

The Capital Minute



Creating a
Business Plan
with Punch

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WELCOME
From the
Editor



BUSINESS PLAN Secrets Revealed

Finally, a real e-magazine! This project has been in the works for quite awhile and so far so good. **The Capital Minute** has branched out: expanded content, added authors, and new resources. And, best of all, we're still not done.

But, what I want to talk about now is the exiting content in this month's issue.

Like putting some **PUNCH!** into your business plan. No matter whether you plan to use your business plan to attract investors, lenders, key employees, or government officials, you'll want some PUNCH in your plan. Best selling author Peter Hickey, winner of the Ernst & Young NSW "Entrepreneur of the Year" award in 1999, shares his ideas for presenting difficult concepts to investors, staff and key stakeholders in our featured article [Creating a Business Plan with Punch](#).

From across the pond John Courtney, Managing Director of Strategy Consulting Limited, talks about [The Small Firms Loan Guarantee \(SFLG\)](#) scheme a joint venture between the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and approved lenders that enables small businesses with a viable business plan to borrow money.

But, it takes well-written content to attract investors and lenders. Whether it's copy on your website, copy for your direct mailings, an impressive article, a business plan or proposal, the words you choose determine your success. In [How to Choose a Writer For Your Next Project!](#), writing stylist and author Charlene Rashkow explains how to find the right writer to help you make that critical first impression.

You know, business plans aren't only for start-up companies. You'll need one if you plan to buy a business as well. Just ask Arthur B. Hamel. He's bought over 200 businesses in the past 50 years and in his article, [Business Plan Facts That Will Help You Sleep Like A Baby](#), he tells you why you shouldn't let writing a business plan hold you back from buying a business.

Great authors, great business plan content...that's the Capital Minute.

To your success,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mike Elia".

Mike Elia CPA, MBA
Editor

Business Plan Facts That Will Help You Sleep Like A Baby

By Art Hamel



“Years ago, I used to actually meet with people wanting to buy a business before they put together a business plan. And I found out after a couple of years that people are afraid of three things – death, taxes and business plans.”

If you've been wanting to buy a business, but are holding back because you're freaked out about the idea of putting together a business plan, then this article should help put your mind at ease.

Years ago, I used to actually meet with people wanting to buy a business before they put together a business plan. And I found out after a couple of years that people are afraid of three things -- death, taxes and business plans.

This is no joke. It's a lot like public speaking -- most people would rather die or pay their taxes than put together a business plan. Back when I used to teach about buying businesses at seminars, a LOT of people came to me wanting to buy a business with no business plan. And it's no big mystery that not one of them ever got their financing -- and are now telling their grandchildren how successful they would have been if they had gotten the financing.

Listen: Don't let the idea of a business plan scare you or stop you from going after a good business to buy. A business plan is nothing more than a detailed description of what you're doing. And that's it. No big deal. There's nothing to be afraid of. If the thing makes sense and everything falls into place, you'll get your financing. If you seek investor financing and have a good business plan, you'll have no problem at all getting all the money you need.

The main thing is to keep it simple. Don't let the idea of doing a business plan freak you out. It's not rocket science and if you can't hire someone to do it for you, simply go to the library and read a couple books on how to do it, and you'll be fine.

Arthur B. Hamel has bought over 200 businesses in the past 50 years, and is a well-known author, consultant, investor, business owner, and dynamic lecturer who has shared the stage with such business greats as Robert Allen of "No Money Down" fame. For the past 20 years Art has taught thousands of people around the world -- even so-called "little guys" with no formal education or money -- how to quickly and easily buy large, multi-million dollar businesses with no credit, banks or prior business experience. He has recently decided to share his unique business-buying secrets and tactics free of charge at:

<http://arthurhamel.com>

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Feature Article

Creating a Business Plan with Punch

By Peter Hickey

If you want to create a multi-million dollar business and personally become successful, you will need to be able to present difficult concepts to investors, staff and key stakeholders. The creation of wealth through business will not be possible unless you are able to do the following three things very well.

1. Simplify, conceptualize and analyze business models and marketplaces. Then develop this opportunity analysis into solid strategies for growth.
2. Make people understand the key vision and direction of the company.
3. Produce a clear concise action plan to ensure that we follow through on the plan.

The biggest tip I can give any fellow businessperson is to learn the art of simplifying the world around you and explain it in simple terms to those that you wish to follow you.

