

Gift Basket Business Development Series
From Gift Basket Network

Construct Your Business with a One-page Business Plan



Joyce Reid

The One Page Business Plan

Only you know yourself and your business so ONLY You can create a viable, useful business plan for your company. No one else can do it for you!

The One-Page Business Plan isn't for everyone. But with simple, easy to use methods becoming the norm, many entrepreneurs have turned to one page business plans in order to get their businesses off the ground faster instead of opting for a detailed and time consuming approach.

Even for existing businesses, it is a simple way to look at where you are now, where you want to go, and what it will take to get there.

In case you have any doubts, here are the advantages of a one page business plan:

- Since your ideas are changing all of the time, it's easy to update
- It provides clarity to whoever is reading it as important information sticks out
- It's a good way to generate interest around a business concept
- It will assist you with your pitch when trying to share your ideas with others
- It offers a more affordable approach to product testing and development
- With the plan having very specific goals you can create a straight forward strategy around each of them
- It eliminates the need to find an excuse not to plan and grow.

If after reading this, you decide that you need or want a more elaborate business plan, you can easily create one for yourself. It will take longer to create than the one page plan but will cover everything in much more detail. You may decide to go that route after looking at the basics with a simple plan. Or this one-page plan concept may be all you need.

So let's get started . . .



Is a Good Four Letter Word

Introducing the One-Page Business Plan

For over 30 years, I have worked with small business owners in my local community through the County Small Business Empowerment Program and with businesses nationwide with SCORE, as well as consulting with many of you on the phone and through email. Some of them have been service businesses while others are selling products including gift baskets and other gift related products. Ninety percent of them have never created any plan for their business and, yet, every single one of them was struggling in one way or another in their business.

Many of them were having trouble attracting enough customers either to their local business or online if they were an internet business. They struggled with how to successfully sell their products, and create a consistent flow of income.

For the few that were achieving some level of success, they were often doing it at the expense of their health, happiness or their personal relationships.

They were working harder than they needed to because they had no plan.

Running a successful business without a plan is a lot like trying to build a house without first pouring the foundation. Just imagine that you hired a contractor to build a new house for you. You decided on the blueprints for your beautiful home, got the permits, and agreed that the contractor would start building.

The trucks start arriving at the building site and start unloading all kinds of supplies – lumber, siding, plumbing pipes, etc. And the crew starts building.

But there is just one problem.

They start framing directly on the ground.
There's no foundation.

How long is this house going to last?



When the strong winds that are so prevalent in your area arrive, the house is going to start shifting. The rains will soften the ground and the framing will begin sinking. The flooring will warp, crack, and pull away from the framing.

Within a year or two, the house will be so unlivable that it will have to be abandoned.

Of course, you would never build a house without a foundation. So, tell me, why would you attempt to build a business without first building a strong foundation?

Sure, lots of people do it. Many pride themselves on the fact that they never wasted their time on creating a plan. And just as many fail.

That is simply because if you don't have a foundation in place, just like the house, your business is likely to crumble like a house of cards.

What about those people who did build a business without a foundation and are still around? How did they do it? Can't I get to where I want to go by just taking it one day and one step at a time?

You can. There are those who have. But chances are that you'll get sidetracked or lost along the way. You'll have to circle back and spend more time making repairs that wouldn't have been necessary if you had built a strong foundation.

Sure, creating a foundation in the form of a business plan, takes time and research. And you have to make some decisions that can be hard to make. But it can eliminate the anxiety, stress, and feeling of being overwhelmed when unanticipated things come up.

You may be thinking that just the thought of creating a plan is overwhelming. I've heard that many times from those that I have counseled and helped. But it doesn't have to be.

The primary reason most businesses don't create that foundation is that they consider it too daunting a task. Which is why I'm a big advocate of the one-page business plan that I am going to share with you.

If you're reading this, you probably already have a business in place and are feeling pulled in all directions. No business can tackle dozens of goals in a single year. It takes time to grow a business which is why it's better to identify a small number of goals and build a plan around accomplishing them.

Even if you have only a handful of goals, you can't tackle them all at once. You need to prioritize them and then tackle them one or two at a time. Most business owners tend

to focus on either the part of the business that is giving them the most trouble or the part they enjoy the most. As a result, they tend to ignore the other important parts of the business.

Let's simplify the process by breaking it down into SIX simple steps.

Step # 1—Begin Your Construction With The End In Mind

Before you begin building a house, you usually know what it is going to look like when it's finished. If you don't, you could end up with doors in the wrong place, and bedrooms built too far from the bathrooms. Creating and growing a business works the same way.

