

First Things First Planning for Business Services @Your Library

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January 30, 2014



Why a Business Plan?

- A necessary tool in planning for success
- A library building is not built without blueprints
- A movie is not made without scripts
- Clearly communicates your goals
- An organizing tool
- Consider the audience



The value of your business plan

- It's not necessarily the finished product
- Value lies in the **process**
- Researching & thinking about your library services in a systematic way
- The business plan brings your strategy to life
- Value directly related to rigor applied to the plan



Business Plan Organization

- Executive Summary
- Mission, Vision, and Desired Impact
- Programs, Resources, and Services
- The Market
- Operational Plan
- Key Collaborative Relationships
- Marketing Strategy
- Financial
- Evaluation and Measurement
- Appendices



Executive Summary

- Write this section last
- No longer than two pages
- Explain the fundamentals
- Tie-in to library strategic plan, vision etc.
- SMART



Mission, Vision, and Desired Impact

- 2-3 sentences to describe current business resources
- Mission statement
- Library goals and objectives
- Describe current trends in libraries
- Describe your strengths and core competencies



Programs, Resources, and Services

- Describe in depth your services for businesses
- Factors that give you competitive advantage
- Quality/Uniqueness/Proprietary features



Your Services

- Describe from customer's viewpoint
- Features – what is special?
- Benefits – how will it help customers?



The Market

- Your plan cannot succeed without it
- Research! Research! Research!- time well spent
- **Danger Alert!** Don't assume you know your intended market – community inventory of business services including government & non-profits



Economic Climate

- Seize the day! An open door!
- Current demand with the target market
- Trends in current market
- What are the barriers? How will you overcome these?
- What changes could impact on your plan?



Customers

Who are your customers?

- The more you know the better
- Who is your target market?
- Zoom in and then zoom out

What do customers want?

- Research! Research! Research!
- Primary Research – interviews, focus groups, surveys
- Secondary Research – Chamber, business directories, StatsCan etc.



Your Competition

- What organizations/businesses will compete?
- Determine level of competition
- How will your library compare?
- SWOT Analysis
- Your niche!



Management and Operations

- Who will take the lead?
- Who is the decision maker?
- Who will be responsible day-to-day?
- What experience is needed?
- Special or distinctive competencies



Key Collaborative Relationships

- Past, current, and future collaborators
- How and what will we communicate?
- Does this service deepen collaboration?
- Are there ways to better engage for success?
- The true meaning of collaboration
- Where to start
- When is it right
- Evaluation



Marketing Strategy

- Your value proposition – features and benefits
- Promotion strategy – if you build it they may not come!
- Communication channels
- Publicity
- Promotion budget – stand-alone budget
- Evaluation



Financial Plan

- Project hours required (include planning time)
- Number of Staff required
- Total hours x Staff (FTE) x hourly wage
- Resources (computers, databases, books etc.)
- Networking costs (Chamber membership etc.)
- Honourariums, gifts etc.
- Promotion



Evaluation and Measurement

- Design programs/services
- Measure their effectiveness
- Evaluation
- Repeat



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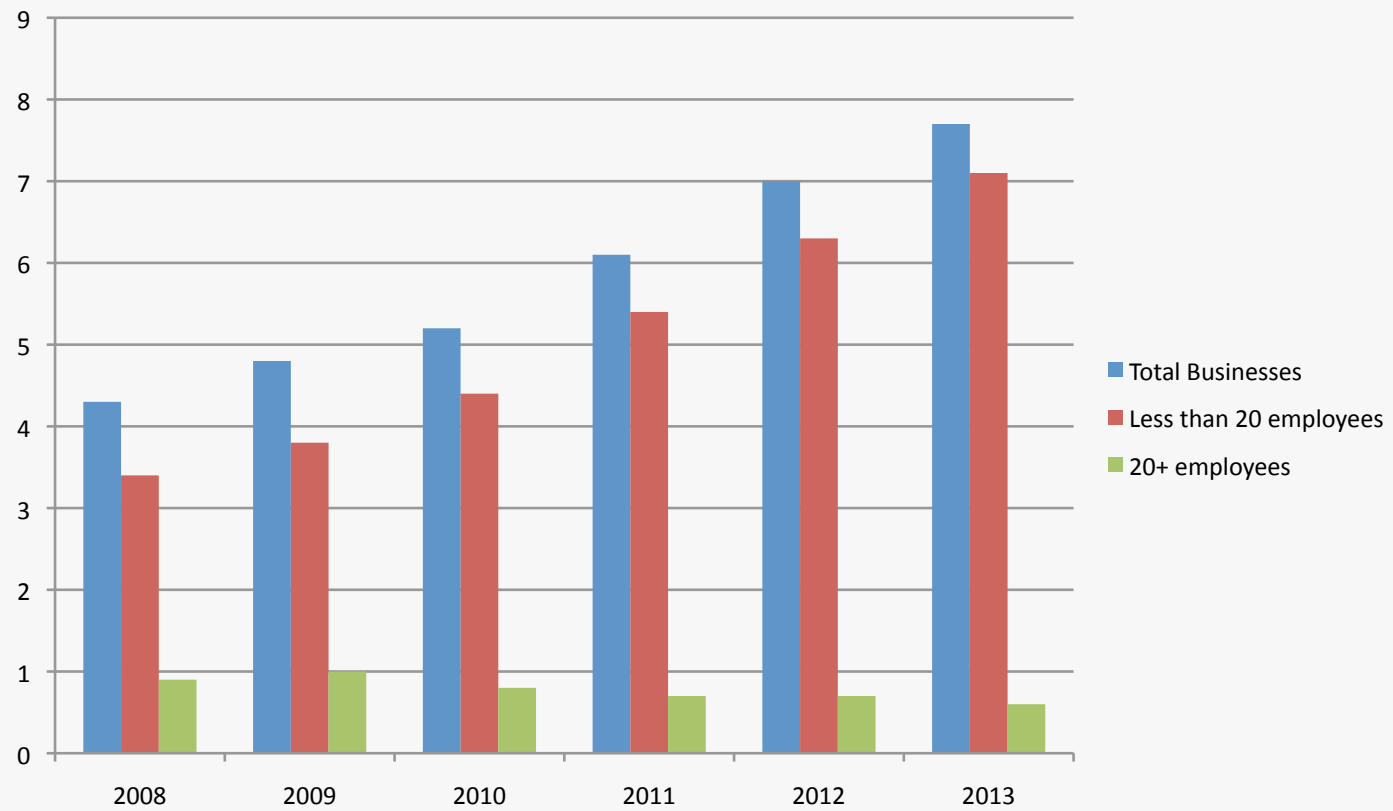


