

Business Plan Executive Summary template

A guide for developing an executive summary for technology-based businesses

The Executive Summary is the most important page in a business plan. Its primary objective is to get an investor to want to know more about the opportunity.

Company and Technology Background

- **Company information and brief technical description** - *Briefly state who you are and what you do. It is critical to say what makes you compelling and sets you apart (i.e., your sustainable competitive advantage, the potential for an expedited regulatory approval pathway, growing market, etc.) and a positioning statement for the business. Note: investors are typically looking for an “unfair competitive advantage” - something making this a unique opportunity.*
- **Describe the core technology in the context of an unmet market need** – *This can be in the form of a problem statement and/or a description of the underlying technology and the opportunity it provides. It is preferable to convey a sense that acknowledged unmet need is driving the opportunity rather than “a really cool technology” in search of a problem.*
- **Intellectual property (IP)** - *To a biotechnology company, IP is usually the heart and soul of the business, so a strategy for developing a solid patent position is essential.*
- **Business model/value proposition** – *Briefly describe the “value” you are offering the market and how you will make money.*

Market Opportunity

- **Describe the unmet market need** - *Provide concrete evidence of demand and document the size of the potential opportunity. Many entrepreneurs appear naïve in this area because they “assume” a market without providing validation/documentation, or don’t really understand their niche.*
- **Core competencies** – *Establish that you have the core capabilities to address the unmet needs. In addition to the core technology, this may include IP, development, regulatory, or reimbursement expertise that are necessary to support the company’s commercialization strategy.*
- **Market dynamics/industry structure** – *Demonstrate that you understand the relevant market dynamics (such as competitive structure, size and trends) and how you are positioning to take advantage of them. Entrepreneurs may also appear naïve if they fail to adequately address their competition.*
- **Commercialization strategy** – *Elaborate on your business model/value proposition. Focus on a clearly defined market and develop a clear strategy for positioning your company in that market; include a discussion of strategic partnerships/alliances, product and/or service offerings, etc. that are key to the overall strategy.*
- **Company-specific milestones** - *Describe the key steps in the process of taking the technology/product /service to market. These are objectives that when attained reduce an investor’s perception of the risk involved, thereby increasing the value of the business. Milestones are often directly linked to the technology development, product development and/or regulatory development path.*

Management Team

- **Establish the company’s ability to execute the plan** - *It is critical to show that the company has a team with skill sets appropriate to the stage of the company that can execute the plan (i.e. reach the milestones that you are asking investors to fund), and a plan for growing that team as the needs change. Often startup companies need to use advisors/consultants to complete their teams. Note: typically the company will at first be*

dependent on its founders, but ultimately you must show that it has value as a separate entity apart from the founders.

- **Introduce key players and highlight their accomplishments** - *Discuss their background as it relates to their role in the company and give any other information that enhances their credibility and demonstrates their knowledge of the business space (domain knowledge).*

Investment summary

- **Funding to date** - *Describe amount and type of funding received to date.*
- **Sources and uses of funds** – *It is critical to include a discussion of how existing and future funding enables the company to reach key business objectives, usually framed in terms of milestones.*
- **An abbreviated financial table** - *A table that includes basic, projected revenues and expenses through at least the period for which funding is sought should be included. The full business plan must include detailed financials, generally including a timeline showing how long and how much money it will take to reach significant milestones as well as an estimate of the overall amount required for the company to reach an exit.*

Miscellaneous

- **Mission & vision statement** – *Values-oriented statements can be included in the business plan but generally should be on a separate page; it is critical to let the business case stand on its own merits, or investors won't respect your mission. Having said that, a larger mission can be a key intangible element, the underlying cause driving the commitment of the team to the company's success. This can also contribute to creating a vital "culture of execution."*
- **Avoid extended technology descriptions, emotionally-loaded language, "buzz" words and jargon** – *Describe the technology and underlying science at a level of complexity understandable to an educated lay audience. In addition, although the document is intended to "sell" your business, the tone should be that of a professional communication and not promotional literature. It is the underlying story that must be compelling. Words such as "tremendous", "exciting," etc. sound like hype and undermine credibility.*