suffer.

Always thank the review panel for their time and consideration.

How to Start Your Business Plan

What form your first Business Plan takes will depend on the needs you feel are important and the knowledge you have to produce meaningful data.

Use your experience as well as feedback from your staff and other people in your business.

You will be able to use the information you are collecting for your accountant who prepares your [tax](#) return and other financials.

The cost of consulting an accountant is much less for most of us than doing our own records. We would be more effective when we focus on using our skills, dealing with production, [promotion](#) and customer contact while the accountant (or one of the assistants) does the figures.

The obvious things which we must keep under review are:

Cashflow: The most important figures for the smooth running of the business. Not just what comes in and goes out, but what is put aside to deal with all the expenses and what is readily available for unexpected needs. [Profit](#) is what left after all of that.

Payroll: Pay your workers on time.

Regular Expenses: This includes your suppliers' accounts, your lawyer and accountant, the fees for operating a business in your area, buying more consumables for all your equipment and keeping enough back to buy new equipment when it is needed.

Other information which can prove helpful for your forward planning includes:

Opportunities: This may be business or community events where you can promote your products, make valuable connections with customers and suppliers and get valuable feedback about the public perception of the products and [service](#) of yourself as well as your competitors and how you might improve your results by responding to them better.

Timeline: This is a prediction of your company's expected progress over the coming months and years.

Put markers for each [six](#) months or whatever period seems appropriate to your company’s current situation and prospects.

It will encourage you to make the targets and show where you have succeeded as well as areas which may need changes in strategy or action.

See Ourselves as Others See Us



It can be difficult to connect with other people and how they see and evaluate a product or even us as individuals.

It's a huge advantage when you understand their views about you, your company and your products.

It just needs for you to understand what is important to them.

A large supplier of scientific equipment and supplies were surprised to discover that their customer base had many more educational [institutions](#) than those solely concerned with scientific research.

They accepted the fact and adjusted their product range over time while also putting more effort into connecting with those customers.

This led to a substantial [increase](#) in profitability which could have started much sooner if they'd examined their figures sooner.

The rapidly expanding area of social media and the [Internet](#) can help produce feedback about your products and support as well as that from other companies.

It's important to remember that, even if you don't say anything about your company or products on the Internet, others probably will.

You should have someone in your organization monitor what's said and the general tone of the comments across the various [systems](#).

Be careful to maintain a professional detachment when reading the comments. Because many people believe they cannot be traced or identified when they make comments at many sites, they can be unfeeling and even cruel or deceitful with their remarks.

It can have some negative effect but you or your spokesperson should. if they respond at all, keep a reasonable attitude and stick with the facts.

You may want to hire a [specialist](#) to do this monitoring, provide reports and even interpretation until you become more comfortable with using the media.

What Reviewers Focus On.



When potential investors review your Business Plan, they will look at these factors.

Low quality answers or lack of information to support claims in your written submission may disqualify you from getting an [interview](#) about your proposal.

These are some factors they may consider highly important.

Consider how you would show the strong points of your business and its goals in relation to each one.

What’s Your Ultimate Goal?

Many people start businesses without any clear idea of what their ultimate goal is.

They focus entirely on making the business a success.

But, what comes next?

Do you intend to stay with this business for life?

Do you build the business and then sell it?

Would you try to raise its value to where it could be floated on the [Stock](#) Exchange? Then, would you stay with the business or go off and start something else?

This forward thinking can be a plus if it aligns with the reviewers’ views of the business’ potential.

How Much and What For?

It’s especially important to spell out exactly how much finance you want from the investors and what you will actually do with it.

How Do You Pay it Back?

They probably think you’re honest or your would not get an interview, but this information is a [test](#) of your understanding of business finance and how realistic your projections are.

S.W.O.T.

The S.W.O.T. [analysis](#) is a good way to spell out the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats which are around your new business.

Keep them brief but don't miss out any which are significant.

Be honest about any deficiencies in your team's skill-set or product range. Make sure you explain what you are doing to remove those potential problems, Include timelines and likely cost estimates.

Another important timeline is the one showing where your part of the industry is in its [history](#). Are you in at the start of an exciting new technology? If so, are you using the most advanced technology.

Are you dependent on a [supplier](#) whose technology is subject to being taken over by a potential rival of yours?

What protection are you devising to keep your business competitive?

Writing Your Business Plan

You may lack confidence in your ability to do justice to your venture if you think about [writing](#) your own Business Plan.

But, you are the best person to do it despite your concerns.

I hope this section will get you ready to produce the first version or the next version if you have done one and not got the results you hoped.

You are better equipped than anyone else to explain the product, the unique benefits it gives users and the potential for [profit](#) and expansion it represents.

Gather all the information you have and supporting material.

You should read enough of this to have the most important parts in your [memory](#) as well as in your presentation.

But, don't give all you know or believe to the reviewers. You will not hold their attention if you don't respect their knowledge of the field and the high demands on their time.

Avoid jargon and all other technical references unless you are sure that you make them understandable and relevant for them. And that you do it quickly!

Use short sentences and keep the language simple. That improves clarity and makes greater impact.

When you give any [predictions](#), tie them to facts about current figures or recent achievements.

You must give yourself time to think about what you will write so that what you type or dictate needs less revision.

