



THE BUSINESS & BRANDING BUNDLE

Your comprehensive guide to all things branding, marketing, communication and business

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SECTION 1: BUSINESS STRATEGY



NAVIGATING THE ROAD TO SUCCESS: STRATEGIES FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

Starting and growing a business is a journey filled with challenges, triumphs, and countless learning opportunities. While the road to success may be winding, there are certain strategies and principles that can significantly enhance your chances of thriving as a business owner. Join us in exploring key insights and actionable tips to help you chart a course towards success.

1. Craft a Clear Business Plan

The foundation of any successful small business is a well-thought-out business plan. Clearly outline your goals, target market, unique value proposition, and financial projections. A comprehensive plan serves as your roadmap, providing direction and focus as you navigate the competitive landscape. We have created a free Business Plan Workbook for your convenience as part of our Business & Branding Bundle.

2. Understand Your Market

Market Research

Conduct thorough market research to understand your industry, competitors, and target audience. Identify gaps in the market and opportunities for differentiation. This knowledge will inform your strategies and set you apart



in a crowded marketplace. There are even a number of AI Market Research Tools that can give you invaluable insights by automating data collection, analysis, and reporting, as well as using algorithms to identify patterns and insights in large datasets.

Customer Feedback

Actively seek and listen to customer feedback. Understanding your customers' needs and preferences allows you to refine your products or services, ultimately building customer loyalty and satisfaction. If you have a brick-and-mortar store, consider having a suggestion box, or for online retailers and service providers, integrate an advice and feedback box from customers that purchase from you.

3. Leverage Technology:

Online Presence

Establish a strong online presence through a professional website and social media platforms. In today's digital age, a robust online presence is crucial for reaching a wider audience and engaging with customers. If you have an online store, Facebook & Instagram are still the platforms with the highest conversion rate (as of July 2025) due to people using them as a search engine for businesses, people and things that interest them.

Conversion is essential for your business, and when it comes to online sales, you must make sure your target audience can go from exposure to purchaser in the straightest line/shortest way possible.

The process from when someone either sees your advert, page, video, post etc to purchasing should be streamlined and as simple as possible. Some ways to do this are by minimising information the customer needs to input to purchase for example, having a button for if the billing address is the same as the shipping. You should literally count how many times you have to click to purchase something and delete any part of the process that is not absolutely essential.

Furthermore, different social media platforms have different best-selling online-store platforms. For example, if you use Instagram, get a Shopify store.

Automation and Efficiency

Utilise technology to streamline business processes. Automation tools,



cloud services, and digital marketing platforms can improve efficiency, reduce costs, and free up time for strategic planning. Buffer, Meta, Stripe, Shopify and HubSpot are just some of the user-friendly and budget-friendly platforms that automate every part of the process.

4. Build Strong Financial Management

Budgeting

Develop a realistic budget that accounts for all business expenses. Regularly review and update your budget to ensure financial stability.

Cash Flow Management

Effectively manage cash flow by invoicing promptly, negotiating favourable payment terms with suppliers, and keeping a close eye on receivables and payables. Adequate cash flow is vital for day-to-day operations and growth initiatives.

Maintain Accurate Financial Records

Implement a robust system for financial record-keeping. Use accounting software to track income, expenses, and other financial transactions. Regularly reconcile your accounts to ensure accuracy.

Understand Key Financial Metrics

Familiarise yourself with key financial metrics relevant to your industry. This may include metrics such as gross margin, net profit margin, return on investment (ROI), and others. Use these metrics to assess your business's financial health.

Separate Personal and Business Finances

Open a business bank account and maintain a clear separation between personal and business finances. This makes it easier to track business transactions and ensures compliance with tax regulations.

Diversify Revenue Streams

Avoid dependence on a single client or revenue source. Diversify your offerings to minimise risks associated with fluctuations in the market or changes in consumer behaviour.

**Control Expenses**

Regularly review your expenses and look for opportunities to cut costs without compromising the quality of your products or services. Negotiate with suppliers for better deals and consider more cost-effective alternatives.

Reputation

Invoice promptly and pay promptly. Customers will not appreciate receiving bills months after doing business with you. Suppliers will not favour late payers.

Invest in Financial Education

Stay informed about financial best practices and continuously educate yourself on financial management. Consider seeking the advice of financial professionals, such as accountants or consultants, to gain insights specific to your business.

Plan for Taxes

Understand your tax obligations and plan for them accordingly. Keep accurate records of income, expenses, and deductions. Consult with a tax professional to ensure compliance and identify potential tax-saving opportunities.

Build a Contingency Fund

Set aside a portion of your profits for a contingency fund. This fund can help you navigate unexpected expenses or economic downturns without jeopardising the stability of your business.

5. Invest in Marketing

Targeted Marketing

Investing in marketing doesn't have to mean money. Paid promotional content is a landmine, and the price to payout ratio varies immensely. You invest your time. Most small businesses use organic (unpaid) marketing by making content themselves and putting themselves out there. Develop a targeted marketing strategy that aligns with your business goals. Whether it's social media advertising, content marketing, or traditional methods, a well-executed marketing plan can drive brand awareness and customer acquisition, no matter how large or small your marketing budget.

Networking

Engage in networking activities to build connections within your industry and local community. Word of mouth and referrals remain powerful tools for businesses, and networking can open doors to new opportunities. Enquire



about clubs, groups, and business organisations that can help you on a local and national level.

Authentic Marketing

People are first and foremost emotional creatures. They act from their emotions and rationalise their actions afterwards. For example, they want to go to Bali, they book it, and then tell themselves they deserve it and need a break, or they order a pizza, get a new dress, and then say they were hungry or needed a new dress for work etc. You market to them the same way. Instead of appealing to their logic or rational, appeal to their emotions. You may have the best prices, quality or unique product or service, but for the customer to actually purchase from you, there has to be some sort of emotional connection.

A great way of doing this is by sharing the story of why you do what you do, why you're in the business you're in. For example, 'I'm a nutritionist who does personalised nutrition plans because I got sick a number of years ago and managed to heal myself through nutrition. Now I want to help others do the same...' This sparks emotion and connection with people, and behind every business is the story of 'Why'. Market this to your advantage, don't be embarrassed. Be authentic, and people will respond to you and your brand.

