

Using Your Completed Business Plan

Many businesses and organizations spend hours, days and months preparing a business plan. And then, it goes directly into a file drawer or a notebook, along with the author's great intentions of using it.

Let's think of the business plan as a roadmap and consider this analogy. Pretend for a moment you want to take a trip. The place you are going is not somewhere you have ever been, nor has anyone around you. No one can explain really how to get there; they just know that if you arrive successfully, it will be wonderful.

You have a choice to make. Choice one is to take time at the beginning to research and analyze the trip. You can search for some of the best routes to take before you begin driving. With that research you can determine how much food or water you might need before you get there, and how much gas the car will require. You can also pinpoint the best places to rest along the way so that everyone with you won't be too exhausted once you arrive.

Choice two is to throw everyone in the car; fill it up with as much fuel and supplies as you have and drive. There is a sense of adventure in this choice, but chances are as you travel you will begin to see the benefits that a little planning would provide. Perhaps you will not have a great place to rest along the way, or the appropriate food or water to enjoy. You might even discover you have gone many miles out of your way, using too much fuel.

The point is, think of the plan you are about to create as a roadmap. Allow it to guide you through the process of thinking about your CTC, how it relates to the overall organization, what resources it requires, what benefits it can bring participants and how to achieve its mission. By the time you have completed the document you will have answered these questions and much more.

These answers can save you in the long run from going out of your way, from using too many resources on unnecessary things and from getting totally lost in the direction you want to go.

A business plan must be used, sometimes daily, to keep everyone on track. If you spend time creating it upfront, and follow what you create, you can achieve the goals you set and successfully arrive at that wonderful place, where the Mission is fulfilled. If you spend time creating the plan and file it away, then you have spent time and money on a trip that may or may not work out.

Business plans are tools to be used internally as guide posts and compasses, but they can also be used externally. Externally they can be shared with current or potential funders to

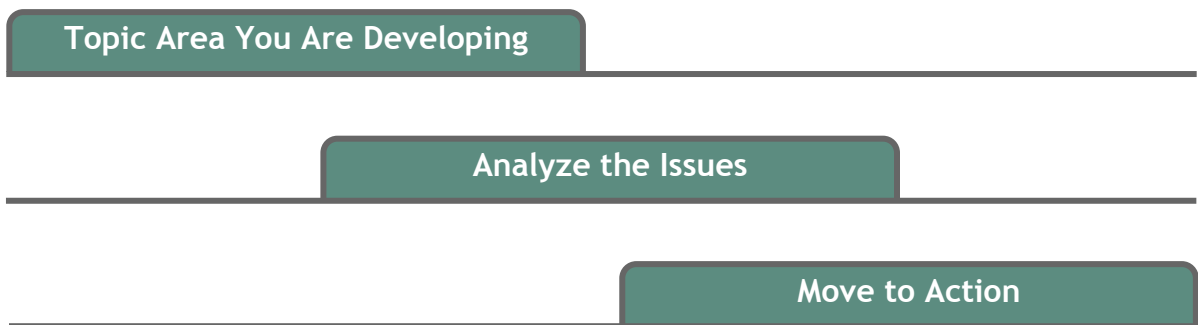
assist them in understanding what you are trying to achieve and what is required to achieve it.

If you have banking relationships, bankers appreciate a good business plan because it shows them you have given thought to what you are attempting to achieve. Bankers like to know how many miles it is from point A to Z and what resources you intend to use to get you there.


A good business plan is an excellent tool to provide a consistent approach to the goals you are trying to achieve. As you continue moving through this curriculum you will be asked to consider many questions. The questions are intended to spark thought about what you will encounter along the pathway as you build your CTC.

Think of the time used to complete your business plan document as an opportunity to craft a first class CTC. Even if you don't hit all the goals, at least the intention will be set to take the most positive trip you can.

You will be guided through the process by tabs (see examples below). The left cut tab indicates the topic area you are creating, the center cut tab provides questions and time for analysis and the right cut tab moves you to action to write that portion of the plan.



In addition to these tabs you will occasionally see icons or boxes such as these:



BullsEye

The BullsEye icon indicates a tip or tool for your consideration as you think through your plan.

Best Practice:

The Best Practices box provides insights into industry standards or ways to organize your tools that have proven to be successful for others.