

How to write a lean startup business plan

The logic behind lean startup plans is that every business plan can be divided into nine segments. Without going into detail, you can describe each of those segments at a high enough level where they can be listed out on a single page. Compared to the traditional business plan, this allows for far more flexibility in case your business drastically changes quickly. There are dozens of templates to choose from but the most common is listed here.

Here are the basic components you'll need in a lean startup plan:

Customer Segments

Describe your target audience(s) that your business will appeal to. Most businesses will have multiple segments listed here and it's imperative that you properly identify them.

Value Proposition

Your business will potentially appeal to different customer segments in different ways. If that's the case, you should list out the different value propositions for each segment clearly and succinctly. If that isn't the case, you can list out the single value proposition your company will have. If you can't figure out what your value proposition is, that means you don't know what your business's value add is.

Channels

How is your value proposition going to be communicated to your customers? Detail out brand awareness as well as ongoing communication channels with your customers.

Customer Relationships

After you've explained how you'll be communicating to your customers, think about the kind of relationship you'll want to maintain with them. Will communication be ongoing? Will you personally be contacting them or sending automated emails?

Revenue Streams

How will your business make money? At what point in the relationship with your customers do you start to recognize revenue? Most companies will have multiple streams although if your business is just starting out, you may only have one. That's OK, but just be sure to demonstrate you know exactly where your revenue will come from.

Key Resources

You've described how you'll be capturing revenue from your customers, but what will the infrastructure look like that will support it? Supporting resources may include but aren't limited to staff or capital.

Key Activities

What are the absolute necessary activities in your plan for your business to be successful? Detail them out here and show why they're important.

Key Partnerships

As a new business, you likely won't own all of your key resources and won't be able to do all of the key activities yourself. What other entities are you working with? Consider suppliers, vendors and anyone else you're planning on doing business with.

Cost Structure

Now that you understand your business's infrastructure and needs, you can detail out the total projected costs of your business or at least identify the biggest costs you have in your plan right now. What is your plan to ensure you're maximizing the value out of those costs?