6. Prioritise Customer Service

Customer-Centric Approach

Prioritise exceptional customer service. A satisfied customer is more likely to become a repeat customer and advocate for your business. Personalised service can set your small business apart from larger competitors. The trends in commerce are cyclic, three generations ago, most products were customised for the consumer, from food to furniture, to appliances. In the last thirty or more years the trend has been much more mass-standardisation and large-scale production to save costs and reach a wider audience. This trend resulted in the reduction of quality, and consumers are well aware of this. People today need and want their products and services to be of high quality and personalised to them and their individual needs once again.

Adaptability

Stay flexible and be willing to adapt to changing customer needs and market trends. A nimble business is better equipped to seize opportunities and



navigate challenges. Things can change extremely quickly in most markets and a general rule of thumb when it comes to marketing, run with what's working and axe what is not.

7. Continuous Learning and Adaptation

Stay Informed

Keep abreast of industry trends, emerging technologies, and best practices. Look at your business from a consumer point of view frequently and have colleagues/friends/employees review your business websites, online presence, store or restaurant with a fresh set of eyes. They might see things you don't, and this can be very insightful. Continuous learning ensures that your business remains relevant and competitive in a dynamic market.

Adaptability

Be willing to pivot and adjust based on market feedback and evolving circumstances. The ability to adapt is a hallmark of successful businesses. Don't be afraid of criticism, in fact, you should welcome it. Use surveys and polls online or in-person, and if you have the budget, consider a focus-group to determine the successes and pitfalls of your business. The quicker you implement good advice, the faster your business will grow.

8. Join your local Chamber of Commerce

Community Recognition

Joining your local Chamber of commerce instantly aligns your business with a community of like-minded entrepreneurs. This affiliation lends an air of credibility to your enterprise, fostering trust among potential customers.

Business Validation

Being part of a Chamber indicates that your business is established, reliable, and committed to the community. This validation can attract customers who are more likely to choose businesses associated with reputable organisations.

Connecting with Peers

The Chamber provides a unique platform for business owners to connect, share insights, and collaborate. Networking with peers can open doors to potential partnerships, collaborations, and shared resources.



Access to Influential Figures

Chambers often organise events where influencers, government officials, and industry leaders gather. Attending these events can provide you with unprecedented access to valuable contacts that can positively impact your business.

Increased Visibility

Chambers actively promote their members, offering opportunities for exposure in local publications, directories, and online platforms. This increased visibility can lead to more customers discovering your business.

Marketing Resources

Chambers typically provide marketing resources, such as advertising opportunities and participation in community events. Leveraging these resources can help you create a strong brand presence in your local market.

Voice in Local and National Policies

Chambers advocate for local businesses in matters of policy and regulation. Joining a Chamber provides you with a collective voice, ensuring that the interests of businesses are considered in local and national decision-making processes.

Educational Resources

Chambers often offer workshops, seminars, and training sessions to help small business owners stay informed about industry trends, best practices, and emerging technologies. Staying updated can give you a competitive edge.

Member Discounts

Many chambers negotiate exclusive deals and discounts for their members. Taking advantage of these cost-saving opportunities can help you reduce expenses and improve your bottom line.

Success as a business owner is a dynamic and ongoing process. By combining a solid business plan with a customer-centric approach, strategic marketing, and adaptability, you can position your business for long-term success. Remember, every challenge presents an opportunity for growth, and with determination, resilience, and these strategies in your toolkit, your small business can not only survive but thrive in the ever-changing business landscape.



SECTION 2: COMMUNICATIONS PACK

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

A communications plan is a strategic document that outlines how an organisation will communicate with its target audience or stakeholders. It serves as a roadmap for effective and consistent communication to achieve specific goals and objectives.

The plan typically includes details about the key messages, communication channels, target audience, timing, and responsibilities. **To begin crafting a communications plan:**

1. **Review** your existing communication materials
2. **Establish SMART** (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-Based) **goals** for your communication strategy based on the findings
3. **Define the target audience** for your communication plan
4. Develop and craft your plan with a **focus on addressing the needs** of your identified audiences
5. **Select the appropriate channels** for delivering your messages
6. **Assign responsibility** for message delivery to specific team members
7. **Estimate the time required** for each step in your plan
8. **Evaluate the outcomes** of your plan post-presentation to stakeholders, identifying successes and areas for enhancement

A communications plan ensures that the messages conveyed by the business are consistent across various channels and over time. Consistency helps in building a coherent brand image and avoids confusion among stakeholders. By identifying and understanding the target audience, a communications plan helps tailor messages to specific groups.

This targeted approach increases the likelihood of the messages being received and understood by the intended audience. Having a communications plan in place is crucial for effective crisis management. It enables businesses to respond quickly and appropriately in times of crisis, minimising damage to reputation and providing clear and timely information to stakeholders.



COMMUNICATIONS PLAN EXAMPLE

Audience	Communication	Description	Timeline / Frequency	Format/ Delivery	Responsibility
Board of Directors	Status Report	Report for Board Meeting	First Thursday of the month	Email board pack last Thursday every month and PowerPoint during meeting	CEO and strategic team
Customers	Product Announcement	Advertise launch of new product	July	Social media campaign Website Email campaign	Marketing
Prospects	Holiday Promotions	New stock and services on offer	Mid Oct-end December	Radio Paid social media Posters and Flyers	Marketing and strategic team
Crisis Management	Stakeholders Customers Employees	Send alerts to audience in event of crisis e.g. card payments go down, or business has to close for a day.	Necessity only	Website Social media Text/Email to employees/CEO	Employee on that day



