

# BUSINESS PLAN

**WHY HAVE A BUSINESS PLAN?** A business plan is useful for strengthening commitment to an organisation's mission and values. It allows the group to examine finance, budgeting, staffing, objectives, etc. It is becoming more usual for funders to ask for a business plan before considering a grant application.

**WHAT IS A BUSINESS PLAN?** A business plan is a complete description of an organisation and its plans for the next 1 to 5 years.

## WHAT DOES A BUSINESS PLAN CONTAIN?

**Summary** This should briefly describe the organisation and highlight its main aims.

**Service** This describes the organisation's work. Says what the advantages of your service are, what needs it meets and what its unique features are.

**The Market** This gives an estimate of demand and who the target customers are. If there is an existing organisation in the area already doing similar work say why a new one is needed and how you have discussed co-operating

**Operation** State where the organisation is located. Describe the premises and other assets it has or will need. Outline staffing needs (including volunteers).

**Management** Explain the strengths of the people involved and how any apparent weaknesses will be overcome. Also give brief details about any staff employed.

**Finances** Provide current financial information including budgets and historical information. Give forecasts including cashflow, income and expenditure and balance sheet projections. Give details about how much funding you need, when and from what source.

**Environmental** Consider all environmental issues that may affect the group, e.g. paper usage and recycling and energy efficiency.

## HOW LONG SHOULD THE PLAN BE?

The plan should be concise no more than 8-10 pages with extra information as appendices. Good presentation can make a big difference but does not mean it has to be an expensive glossy document. Don't forget the cover page with the organisation's name, address and the years the plan refers to.

**Links can provide more information, help and advice. Contact us if you need any further assistance**



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You are advised to contact Links for the up to date position and seek legal advice where appropriate. 09/04/2003