Appendices

- Market research studies
- Brochures
- Community Inventory
- Collaborative Agreements
- Etc.



Business Growth in Barrie



ENRICHING
THE ECONOMIC,
SOCIAL AND
CULTURAL VITALITY
OF OUR COMMUNITY
BY OPENING DOORS TO
LIFELONG LEARNING



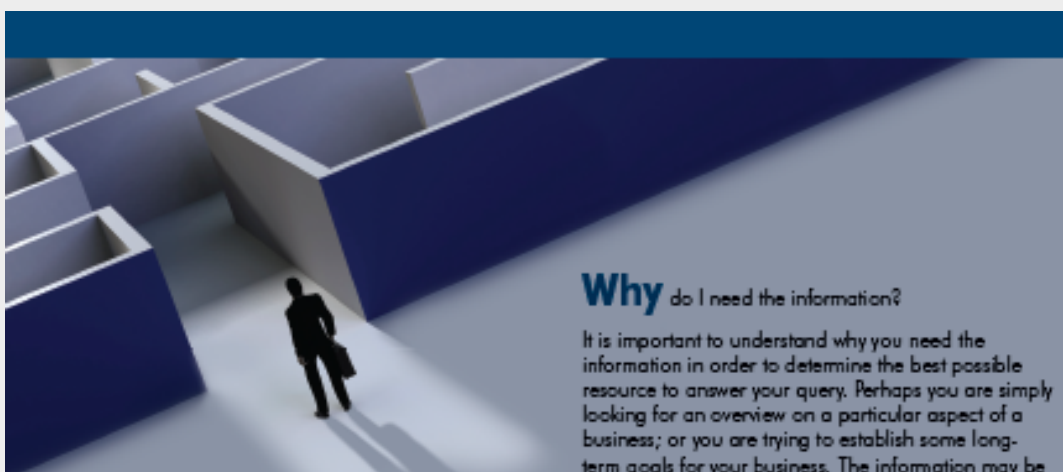
Barrie Public Library Welcomes Business



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OUR BUSINESS

www.library.barrie.on.ca



Where do I start?

The first step into your business venture requires you to take some time to do your homework. Be prepared to set aside a couple of hours to come to the library and determine what resources are available. You may need to make several visits depending on the type of information you need or the complexity of the information resources. Information Services staff will assist you in finding the information you need. They may also suggest that you set up an appointment with the Business Services Librarian for a one on one information session.

One of the key starting points for any business idea is a business plan. This is an essential tool that helps you to focus on your goals. A business plan can be as simple or as detailed as you like. The library has hundreds of resources to assist you in developing a business plan that is right for your business.

What am I hoping to do with the information?

Information is used to assist us in making decisions. Perhaps you are thinking about being your own boss but wonder if you have the traits of an entrepreneur. Maybe you are considering a career change and want to see what some of the possibilities are in your area. If you are a small business, perhaps managing growth in a chaotic economy concerns you.

Why do I need the information?

It is important to understand why you need the information in order to determine the best possible resource to answer your query. Perhaps you are simply looking for an overview on a particular aspect of a business; or you are trying to establish some long-term goals for your business. The information may be used to assist others in understanding your business concept and supporting your vision for its future.

Who needs the information?

It is important to keep in mind who is asking for the information. This will help you focus on the best source for the information you need. You may want the information for yourself so you are sure about an important business or career decision. A financial institution may require very detailed information before they will consider lending you money. You may also be asked for information for insurance purposes, leasing agreements, professional services, legal decisions etc.

When do I need to have the information?

You will need to consider whether you have a deadline for the information. Your timeline may impact on the type of information you can gather as well as the amount of detail you will need. Remember, it can take a great deal of time to access all the necessary information tools that are available in order to make the best possible business decision.

Barrie Public Library is committed to assisting you with all of your business information needs.

We have the expertise to help you understand a wide variety of business tools so that you will be able to make the best possible business decision.

Further Reading

Edmonton Public Library *The Way We Share: EPL Business Plan 2011- 2013*

Gibbons, C. (2006) *Economic Gardening: An Entrepreneurial Approach to Economic Development* (ePUB)

Harriman, J. (2008) *Creating Your Library's Business Plan*

La Piana, D. et al (2012) *The Nonprofit Business Plan*



Go Out and Make It Happen!

Thanks So Much for Your Time

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