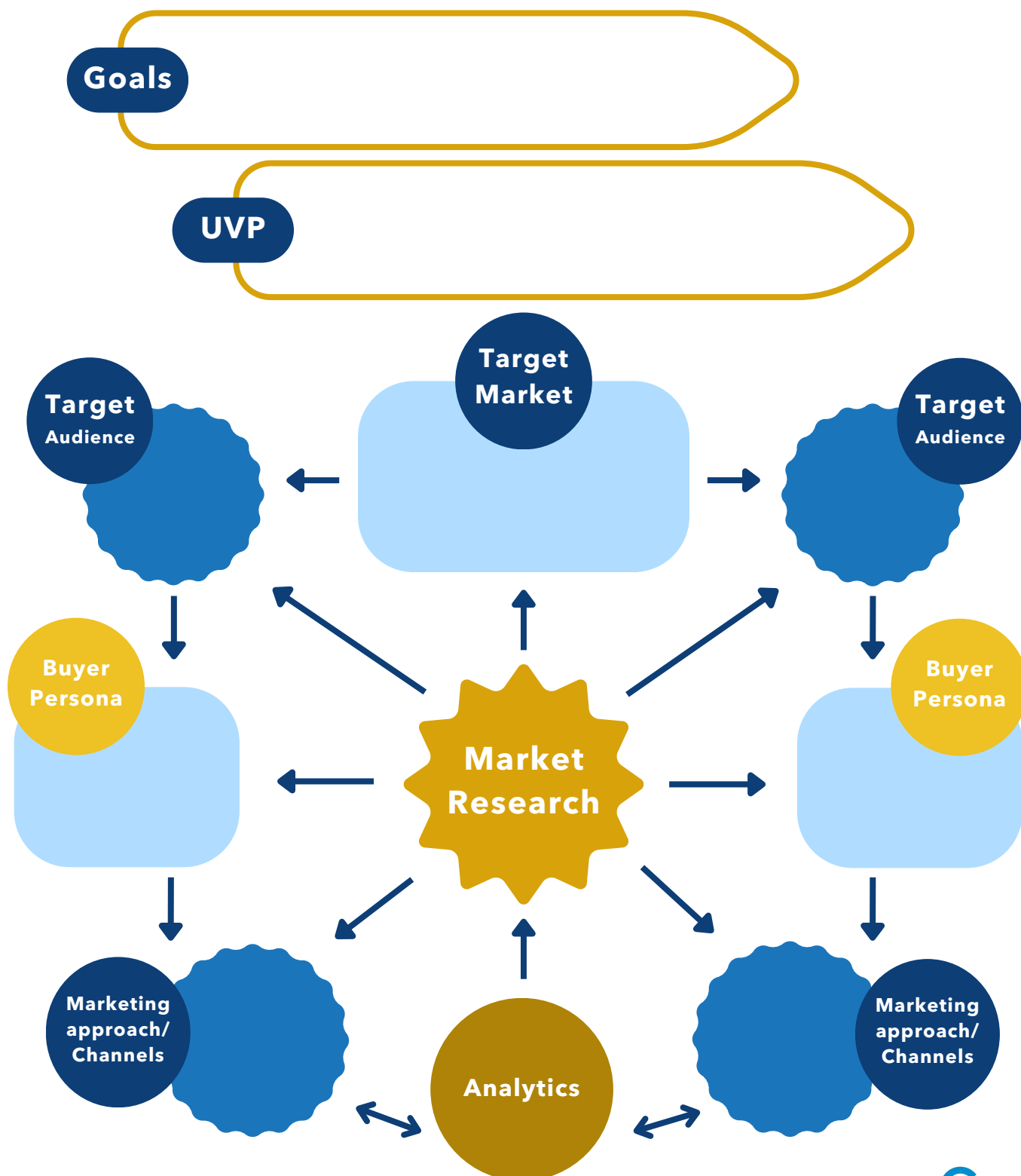
COMMUNICATIONS PLAN TEMPLATE

AUDIENCE	COMMUNICATION	DESCRIPTION	TIMELINE / FREQUENCY	FORMAT/ DELIVERY	RESPONSIBILITY



SECTION 3: MARKETING STRATEGY

ESTABLISHING A MARKETING STRATEGY





ESTABLISHING A MARKETING STRATEGY

To gain a deep understanding of your business, its products or services, target market, unique selling points, and current marketing efforts, we will share with you step-by-step how to do this.

1. Set Clear Goals

These could include increasing brand awareness, generating leads, driving website traffic, conversion, or boosting sales. For example, you may be happy with the exposure your content gets, or the number of viewers on your website, but you're not happy with how many of them result in sales.



You therefore may decide to launch a campaign with the goal of increasing sales conversion. This may be by creating content that shows customers that are happy with their purchase, explaining the benefit of the product.

2. Market research

Conduct market research to identify your target audience's demographics, interests, behaviors and preferences. Create detailed buyer personas to guide your marketing strategies and messaging. You do this by gathering the data you have on your current customers e.g. their gender, age, interests, and gather some insights from this data analysis.



There are many other sources that can help you gain insights from your target market, for example, the website Statista has a lot of statistics. You can also automate aspects of market research with AI. Platforms like Typeform connect to Hubspot and MailChimp and start at 25 euro a month, while more comprehensive platforms like Qualtrics are pricier.

Study your competitors to understand their strengths, weaknesses, strategies, and market positioning. Identify opportunities and gaps in the market that you can capitalize on.



3. Define Your Unique Value Proposition (UVP)

Clearly articulate what sets your business apart from competitors and why customers should choose your products or services.

Your UVP should address your target audience's needs and provide compelling reasons to engage with your business.



4. Choose your Channels

Based on your target audience and goals, select the most appropriate marketing channels to reach and engage with them effectively.

This could include a mix of digital channels (e.g. social media, email marketing, content marketing, search engine optimisation) and traditional channels (e.g. print ads, local events, direct mail).

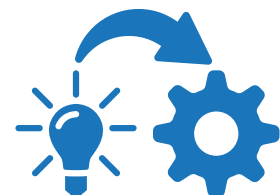


5. Plan the details and execute

Create a detailed plan outlining the specific tactics and activities you will implement to achieve your marketing goals. This may include content creation, advertising campaigns, promotions, partnerships, events, and more.

Determine how much you can invest in your marketing efforts and allocate your budget across different channels and tactics based on their potential ROI and alignment with your goals.

Put your marketing plan into action by implementing your tactics and campaigns effectively. Ensure consistency in messaging and branding across all channels to build brand recognition and trust.





6. Measure

Track the performance of your marketing initiatives using relevant metrics and KPIs. Analyse the data regularly to evaluate the effectiveness of your strategies, identify areas for improvement, and make data-driven adjustments as needed.



It is wise to invest in marketing software. Marketing software will combine multiple channels. You can schedule posts to multiple channels at once, and it will gather analytics from all connected channels and analyse the data so you have valuable insights into what is or isn't working. You should use these insights to your advantage, scrapping ideas that fail and expanding on ideas that are successful.

