

Writing a simple Business Plan

Before writing your business plan, think about who is going to read it and what you need it to do. Do you want the plan to help you win funding, guide staff or persuade others to get involved with your work?

Key audiences will probably be your funders, trustees, managers and staff. Think about the language, tone and design of the document with them in mind.

Your plan should be concise and easy to read and contain the following sections:

- 1. Executive Summary** – This is the most important part of the plan as it is the first (and sometimes only) section people read. It should be written last. It is a clear and interesting one or two page summary of your plan, setting out key elements such as mission, aims, how you plan to put your aims into action, and the role of your organisation in delivering this work.
- 2. Mission Statement** – overall purpose of an organisation. It is sometimes called a strategic or overall aim. It defines and summarises the long-term change or difference you want to make.
- 3. Key Personnel** – responsible for delivering on aspects of the plan. This can include Board members and teams of volunteers, not just paid staff.
- 4. Current Environment/SWOT (Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats) analysis** – brief overview of the current and the key future challenges and opportunities.
- 5. Organisational Strengths and Weaknesses** – how strengths will be utilised and weaknesses overcome.
- 6. Three Measurable Goals for each Year.**
- 7. Outline Financial Plan** – For the first year, monthly breakdown of expenditure, secured income and existing shortfall. For any following year a summary (not broken down per month).
- 8. Resource Requirements** – what money and other resources (facilities, skills, software for example) you'll need to achieve the three goals identified. This need to match up with the outline financial plan.

9. Goal Related Risks – explain how any risks will be mitigated, in other words what you will do to make sure the possible problems don't arise or, if they do, how you will fix them.

10. Monitoring and Evaluation – how the plan will be reviewed and who will be responsible for this.

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