

**SMALL BUSINESS CENTER NETWORK**  
North Carolina Community College System

# **BUSINESS PLANNING GUIDE**



**Your Partner for Business Success!**

# **What is the SBCN?**

The Small Business Center Network, comprised of 58 Small Business Centers throughout North Carolina, supports the development of new business and the growth of existing businesses by being a community-based provider of training, counseling and resource information. A Small Business Center is located at your nearby community college.

## **The Mission of the SBCN**

The objective of the Small Business Center Network (SBCN) is to increase the success rate and the number of viable small businesses in North Carolina by providing high quality, readily accessible assistance to prospective and existing small business owners and their employees. Each Small Business Center (SBC) is a community-based provider of education and training, counseling, information and referral.

## **The Vision**

The vision of the North Carolina Small Business Center Network is to foster and support entrepreneurship, small business training and economic development in local communities.

## **Business Seminars and Workshops**

Small Business Centers offer a wide variety of seminars, workshops and courses to help businesses be successful and they can design specific training for individual business needs.

## **Confidential Business Counseling**

Small Business Centers provide free, confidential counseling services for new and existing businesses. Available on an as needed basis, this free, confidential service acts as a sounding board for ideas and concerns you may have about your business. Our professional staff will help you find solutions to your challenging business questions. No question is too simple or complicated.

## **SBCN Resource Centers**

Each Small Business Center has a library of professional resources waiting to be tapped. Printed materials including books, pamphlets, magazines, trade journals, as well as, a wide variety of tapes and videos are available for your use. Some Centers offer business-related software, teleconferencing and access to the Internet.

## **The Cost of SBCN Services**

Confidential counseling services and access to resource libraries are free of charge. Some seminars and workshops require a minimal registration fee.

# Why You Need A Business Plan

For any business, the first step is to turn the would-be owner's basic idea into a written viable plan of action. Every business begins with an idea for either a product to be manufactured or sold, or a service. This idea must be transformed from a vision to a working plan.

Your business plan must first, convince you that your business will work "on paper". It can then be used to convince others that it will work. With it, you can apply for a loan and the plan can subsequently serve as a road map for your business success. The goals you set in this plan will serve as a model for performance. Your neat, well prepared business plan should show that you are a professional; any one who reads it will know that you will succeed!

## **I. Executive Summary**

In this section give a brief overview of the entire operation and the service or product to be sold. Identify your market, the management structure and a brief synopsis of planned operations. Summarize your overall financial projection; be brief and concise. This paragraph will set the tone for your entire project.

## **II. Business Description**

In this part of your plan you should describe the history of this business as it relates to the general industry. You should include short term and long range goals and strategies for achieving those goals.

1. What is the history of your business?
2. Describe the type of industry in general.
3. What are the outlook and projections for your business?
4. State your goals and strategies for achieving them.
5. Is this business risky? How would you reduce the risk?
6. How will your business succeed in its particular setting?

## **III. Product or Service**

Describe your product or service in terms that an "outsider" can understand. Include the uses and uniqueness of the product or service.

1. What exactly is your product or service?
2. What market niche will it fill?
3. How does this product or service differ from others currently available?
4. Does your product or service meet patent laws and licensing laws and does it meet state and local regulations?
5. Why will your customers buy your product or service?

#### **IV. Marketing Plan**

**Describe how you plan to market your product or service. Talk about how you plan to advertise. What will your public relations strategy be? Include information about competitive pricing and your sales plan. Provide sales forecasts for several years.**

- 1. Who are your potential customers – include names and locations.**
- 2. How will you tap into the current market?**
- 3. Explain your sales strategy – sales force and distributors.**
- 4. How do you plan to advertise; discuss your advertising budget.**
- 5. Identify the market niche you intend to capture and how you plan to do that!**

#### **V. Marketing Research and Analysis**

**In this section of the plan, you will describe the general state of the industry you are entering, any trends in the industry and what the future potential of the industry is. You will also identify and describe your target market and analyze the competition.**

- 1. What geographic market will you serve? Tell why you chose a particular location.**
- 2. Who will you sell your products and services to? Provide a profile of your targeted customer.**
- 3. Who are your competitors? Detail the differences between their products and services and yours. What are their strengths and weaknesses?**
- 4. What portion of the market share does each competitor hold?**
- 5. Describe your competitive advantage. How will you differentiate your products/services, in order to remain competitive? (price, quality, range of products and services, innovativeness etc.)**
- 6. Estimate what portion of the market share you can obtain.**

