

Business Plan Template

Your business plan will need to cover the following topics:

Executive summary

This is a summary of the entire plan and is usually contained at the start of the document. It should be completed at the very end of the planning process and, if you can, try to find a 'wow factor' that will entice the audience to sit up and take notice.

Customer need

How have the needs of your community in relation to your community co-operative (eg a local shop, pub, café, etc) been met in the past? How are they being met currently? How will they be met in the future?

Competition

Where is your competition? Who is your competition? What opportunities and threats do they present for you?

Work done to date

Show the work you have done so far. For example this might include questionnaires, public meetings, research into premises, fact finding and discussions with third parties such, for example the Post Office and local councils.

Proposed scheme

You will need to cover this in as much detail as you can. It will need to include:

- What it means to be a community co-operative shop/pub/café/etc
- Premises/where you will be located (eg current pub building)
- Product groups or services to be offered (eg Post Office services if you are a shop, hot food if you're a pub, etc)
- Target market and how the business will be marketed
- Opening hours/hours of trade

Staffing

How will your business operate? Will you make use of volunteers?

Profitability objectives

What happens to any profits made? Are they reinvested in the business? Are they returned to the community once the business needs have been met? If so, what is the mechanism for this? Do you expect the business to eventually pay off all loans? If not, how will they be paid?

Financial data

Your financial data will be scrutinised in some detail and therefore you need to ensure that the figures provided are as robust as possible. Costs should be documented in full and assumptions clearly shown. Sales predictions should be both conservative and realistic. Whilst the costs should be fairly predictable, the sales predictions are going to be much more subjective. Figures from the business that is closing may be helpful (if applicable), bearing in mind that your community co-operative may be different to the old business, and this will have an impact on sales. You would normally be expected to provide figures for a 3-5 year period.

Set up costs and funding for set up

You will need to detail the costs of setting up the business and show how these costs will be funded. You will probably need to show actual funds secured plus potential funding sources being investigated.

Other schemes being considered – and why rejected

This section illustrates that you have considered a number of options and are clear that the one you have selected has the most chance of success.

Qualifications of the management team

This section is important and needs to give confidence to the reader that the team is professional and competent to run this project. It should highlight the skills of the committee members and give details of any staff (if known).

Independent review

Finally, once you have completed your plan, have it independently reviewed by someone who can offer constructive criticism. This may be someone from within the community who has the necessary experience but has not been involved in the nitty gritty of the scheme. Or you could contact your local Business Link office who should be able to provide a suitable adviser for you.

And remember...

- Keep it simple
- Stick to facts and figures
- Provide evidence

Any questions?

If you have further questions please don't hesitate to contact us – we're always happy to hear from you.

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