

The Simple Business Plan (SimBPI™) is the most powerful small business tool on this planet! *By Margaret Wyn, Coaching Plus*

Small business owners are doers, not planners, they have a great idea, they are entrepreneurial, they are intelligent and they are turned off by templated software and business planning manuals. If the above describes you, the SimBPI™ is for you!

Life is too short for complicated plans. However, if you are going into business, you need to make sure you do plan. Sure you do need to have a business plan, but I have found so many people turned off by the concept of putting together a plan, that they don't get around to it. The answer? Make it easy and fun and it will get done! To make the whole process palatable, I recommend you have two parts to your plan – Part One deals with the outline of what, why, when, where and how to some extent. Part Two deals with the How of Marketing – taking your product or service to the market.

How SimBPI™ works

The three simple steps to building a business plan that works!

Step 1 Get rid of your ego

Sit down and ask yourself why you want to do this business – what's in it for you. If you cover this off at an early stage, you can avoid a lot of pain down the track.

"Why do I want to do this business – what's in it for me?" The reason behind this is that sometimes we head off into a business venture without really understanding what it is that is motivating us to do it – this is time to be brutally honest with yourself.

- Does it feed your ego?
- Is it to please or impress someone?
- Is it simply to make money to enable you to buy a lifestyle?
- Is it to keep the wolf from the door?
- Is it to escape from a mundane existence doing something else?
- Is it because you want to grow personally?
- Is this for a future investment?
- Is it for the short-term
- Do I want to build up an asset I can sell later?
- Is it to be a primary source of income or secondary?
- Do you really want to do this?
- Have I really got the finance and time to put into this?

Your answer doesn't matter – what does matter is that you understand the answer the WIIFM question – what's in it for me. If you are very clear as to what your expectations from the business are at the outset, you are more likely to have a successful experience!

Step 2 Get writing – Part One

Try to fit your plan onto one A4 size sheet of paper. I deliberately limit most planning to one page – the rationale behind this is that a good plan needs to be clear and simple. The discipline of using fewer words focuses your thinking. If you write screeds of information and forget the core aspects of the business, you have missed the point! Your plan might look impressive, but does it really communicate your business plan? Your plan is a plan not a research of feasibility document.

You might like to do a mind-map, with the headings suggested or if you are very systematic and like tables, set up a table. The most important thing is that you do some planning. It is not what it looks like. However, if you will be going along to a bank for a loan, it is prudent to prepare your business plan in a relatively conventional format.

Here is a simple one-page format to work to: Under each heading, answer the following questions:

Business Plan

Business Name - What will you call your business?	
Vision – What do you hope your business will become	
Core solution – what is the purpose of the business - what problem are you solving or people?	
Customers – who are your customers – where do they live, work, what is their age, sex, education, income	
Competitors – who competes in the same market as you? What are their strengths or weaknesses?	
SWOT What are your strengths (Your unique selling points – the thing that make your different to others doing the same business What are your weaknesses – e.g. skills, finance, Opportunities – where is there a gap in the market that you are planning to fill – your niche? Threats – What might stand in your way? What can you plan for to prevent this?	Strengths: Weaknesses: Opportunities: Threats
Financials – what do you want to get from the business financially – what sales will you need. What will your pricing structure be?	Income \$ Sales\$ Expenses \$ Set-up costs\$ Pricing\$
Structure – list your accountant, banker, lawyer, coach/mentor, professional or trade memberships, Time commitments (i.e. part-time, seasonal, fulltime) Staff/Associates	Accountant: Lawyer Banker: Coach/Mentor: Professional Membership: Staff/Associates: Distributor:
Resources – list what the business will require of you in terms of initial investment, time commitment, (have you got the time to work this business?) Will you need expert	

knowledge, manufacturing support, distribution support?	
Milestones – What are yours significant milestones – i.e. where would you like to be by when	Milestone: Date Milestone: Date: Milestone: Date:

Step 3 – Get writing – Part Two

Use a separate sheet to complete this – list the 6 P's of marketing down the left hand side of the page – Positioning, Packaging, Pricing, Promotion, Persuasion, and Performance.

Marketing Plan

Positioning – Why would your prospects want to do business with you? How does your service solve a particular problem or add value? What qualities do you want to be known by?	
Packaging – What do you want your image to portray? What will your marketing material comprise?	
Pricing – What image do you want to send through your pricing? What will the market pay for your product?	
Promotion – How will you promote the products? I.e. networking, newsletters, cold calling, advertising, referrals?	
Persuasion – What process will you establish to persuade people they need your product? Is this consistent with where you wish to position your business?	
Performance – How will you plan for your marketing action steps? How will you keep track of prospects and leads? How will you keep track of your clients - Do you want to build repeat business – if so, how will you build client loyalty?	

Step 4 – Action Points

Now that you have sorted your ideas out and have a clearer picture of where you are going, you need to put things together into an action plan.

Here is a simple action plan format which is completed on a monthly basis.

Your BUSINESS Name

Monthly Action-planning schedule

Month: _____

Activity	Target Date	✓ Achieved ● Underway ○ Deferred	Successes/notes/extra activities
Week 1			
Week 2			
Week 3			
Week 4			

"The most productive planning is about becoming more human, it's about sitting on the edge of the mountain on the way up, not going forward nor going backward, to savor the intensely sweet joy of the moment." Gerber, Michael

About the Author:

Margaret Wyn is a Master Coach with 15 years coaching and mentoring experience, working under her company, Coaching Plus. She is also Principal of the NZ School of Coaching Ltd, training people who wish to become coaches or Leaders who wish to use coaching as a way of managing their people. She is open to dialogue and warmly invites comments and suggestions about her articles, modules and material. She also invites you to use this article to benefit yourself and others, but asks that you respect her name as author and that you retain these details if using information from the article. She can be contacted at 064 09 410 3766 or margaret.wyn@coachingplus.co.nz