TARGET AUDIENCE vs TARGET MARKET

A **target audience** is a subset of your target market. It's a narrower group of people you aim to target through specific marketing campaigns

A target market is the **totality of groups your brand targets**. Your target market will influence all of your marketing decisions

You identify a target audience by analysing your target market, looking at their **demographics and habits**, then creating 'Buyer Personas'

A target market is the **entire group of people** your product is intended for
(e.g. for a vegan restaurant, your target market is local people but a target audience might be vegans between the ages of 18-40)

When you have your Buyer Personas, ask yourself '**What will make them buy?**' to create an advertising strategy specifically for them

You identify your target market by determining your customer's **needs** and **how much** they are willing to spend



SAMPLE BUYER PERSONAS

**Peter, 50 M, Electrician:**

likes going on adventure holidays - good travel products, technology and innovation, politics. Uses LinkedIn and Twitter the most.

**Sarah, 29 F, Teacher:**

loves walking on the beach - athleisure wear, likes shopping locally and sustainable practises. Spends most of the time on her phone on Pinterest & Facebook.

**Saoirse, 37 F, Banker:**

loves designer clothes, shoes and bags, only eats organic, goes on frequent city breaks for work. Spends her screen time on Instagram.

**John, 40 M, Engineer:**

loves cars, likes financial advice and stocks, home improvement projects and rock music. Uses YouTube the most.



YOUR UNIQUE VALUE PROPOSITION

Defining your Unique Value Proposition (UVP) is essential for distinguishing your business from competitors and compelling potential customers to choose your products or services. Your UVP should succinctly communicate the unique benefits and value that your business offers to solve customers' problems or fulfill their needs.

To determine an effective UVP, start by identifying your target audience's pain points (the challenges your customers face that your product/service can fix), and desires. Then, articulate how your business addresses these needs in a way that sets you apart from competitors. Your UVP should be clear, concise, and memorable, highlighting the key benefits or advantages that differentiate your offerings in the marketplace. It should also tell a story.



Your UVP should resonate with your target audience and evoke an emotional response that motivates them to take action. Consider what makes your business truly unique and valuable to your customers. This could be based on factors such as superior quality, innovative features, exceptional customer service, competitive pricing, or a combination of these elements. For example: for a vegan restaurant's UVP might be the passion to make quality vegan food affordable and accessible for everyone, so we can have a healthier society. They share this story and even their recipes with customers for free. Customers feel cared for, and in turn, they care about the restaurant.

By focusing on what sets you apart and delivering a compelling value proposition that addresses your audience's specific needs and preferences, you can establish a strong competitive advantage and attract and retain loyal customers. Regularly review and refine your UVP to ensure it remains relevant and impactful in the ever-evolving marketplace.



HOW TO SELECT THE RIGHT MARKETING CHANNELS

The first thing that needs to be established is **knowing your market**. Divide your target market into a few target audiences and create buyer personas for each target audience. Use market research to understand your target audience's demographics, behaviors, preferences, and communication habits. Set your goal for the campaign you want to run, e.g. grow sales by 5% in three months.

Consider where they spend their time online and offline, what platforms they use, and how they prefer to consume information. Marketing statistics will be useful, for example; in 2025, it's important to know that Facebook and Instagram are expected to maintain their position as leading platforms for conversion rates, while TikTok continues to be a strong contender, particularly for younger demographics.

Familiarise yourself with the various marketing channels available, including digital channels and traditional channels. **Evaluate the relevance of each channel to your target audience and goals**. Choose channels that align with your audience's preferences and offer opportunities to engage with them effectively. Determine the reach and accessibility of each channel in reaching your target audience. Consider factors such as geographic coverage, audience size, and ease of access.

Assess the costs associated with each channel, including advertising costs, production costs, and time and resources required for implementation. **Consider your budget constraints and resource availability when making your decision**.

Research and analyse the effectiveness of each channel in driving the desired outcomes for your business. Look at factors such as engagement rates, conversion rates, return on investment (ROI), and customer acquisition cost (CAC). The CAC is the total sales and marketing expenses divided by the number of new customers.

Conduct small-scale tests or experiments across different channels to gauge their effectiveness and suitability for your business. Use A/B testing or pilot campaigns to compare performance and identify which channels yield the best results. For example, make two posts for the same product targeting the same audience, and run an A/B test. After the test you'll be able to see which was more successful and only spend money on the successful ad. **Remain flexible and adaptive** in your approach to channel selection. Monitor changes in consumer behavior, market



trends, and technological advancements that may impact the effectiveness of certain channels.

Explore opportunities for **integrating multiple channels into your marketing strategy** to create a cohesive and synergistic approach. Combining channels can amplify your reach, reinforce your messaging, and enhance overall campaign effectiveness.

Be prepared to adjust your strategy accordingly. Implement robust tracking and analytics to monitor the performance of each channel in real-time. Measure key metrics and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to evaluate the effectiveness of your efforts and make data-driven decisions for optimization.

Choose your KPI **based on the goal you had for the campaign**. E.g. if the goal was to increase sales by 5% in a quarter, track sales, and whether ads resulted in clicking to buy, then conversion statistics on your shop or website. Interpreting how well an ad or campaign worked can be tricky, so it's important to have tracking software tied to each channel you use and your shop or website, as well as taking advantage of Google analytics.



COVERING YOUR BASES

Social Media Platforms

Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and Pinterest offer powerful tools for small businesses to reach and engage with their target audience. While many people have accounts with multiple platforms, certain audiences and markets will use different platforms for different uses, and lean more towards one than the other. Therefore, once your audience is identified, you may research their habits, and form your marketing strategy accordingly.



Marketing software such as Meta, Hubspot and Marketo allow you to combine and integrate your efforts. With the right software, you can connect your CRM (Customer Relationship Management), email marketing, social media marketing, lead marketing and more all together, and the software will also analyse your activities and give you amazing data and insights.

Google My Business (GMB)

This free tool allows businesses to manage their online presence across Google, including Google Search and Maps. It's particularly useful for local businesses looking to improve their visibility in local search results and attract nearby customers. If you search Google My Business and link it to your business account, you will be able to update and modify what comes up on the right column of Google when your business is searched.

There are tips and tricks to note so Google will push your online presence, which improves you SEO (search engine optimisation). Having you GMB updated regularly, i.e. biweekly, shows Google you are an active user, and your business will be more likely to show up in search results. You can do this on the GMB website by updating your opening hours, linking your social media, so it shows up on Google as well, answering questions and reviews, and much more.

