

BOOK REVIEW

SO YOU NEED TO WRITE A BUSINESS PLAN!

By Jerome S. Osteryoung & Denise L. Denslow
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In their book, *So You Need to Write a Business Plan*, Osteryoung and Denslow provide an exceptional approach to building an effective Business Plan. They make prospective entrepreneurs and small business managers aware of the requirements of an articulated and well developed Business Plan. Readers or users of this book are informed in the Foreward that there is nothing new in the form of contents in this book. The key issue is, this book is an indispensable resource, and provides valuable information.

In each of ten Chapters, the authors' primary purpose is to move entrepreneurs and small business managers to a new level of awareness of the requirements for the development of an effective Business Plan. This is very essential, since more than 600,000 new small business startups occur each year. Secondly, many of the startups are headed by individuals who have little or no business experience.

Chapter 1 lays the groundwork for the novice as well as the seasoned entrepreneur or small business manager. It answers the basic questions of who, what, why, and how as they pertain to a business plan. The abbreviated summary for this chapter can be used in an academic environment.

Chapter 2 encourages the involvement of employees in the overall process. Although it is not a chapter on communication, a high degree of communication is encouraged. This chapter makes use of marginal notes and provides an excellent Mission/Vision Statement Worksheet that can be used by the Small Business Owner/Manager and Employees.

Chapters 3 and 4 involve decision making. Chapter 3 provides information on the legal structure of a business. The owner/manager must decide the *WHAT* (type of organization- proprietorship, partnership, corporation, etc) and the *WHY* (why would one type of structure be more advantageous than another). Chapter 4 covers key actions or steps prior to writing a Business Plan. It provides detailed assessment of financial statements, and provides examples of a cash budget, balance sheet and income statement. In both of these chapters the authors do

an excellent job or providing comments in the margins and Worksheets that can be used by the preparer(s) of these documents.

Chapter 5 details what should be contained in the business plan. It provides examples of Table of Contents and information that should be covered under each heading. The Chapter Application recommends action that will enhance the preparation and contents of the business plan.

Chapter 6 gives a step-by-step approach to describing the business, its history, and the product and/or service that will be provided. Ten (10) key items to be included in this section, list of mistakes to avoid, and The Business Worksheet are provided.

Chapters 7, 8, and 9 are ideally grouped and cover essential information that will assist in meeting the financial requirements and actions of Chapter 10. Chapter 7 details the needs and requirements of a Marketing Plan. The importance of the marketing plan, identifying customers, meeting customer needs, trends in the industry, how to obtain market data, how and what strategies to apply, distribution, and other aspects of marketing. Chapter 8 continues this process by focusing on who is to carry out the functions of the organization. The Management Team, its importance and contributions to the success of the organization are covered by examples and information. Chapter 9 covers product and process. It provides a Production Worksheet that can be used to identify action that must be accomplished in the production process and who does each.

Chapter 10 gives explicit information on financial statements and documents that must be included in the business plan. It also makes the small business owner more aware of the need for a well developed financial plan; a plan that covers the present, but is also futuristic in nature.

Chapters 11, 12 and 13 cover those critical documents that frequently are over looked or given cursory effort. The authors have devoted a considerable amount of time in providing examples of Time Schedule for Start-up, Time Schedule for Operations, Critical Risk, Executive Summary, and Other Supporting Documents such as Resumes, Market charts, Financial Graphs, Timeline, Organizational Charts, and an example of a complete Business Plan.

This book is a very useful source or reference for prospective entrepreneur or small business manager. It fulfills the requirements in academe for teaching a section on Building a Business Plan in an Entrepreneurship and/or Small Business Management Course. It constitutes a must for certificate programs offered through Community Based Learning Programs and Vocational and Technical Schools.