Most people can save a fair amount of time by writing their material without editing the material at all.

This can give you a 15% or better improvement in the time it takes to get the first draft saved on your [computer](#).

Keeping all the editing for a separate pass after finishing that first draft will also reduce any stress you have felt when editing while you write.

Keep to the most important points. Just give them the essentials and be

ready to answer any follow-up questions if they are asked.

Don't pretend to have the answer to questions if you don't know. You will be found out and it will hurt your credibility.

You don't have to finish each version of the Business Plan. Just make sure that all the information which matters is kept up-to-date and easily accessible.

Quick Tips for Better Business Plans

Lack Writing Experience? Do not be concerned if you feel that you don't have the [writing](#) skills to produce the plan you need.

You have the knowledge and drive to make a better plan than anyone else.

You are unlikely to omit important details or give too much emphasis to the wrong factors.

Appearance Matters but Content is King! Too many people try to make their plans look better when they just need to show the relevant information more clearly.

Filter the Details: Do you put off writing your Business [Plan](#) because of the amount of detail required.

That's because of a common misunderstanding. You don't need to include a lot of detail in your Business Plan, only enough to support or [explain](#) the statements you make.

Writing your Business Plan is not a test of how much you can recall.

The reviewers will be more interested in “just the facts”!

From the first version of your Business Plan, include a section where you give a brief overview of the contacts you've made, including customers, suppliers and business people who you want cooperative arrangements with, for mutual promotion and support.

The Future of Business Plans

Many Business Plans will continue to be produced in the traditional format for some years to come.

They are easily portable, can be read without access to special equipment and copied at the corner [store](#) if you want to produce a [copy](#) for someone you think might help your progress.

But, there will be more plans that use all the new devices and their powerful presentation abilities.

There is one important rule:

Use the method which communicates your message and information most effectively.

Just make sure that you are at least competent in using the equipment so that the viewer gets the [message](#) in a way that works for you.

Business Plans are becoming shorter and more visual. But, the reviewers still want enough text to be able to get the most important information without deciphering charts and other media.

I don't think we'll stop producing the “old” Business Plans for some time.

Almost all of the newer [systems](#) still use the same terms for the different sections or provide cheat sheets with that information.

I suggest that you use them too for their ease of understanding but invest some time and effort to increasing your ability to use some of the exciting new media.

Making a Visual Plan

The plans which contain lots of visual parts and much less text can be produced with any number of programs for the various computer systems.

This section will give you a simple overview of a simple step by step approach which can be adapted to whatever devices and [software](#) you have available and are competent with.

The focus needs to be on emphasizing how you and your products and team are able to supply exactly what your customers need!

Start with You!

What do you base your product’s special appeal to your customers? That is the focus of your core statement.

Keep it short and relevant to the major appeals your product has for that [group](#) of “hungry buyers”.

Look for a market or segment which you believe you can dominate for a period of time, not just a fad. That will give you time and cash to develop further products for other [niches](#).

Check Your Map Constantly!

These markets and the people that inhabit them move fast.

You need to watch them or pay someone to monitor what is happening in and around them.

Loyalties may shift overnight and you need to know when they do!

Keep on Target.

Focus everything on your key elements of your [marketing](#) for that group.

Reduce text to a minimum and add appropriate graphics wherever possible.

Any predictions and assumptions are given short supporting statements rather than the longer explanations used in traditional Business Plans.

Plot the course you [travel](#) and add some markers with details in your notes (separate from the chart) about what happens, what works and what doesn’t. Put links to the expanded data so that you can take advantage of any lessons you learn from your reviews and experiments.

If you don't update regularly, you begin to devalue the whole [exercise](#).

Your older data is most valuable when you can see a relationship to more recent events.

If you stop the updates, everything becomes less relevant to future progress.

Some small gaps are probably inevitable with the pressure of other tasks. But, the more dots showing your path, the more accurate it will be.

Resources

The [sites](#) listed here contain helpful information and resources about business subjects for people at all stages of their business’ cycle. The Government –supported sites in each region focus mainly on their country’s conditions and needs.

But, a lot of the material may be of interest to business people elsewhere as well. Sometimes, you can adapt an idea and start using it in your area with great results.

U.S.A.

Mentorship Programs

This S.B.A. blog entry explains the help available from Mentorship Programs which are supported by the Small Business Administration:

<http://www.sba.gov/community/blogs/community-blogs/small-business-matters/mentorship-programs-can-benefit-your-small-bu>

Service Corp of Retired Executives

<http://www.score.org/>

The S.C.A. is part of the Small Business Administration.

From their website: “

U.K.

U.K. Government portal with advice and support for anyone setting up and running a business in the United Kingdom.

<https://www.gov.uk/browse/business>

Australia

<http://business.gov.au/>

Social Media Tool

Who is talking about what on Social Media?

<http://Whostalkin.com/>

Free (at present) tool for searching social Media sites.

It lets you check who’s talking about your company, or even your competitors, and what they’re saying!

Start Your Plan Today

It's never too soon to start assembling the material you need for your Business Plan.

You don't have to have it perfect, just available and up-to-date.

Then, you will be ready when opportunity knocks.

That usually happens whether you are ready or not.

Good Luck!

Alice Graham

[Another eBookWholesaler Publication](#)