Paid Advertising Platforms

Platforms like Google Ads and Meta allow you to target specific audiences based on demographics, interests, and online behavior. While paid advertising requires an investment, it can be highly effective in reaching potential customers and driving conversions when executed strategically. Unpaid or organic marketing can be very successful, so be sure to utilise before investing in paid advertising

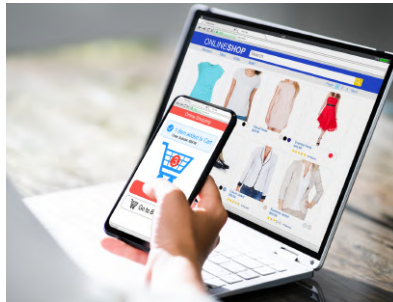
Email Marketing Platforms

Email marketing remains one of the most effective channels for reaching and nurturing leads. Platforms like Mailchimp, Constant Contact, and Sendinblue offer user-friendly tools for creating and sending professional-looking emails, managing subscriber lists, and tracking campaign performance.

Ensure that on your website, you have a pop-up for collecting emails. You can offer them a discount for taking their email, or offer a newsletter. Be wary of GDPR guidelines, people should know what they're signing up for and they should not to be contacted too frequently.



On Mailchimp for example, you can segment your audience, so they receive different emails at a different frequency. Say people that sign up to receive a discount, they can be segmented so that they only receive emails to inform them of other discounts in the future. For people that sign up for the newsletter, they can receive monthly emails, talking about the brand, company updates, new product launches etc..



Website and Blogging Platforms

Having a professional website is essential for establishing credibility and providing information about your products or services. Platforms like WordPress, Wix, and Squarespace offer easy-to-use website builders, while blogging platforms like WordPress.com and Medium can help you create and share valuable content to attract and engage your audience. Posting a blog about your product or service and its unique value, will improve your SEO. For example, I google 'shoes for painful feet', and your blog mentions how your shoe company is a fix for sore feet, that should come up on Google, once it includes enough buzzwords.

AI: You can use artificial intelligence to assist in your content creation for posts, emails blogs and videos. ChatGPT can be used to help with wording, and AI software like Invideo and Kapwing can help with images and videos. It can be tempting to overuse these tools, but relying on AI too much can feel inauthentic, especially in the marketing space.

Local Directories and Review Sites: Listing your business on local directories like Yelp, Google My Business, and TripAdvisor can help improve your visibility in local search results and attract customers in your area. Encouraging satisfied customers to leave positive reviews can also boost your reputation and credibility. If you're a tourist provider or restaurant, you may decide to enlist on 'AirBnb experiences' for example. Think about where your audience goes to learn more, and make sure you're there to be found.



SECTION 4: CREATING A BRAND



1 EXPLORE AND REFINE YOUR 'WHY'

Why do you do what you do? What is your business really about? What do you believe in? Why does your brand exist? For example, to solve an existing problem or make the lives of your end users better or easier. Think in terms of impact and emotions. Create an authentic story behind this and make this the foundation of your brand.

2 CREATE A MISSION

A business mission is a statement that articulates the purpose and reason for the existence of a company. It outlines the core objectives and values that guide the organization's actions and decisions. A well-crafted mission statement communicates the company's identity, aspirations, and the impact it aims to make in its industry or community. It serves as a guiding principle for both internal and external stakeholders, helping to align employees, customers, and partners with the company's overarching goals and values. The mission statement often reflects the company's long-term vision and commitment to fulfilling a specific need or contributing to a broader societal goal.

3 DEFINE YOUR VISION

A business vision is a forward-looking, inspirational statement that outlines the long-term aspirations and desired future state of an organisation. It serves as a guiding image or concept that encapsulates what the company aims to achieve or become over an extended period. The vision statement is often crafted to inspire and align the efforts of stakeholders, including employees, customers, and investors, towards a common purpose.



DESIGNING YOUR BRAND

When designing your brand, you want the brand to be professional, timeless, memorable and appealing to the masses. Ideally, you want your brand to surpass your competitors in every aspect.

Believe it or not, it is not just the luck of the draw that determines which brand will be internationally known and loved, and which brand will wither away. There are some trade secrets that major corporations have always used, that make an incredible impact. The majority of marketing is done subliminally. For example, product placement in your favourite TV show, or your favourite singer mentioning a certain brand in her new song.

Logos come from this idea, that marketing is inherently subliminal messaging. A brand need not create an advertisement to tell you about their products or latest sales, all you have to do is watch a sporting event on TV, and you will be bombarded with thousands of logos, covering every square inch of the screen, whether you're a GAA, soccer or F1 fan. When you buy a t-shirt, it will most often feature the logo of the company you bought it from. This is so widespread because it works so well.

A person, although they don't know it, is completely aware of their surroundings - they take every single thing in. You may have a number of thoughts running in your brain at any given time, and you may focus on one or two. This is your conscious brain. Most people do not realise they are not only their conscious brain, but their subconscious brain records everything, without the person being aware/conscious of it. Your unconscious brain is your subconsciousness. This is where memories, dreams and fantasies are derived from. For major global corporations, it is better to target the subconscious brain, because the conscious brain cannot reject it, and because people get annoyed by advertisements.

Today, there is more advertising in the world than ever before - subliminal messaging is very successful, reaching deeper parts of the brain than conventional advertisements, so people don't realise they're being marketed to. It is insidious, but that is the reality of marketing in the modern world. By the time an American child is three years old, they can recognize an average of 100 brand logos, according to Wright Institute child psychology Dr. Allen Kanner. By 10, that number increases to between 300 to 400 brands, according to a study from Nickelodeon. This encompasses just how crucial brand imaging and logos are for your business.

**BRAND****vs****LOGOS**

A brand is a comprehensive concept that encompasses the overall perception, identity, values, and reputation of a business, product, or service.

A logo is a visual symbol or mark that represents a brand. It is a specific graphic element, often a combination of symbols, text, and colors, designed to identify and distinguish a company or product.

It goes beyond just visual elements and includes the emotions, experiences, and associations that people have with a particular entity.

The logo is a crucial part of a brand's visual identity and serves as a recognisable emblem that helps consumers identify and remember the brand.

A brand is built over time through consistent messaging, quality, customer service, and other factors that contribute to the overall image of the business.

While a logo is an essential component of branding, it is not the entirety of the brand itself.

CHOOSING A COMPANY NAME

Choosing your family name as your company name can be a mistake, unless you do not intend to scale your business, and keep it very localised. Shared family and company names do not account for future partners or a future company sale. Your surname might not hold meaning that relates to the company. Family names are also common, and your company may be impacted by bad press of another company with the same name. Lastly, naming your company after a geographical location may limit its growth.

