

Step One in Business Plan Development - Determine Scope of Work

We complete business plans and assist in capital access as well for experienced business owners as well as entrepreneurs that are new to operating a business. The extreme diversity of those that contact us, let alone send draft business plans, is as varied as a thesis from a PhD from MIT who graduated with honors to someone who doesn't even know what school is.

Approximately one in three people that approach us ask for a price for completing their business plan without volunteering any information about the proposed or existing business. If we were like the many former unemployed writers or bankers who claim to be business plan experts but use templates and price based on the same volume of writing within that template, we would provide a flat price regardless of what the prospective client's goals might be, what their related background might be, how much research is needed and more to have the best opportunity for a client's success. However, our clients' success is very important to us and we don't want work that doesn't have a reasonable opportunity for that success.

We don't tell you just what you want to hear either like so many others, but will advise openly and without sugar coating based on our understanding of SBA, SBA Express, Bank, VC and Angel expectations for a wide range of businesses. The economy is recovering but it is a slow process. Some regions are doing better than others. Some types of businesses are doing better or great, like solar which is booming in many states and good in others. Some types of businesses are recession proof, like a restaurant that knows their composition, have well thought out marketing strategies and quality food with relative value. Most others aren't that straight forward and take some discussion to determine the best options and content in a business plan to achieve reasonable goals, i.e. "scope of work."

Recently I tried to explain the term scope of work to a business neophyte, but she responded after two requests with one sentence as to the scope of work of a business plan that needed to be drafted. I admit that I laughed. Do people think you'll get funding no matter your background? That obtaining capital and hence components of the business to the right target audience will not be influenced by how much they have invested in the business? What are historical sales if not a start up? By a great market analysis that compares competition in detail versus little more than a list? These questions (and answers) and more depending on the business determine the scope of work of a business plan and therefore the research and content needed to support and affirm the business plan purpose, typically raising capital. This information would be critical to investors and would shape the amount of work needed by the consultant for research and time and, therefore, determine the appropriate price for a plan that may accomplish goals in 10-12 pages or 50 plus pages.

Be wary of those that quote one flat price for everything! The result will be a template with tons of useless information, let alone insufficient or sometimes even excess information just to fill in the blanks versus a custom plan that attracted capital so much more often. When we receive plans from other "experts" complete that results in a smoothie shop business plan looking like a plan for intellectual property or vice versa, like two received from clients looking to fix business plans done by other consultants, then something is very wrong.

Our company offers a free consultation tim@thebusinessplanconsultants.net on business plans and that starts with a series of questions in a form or phone interview to determine the scope of work to achieve viable goals.

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