|  |
| --- |
| [Company Name] |
| [Year] Annual Business Plan |
| [Subhead if you need one] |

|  |
| --- |
| [Pick the date] |

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**Before You Start**:

The overall length and detail of this document will depend on the reason it’s being written. Is it going to be used as a roadmap for growth, or to pique the interest of an investor? If you’re writing this for a startup, it’s probably the later. Know your audience before you start writing. It changes everything you’re about to do.

**Section Headings:**

Start each section on a new page. For sections that run multiple pages, copy and paste section heading so that it appears at the top of each page within that section.

**Writing Style Tip:**

Keep in mind that this is a business plan, not a sales document. (Even if it’s being written to secure financing!) Don’t over sell, or over hype.

**Section Length**:

Sections will vary in length. Your executive summary shouldn’t be more than a page or two. Hence the word “summary.” Your marketing and sales strategy may be much longer.

**TIPS ON HOW TO WRITE YOUR PLAN**: For tutorials and videos go to: [How to Write a Business Plan](http://workingforwonka.com/business-plan-for-startups/).

**Executive Summary**

1. Company description
2. Current position in market
3. Financial highlights
4. Major accomplishments to date
5. Future milestones critical to success
6. If seeking funding, uses of loans

**Business Description**

1. Legal Structure (ex: LLC, S-Corp)
2. Founders background (ex: successes, why uniquely suited for this venture)
3. Brief industry snapshot (ex: growing)
4. Brief product description (ex: what is it, what industry)
5. Company vision (ex: long term goal)
6. Partners (ex: key management bios, exclusive vendors or customers)

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**Details**

This is where your plan will really vary depending on why you’re writing it. These two sections should contain more detail if the document is being written as a roadmap for the company.

**Marketing Strategy**

Don’t fall into the marketing fluff trap. Lots of startups fill this section with events, promotions and flashy gimmicks that will never get executed. If your financials don’t reflect a budget to back these tactics, you’re wasting your time, and not fooling your potential investors.

A well-thought out, low cost (or clever guerilla) marketing plan will be far more impressive.

**Finding this challenging?**

Writing a business plan can be tough. In particular if you’ve got a fast approaching deadline.

Try watching the Working for Wonka [How to Write a Business Plan for Startups videos](http://workingforwonka.com/business-plan-for-startups/) for some inspiration. There’s a video tutorial for each section of your plan, and they’re all less than ten minutes long.

**Product or Service Description**

1. Product description
2. Product functionality (ex: trademarks/patents, barriers for competition)
3. Benefits (ex: to end user, to customer or retailer)
4. Product manufacturing (ex: development cycle, line extensions)

**4. Marketing & Sales Summary**

1. Target market demographics
2. Brand positioning
3. Market overview (ex: total size, trends, key competitor & customers)
4. Product market share (ex: revenue, by retailer or category)
5. Sales forecasts (ex: by category, customer, product line)
6. Marketing tactics

**Financials**

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**Rubber, Meet Road**

This, the driest section, is the heart of your plan. It shows what it costs, how you’re getting it done, and whether you can afford to be playing in this sandbox.

Don’t over exaggerate your financial projections. They should match up with your market analysis. Did you just project sales that are bigger than the existing market? That might work if you’re bringing significant innovation into your category (think iPad), or you’re creating a category (think Redbull), but this is rare. More likely you are stealing share from an existing competitor, and possibly growing an established category by small increments.

**Finding this challenging?**

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1. Profit and loss statement
2. Balance sheet
3. Cash flow projection
4. Financial projections (3 years)
5. Loan and vendor term details

**Operations**

1. Manufacturing details (ex: where, how)
2. Distribution details (ex: route to market)
3. Key vendors
4. Organizational chart
5. Key management bios

**Appendix**

Add any extra information; existing sales data (IRI, Nielsen), marketing programs, vendor or bank contracts, to back earlier claims.