Similar to choosing your brand colours and logo, a brand name can have a deep meaning that impacts the subconscious. Etymology is the root origin of words. Our root languages: Latin, Sanskrit, Ancient Greek, Babylonian, Aramaic and Hebrew encompass most of our modern languages today. Although Latin for example, is no longer taught in schools and not a big proportion of the population speak ancient languages, our subconscious minds will recognise and gain meaning from many words in ancient languages because they are so inter-connected. It is recommended to choose a name with meaning relative to the business.



Many important corporations use company names that are derivatives of words from ancient languages because meaning will be subconsciously imprinted in people across many different countries. Additionally, Latin words sounds pretentious, grand, important, older and yet familiar. Here are some examples of companies whose names are derivations of words, most commonly from Latin:

Name	Meaning
HOSPIRA	(Pharmaceuticals): Hope, Trust
LENOVO	New, Extraordinary
MONDELEZ	International: Elegant
VERIZON	Truth, and Horizon
AQUAFINIA	Water, Stream
PANERA	Bread
ENERGIA	Energy
AUDI	Listen, Hark
PEPSI	Dyspepsiae = Indigestion
ADIDAS	You go
ROLEX	Roloi = Time instrument
HITACHI	Land of the rising sun
ORACLE	See Future
MERCEDES	Mercy, Favor
FIDO	Faithful = Dog Brand and Communications Brand
FIAT	Let it be done
DUREX	Durare = To Last
NIKE	Victory
MAGNAVOX	Great voice
OCULUS	Eye
COGNITIO	Knowledge
LIBERTAS	Freedom
QUORA	Quorum = Evocative of questions and answers
NOVARTIS	Nova Artis = New Arts
FONTERRA	Fon = Fountain and Terra = Land
SONY	Sonus = Sound
ACER	Sharp, Acute, Able and Facile
ASICS	Anima Sana In Corpore Sano = Healthy soul in healthy body
VOLVO	Volvo = I roll, I turn



THE BRANDING PACKAGE CHECKLIST

1 Logo & Visual Identity

- Full colour logo (Vertical & horizontal versions)
- Black and White colour versions
- Alternative Colour Versions
- Resizable Resolution
- CMYK colour (Printable Colours)
- 100% Vector (Quality)



2 Document Brand Guidelines

Once you've got all the branding elements together, it's time to document the brand guidelines in a style guide. The brand style guide will include a brand board that features visual elements like brand colours, fonts, logo, & alternative logos.



3 Design The Website

The website often gives the first impression of the brand, so it's important that the design aligns with the brand's visual identity while remaining accessible & paying attention to SEO.



CREATING A BRAND BOARD

Creating a brand board is an essential step in developing and maintaining a strong and consistent brand identity. A brand board is a visual representation that consolidates key elements of your brand into a single document. It can be very useful for the following reasons:

1. Consistency

A brand board helps maintain consistency across all your brand touchpoints, such as your website, social media, marketing materials, and packaging.



Consistency is crucial for building brand recognition & trust among your audience.

2. Clarity

It provides a clear and concise reference point for your brand elements, making it easier for you and your team to understand and adhere to the established brand guidelines. This includes elements such as logo usage, colour palette, typography, and imagery.

3. Communication

A brand board serves as a communication tool for your team, ensuring that everyone involved in brand-related activities understands and follows the same guidelines. This is particularly important in larger organizations where multiple individuals or departments may be responsible for different aspects of the brand.

4. Efficiency

Having a brand board streamlines the design and marketing process. Designers and marketers can reference the brand board to quickly create materials that align with the brand guidelines, saving time and effort.

5. Brand Personality

It helps convey the intended personality and values of our brand through visual and design elements. This ensures that your brand is perceived the way you want it to be and resonates with your target audience.

6. Adaptability

As your brand evolves, a brand board can be updated to reflect any changes in your visual identity. This ensures that your brand remains relevant and in tune with your business goals and market trends.

In the next pages, we will see examples to give you an idea of what you need.





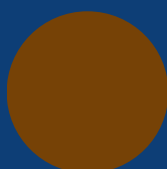
EXAMPLE BRAND BOARD 1: SEAFOOD RESTAURANT

Moodboard

Images of your brand's aesthetic, storefront, online store etc....



Color Palette



Font

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ



EXAMPLE BRAND BOARD 2: YOGA BRAND

Logo Variations:



Font Variations:

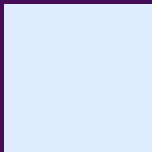
Headers: Public Sans

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii
Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr
Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0
! / - ; ? () . \$ % &

Body: Cardo

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii
Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr
Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0
! / - ; ? () . \$ % &

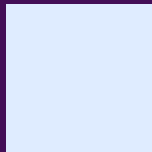
Brand Colors:



#F6E1E1



#FFF0C1



#F8C3AA



#222222

Mission:

To provide our clients with unmatched knowledge in the field of yoga, a decedant atmosphere to relax, learn and have fun.

Vision:

To be a pillar in the community for people of all backgrounds and ages for relaxation, spirituality and self-care.

Inspiration:





SECTION 5: BRANDING PALETTE

CHOOSING YOUR BRAND AND LOGO COLOURS

Colour is a major component of brand recognition. Ninety percent of a first impression comes from colour and over ninety percent of customers make decisions from only visual. The right colour could increase your brand's recognition and awareness by 80%.

Colours have a biological effect on our bodies and impact our emotions greatly. Colour psychology has been studied for decades and companies have perfected it for marketing purposes.

In the early 80's, the colour Baker-Millers pink was used in prisons in the United States to make the prisoners more relaxed and docile, after the biological effect of exposure to the light shade of pink was studied for 20 years. It was found to be extremely effective as suppressing aggression and word spread all over the world, so much that sports teams started painting their opponents dressing room in the shade of pink. This tactic was so effective that a number of sports teams eventually banned this practice.

Companies use colours to target signals to their customers, and often you'll find companies in shared industries share brand colours, because they are all following colour psychology.





BRANDING & COLOUR THEORY



Navy

Dark blue or navy signifies Security, Strength, Wisdom, Trust, Authority, Knowledge and Professionalism. Navy is therefore often used for Banking and Technology companies. Blue can sometimes feel cold and unfriendly.




Blue

Bright blue signifies Competence, Integrity, Friendly, High-Quality & Reliability. A lighter blue signifies Faith, Healing, Peace, Trust, Calm and Understanding. Often seen in Healthcare Industries and NGO's as well as IT. Blue suppresses appetite.