When it comes to preparing a business plan with punch...

The first thing to do when preparing a business plan "with punch" is to understand the reason why you are actually undertaking to do a business plan.

A plan that you might do for your employees might be a simple one- to three-page document. You need to get the employees to understand your vision and your strategy. In most cases you will want to leave your analysis out of your final document. It will just bulk it up. That is of course assuming that you are reporting down the chain. i.e. you are the Managing Director or Chief Executive Officer.

If you are in a larger company and doing a business plan then you will need to include your analysis. In both cases a simplified version of your analysis presented in a Microsoft PowerPoint type presentation is essential. Why, because your staff will not blindly follow your direction unless you map it out and prove it is logical and possible.



"The first thing to do when preparing a business plan "with punch" is to understand the reason why you are actually undertaking to do a business plan."

CREATING A BUSINESS PLAN WITH PUNCH... CONTINUED

MASTER THE ART OF ATTRACTING AND CONVINCING INVESTORS



"Mike delivers what he promises on the title page: he teaches you how to quickly gather evidence, build a case for your business, and write a readable plan that attracts investors and makes your business the most appealing investment choice. Even if you already own other business planning resources, I highly recommend Business Plan Secrets Revealed."
Art Tuner, <http://selfemploymentstation.com>

Learn how to write a business plan that improves your image, attracts more investors and increases funding dollars. Filled with practical advice, invaluable examples and cost-cutting tips, Business Plan Secrets Revealed is for anyone who wants to create a business plan that sells.

<http://www.business-plan-secrets-revealed.com/business-plan-manual.html>

My hints for creating Business Plan PUNCH in this situation would be:

- Use more diagrams than words. Diagrams such as competitive positioning, product life cycle or simple illustrative concepts such as those in this article.
- Keep the document as short as possible.
- Maintain a strong emphasis on the final Milestones
- Focus on the KPI's (Key Performance Indicators) that need monitoring.
- Develop financials that have best and worst case scenarios, so you can do what if analysis and examine the risks.

On the hand, if your business plan was for government, banks or investors and your first goal is to impress, then my hints would be

- Print in colour. Color graphs, financials and product shots impress and bring the document to life.
- Bind the final plan with a good hard back cover and transparent front.
- Attach the financials and graphs to the document and make sure they are formatted nicely.
- Have copies of certificates or awards that your company or your products have won. Scan and get a screenshot and paste into the text of your document.
- Show some nice positioning maps
- Make sure document is at least 10 pages. Probably more like 20-30. The important thing is that the reader has the impression that the document is comprehensive.

Peter Hickey Corprat © Coaching - All rights reserved. Winner of the Ernst & Young NSW "Entrepreneur of the Year" award in 1999. Bestselling author and designer of a number of multi award winning business tools that are now being used by more than 60,000 companies around the world. Founder of a software company that was listed as one of BRW's fastest growing 100 private companies in 2000. Peter successfully built the company from a one man business to a multi-million dollar concern. The company was acquired 10 years after its inception by a multi-billion dollar publisher Visit - <http://www.corprat.com> for more information on how to become a business coach and for our free Mini MBA program or business planning service; and visit - <http://www.plansforbusiness.com> for more free resources and a free business planning software and free "how to sell your business guides."

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MONEY

Small Firms Loan Guarantee Scheme (SFLG)

By John Courtney



The Small Firms Loan Guarantee scheme is a joint venture between the DTI and the approved lenders, enabling small businesses with a viable business plan to borrow money from approved lenders.

The **Small Firms Loan Guarantee** scheme - SFLG - has been in existence to enable small businesses with a viable business plan, but lacking security, to borrow money from approved lenders. The Small Firms Loan Guarantee scheme (SFLG) is a joint venture between the **Department of Trade and Industry** (DTI) and the approved lenders.

The scheme will provide loans between £5000 and £100,000 for companies with a trading record of less than two years and this amount is increased to £250,000 for the older businesses. The DTI do not lend the money as they leave the commercial decision to the bankers.

The borrowers are not asked to provide personal guarantees although the bank will request any required personal security prior to considering a SFLGS application. The DTI will provide 75% of the security to the bank on acceptance by them of the application. Certain businesses are not available for the loan and companies with more than 200 employees are not eligible. Turnover in the prior year to the application must be below £5m for manufacturing industries and £3m for all other businesses. In addition, the bank charges a premium on the amount outstanding.

