

The Company - Outline

- 1) Name and location
- 2) Company objectives
 - a) Purpose of the plan
 - b) Mission statement
 - c) Advertising slogan
 - d) Goals
 - e) Objectives

Goal:				
Who responsible	Activity	Time Frame	Measurement	Sign-off
Objective 1:				
Objective 2:				

- 3) Industry Trends
 - a) Industry background/ trends
 - b) Nature of your business - what you really sell
 - c) Brief description of product or service
- 4) Company history and Legal Form
 - a) Existing business or new business?
 - b) If an existing business - Company
 - c) Legal Form

The Company

1) **Name and location**

List the name of the business, with current or projected location information.

2) **Company objectives**

a) **Purpose of the plan** - Who is the audience for this plan? How will they use it? What's In It For Me (WIIFM) - How will you use this planning process and plan?

b) **Mission statement** - What is important to you? Where is your focus relative to:

- Stakeholders
- Customers
- Employees
- Society

Begin by writing bullet points for each of the above. Then combine them into one or a few sentences. There are varying opinions about how long the mission statement should be - some emphatically state that it should be no more than six to eight words, while others say that a good paragraph or two are acceptable. Use your own judgement - for what can concisely convey your business essence.

Your mission statement should clearly identify the focus of your organization and the values upon which it is based.

- c) **Advertising slogan** - The advertising slogan should be about six to ten words, at the maximum. It may be comical, witty, easy to remember, and spark the need for your product or service. If you mention a company name to a three-year-old, and she/he finishes by singing or saying the marketing slogan of that company - you've got an effective slogan. It should not only relate to the essence (or mission) of your firm, but should also cause your targeted audience to put your firm "first in mind" when contemplating the purchase of your type of product or service. The idea is to create within your target customer segments the conscious or subconscious long-term connection to your slogan - create the "household name" that pops into your customers' minds when they think of the need for your type of product or service.
- d) **Goals** - Develop your goals relative to your mission statement. Project goals for 3-5 years out. Make them measurable in terms of what, specifically, you strive to accomplish. Goals should be written in terms of what you wish to have accomplished by a certain date, perhaps three to five years into the future. For example, a corporate goal for a start up might be "To have achieved an average sales growth of 50% per year for the next three years." Goal statements should support your company mission.
- e) **Objectives** - Develop your objectives relative to your goals. Project out from 1 to 3 years. Make them measurable in terms of who is responsible, the activity to be completed, the time frame, how you will measure success, and how you will evidence completion. Objectives are subsets of the goals you identified earlier, and should relate to specific goals. For example, relative to the goal "To have achieved an average sales growth of 50% per year for the next three years", you might develop several objectives. An examples might be: "I (owner) will identify

the customer segment trends, in terms of volume and profitability, by creating monthly reports on customer segment sales levels and profit contribution, and analyzing those reports in January and July of each year, as evidenced by the completion of a "Best Segment Marketing Analysis Report." This objective would require the completion of a new report called the "Best Segment Marketing Analysis Report", which would assist the firm to make progress toward its long-term goal of sales growth. The table that follows may prove to be useful during the process of articulating objectives for each goal, for example:

Goal: Average sales growth of 50%/year				
Who responsible	Activity	Time Frame	Measurement	Sign-off
Objective 1: Complete customer segment reports				
Owner (I)	Identify customer segment trends, in terms of sales volume and profit contribution	Monthly	Reports on customer segment sales levels and profit contribution	
Objective 2: Analyze customer segment reports				
Owner (I)	Identify marketing program modifications appropriate to customer segment sales trend reports.	January and July	Complete the "Best Segment Marketing Analysis Report"	

Goal:				
Who responsible	Activity	Time Frame	Measurement	Sign-off
Objective 1:				
Objective 2:				

3) *Industry trends*

- a) **Industry background/ trends** - Look into trends and the general context of the industry in which you operate. Some things to look at are:
- how many competitors exist
 - relative size of competitors
 - industry in growth or decline
 - anticipated future of the industry

One of the best ways to get information for this section is to talk to people in your industry. Talk to everyone you can - the more people the broader will be your scope. You can talk to indirect competitors - companies that conduct a similar business, but, perhaps, geared toward a different audience. You also may talk to

suppliers to your industry - often times the sales representatives that sell to your industry are a wealth of information. Most of the time, good vendors can supply you with strong indicators of current trends within your industry. During your quest for information, you may find a mentor - a person whom you can trust, bounce ideas off, and learn from. Mentors often surface from the most unlikely sources. As a business owner, it is to our advantage to talk to as many people as we can, about questions we have, ideas we have, and trends in the marketplace. That person in the elevator, or on the airplane (sitting next to you) may be your next supplier, customer, information source, or mentor.

- b) **Nature of your business - what you really sell** - What are you REALLY selling - think in terms of your marketing slogan for match. Example - I sell high-fashion and image NOT just expensive purses.
- c) **Brief description of product or service** - Describe briefly your product or service. This should take 1-2 sentences.

4) *Company history and Legal Form*

- a) **Existing business or new business?**
- b) **If an existing business - Company Background** - If applicable, please write 1-2 paragraphs briefly describing the company background. How many years in business? Profitable? Number of owners?
- c) **Legal Form** - Which legal form is being utilized? Sole proprietorship, Partnership, Limited Liability Company, or Corporation? - Please see comparison chart and specify the type chosen.

Comparisons of Forms of Business Ownership

	Sole Proprietorship	General Partnership	Limited Liability Company	C Corporation	S Corporation
Creation	Easy to do, may need permit/license	Need a partnership agreement	Need articles of organization	Need articles of Incorporation and bylaws	Need articles of Incorporation and restrictive bylaws
Transferability	Can be sold	All Partners must agree	Can't sell stock	Sale of Stock	Sale of Stock
Capital Access	Bankability and credit of owner	Bankability, capital and credit of owners	Bankability, capital and credit of owners	Access to Debt and Equity Capital	Access to Debt and Equity Capital
Liability	Unlimited liability	Unlimited liability	Limited liability	Limited liability	Limited liability
Taxation	Business income taxed as personal	Business income taxed as personal	Business income taxed as personal	Corporate, double taxation	Business income taxed as personal
Continuance of business	Termination or Owner death	Partner death or withdrawal	Partner death or withdrawal	Perpetual	Perpetual
Termination Difficulty	Easy	May be hard	May be hard	Expensive and Hard	Expensive and Hard
Employee Perspective	Limited growth, glass ceiling, fewer benefits, lower wages	Limited growth, but possibility of joining the partnership	May offer growth, but typically lower wages and fewer benefits	Better growth opportunities, more benefits and higher wages	Better growth opportunities, more benefits and higher wages