

# project::business plan

## Group Project—Business Plan Development

### Assignment ::

In groups of three, create a business plan for a new design firm that you will be starting. This is a formal, professional document—it should be written and designed for an audience of business leaders, lenders, and potential clients (aka: non-designers). Your group will write and design a printable business plan, and (informally) share it with the class. However, the target audience for this document are investors and potential clients.

### Why Create a Business Plan ::

- You have to want to succeed as a business; not just get paid for designing/creating.
- Gives focus by setting goals — it's surprising how helpful this actually is.
- Careful planning leads to increased efficiency and productivity.
- Ensures that all members of a team are on the same page.
- Prepares you for unforeseen circumstances.

### Components ::

Your business plan should contain (at a minimum) the following components:

#### 1. Cover page

- Name of business
- Group member names
- Presentation material name/type (i.e., “Business Plan” or similar)
- Presentation date
- Other information you feel is important

#### 2. Summary Statement

Otherwise known as a mission statement, this is an overview of your business. Make this section clear enough that someone who knows nothing about our field will be able to tell what you do.

- Describe your business philosophy or values, i.e., “...quality work at a reasonable price”, etc.
- What will your business focus on? Be more specific than “Graphic design” or “Social media”.
- Who/what is your market?
- Connect your services to your client’s needs—how does what you do help them?
- What types of clients will you pursue?

#### 3. Business Structure & Practices

Detail your business’s organization, services and markets. The topics you should address include:

- Services provided—more than just a bulleted list.
- Your market—who are you targeting?
- Principals (who you are with short bios; headshots are a nice addition)
- Company organization and facilities (office location)
- What does the competition look like?
- Sales activity—how will you market yourself?

#### 4. Business Goals

- What kinds of clients do you want?
- What types of projects will you be going after?
- Where do you want to be after the first year? Five years? Ten years? Don't just say "we want to grow big" — not every company should become big. Give serious thought as to what your life might be like in five years, and how you want work to fit into that vision.
- What type of work/life balance do you want to create for your employees? For the owners?
- What would be your wildest dreams come true for this company – no restrictions?
- How would you like your company to be perceived in the community?
- What is your projected yearly gross and net income?

#### 5. Estimated Start-up Costs (*upcoming group exercise*)

- This component will be assigned as part of Exercise in a future class.
- It will NOT be graded as part of this project. However, it must be included in the back of your Business Plan.
- Include it as part of both the printed brief and the PDF file.

#### Hints & Tips ::

- In terms of content length, Sections 2, 3 and 4 should be at least about five-to-seven paragraphs in length. One of the biggest causes of low grades on this project is not providing (or not inventing) enough information or demonstrating new and original thought in the plans. Be thoughtful in your writing and show the thought that went into your plan.
- Try to be realistic. Stretch a little so that your goals are really goals but try to picture what would actually happen if you were to set out on this venture tomorrow. What do you need? What resources do you have now that you could/could not use?
- What would you want to see happen with your business? What is your vision?
- Your writing should be complete, professional, clear, concise, and free of errors. Only use bullet points where appropriate — a narrative is a better way to communicate with the intended audience. Find the right voice and stick with it.
- The full grading rubric can be found by viewing the project assignment on Canvas. This will tell you exactly what I will be looking for when evaluating your project.

#### Dates & Deliverables ::

At the beginning of class on **Tuesday, April 15th, 2025** (Week 03), the following items are due:

- A **printed-in-color, professionally bound copy** of your business plan to turn in. I don't recommend double siding the color prints. Make it look and feel good—use quality paper and binding.
- Stapled, **black-and-white copies** for each group in the class plus one for the instructor (7 copies). Please double-side these prints to save paper.
- A **High-Quality PDF** of your plan, uploaded to **Canvas** using one of the group member's accounts (grades and feedback will be visible to all members of the group).
- Be prepared to informally present and discuss your plan during class.

This group project is worth 100 points.

# group worksheet

**Members and contact info ::**

**Proposed times and places of meetings ::**

**Responsibilities ::**

**Company name ideas ::**