**Business Concept Proposal for Self-Employment**

**Template for Completion of Section B**

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| **FOR OFFICE USE ONLY** |

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| **Applicant Name** |  |
| **Reviewed by** |  |
| **Review Date** |  |
| **Session Start Date** |  |
| **Revision Deadline** |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Summary of Positive Feedback** | |
| **Strengths of Application** | **Business Concept** |
|  |  |

**Section B - Business Concept Outline**

Your responses should provide the level of detail outlined in this template. Answers can either be written directly on the *Business Concept Outline* form, or attached by completing this template as a separate Word document (recommended).

1. **Business Description**:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| List each product or service on a separate line | Description of product(s)/service(s) | How will your customers receive your product(s)/service(s)? |
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1. **What are your product/service offerings?** **Describe their features and benefits.**

## A Feature “tells” – it is what a product or service has. You can prove it!

Examples:

* Product (laptop): 1) a built-in mouse, 2) portable, 3) battery (these are features)
* Service (consulting): 1) ½ hour free consultation, 2) customized to the client’s needs, 3) report included (these are features)

## A Benefit “sells” – it is what a feature means to potential customers. Put yourself in your customer’s shoes, and describe the feeling(s) they will have from each feature and what they will gain.

* Product (laptop): a built-in mouse (*feature*) makes customers feel *relieved* about not having to worry about forgetting to pack their mouse (*relieved* is the benefit)
* Service (consulting): ½ hour free consultation (*feature*) makes customers feel *confident* in making a decision about whether or not to hire the consultant (*confident* is the benefit)

Please complete the following table, **one for each product and/or service**. You may need to copy/paste this table (e.g. if you’re selling 1 product + 2 services, you will need to complete 3 tables in this format).

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| --- | --- |
| **Product →** | **Laptop** |
| **Features** | **Benefits** |
| Built-in mouse | Customers feel **relieved** about not having to worry about forgetting to pack their mouse |
| Portable | Customers feel **grateful** for the convenience |
| Battery | Customers feel **pleased** that they can use their laptop where no plugs are available |

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| **Service →** | **Consulting** |
| **Features** | **Benefits** |
| ½ hour free consultation | Customers feel **confident** in making a decision about whether or not to hire the consultant |
| Customized to client’s needs | Customers feel **involved** in the consultant’s process |
| Report included | Customers feel **interested** to learn how the consultant can help |

**“Benefits” - List of Feeling Words**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **AFFECTIONATE**  compassionate  friendly  loving  open hearted  sympathetic  tender  warm | **CONFIDENT**  empowered  open  proud  safe  secure | **INSPIRED**  amazed  awed  wonder |  |
| **ENGAGED**  absorbed  alert  curious  engrossed  enchanted  entranced  fascinated  interested  intrigued  involved  spellbound  stimulated | **EXCITED**  amazed  animated  ardent  aroused  astonished  dazzled  eager  energetic  enthusiastic  giddy  invigorated  lively  passionate  surprised  vibrant | **EXHILARATED**  blissful  ecstatic  elated  enthralled  exuberant  radiant  rapturous  thrilled | **PEACEFUL**  calm  clear headed  comfortable  centered  content  equanimous  fulfilled  mellow  quiet  relaxed  relieved  satisfied  serene  still  tranquil  trusting |
| **Cont’d on next page**  **HOPEFUL**  expectant  encouraged  optimistic | **GRATEFUL**  appreciative  moved  thankful  touched | **JOYFUL**  amused  delighted  glad  happy  jubilant  pleased  tickled | **REFRESHED**  enlivened  rejuvenated  renewed  rested  restored  revived |

Copy/paste this table if needed (1 table required per product and/or service).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Specify the Product/Service →** |  |
| **Features** | **Benefits** |
|  |  |
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|  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Specify the Product/Service →** |  |
| **Features** | **Benefits** |
|  |  |
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|  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Specify the Product/Service →** |  |
| **Features** | **Benefits** |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

*(For filling out the WorkBC pdf form: include a brief description of products and services in question 1 and the detailed list with features & benefits in question 9)*

1. **Ownership and Management**:

Will your business be: a) a sole proprietorship (operated only by you), or b) a partnership (operated with one or more other part-owners), or c) a corporation (a legal entity that lists you as a shareholder, plus possibly other shareholders)?

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| List each person on a separate line:   * Owner, business partner(s) or shareholder(s) * plus other staff/contractors | Position Title | Each person’s responsibilities in the company | **\*Relevant** skills of each person | **\*Relevant** work experience of each person | **\*Relevant** education of each person |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
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\*List only what is relevant to the business, not a comprehensive list of skills, experience, and education.

