The Two Page / 30 Minute Business Plan

By Tony Novak, CPA, MBA, MT, www.tonynovak.com

Almost everyone agrees that a written business plan is an important tool for success. Yet too many small business owners put off the project because of the complexity of the planning process. Online tools or business plan templates can be useful but often involve some type of fee or require purchase of a related service so this might undermine their usefulness.

What if you could complete a business plan free of charge in about 30 minutes? This business plan template is meant simply as a free and easy tool that can be completed in about half an hour. Just add a few sentences to each of the functional planning categories numbered 1 through 7. Revisit and refine your plan from time to time later as you accumulate new business experience. That's it! You'll be well on your way to enjoying the benefits of a solid written business plan.

1. Customer Problem / Your Solution

What will you sell?

Who will buy it?

How will your product help people?

2. Business Model

What will you charge?

How will you get paid?

How else will you make money from this project?

3. Target Market

Who is your customer?

How many of them are there?

What is your competitive advantage? Why will a customer choose you over a competitor?

4. Marketing and Sales

How will customers hear of your business?

How can you encourage referrals?

5. Management Team

Who will carry out these key activities?

6. Financial Summary

How will you manage when the business is a success?

What level of sales revenue?

What number of customers?

7. Potential Obstacles

What potential obstacles or challenges do you anticipate?

What funding is required?