

Introduction

The One Page Business Plan®

*Visionaries are
the keepers of the
dreams.*

*Entrepreneurs take
risks and make the
dreams real.*

*The community
nurtures
and supports
creative
businesses.*

Every business owner has a business plan. Meet a business owner at a party and most likely you will hear the majority of that plan within 30 minutes. Of course they will boast about their latest product success, and moan about employees, customers, and partner problems. If you listen, you'll also hear them freely describe their vision, objectives, strategies, and their plans.

Business plans don't have to be long to be good. A single page can contain all of the essential elements you need to tell your employees, board of directors, potential partners, or banker where you are taking your business and how you are going to get there. This book is going to show you how to do that.

The most important reason to have a business plan is to clarify your thinking, regardless of the size of your company. Is it possible to have too much clarity or focus? How much of your time and your business resources are wasted on projects that detract from your primary mission? What could you accomplish if everyone in your organisation really knew what you were trying to do? To have a business plan is to be clear about where you are taking your business. When you're clear, and it's in writing, others will know and understand your vision and how you plan to get there.

Extensive business plans are required by those people and organisations

who have money that you want. They have specific requirements that must be met or you will not get their money. This book is not about those business plans, but can greatly simplify their preparation. If you can get focused and clear on one page, you can then turn each short phrase into a paragraph, a full page, a chapter, etc. It is always easy to expand, it's much more difficult to focus and simplify. Mark Twain once said, "give me three weeks and I'll write you a short letter."

It doesn't have to take six months of agonising meetings, pounds of written documents, endless spreadsheets, and complicated flowcharts to produce a meaningful business plan. It also does not take an army of expensive consultants. A few well-constructed phrases and short sentences can say a lot. The examples in this book will demonstrate that for you.

You and your team know your business, inside and out. You know your industry — the major trends. You talk with your competitors and suppliers regularly. You read the newspaper, and trade journals, and maybe even surf the net a little. You also share your dreams with your close friends, associates, and family. You have everything you need to draft the plan in your head. You could draft it this morning and have a meaningful discussion with someone you trust this afternoon. If you want to bring in a

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consultant to help, great! Give them a copy of your draft and interview them. If they have valuable insights, hire them and have them help you refine it.

Business planning concepts are not difficult. You already understand all of them. You dream about your business, you set goals, and you work throughout the year in an organised manner to make it all happen. You probably would like to do it with less stress and better results. That’s why the concept of a one page plan sounds good to you.






Why must you have a written plan? You know where you are going. But without a written plan, it’s always subject to change. Every time you talk about it, it will be different. Put it in writing and everyone sees the same thing.

owner to commit to doing his or her plan at the same time. It’s kind of like going to the health club with a friend. Get a planning partner, commit to a process, and set some deadlines. Serve as coach and cheerleader to your planning partner. It works. I know because I got writer’s block when I attempted to write my own. A fellow entrepreneur gently but firmly guided and challenged me through the process. I did the same for him.

A business plan brings out the best and worst in most business professionals. It facilitates creative and analytical thinking, problem solving, communications, interfunctional sharing, and teamwork. It generates hope and enthusiasm about the future. It also brings out procrastination, frustration, differences of opinions, and possibly anger. It is not a benign process. But when done well, the process is very valuable and has its own sense of satisfaction. Your business will be stronger.

If writing a business plan still seems too big of a task, even after reading this book, get another business

The One Page Business Plan*

 vision	
 mission	
 objectives	
 strategies	
 plans	

Uses of The One Page Business Plan®

There are many uses for the One Page Business Plan®. Listed below are four categories with many different uses. This list is obviously not exhaustive but meant to give you an idea of some of its uses to date. Keep blank copies of the One Page Business Plan® handy. If you find yourself dreaming about a new product, service, business, or career, start taking notes. Capture your thoughts as they come.



External Presentation

- Complete business plan for small to mid-size companies
- Vehicle for testing business ideas with your board of directors, partners, banker, and employees
- Draft concept for Small Business Administration loan or venture capital funding business plan
- Summarises existing plan