Green

Green represents Life, Growth, Health, Abundance, Safety and Nature. It's the colour of balance & helps people to relax. Green can be competitive & adventurous, but sometimes evokes envy. It is often used in branding for health & climate companies.




Yellow

Yellow symbolises Optimism, Extroversion, Warmth, Happiness and Innovation. Yellow is perceived as kid -friendly and when paired with appetising red, it is a popular choice for food companies.




Orange

Orange conveys Courage, Creativity, Fun, Confidence, Warmth and Energy. However, it can come across as immature. We widely see orange used in food brands and children's brands.





Red

Red signifies Power, Excitement, Fearlessness, Passion & Energy - it is the colour that increases appetite the most. This power makes it popular for strong international brands, especially in the food industry.



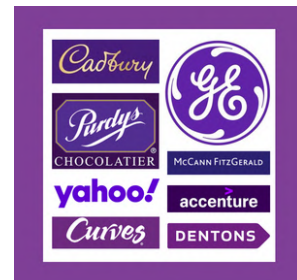
Pink

Pink exudes Fun, Flirtatious, Feminine and Childish vibes. It is a playful colour, with a hint of rebellion. If your company is seeking a youthful tone, pink is a great choice, but too much bright pink can be overwhelming.



Purple

Purple has long symbolised Superiority and Royalty, adorning royal families & the Vatican for centuries. It signifies Spirituality, Wisdom, Authority, Imagination, Sophistication & Wealth. It is the colour of choice for law firms, religious & health groups & even chocolatiers.



Grey

Grey is not many people's favourite colour, but it can be a popular choice for branding. It signifies Professionalism, Neutrality, Sophistication & Cleanliness. Companies use grey logos and branding to signify Exclusivity.



Black

Black is a staple colour and it is everywhere. On one hand, it shows Authority, Substance, Power, Sophistication and Elegance. On the other, people associate black with Evil, Oppression and Mourning. Companies use black in their logos to give a luxurious, sleek and refined feel.



White

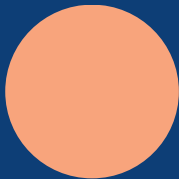
White is Clean and Simple - it is a blank canvas, symbolising Innocence, Purity and Pristineness. It can be very modern, but it can also be sterile, emotionless or boring. It is a great choice to combine with other colours. Very innovative companies have chosen to have a white logo.





LOGO BOARD EXAMPLE

COLOURS



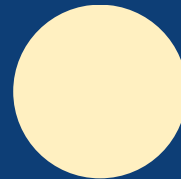
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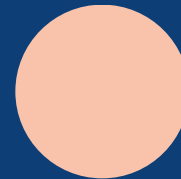
#FFB800



#FF9900



#FF6B00



#FF9100

FONTS

Font Name - Clear Sans

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

UVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

1234567890!@£\$%^&

Font Name - Arimo

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

UVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

1234567890!@£\$%^&

MOOD BOARD





SECTION 6: BUSINESS PLAN WORKBOOK

This workbook functions as a versatile tool tailored for the dynamic landscape of small businesses. This pre-structured document serves as a roadmap, guiding entrepreneurs through the intricacies of strategic planning and comprehensive business development.

Designed for time efficiency, the template streamlines the planning process, ensuring completeness by acting as a checklist for critical elements such as market analysis, financial projections, and operational strategies. Its customizable framework allows small business owners to tailor the plan to their unique industry, market, and goals.

With a focus on clarity of presentation, financial projections, and accessibility for non-experts, this user-friendly template becomes a powerful communication tool for articulating business vision to internal and external stakeholders alike.

As a facilitator of review and revision, the template adapts to the evolving nature of small businesses, making it an indispensable resource for creating and maintaining a well-rounded, dynamic business plan.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Executive Summary
2. Business Description
3. Market Analysis
4. Organisation and Management
5. Products/Services
6. Marketing and Sales Strategy
7. Funding
8. Financial Projections
9. Implementation Plan
10. Risk Management
11. Appendix



1. Executive Summary

This can be finalised once you've made the rest of the business plan, and the concept and goals may be clearer.

Overview of the business

Mission Statement

Business Concept



2. Business Description

Why are you setting up this business? What is your personal history and motivation behind this choice?

How will this business be structured? What is the legal form of the business?



What products/services does this business offer. Why are they of value?
What is the unique value proposition of the business?

Who are your suppliers?

What is your distribution channel?



3. Market Analysis

What is your brand? Describe the feelings, the colours and the experience.

Who is your target market? If it is broad, segment it. Use automation tools if necessary to learn more about market trends, customer needs and growth opportunities. How will you meet the needs of this audience?

What is your industry? Describe and identify your niche.



Who are your competitors? Write about the top four, and describe the differentiation between your business and theirs.

4. Organisation and Management

What is this business's organisational structure i.e. roles of key personnel, their qualifications and experience.

What licences to I need to operate?

Do I need planning? Insurance?



5. Products or Services

Provide a comprehensive description of your products or services. Highlight any unique features, benefits, or competitive advantages.

Operating Budget:

There are three steps to determine Operating Budget. This is used as a guideline to budget business expenses.

Sales and Gross Profit Equation:

Product/Service	
Sales (number sold x price)	
Minus Cost of Sales (Opening stock, material purchases minus closing stock)	
Difference is your Gross Profit	

**Overheads:**

Advertising	
Licences	
Insurance	
Education	
Rent	
Office Expenses	
Employee Wages	
Other (include asset depreciation)	

Now work out your Operating Budget:

Gross Profit	Calculation	Totals
Minus Overheads		
Minus Taxes		
Profit		



6. Marketing and Sales Strategy

What will your marketing approach be? Will you use paid or/and organic marketing? Will you utilise social media, radio, newspapers, email or influencers?

What is your budget for marketing? How much is marketing software per month? What is your pricing strategy? How much of the budget will be for software vs paid promotional content (PPC)?

Who will make the content? Will you make content yourself on Canva and/or through videos? What are your distribution channels?

What kind of promotions will you run? What sales forecasts can you predict from each campaign?



How will you track how well a campaign is doing? For example, try asking a customer how they heard about you, investing in tracking software, or comparing sales charts with timing of marketing campaigns.

Try out four campaigns at a time, use this table to organise and track your campaigns. Decide how long you want to trial each campaign, and after the trial, determine, using analytics and sales data, if it was successful enough to replicate, or should you try something else.