You need to decide “what you want to be when you grow up.” Resist the temptation to try to provide something for everyone. Dabbling in this market and that market will simply mean that you aren't reaching any market very well. What is your business model or what do you want it to be? Do you want to concentrate on corporate or consumer? Internet or local? Streamline your business by making these decisions first and the rest will be so much easier.

Of course you can dream about the future and where you would like your business to be ten years from now or when it finally ends. What do you want to accomplish financially as well as in your personal life?

And here is the best question: What would you dare to dream if you knew you could not fail?

But for the purpose of streamlining your business and creating the foundation, let's look at where you want to be at the end of this year.

Recommended Action: Decide where you want to be at the end of this year but dream about where you would like to be five or ten years from now, and where you want to end your business.

Step #2 – Determine Where You Are Right Now

In order to successfully get to where you want to go, you need to know where you are right now. You may be just beginning your business or have been around for a number of years. Unless you've already reached your destination and are ready to retire, it's not too late to create that foundation.

Recommended Action: Put the past behind you and write down exactly where you are now in the process of building your business.

Step #3 – Break Your Plan Down into Manageable Steps

A carpenter knows what steps to take when building a room. You need to develop a series of simple action steps that you can take to get you from where you are now to where you want to go. I'm not going to ask you to list all the steps to get to where you want to be when you end your business. But list six steps that you need to take to get where you want to be at the end of this year. Keep them simple. Once you have the steps, you can later take each step and list what you need to do to take that step. You want a minimal number of action steps. You might have grand plans but start small and grow.

Recommended Action: Think about, and write down, what you think you need to do to either start or grow your business. Break it down into simple steps.

Step #4 – Identify the Resources Needed To Make the Journey

A builder can tell you how much lumber you will need, how many pounds of nails, and how much the carpeting you choose is going to cost so that you can plan ahead and

make sure you have enough money to complete the house. In the plan for your business, you need to take the time to determine what resources you are going to need to get to your destination.

Recommended Action: Write down everything you can think of that you will need to achieve your goals and how much each item is going to cost.

Step #5 – Focus on The Next Right Step

Your builder doesn't bring all the supplies in at once and just pile them up and turn all the sub-contractors loose at once. You would be so overwhelmed that you would just give up and forget building the house. He starts with the foundation, adds the framing, the siding and roofing, and on and on, one step at a time. When you drive out and look at the progress being made on your new home, you can see exactly what has been done and what the next steps will be.

This is important for you to remember. Don't let the list of steps you need to take overwhelm you. Instead, focus only on the next step that you need to take. This single practice will help you achieve your goals faster and with less stress.

Recommended Action: Look at the your list of steps and determine which is the first one you need to take. Begin it now.

Step #6 – If You Take a Detour, Recalculate Your Journey

Sometimes when you build a house, you suddenly decide you'd like to add a closet here or change a door there. Or perhaps something comes up that was unexpected that you need to take care of before proceeding on the next step of the building process.

Whatever detour you make, your building contractor can recalculate the time and cost based on where you are at that moment in time.

The same is true of your business journey. Business is only one part of your life. In real life, priorities change, problems arise, crisis happens. There will be times when you need to make additions or deletions to your plan. If you change your goals, you will need to make a change in your plan and recalculate the steps you need to take to get there.

Recommended Action: Give yourself permission to consider your business journey as part of your life journey and to make changes as needed.

That's the six basic steps.

I could, of course, give you a detailed outline of a business plan depending on what you will be using it for. If applying for a loan, an extensive plan is required. If you're really serious about knowing exactly where you are going, who your competition is and how you are going to compete, you would want a much longer plan.

Even creating a simple plan for your marketing, which I highly recommend, will create a big advantage for you. A marketing calendar is easy to create and will guide you each month on steps you need to be taking.

But if you are one of those who are resistant to taking the time to create a detailed plan, at least lay the foundation for the rest of your business life with these six simple steps. The remainder of the journey will be much less rocky.

But making the plan isn't enough. When you narrow down where you are and where you want to go and create the minimal action steps to get there, you absolutely must **STICK TO IT**. Sure, there may be detours and things that come up that may slow you down.

But don't quit! The reason that 95% of those who fail is simply that they didn't stick to it.

Seriously, that's what failure is. It's doing nothing. It's quitting.

Questions: Email me at giftbasketnetwork@gmail.com

Joyce Reid