Inspiration and Motivation

- Tool to get back on track if you've lost your vision
- Career planning



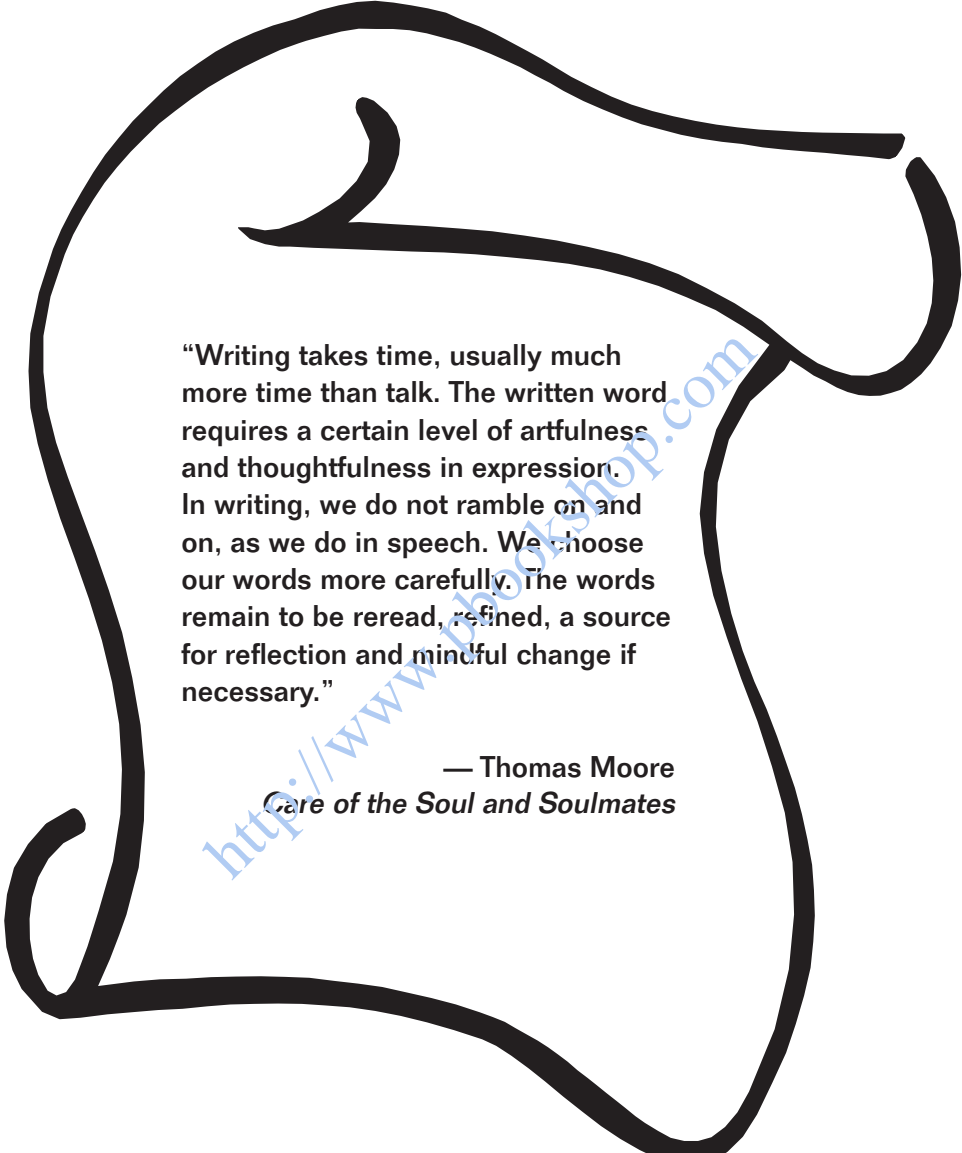
Research and Development

- Place to summarise ideas for new division or new business
- Quick sketch and fleshing out of idea for new product or service
- Process for planning major projects



Internal Process Guide

- Complete business plan for small to mid-size companies
- Business plan for subsidiaries or divisions of larger corporations
- Functional or departmental planning tool (sales, marketing, finance, etc.)
- Strategic planning starting point for CEOs in larger corporations
- Methodology to quickly update annual plan for significant mid-year changes
- Summarises existing plan



“Writing takes time, usually much more time than talk. The written word requires a certain level of artfulness and thoughtfulness in expression. In writing, we do not ramble on and on, as we do in speech. We choose our words more carefully. The words remain to be reread, refined, a source for reflection and mindful change if necessary.”

— Thomas Moore
Care of the Soul and Soulmates

The Power and Magic of Writing

There is magic in the written word! Especially when they're your words about an idea that you have been thinking and talking about for some-time. Somehow the process of writing initiates the transformation from idea to reality. It also does many other wonderful things.

Things get clearer when you write. Of course at first the process can feel very awkward, and the results seem poor and anything but clear. But given time and patience, the process results in a connection of the mind with the reality of the paper. Thoughts begin to develop into images. Images turn into key words and short phrases. An outline begins to emerge, and the clarity builds.

If you stick with your writing, you also get focused. In the beginning, you'll have many ideas, more than you can ever implement. But the process of capturing them on paper results in a conscious and unconscious ranking and prioritisation. I believe it is important to capture as many of your thoughts regarding your product, service, or business as possible without critiquing them. The natural process of writing will keep the best and strongest of your ideas. Your vision and mission will become more concise through this evolutionary process, resulting in a focused approach.

