

Your Business Plan

In today's competitive environment, a business plan is an entrepreneur's most important document. It is a summary of why the business exists, what the business does, what the entrepreneur expects to accomplish, how the operational and administrative aspects of the business will be addressed and the anticipated financial results.

Having a plan can facilitate the process of buying or selling a business since it will enable the potential buyer to understand the business more quickly. The lessening of the time devoted to the learning curve will accelerate the due diligence process and receipt of a purchase offer. A business plan can be one of the most important documents a seller can make available to a motivated and qualified buyer.

Even if a seller does not have an up-to-date plan, a buyer will need to have a business plan to obtain third party or seller financing. Once the financing is secured, having a plan will enable the new owner to immediately begin focusing on the business's operational and administrative challenges as well as address the critical success factors.

A business plan should generally contain the following components:

1. The Executive Summary
 - objectives
 - mission/vision
 - keys to success
2. Company Summary
 - history
 - legal structure
 - ownership
3. Products and/or Services
 - current offerings
 - future offerings
 - product benefits
 - competitive products
 - pricing
4. Target Market Analysis
 - needs satisfied
 - size of market
 - market trends
 - market needs

- competitors
 - market share
5. Marketing
- marketing strategy
 - sales strategy
 - advertising and promotional strategy
 - website strategy
6. Management
- management team
 - organization chart
 - personnel needs
7. Financial Plans
- start up costs
 - cash infusion needs
 - financial assumptions
 - break even analysis
 - projected profit and loss
 - projected balance sheet
 - projected cash flow
 - long term needs
8. Milestones
- significant accomplishments
 - projected time frames
9. Appendices
- pertinent company literature
 - brochures
 - supporting detail

Call CAA if you need assistance in preparing your business plan.