Campaign Description (Message, Content, Creation)	Distribution Channel	Budget: Paid/Organic	Conversion Projection Tracking techniques	Time Frame and Success of Campaign
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				



7. Funding

How are you funding your business? Are you using personal assets such as savings or your car as a capital and a company vehicle? Are you getting a business loan or do you have investors?

List your short and long term investments in the columns below. Specify the amount and the purpose of the funding. Outline how you plan to use the funds and provide a clear financial picture. Be sure to identify grants your business may avail of and the application process entailed.

Short Term Financing	Long Term Financing



8. Financial Projections

Create detailed financial projections for the next three to five years. This should include income statements, balance sheets, cash flow statements, and key financial ratios. If your business is already operational, provide historical financial data.

Income Statements are formatted as such:

Company Name	Year
Revenue	
(-) Expenses	
Net Income before Taxes	
Tax Rate	
(-) Income Tax Expense	
Net Income	

Cash Flow Statements have the following format:

Company Name, Cash Flow Statement, Year Ended	
Cash flow from operating activities	
Cash flow from investing and financing activities	
Net (De)/Increase in Cash	
Cash at beginning of year	
Cash at end of year	



Balance Sheets are formatted as such:

Company Name	Year
Assets	
Current Assets	
Cash	
Accounts Receivable	
Prepaid Expenses	
Inventory	
Property and Equipment	
Total Assets	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	
Accrued Expenses	
Unearned Revenue	
Long-term debt and liabilities	
Total Liabilities	
Shareholder's Equity	
Total Liabilities & Shareholder's Equity	
Summary	



Financial ratios are valuable tools for assessing the financial health and performance of a small business or startup. They provide insights into various aspects of the business, such as profitability, liquidity, solvency, and efficiency. Regularly monitoring and interpreting these ratios can help business owners make informed decisions and identify areas for improvement. Conduct some financial ratios monthly and keep the figures in your Appendix for data analysis in the future.

Profitability Ratios:

- **Gross Profit Margin:** $(\text{Gross Profit} / \text{Revenue}) \times 100$
 - Measures the percentage of revenue that exceeds the cost of goods sold. It indicates the efficiency of production and pricing strategy.
- **Net Profit Margin:** $(\text{Net Profit} / \text{Revenue}) \times 100$
 - Reflects the percentage of revenue that remains as profit after all expenses, including taxes and interest. A positive net profit margin indicates profitability.

Liquidity Ratios:

- **Current Ratio:** $\text{Current Assets} / \text{Current Liabilities}$
 - Assesses the ability of a business to cover its short-term obligations. A ratio above 1 indicates good liquidity.
- **Quick Ratio (Acid-Test Ratio):** $(\text{Current Assets} - \text{Inventory}) / \text{Current Liabilities}$
 - Similar to the current ratio but excludes inventory. It provides a more conservative measure of short-term liquidity.

Solvency Ratios:

- **Debt-to-Equity Ratio:** $\text{Total Debt} / \text{Shareholders' Equity}$
 - Measures the proportion of debt used to finance the business compared to equity. Lower ratios indicate lower financial risk.
- **Interest Coverage Ratio:** $\text{Earnings Before Interest and Taxes (EBIT)} / \text{Interest Expense}$
 - Assesses the ability of the business to cover interest payments on its debt. Higher ratios indicate better ability to meet interest obligations.

Efficiency Ratios:

- **Inventory Turnover:** $\text{Cost of Goods Sold} / \text{Average Inventory}$
 - Measures how many times inventory is sold and replaced over a period. Higher turnover ratios indicate efficient inventory management.



- **Accounts Receivable Turnover:** Revenue / Average Accounts Receivable
 - Assesses how quickly a business collects payments from customers. Higher turnover ratios indicate efficient receivables management.

Return on Investment (ROI) Ratios:

- **Return on Assets (ROA):** Net Profit / Average Total Assets
 - Measures the efficiency of asset utilisation in generating profits. A higher ROA indicates effective use of assets.
- **Return on Equity (ROE):** Net Profit / Average Shareholders' Equity
 - Assesses the profitability of the business in relation to shareholders' equity. Higher ROE indicates better returns for equity investors.

Operating Efficiency Ratios:

- **Operating Margin:** Operating Income / Revenue
 - Examines the proportion of revenue that contributes to operating income. Higher margins indicate efficiency in operating the business.
- **Fixed Asset Turnover:** Revenue / Average Fixed Assets
 - Measures the efficiency of utilising fixed assets (e.g., property, equipment) to generate revenue.

9. Implementation Plan

Detail the steps you'll take to implement your business plan. This can include milestones, timelines, and responsibilities. Note which tasks take priority.

What to do	How to do it	When to do it



Detail the steps you'll take to implement your business plan. This can include milestones, timelines, and responsibilities. Note which tasks take priority.

Month 1	Month 2	Month 3
Month 4	Month 5	Month 6

10. Risk Management

Identify potential risks that could impact your business and outline strategies for mitigating those risks. Your SWOT analysis might assist in this process. This is a contingency plan, include your insurance information, identify additional potential investment leads, viable suppliers, business locations & employees should anything go wrong in any area of your business.



SWOT Analysis: Identify your business's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This analysis helps you understand your internal and external environment and informs your strategic planning.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats

Appendix

Include any additional information, documents, or supporting materials that are relevant to your business plan. This could include resumes of members, market research data, your legal structure information, ownership documents, contract agreements, taxation information, financial calculations and other relevant documents.





LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE WATERFORD

Local Enterprise Office (LEO)
Waterford is your first stop shop for anyone looking to start, grow, or develop a business in Waterford.
Whether you're an entrepreneur with a new idea or an established business ready to scale, we're here to support your journey.

We offer a wide range of supports tailored to business needs, including:

- One-to-one **Mentoring** with experienced business advisors
- A year-round calendar of high quality **Training Programmes & Events**
- **Financial Grant Aid** to support start-ups & growing businesses

Our Productivity Support Programmes (**Lean**, **Green**, and **Digital for Business**) are designed to help you save time, money, and energy while making your business more competitive and sustainable.

Unlock up to €10,000 to invest in energy-saving measures with the **Energy Efficiency Grant**.

Access up to €5,000 to enhance your digital capabilities with the **Grow Digital Voucher**.

Whether you're just starting out or scaling up, LEO Waterford is here to help you take the next step.

Contact us today to see how we can support your business.



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Office

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