Writing allows others to participate in your dream and give you feedback. Writing provides a consistent forum, whereas in conversation the context changes each time you speak. Allowing others to participate and help support your idea to its next step is crucial to your overall success. The lone ranger mentality is no longer necessary nor effective.

The written word also produces a contract with yourself that results in immediate action. Haven't you found that if you make up a grocery list and leave it at home you almost always remember everything on the list? Many users of The One Page Business Plan® report that as soon as they begin to write their action items — some of which they have been thinking about for years — they start to take action on them. I think it's magic!

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1. Architects visualise the details of a new building and produce a simple sketch to see how it might look.



2. Songwriters mentally hear a new melody and then test it out on a piano to see how it will sound.



3. Movie producers imagine the setting of their next picture and produce storyboards to help them produce a more complete image of their story.



Modelling the New Idea

“...business owners need a way to test their ideas without having to put their cash or business at high risk.”

Architects, songwriters, movie producers, and inventors make models in some shape or form so they can see their ideas in a more visual, concrete manner. This process is one of the early steps that makes an idea something real and tangible. Models are a technique to help with the visualisation of ideas.

As creators of businesses, we need a methodology for exploring our business ideas. It's too difficult, expensive, and nonproductive to produce working models or samples for every potential idea that comes our way. Market research is also very expensive and is generally reserved for our very best ideas. Complicated products with long lead times, requiring expensive raw materials and manufacturing facilities, obviously cannot be produced and tested like a new melody on the piano. And yet business owners need a way to test their ideas without having to put their cash or business at high risk.

Most individuals in business check out their ideas in conversation with trusted associates, consultants, friends, and relatives. But conversation is fluid, flexible, and frequently informal. Also we may not deliver the

same message and details to everyone; hence the response we receive may be affected by the way we presented our thoughts. A melody played from written music will sound similar regardless of the piano it's played on. Unfortunately the spoken word is subject to much greater ambiguity when delivered.

Business people do, however, have the written word to describe their thoughts and ideas. The written word allows the sharing of our ideas with others in a consistent, clear fashion. The business plan is, in effect, our modelling tool. It provides the sketch, the vision, the road map for our ideas. In many ways, it's just like the composer's first few chords; the musician gets to hear it and so do others. The business plan works the same way. You get to see your ideas in writing and so do others.

INTERVIEW



EXERCISE

↪ Ask your planning partner or a fellow business owner to interview you with the questions below. Tape the session so both of you can take notes from the recorder afterwards. Then write each person's notes below. ⌚ 30 minutes

Describe your business. Where are you going with it? What will it look like in five years?

What market need will your company's product or service fulfill? Why are you in this business? What's your passion?

What would you like to celebrate this year? What would you like to celebrate this time, next year?

What has made your business successful to date? What will make your business successful over time?

What business-building projects are on your to-do list? What have you been procrastinating on that you know would make a difference in your business?



Why The One Page Business Plan[®] Works

Business plans don't have to be complex and cumbersome. The One Page Business Plan[®] is meant to be simple and to help you get focused quickly.

Simplicity

The One Page Business Plan[®] is effective because it takes a complex subject and makes it simple. It's easy to read and understand. If you are the writer, you will know when you are finished because you have effectively covered all of the important elements of your business plan.

Focus

The One Page Business Plan[®] works because it focuses on what's important. There is no room for fluff or filler. The use of key words and short phrases tells your reader that only the essence is being presented for review. The fact that this business plan is only one page communicates that the investment in reading is limited.

Readily Understandable

The five elements of the One Page Business Plan[®] are readily understandable. As you read each section, the business plan element telegraphs the kind of information being presented. You know the vision statement is going to be expansive and idealistic. You expect the mission statement to be powerful and customer oriented. Objectives should be realistic and measurable. Strategies are well thought out, and plans are action oriented.

Versatility

The One Page Business Plan[®] works because it's a tool for communication. If you are the owner of a business,

this one page document can be an important tool for communicating to your existing or prospective employees, partners, shareholders, investors, or banker the kind of company you are building and how you plan to build it.