#### **VI. Operational Plan**

**In this part of the plan, include the total operational details for your business.**

- 1. Will you purchase products for resale, purchase parts and assemble, manufacture? Define your general manufacturing operations, including the processes used to create your products and/or services.**
- 2. Create a list of raw materials sources/ inventory sources. Provide a list of vendors and suppliers.**
- 3. Describe what special equipment will be needed, what it will cost and where it will be obtained.**
- 4. Will you operate in your home, leased space or will you purchase a building? Detail the costs involved.**
- 5. How will you maintain and provide security for your equipment and facility?**
- 6. Describe your plan for staffing your business, including how many employees will be needed and how they will be recruited and selected. How will you train new employees? What will it cost to pay employee wages and fringe benefits?**
- 7. Describe your policies for extending and receiving credit?**
- 8. What warranties will be extended? What are your sales and service policies?**

## **VII. Management Plan**

**In this section describe the legal structure of the business and who will lead and manage the business.**

- 1. Will you operate as a sole proprietor, partnership, and corporation?**
- 2. Who are the owners and managers? What relevant experience do they bring to the business? Provide resumes for key leaders and managers**
- 3. How will owners and managers be compensated?**
- 4. Provide an organizational chart for your business.**
- 5. Have you selected a team of professional advisors, attorney, CPA, lender?**
- 6. Who will handle the bookkeeping and tax preparation?**

## **VIII. Financial Plan**

**In this section of the plan you will provide financial documents to support your plan and provide a realistic picture of the financial future of your business. Include a summary of the funds needed to start the business, sources and uses of funds, payment terms and collateral available to secure the loan.**

- 1. Provide a list of start-up expenses for the business.**
- 2. Provide personal financial statements of the owners.**
- 3. Include a statement of the Sources of Capital**
- 4. Provide Sales Projections for three years.**
- 5. Provide projected cash flow statements for three years.**
- 6. Provide projected profit and loss statements for three years.**
- 7. Provide an "opening day" balance sheet.**

## **IX. Appendix**

**The appendix will include any supporting documents for your business plan.**

- 1. Resumes**
- 2. Lease agreement**
- 3. Store or plant layout**
- 4. Capital Equipment list**
- 5. Maps showing business location and market information**
- 6. Photos of products, equipment, etc.**
- 7. Supporting charts and graphs**
- 8. Relevant articles to support industry trends**
- 9. Legal agreements such as patents, trademarks, copyrights, license to manufacture, etc.**

## **SMALL BUSINESS CENTERS in North Carolina**

Alamance Community College  
Asheville-Buncombe Technical  
Community College  
Beaufort County Community College  
Bladen Community College  
Blue Ridge Community College  
Brunswick Community College  
Caldwell Community College  
Cape Fear Community College  
Carteret Community College  
Catawba Valley Community College  
Central Carolina Community College  
Central Piedmont Community College  
Cleveland Community College  
Coastal Carolina Community College  
College of the Albemarle  
Craven Community College  
Davidson Community College  
Durham Technical Community College  
Edgecombe Community College  
Fayetteville Technical Community  
College  
Forsyth Technical Community College  
Gaston College  
Guilford Technical Community College  
Halifax Community College  
Haywood Community College  
Isothermal Community College  
James Sprunt Community College  
Johnston Community College

Lenoir Community College  
Martin Community College  
Mayland Community College  
McDowell Community College  
Mitchell Community College  
Montgomery Community College  
Nash Community College  
Pamlico Community College  
Piedmont Community College  
Pitt Community College  
Randolph Community College  
Richmond Community College  
Roanoke-Chowan Community College  
Robeson Community College  
Rockingham Community College  
Rowan-Cabarrus Community College  
Sampson Community College  
Sandhills Community College  
Southeastern Community College  
South Piedmont Community College  
Southwestern Community College  
Stanly Community College  
Surry Community College  
Tri-County Community College  
Vance-Granville Community College  
Wake Technical Community College  
Wayne Community College  
Western Piedmont Community College  
Wilkes Community College  
Wilson Community College

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**[www.sbcn.nc.gov](http://www.sbcn.nc.gov)**