Note: Changes to the Small Firms Loan Guarantee scheme (SFLG) came into effect from 1 April 2003 meaning that more businesses may be eligible. The changes include:

- A single guarantee rate of 75% for all new loans;
- Sector exclusions removed for retailing, catering, coal, hair dressing and beauty parlours;
- The maximum turnover level for non-manufacturing businesses increased from £1.5m to 3m;
- The premium paid by the borrower set at 2% per year on the outstanding balance for all new loans.

The government may continue to introduce changes and we are happy to advise on the current situation.

The importance of a **carefully prepared business plan** is often underestimated. The borrower must convince the potential lender that he or she has a viable business proposal. There is a need to create a

SMALL FIRMS LOAN GUARANTEE... CONTINUED

specialist funding plan that identifies closely compliance with the requirements of the scheme and the banks. Our consultants have wide experience in meeting these needs and have identified the following information as information that a potential lender would expect to see:

- **Management:** key personnel, their experience, industry knowledge, age, education and training;
- **Product or service:** details of product or service on offer, state of product development, any follow-up products or services;
- **Markets:** description of the market and its size, customers, competitors, sales estimates and expected market penetration. Sales forecasts should be supported by hard evidence and research wherever possible. An explanation of how the business will succeed in the market against competition;
- **Business background:** when started, results to date, borrowing history, existing commitments, and current bankers;
- **Objectives and Strategy:** business objectives, timetable and assumptions, risk factors, longer-term plans;
- **Financial Projections:** projections of at least one year's future performance together with supporting assumptions and evidence (order books, customer enquiries). Projections should include profit and loss account, monthly cash flow projections, balance sheets and capital expenditure budget;
- **Required Financing:** total funding required based on projections, application of those funds, repayment assumptions. Purposes of financing, detail of capital expenditures;
- **Security Available:** what assets are available as security (personal assets as well as business assets). Also what assets have been used as security elsewhere;
- **Management Information Systems:** accounting systems used by the business, ability to produce regular management accounts;
- **Principal Risks:** most likely areas of risk and ability to cope with these. What happens in event of sickness or injury to key personnel?

John Courtney AIMC, MABS, MInstDis, is the managing director of Strategy Consulting Limited (<http://www.strategyconsultinglimited.co.uk>). Having trained at The Academy of Business Strategy, and is an associate of the Institute of Management Consultancy and a member of the Institute of Directors, he is also a visiting lecturer on the MBA course at Cranfield University School of Management and a Judge in The National Business Awards. John has run training seminars at board level on corporate strategy and made presentations to both large and small groups on funding strategies. He brings a wealth of experience, particularly in corporate strategy, funding, business planning, internet strategy and marketing strategy, including new product development.

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BUSINESS PLAN WRITERS

How to Choose a Writer For Your Next Project!

By Charlene Rashkow



If you're ready to put your thoughts in a special written presentation but you feel stuck for just the right words, perhaps you should consider hiring a professional writer.

Well-written content drives business.

Whether it's copy on your website, copy for your direct mailings, an impressive article, a **business plan** or proposal, the words you choose determine your profits.

Because written content covers a lot of territory, if you're ready to put your thoughts in a special written presentation but you feel **stuck for just the right words**, perhaps you should consider hiring a professional writer.

Believe it or not, good writers are eager to help you with your important documents and are often very affordable. When you consider the old adage: "You only get one chance to make a first impression," spending a little money on making a positive name for yourself is of critical importance.

Choosing the Right Person!

Of course, choosing the right person can often present you with a bit of a dilemma. There are a lot of people who claim to be terrific writers, yet when you review their material, you are not impressed. So **how can you be sure** that the person you are selecting is ultimately going to be the right person, the one who can truly present you effectively?

- 1) The first and most important aspect of finding a writer for your project is to locate a good match. By that I mean making sure that **personalities mesh**. Since there's more to good writing than just stringing words together, when selecting a writer be sure that you like the writer's attitude and approach.
- 2) Next review some of the writer's samples to give you a clear idea of his or her **writing style**. There are many articles and sites online that share the writer's expertise so review their work, trust your judgment and follow your instincts.
- 3) If you want something done well, expect to pay a fair price for the services. While you do not have to spend an inordinate amount of money to get quality work, be aware that you **usually get what you pay for**. I am often amazed that people pay so much to have a web site designed yet the content is not considered nearly as important.

