

Additional Tips for Preparing this Section

The following general tips may help as you progress through this component:

1. Be Clear and Thorough

If you will be using your business plan to help secure funding or partnerships, the Business Idea section of the Business Plan is your first opportunity to communicate a complete vision of your business to the reader. Use it well. Financial services professionals cannot be experts in every industry; this may be the first time they've seen an idea for a business such as yours. What is obvious to you, may not be obvious to them, so explain yourself accordingly.

Tip: To receive the best reception, your idea should be written without jargon or any assumption that the reader already understands what your business or industry is about.

2. Explain Don't Sell

Related to the tip above, the business plan is the place to explain your idea to the reader with clarity. It should demonstrate your expertise in your market but not be written in "salesy" speak. This is not the place to "sell" your idea, it is the place to explain it clearly. Your business plan isn't a "Dragon's Den" submission.

Tip: The business plan is a professional business document used to explain and justify your business idea, it is not a sales pitch and should not be full of marketing copy.

3. Let Your Idea Drive Your Plan

Your business idea is your introduction to your business, but more than that, from a structural point of view, this first section should lead the reader into the remaining sections of the plan. It is the "set up" section, and what follows should be a *logical extension of that idea*. It should be written in enough detail that the conclusions you have come to in those later sections make sense in the context of the first. Otherwise, the later sections will feel disjointed or plain nonsensical.

Tip: Ensure the business idea section includes all the key information which adequately explains your business. The rest of the document can then be built on this introduction. For example, don't suddenly list expenses for a service or product in section 4 – the Financial Plan – which you haven't mentioned up front. Or, don't discuss a major client base in your marketing plan which you have not identified as a target in your Business Idea.

4. Establish Your Expertise

This section should prove that you know your market, your customers, and your industry extremely well. It should also prove you have thought long and hard about your products and services and have done the research to back up your numbers in the financial section of the plan. The representative from the financial institution looking at your plan wants to see **proof of your assertions**—they won't just take your word for it.

Tip: Establish your expertise by proving your knowledge and experience. Spend time digging into your market in order to find the evidence that proves the viability of your product/service; then demonstrate the research you have done. Look at your competition, the demographics/psychographics of your market, the state of your industry, etc.

5. Don't Clutter Your Plan

Related to tip number 4, it is important to establish your expertise for the person assessing your business plan, and include the research you have done. However, support your research with references or summary statements only, not long sections cut and pasted from websites into the body of the text or included as numerous Appendices. It is distracting.

*Tip: Summarise key information in the text (plus an attribution like a website URL so the reader can look it up for themselves), and/or provide more as an appendix **only if you feel it adds real value to the document.***
