
The Interactive Resource, a firm that specializes in matching clients with web site developers, venture capital introductions and strategic partnerships, would like to offer you this outline of information and documents necessary for an effective and comprehensive business plan.

Company Description

1. Nature of the business
 - Marketplace needs the company satisfies – what is the industry opportunity?
 - What your company does to meet these needs in terms of the benefits it provides to customers and/or end users through its products or services
2. The company's distinctive competencies - what are the key factors that differentiate the company from competitors and that will make it successful – in terms of customer satisfaction, production or distribution efficiency, staffing, etc.
3. History of the company
 - Date founded, by whom, for what purpose, where, corporate structure then and now. (Include documents)
 - Progress to date, including corporate structure, product development, research, distribution, sales.
 - Description of founders and present leadership. (Include detailed resumes)
 - Legal form. (Include documentation)
 - Mission
 - Overarching goal
4. Financial background
 - Distribution of equity – capitalization, classes of stock, shares outstanding. (Include documents)
 - Past loans to or investments in the company (include relevant agreements)
5. Core competencies – present and planned
6. Economics of the business
 - Operating and profit margins
 - Profit potential and durability
7. Reasons, if any, why past performance may not be a reliable indicator of potential.

Products and Services

1. Detailed description of product/service from customer/user's point of view
 - Perceived benefits
 - Competitive advantages
 - Stage of development (concept, prototype, small production run, etc.)
2. Product life cycle – current position and factors that might lengthen or shorten it
3. Intellectual property (Include copies of patents, copyrights, and other documents and agreements with owners and employees for nondisclosure or noncompete. Describe any trade secrets.)
4. R&D in progress or planned – by this company and by others in the industry

Market Analysis

1. Define the industry/industries. If multiple industries are converging, each must be covered.
2. Industry description (include statistics with sources and dates for each)
 - Size – historically, currently, in the future

- Characteristics and trends – historically, currently, in the future
 - Structure – major customer groups and distribution patterns
3. Describe target market sectors – and document with statistics, including sources and dates in terms of:
 - Needs and extent to which these needs are currently being met
 - Demographic and psychographic profile
 - Geographic distribution
 - Decision-makers and influencers
 - Size – number of customers and annual purchases, historically, currently, in the future
 4. Market penetration the company expects to achieve and why this is achievable
 - Percent of total sales
 - Number of customers
 - Geographic coverage
 - Rationale

Competitive Analysis

1. Names of competitors – both direct and indirect, with a brief description of each; alternative ways in which customers can meet similar needs
2. Strengths of each - ability to meet customer needs, technology, market penetration, track record, reputation, financial resources, key personnel.
3. Weaknesses of each – in same areas.
4. Importance of your company's target market to each.
5. Barriers to entry – cost, time, technology, personnel, customer base, and intellectual property – and how your company will defend its position against competitors and adapt to new developments.
6. The company's competitive advantages.

Marketing and Sales (covers strategic alliances, sales and marketing communications; include agreements for alliances, sales plans and marketing communications programs)

1. Distribution channels; sales plan
2. Pricing price levels, gross margin levels, discount structure
3. Purchasing cycle, including lead times
4. Branding – techniques and media your company will use to promote market awareness at various levels – advertising, PR, both online and offline (include programs in each relevant area)
5. Sales process – from identifying prospects to average dollar size per sale and per reorder

Operations

1. Procedures for producing and delivering products/services.
2. Operating strategies and competitive advantages in terms of techniques, experience economies of scale, and lower direct costs.
3. Facilities and equipment – what's required, what exists, what is needed – nature, quality, and extent
4. Production strengths and limitations; how the latter will be corrected.
5. Suppliers key to production with lead-time requirements, assessment of risks of shortages (include contracts with key suppliers)

The Management Team

1. Organization – management structure in terms of who is responsible for what areas
2. Key management personnel – names, titles, areas of responsibility, and detailed bios
3. Management compensation and ownership

4. Board of Directors and/or advisers
5. Supporting professional advisers and services

Difficulties and Risks

1. Market acceptance
2. Product/service design and/or stage of development
3. Costs
4. Proprietary issues – trademarking, etc.
5. Regulatory issues
6. Competitive considerations
7. Risks typical of ventures of this type or at this stage

The Financial Plan

1. Financing
 - Financing sought and users
 - Exit options
2. Income statements, balance sheets cash flow statements for the past five years or as long as the company has been in business.
3. Projected income statements, balance sheets, cash flow statements for the next five years – month by month.

Documents for Appendix

1. List of current clients with a brief description of each and recent work for it by the company.
2. List of recent past clients by category.
3. Press clippings.
4. List of speaking engagements by principals.
5. Articles by principals.
6. Questionnaires, research design, findings, and analysis for any market research.