



**STARTING A BUSINESS ??**

**MARKETING ??**

# The Small Business Planner

**EMPLOYEES ??**

**FINANCE ??**

**WEB SITES??**

**The Complete Guide  
to Small Business Success!**

**OPERATIONS ??**

**by Lawrence Wilson**

Lawrence Wilson

## THE SMALL BUSINESS PLANNER

Publisher: 6809995 Canada Inc.  
Baysville, ON. Canada.  
[www.consultbiz.net](http://www.consultbiz.net)

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The Small Business Planner  
Electronic version first publication: April 2008  
ISBN: 978-0-9809795-0-3

On file with Library and Archives Canada  
1. Table of Contents, 2. Introduction.

Cover photos courtesy IMSI

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## INTRODUCTION

Statistics don't lie and they all point to one conclusion – a majority of small businesses fail within the first five years. Of the businesses that do make it over this hurdle, many just get by and don't realize their full potential in growth or revenue for the owner(s). The big question here is - why? There may be several reasons why so many small businesses struggle and / or go under. Before we analyze the reasons, let's take a look at the basic business structure for a moment. All businesses – large or small – have three main modules that interact. *Marketing* is covered in section two of this book, *Finance* in section three and *Operations* in section four. The strategies and action planning techniques discussed are based on North American business models, however most of these concepts will work in almost any country in the world, as do the finance checks and balances. You will be introduced to a new *Marketing Planning Process* model that I developed to help people understand the importance of *First Things First* in creating an action plan. I will also be sharing a number of my own experiences from personal business dealings and those of others that I have witnessed as a consultant, instructor and mentor of new entrepreneurs.

The first section, ***Starting a New Business***, provides the budding entrepreneur with a list of the numerous tasks that must be addressed when starting a new enterprise. What it takes to be successful, conducting a feasibility study, building your team of professionals, legal and accounting considerations, along with business name and style are only a few of the many related topics discussed in detail. Included with the book are all the files you need to start you on your way. These include a *Profit & Loss, Cash Flow and Start-Up Cost* work sheet in *Microsoft Excel 97–2003*, all customizable and complete with formulas. (See page 131 for a complete list.)

The second section of the book covers the ***Marketing Module***. Finance deals with managing money properly for business growth and longevity. However, if you don't make sales, there is nothing to manage and that is where a sound marketing strategy comes in. Since this is an area where many small business owners fail miserably, it will be dealt with first. The most common reason for business failure next to poor financial management occurs in the development, or lack of development, of an effective marketing plan. It is common for new and even seasoned entrepreneurs to let their guard down when it comes to understanding customer's needs and positioning their offerings effectively against the competition. Assuming or thinking you know your customer just doesn't cut it in today's competitive markets which means you must do your homework and plan properly. Developing the *marketing message* without proper planning almost always results in wasted advertising dollars and inadequate sales.

The *Marketing* section of this book starts off describing the *Ten Most Common Marketing Mistakes*. It introduces the reader to the *Marketing Planning Process* model, and then goes into detail on the proper methods to develop a strategy that will position your company to make money. This is followed by chapters that cover the development and delivery of an action plan to make it work, including an in depth discussion of advertising tips and sales skills that many business owners will need. Templates are included for a *Marketing Plan* in *MSWord 97–2003* format; along with a *Media Plan* and *Sales Call Sheets* in *Microsoft Excel 97-2003 file format*.

The third section details the **Finance Module** which includes some of the most important functions in a business. Finance, in a basic sense, is simply about managing money, and failure to practice sound financial management is the most common and quickest way to create a business failure. When it comes to business finances, just like household finances, income or revenue, must over time exceed expenses or the result eventually is bankruptcy. There must also be a way of measuring this in-flow and out-flow of money, and in businesses, the bookkeeping system does this to ensure compliance with government regulations. In addition, a good set of books and the timely reports they create provide management with a clear indicator of the company's financial health. This allows the initiation of appropriate controls if necessary to maintain profitability and growth. Extending credit comes with risks and this subject is covered in depth. This book includes templates for a *Business Plan* in *MSWord 97–2003* that is pre-formatted (requires the *Marketing Plan* insert – also included); a *Profit & Loss and Variance Analysis* work sheet in *Microsoft Excel 97–2003* that is customizable and complete with formulas.

The final section of the book discusses the **Operations Module**, which covers, as it describes, operational processes such as: facility; IT (Information Technology); supply; production; shipping and warehousing logistics; management; personnel; research and development; and contingency planning. The chapters in this section will help entrepreneurs avoid making costly mistakes when it comes to developing effective websites, employee relations, and contingency planning.

There is a tremendous amount of information available on the Internet. Due to the fact that web site addresses are constantly changing, very few were included as resources in this book. It is suggested that the reader conduct a search of their own on any given topic on their favorite engine and a multitude of resources should be available.

If one idea from this book can help you to increase revenue or save money by avoiding common mistakes and pitfalls, then I have accomplished my goal. There is nothing more gratifying than operating a successful small business. This book should be of tremendous benefit to a new entrepreneur, many of whom jump into the turbulent world of business without testing the water or seeking outside professional advice. The seasoned business owner will also find this book of benefit as a reminder to keep pace with the rapidly changing business environment. Remember, there are only two criteria that must be satisfied for you to be a successful entrepreneur. First, you must love what you are doing and have a passion for it; and second, you must be able to pay yourself and make a profit.

**THE ONLY BOOK YOU WILL NEED TO START AND OPERATE  
A PROFITABLE SMALL BUSINESS**