HOW TO CHOOSE A WRITER... CONTINUED

- 4) How a writer responds to your request can also speak volumes. Pay attention to their **level of communication**. Is it friendly? Are they easily accessible, whether via phone or e-mail? Do they respond within a reasonable amount of time? Of course it's always best to find someone that comes recommended but if you have to commission someone from a search engine, ask for references.

Rules of thumb when selecting your candidate include the following:

- -A good writer will **communicate professionally** whether by phone or e-mail; pay strict attention to the response you receive via e-mail or telephone; professionalism is the key.
- -A good writer is willing to **provide samples** of their work; most good writers have lots of samples and articles presented on the Internet.
- -A reputable and good writer will post testimonials on their web site so that you can check references; **read testimonials** because they speak volumes. If you'd feel more comfortable, ask for personal references.
- -A good writer will **make suggestions** but will never try to convince you of what's best for you; if you have an idea of what you want, stick to your guns.
- -If you prefer to have an **agreed upon contract**, make sure everything is spelled out clearly; agree upon time lines and completion before starting.
- -A good writer will allow for at least **two proofings** so that you can be sure you're totally satisfied.

Finding a good writer can bring a fresh new approach to your company's marketing material. But remember, even if something is well written, if it doesn't speak to your heart and doesn't reflect the way you anticipated, tell the person that you are not satisfied. Every good writer wants your referrals, so they should be prepared to satisfy your goals and intentions. Whether you are planning to create a new web site, a dynamic press release an important proposal or business plan or even preparing your lifelong manuscript, make sure before you start, you employ the services of someone who has your best interests at heart.

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Charlene Rashkow brings 15 years of experience as a Writing Stylist and Author to her creative efforts as a freelance business writer/consultant. She has successfully helped companies and individuals reach their objectives by writing outstanding press releases, bios, articles of interest, business plans, resumes, web site content and all other forms of marketing material. To speak with Charlene you may contact her at <http://www.allyourwritingneeds.com> or write her at info@allyourwritingneeds.com.

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Published monthly by Elia & Partners, LLC to help business owners and entrepreneurs write effective business plans.

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Full, half and quarter page ads are available. For current rates, contact:

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Feature Articles

1200-2000 words, in plain text format ONLY (no html or formatted text), on one affiliate marketing subject. No general marketing advice or tips. We prefer articles from experts or professional freelancers. Articles with documented results, hard numbers, and factual research will be given first consideration.

We reserve the right to edit all articles.

News & Views

300-600 words, in plain text format, on current news events. Must relate to business plans and financing.

Letters

Send to mike@business-plan-secrets-revealed.com with the words CAPITAL MINUTE LETTER in the subject line.

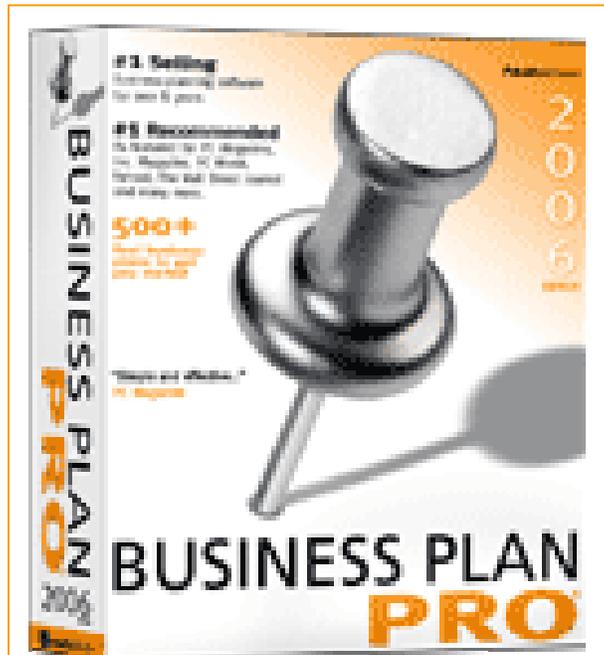
All Submissions

Include your name, email address, resource box, URL, and a photo in .jpg or .png format. Contact the editor via email: mike@business-plan-secrets-revealed.com. We regret that we cannot respond personally to submissions.

You can also send us articles via snail mail:

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