*(On the WorkBC pdf form: use this for question 2, Ownership & Management)*

1. **Key Initiatives and Objectives**:

Why did you decide to start this business? Tell your personal story of how you got here.

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**Business Goals:** what specific outcomes would you like to accomplish?

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Milestone Dates | Desired Outcome | How will you achieve this? |
| By month 3 |  |  |
| By month 6 |  |  |
| By the end of year 1 |  |  |

**Mission:** broadly speaking, what problem does your business seek to solve? You can state this as your company’s solution to the problem. (E.g. “The YMCA of Greater Vancouver is a charity dedicated to strengthening the foundations of community”)

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*(On the WorkBC pdf form: include Initiatives & Objectives in question 3)*

1. **Market Research**:

***Provide an overview of the potential viability of your proposed business.***

* Write about the results of your market research that supports a need for your products/services. Market research includes the following:
  + **Primary** – information directly from your prospective customers and people in your industry (e.g. through interviews, surveys, meetings, conversations)
  + **Secondary** – information from statistical reports, books, magazines, online, etc. This includes 1) observed trends (what has been happening in this industry), and 2) projected outlook – what is the probability of decline/stability/growth?
* Sources – tell the reader where you found this information (if you can’t tell us where you got this information, then you can’t include it in your business plan).

*Example of a Product-based Business: Dried Organic Produce*

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| --- |
| The Canadian/British Columbian Market:  The organic market in Canada has grown exponentially over a very short period, to the point where it is now the fourth largest in the world.  The value of the Canadian organic food market is now valued at over $3.5 billion per year in sales. Fruit and vegetables are the clear leaders in organic sales, capturing over 40% of total sales.  Canadian consumers show a strong bias toward the Canada Organic logo when compared with “USDA Organic” and are consistently seeking out local or made-in-Canada options.  With more than 3,000 organic grocery items captured in a research scan, 44% by volume, identified themselves as being grown, processed or packaged in Canada - these Canadian products are capturing more value in the market than imported products, with 48% of market share.  A majority of Canadians, at 58%, report the purchase of some organic products every week. That rate includes ethnic Canadians, people living in Canada’s largest cities, households with young families and consumers with university educations. On average, Canadians who buy organic report they spend only $17.50 more per week than those who do not purchase.  “It is clear that the organic market in Canada is here to stay with great potential for continued growth. 98% of Canadians plan to INCREASE or MAINTAIN their current purchases of organic food. While 20 million Canadians buy organic products weekly, British Columbia is the strongest organic market in Canada: 66% of British Columbians buy organic groceries weekly,” COTA (Canadian Organic Trade Association) mentioned in its research.  *Source: The National Organic Market*  *Growth, Trends & Opportunities, 2013.*  *Research conducted by: Canadian Organic Trade Association* |

If you gathered *primary* research, what did you learn about the potential success of your business? (Please include with whom you talked when you gathered this information).

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| Trends/Outlook:  People with whom you talked: |

What does your *secondary* research tell you about the potential success of your business? (Please include your research sources in gathering this information).

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| Trends/Outlook:  Sources: |

*(On the WorkBC pdf form: include Trends & Outlooks in question 4 with sources listed)*

1. **Who are your customers?**

Your ***Primary Target Market***is your core direct buyer - the most able and likely to buy from you.  They will decide yes or no, and will put the most money in your pocket.

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Your ***Secondary Target Market***is not always the most direct or obvious buyer of your product or service, but they are still potential buyers, and they are the second highest source of sales for your business.

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|  |
| --- |
| **My Primary Target Market**: C:\Users\lfolster\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\FAD8WCOG\money_sign[1].jpgC:\Users\lfolster\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\FAD8WCOG\money_sign[1].jpg   * Check one: C:\Program Files\Microsoft Office\MEDIA\CAGCAT10\j0205462.wmfBusiness to Business \_\_\_ OR C:\Users\lfolster\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\TAJSNJN8\Woman[1].pngBusiness to Consumer \_\_\_   What do you know about them? (For example, For **Business to Consumer**: How old are they? Are they male or female? What is their education level? What is their income level? Where do they live? What are their lifestyle activities? For **Business to Business**: What type of products or services do they offer? Where are they located? How many employees do they have?) |
| **My Secondary Target Market**: C:\Users\lfolster\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\FAD8WCOG\money_sign[1].jpg   * Check one: C:\Program Files\Microsoft Office\MEDIA\CAGCAT10\j0205462.wmfBusiness to Business \_\_\_ OR C:\Users\lfolster\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\TAJSNJN8\Woman[1].pngBusiness to Consumer \_\_\_   What do you know about them? (For example, For **Business to Consumer**: How old are they? Are they male or female? What is their education level? What is their income level? Where do they live? What are their lifestyle activities? For **Business to Business**: What type of products or services do they offer? Where are they located? How many employees do they have?) |

*(On the WorkBC pdf form: include Customer description in question 8)*

1. **Where do your customers live, and what is the competitive environment like in these areas?**

List the communities (i.e. the municipalities or provinces or countries or continents) where you think your potential customers live (Business to Consumer and/or Business to Business).

