

## Writing an **Executive Summary** that Makes People WANT to Read Your Business Plan

Your Executive Summary is your first impression, make sure it's a powerful one. Too often entrepreneurs undervalue the impact a well-written Executive Summary can have on the expected outcome of a business plan. In fact, an effective Executive Summary can have several benefits:

- Interests potential investors, thus encouraging them to read your business plan more carefully
- Shows you understand your business idea and have a clear vision on how to chart a path to success
- Demonstrates the effort you've put into not only planning your business, but ensuring others easily understand your vision and goals
- Saves investors, and others reading your business plan, time and effort. Time is precious to busy professionals, and by writing a clear and concise Executive Summary, along with a well laid out business plan, you demonstrate you have written the plan with the reader in mind

Of course, there are many more benefits to well written Executive Summary, but first let's learn more about its function and some common misconceptions about its importance (hint: it's undervalued!)

"An executive summary is a brief introduction and summary of your business plan. It should **describe your business, the problem that it solves, your target market, and financial highlights.**

A good executive summary **grabs your reader's attention** and lets them know what it is you do and why they should read the rest of your business plan or proposal. It's not unusual for investors to make an initial decision just based on reading an executive summary, so it's important to get it right..."

Source: <https://articles.bplans.com/writing-an-executive-summary/>

There are several misconceptions about the importance of writing an effective Executive Summary, so let's get those out of the way:

- **An Executive Summary is an introduction to your business plan**
  - **NO.** It is a clear and comprehensive "snapshot" of your business plan telling the reader (e.g., investors) what you plan on doing in a clear and concise manner. Basically, think of it like an "elevator speech" for your business plan. If you have 30 seconds to describe what is in your plan what would you say?
- **It should be very short, maybe even one paragraph**
  - **NO.** Your Executive Summary is typically about 10% the size of your business plan. Depending on how long your plan is, it could be up to a page or more. Be careful, however, that it doesn't exceed this general size rule – clear, concise, and comprehensive are the 3Cs you want to follow.

- **If the Business Plan is well written, then it doesn't matter if an Executive Summary is included**
  - **WRONG.** The goal is to interest the reader into learning more by reading the business plan. If you don't give a snapshot of your business that sounds interesting, then what motivation is there to keep reading.
- **The Executive Summary is written first, then the business plan**
  - **NO.** You write the Executive Summary AFTER you've written the business plan. How can you summarize something you haven't written yet? Again, think of it like an "elevator speech;" you give a clear answer to "Tell me about your business plan."



An Executive Summary is a stand alone in your business plan. While you will include it in your table of contents, it is on its own pages. Often an Executive Summary is shared with others who will consult on the business plan, but may not need to access each part. This is a good overview for others who may influence those making decisions about investing in your business.

Another great use is to share it with those who work with you – whether paid or part of your support network. It shows where you are headed and helps others identify opportunities based on your business plan.

## Resources to help you write an effective Executive Summary

### Sample Executive Summary:

<https://www.sampleplan.com/fast-food-business-plan-executive-summary/>

<https://www.thebalancesmb.com/business-plan-executive-summary-example-2948007>

### Helpful Articles:

How to Write an Effective Executive Summary; BPlans; <https://articles.bplans.com/writing-an-executive-summary/>

First Steps: Writing the Executive Summary of Your Business Plan; Entrepreneur Magazine; <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/241071>

What Is an Executive Summary Business Plan?; Chron; <https://smallbusiness.chron.com/executive-summary-business-plan-2587.html>

**Do your research! Find resources online that will help you write a powerful and effective Executive Summary.**

There are a lot of good resources, and a lot of poor resources out there, be discerning in which you use. Following the guidelines above should help you decide which resources will be helpful for you to write an effective Executive Summary.

*Also refer to your Entrepreneur Success Kit for more information*