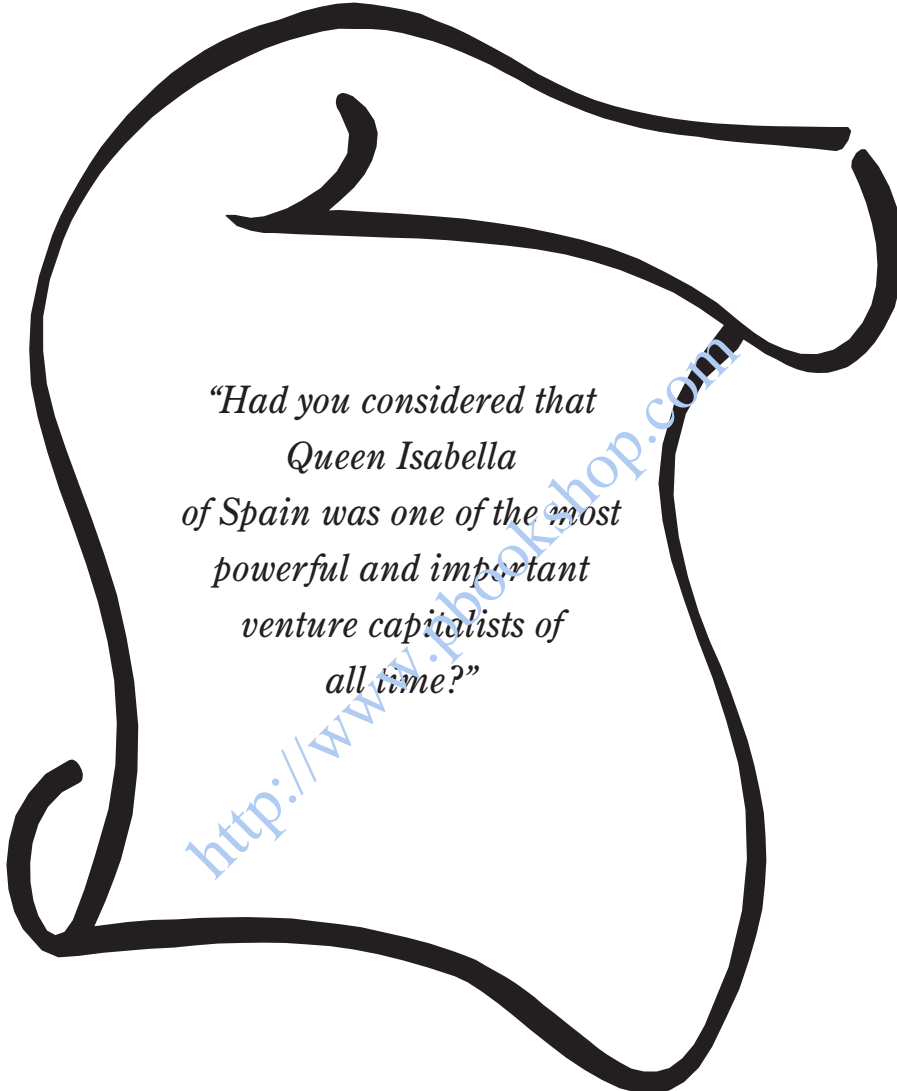
Consistency

It's an effective communication tool because you send the same message to every person you give it to — unlike the spoken word, which may change every time you speak. Additionally, with the written word, you have chosen your words carefully and you are communicating only the most important elements of your business plan.

Flexibility

The One Page Business Plan[®] works because it's easy to change and update with your latest thinking. An important thought in the morning can be in your plan that afternoon. Capturing those "moments of clarity" quickly and in a useful manner will preserve them for further review, consideration, and possible action.

So what's the benefit of having a One Page Plan? It's your plan, your ideas, in your words. It's a reference point for any significant business or financial decision you may be considering. It's simple, concise, and it's you. Bankers, investors, and potential partners can have a complete overview of your business at a glance. Attach your budget and you're ready for a meaningful discussion about your business.



*“Had you considered that
Queen Isabella
of Spain was one of the most
powerful and important
venture capitalists of
all time?”*

<http://www.bookshop.com>

Building a Business Is a Journey...

The business plan is your map!

Building a business is a journey, it always has been. Marco Polo, Christopher Columbus, and Ferdinand Magellan were all great adventurers who took extended journeys. These journeys were explorations into the unknown parts of the world seeking new lands, exotic spices, fame, and fortune. These explorers were also businessmen and many of them had venture capitalists. Had you considered that Queen Isabella of Spain was one of the most powerful and important venture capitalists of all time?

Great journeys start with a vision. The vision is the dream. It describes what the journey is about and what you hope to find or create. Columbus's vision was to reach the Indies by sailing west.

All great journeys also have a mission. The mission describes the purpose for the trip. Columbus wanted to prove the world was round. Queen Isabella's mission was different. She wanted the riches and the power that conquering the new lands would bring.

Journeys have specific goals or objectives that drive certain behaviour. John F. Kennedy wanted to have a man on the moon by the end of the 1960s. This goal focused many people's energy into specific actions to achieve

this deadline. That's the purpose of a well-defined objective; it produces meaningful action.

Strategies set the direction. They are the road signs. They help to keep you on target so that you ultimately achieve your destination. Great strategies remain constant over the entire journey; Columbus kept heading west and it worked! Establish clear strategies for building and growing your business and stick to them.

Successful journeys have a plan. The plan details the important actions that must be taken to make the venture a success.

Wherever you are, today is the starting point. Develop a business plan that guides the building of your business. Use your business plan as a map to keep you on track to your destination.