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| --- | --- |
| **Business to Consumer** | **Business to Business** |
| Where my individual customers live | Where my business customers operate their businesses |
|  |  |

**Business to Consumer**

How manypeople fitting the profile of your average consumer live in the communities listed above?

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| --- | --- |
| Targeted Community (list municipalities or provinces or countries or continents) | Population of my Target Market per Community |
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| Total Population (all communities combined) |  |

Here are some ways to look up populations: ask for assistance from a librarian at any branch of the Vancouver Public Library, to access the database “Simply Analytics” (see instructions below), and/or check <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/start-debut-eng.html>.

Instructions for Simply Analytics:

* Go to <http://www.vpl.ca/>
* “Login”: look at the top right corner using a VPL library card and PIN
* Here is where it may vary depending on the browser. On some browsers take the following steps:
  + Click on “Menu”
  + Click on “Digital Library”
  + Click on “Explore our Digital Library”
  + Under “Name”, type in “simplyanalytics”
  + Click “Find”
  + Scroll to “Simply Analytics” and click “Access Now”. Between 7 a.m. – 7 p.m., users need to use a VPL computer. From 7 p.m. -7 a.m., the software can be accessed from any personal computer.

**Business to Business**

How many businesses fitting the profile of your average business customer have head offices in the communities listed above?

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| --- | --- |
| Targeted Community (list municipalities or provinces or countries or continents) | # Businesses that fit the description of my Target Market per Community |
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| Total # Businesses (all communities combined) |  |

Here are some ways to find businesses located in these communities: conduct a web search, contact a relevant professional association, search for provincial stats on <https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/cis-sic.nsf/eng/home>, and/or access the Reference Canada Business Directory, which is a list of the businesses in Canada with some search criteria to choose from (see instructions below).

Instructions for using the Reference Canada Business Directory (available from the Vancouver Public Library resources):

* Go to <http://www.vpl.ca/>
* Under the “Digital Library” menu, choose “Online Resources” (<https://www.vpl.ca/digitallibrary>)
* Enter “Reference Canada” in the search line (it actually comes up as a selection)
* Click on the “Reference Canada Directory” option that appears below
* At this time, it asks you to sign in to the library website with your VPL card number. Once you sign in, you are at the url: <http://www.thereferencegroup.com/Home/Home>. Then you can start your search within the 2 million businesses listed. Many of them have website information as well.

How many competitors in total serve customers in your targeted communities, as listed above?

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What do your competitors charge for similar products/services? Provide a price range.

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For your anticipated 3 main competitors, briefly describe their strengths and weaknesses (e.g. pricing, experience, expertise, customer service, quality, etc.)

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Competitor Business Name | Strengths | Weaknesses |
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*(On the WorkBC pdf form: include the geographic area you serve, and competitor information in question 10)*

1. **Competitive Advantages**:

Compared with your competitors listed above, what do you do **better** than they do?

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*(On the WorkBC pdf form: include Competitive Advantages in question 5)*

1. **Marketing Strategy**:

Briefly explain your pricing.

How much will you charge for your products/services?

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How did you arrive at this pricing?

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If you are selling products, what are your anticipated costs per unit to produce your products?

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If you are selling services, what are your reasons for positioning your pricing at this level?

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Marketing Strategies

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| List each marketing strategy you will you use to reach your prospective customers | Why have you chosen each of these strategies? | What **evidence** do you have that each strategy is likely to work? (Prove it with statistics/quotes) |
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*(On the WorkBC pdf form: include Marketing Strategy in question 6)*

1. **Summary of Financial Projections**:

Start-up costs: what expenses will you incur to establish your business?

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| List each type of expense | Cost |
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| Total Start-up Costs |  |
| How do you plan to finance your start-up costs? | |

**Year 1 Projections**

**(September of this year – July of next year)**

**Instructions for completing this section:**

* **Download** the “Business Concept Proposal Financials” Excel spreadsheet and use it to list your projected revenues and expenses, month by month, for Year 1 of your business.
* Do not enter numbers in the grey cells, as they contain formulas and will automatically tabulate.
* \*List each of your products/services by name.
* \*\*Sample expense categories are provided. List all the business expense categories you can think of. Do not include personal expenses.

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| Explain here, your **assumptions** in estimating these $’s (e.g. seasonality, introduction of new products/services, price adjustments, etc.) |

*(On the WorkBC pdf form: a Summary of these Financial Projections in question 7)*