

**“SOUNDS LIKE A GREAT IDEA! CAN YOU SEND ME A BUSINESS PLAN?”**

Whether a start-up looking for seed capital, an established business seeking expansion funding, or a *Fortune* 500 company presenting a new venture to upper management, a business plan is the common tool used to fully describe the business and market opportunity.

Business leaders and investment professionals increasingly divide their time amongst multiple activities. A business plan that is thorough, well-written, and based on realistic financial projections can be the difference between initiatives that get funded and those that do not.

**Start-ups and early-stage companies** need business plans to attract angel or venture capital, seek financing, recruit executives and advisors, attract alliance partners, and use as an operating tool to manage the business.

**Established companies** need business plans to seek acquirers, expansion capital, merger or joint-venture partners, and to recruit senior management. Established companies often find that using a professional business plan to present a new product or venture concept to senior management improves the likelihood of support and the ultimate success of the launch.



Novel ideas and solid business concepts are great to have, but without a well thought out plan of how to turn the vision into a profitable business it may be impossible to attract the support and resources necessary to realize your goals.

A solid business plan provides a framework to explain the business model and key issues, including:

- **market opportunity**
- **competition**
- **products and services**
- **marketing and sales plan**
- **operations**
- **management team**
- **strategic plan**
- **financial analysis**

It provides the reader with a basis upon which to measure the opportunity against his/her evaluation criteria.

**The impressive experience and industry contacts that *Gates and Company* consultants bring will help you better identify the obstacles to avoid and the opportunities to embrace while you strategically build your business.**

## **Methodology**

Since your business plan is the first expression of your capabilities that the potential investor sees, it is important that it be carefully prepared. In a general sense, a business plan defines the mission of the venture and the goals and strategies for achieving this mission. In many cases, it becomes an outline of projected sales and the strategies and resources needed to achieve them.

Each business plan is unique and, accordingly, the approach and structure of each varies considerably. However, some common elements in all business plan development initiatives include:

**Management meeting** – Our consultants meet with your management team, devoting time to understanding the unique aspects of your business, industry, and marketing environment. Overall corporate and business goals and objectives are discussed, along with the direction and message of the plan.

**Assessment of market opportunity** – Many new ventures struggle because they fail to adequately analyze market dynamics. Our experienced consultants will perform market research to evaluate the size of the potential market, market segments, competition, marketing channels, customers, pricing, and other critical elements.

**Development of marketing and sales strategy** – The ability to market and sell your product or service successfully is critical to profitability. *Gates and Company* consultants will help determine the best marketing techniques to use, including pricing model, promotional venues, selling strategies, customer service capabilities, channel strategies, brand development, and more.

**Outline of company operations** – Where will your company be located? Will you outsource manufacturing? Fulfillment? Customer service? Or will you manage these functions in-house? What does your work force consist of? Have you identified key personnel/skills that you will need to fulfill your objectives? We can help you answer these questions and select the best options for your particular needs.

**Preparation of financial summaries and projections** – Detailed financial forecasts are a key element in any business plan, even if your company is a start-up with no revenue track record. *Gates and Company* consultants can prepare budgets and financial projections based on market statistics, trends, detailed assumptions, and anticipated revenues, royalties, and/or licensing fees. These analyses will highlight the capital needed and provide the basis for determining the potential future value of the investment.

## **Benefits**

*Gates and Company* considers itself an extension of our client's management team. We work closely with company leadership in a team approach to sharpen the strategic vision and validate the opportunities through market research.

Our team can help determine the amount and timing of funding required to reach financial goals. We can also help determine a reasonable valuation of the business and provide guidance on the proper blend of debt, equity, or other capitalization matched to management's goals of ownership and control. If desired, *Gates and Company* can also assist with the raising of capital to fund the new venture.

To help accelerate the launch of new businesses, *Gates and Company* consultants are often asked to fill one or more management rolls on an interim basis. The top-quality credentials of *Gates and Company* consultants lend credibility to the venture and demonstrate a commitment to success to potential investors.

Please contact us to learn how our special know-how can help you get your new venture started on the best track.