

Action Plan Worksheet

This worksheet consists of 7 steps, and is an opportunity for you to get your thoughts down on paper and organize them. It does not have to be perfect. You are encouraged to print out 2-3 copies of this worksheet; jot down what comes to mind with each question, scratch it out as new ideas develop, and add or start again as necessary. An example of a completed Action Plan worksheet is in the tools and templates section of DreamBuilder.

When organizing your thoughts on opening or expanding your business, it is best to start with the end in mind. Think about your motives and what you want to accomplish with your business in both the short and long-term. Answer the questions in the next seven sections to start narrowing your idea into a concrete action plan.

Step 1: Write Your Objectives for Starting or Expanding Your Business

What do you want to accomplish by starting or expanding your business? List at least 3 of your objectives.

Your Objectives for Starting or Expanding Your Business

Step 2: Brainstorm How to Accomplish Your Objectives

After considering your objectives in starting or expanding your business, now begin to brainstorm what you will need to do to accomplish the objectives identified in the previous section. In this section, it is especially important to write down everything that comes to mind. Begin to think about when you will be able to accomplish these objectives.

Brainstorm How to Accomplish Your Objectives

Step 3: Create Your “SMART” Goals

The brainstorming that you did in Step 2 will be the foundation for creating concise and achievable goals. Revisit Step 2 and refine what you wrote down into “SMART” goals. Remember, “SMART” goals should be specific, measurable, actionable, relevant, and time-bound:

- A **specific** goal makes it clear that you know exactly what you want to do.
- A **measurable** goal means that you will know when you have achieved the goal.
- An **actionable** goal means that you are able to do what it takes to achieve the goal.
- A **relevant** goal means that it is the right goal for your situation.
- A **time-bound** goal means that you have set a completion date by which you will achieve the goal.

e.g.

General Goal: *I want my bakery to sell a lot of brownies.*

“SMART” Goal: *I want my bakery to sell a dozen brownies to 200 customers within the first month of business.*

Next, sort your goals by the area of your business to which they apply. These areas include:

1. Management
2. Marketing
3. Finance
4. Operations

Lastly, consider when you will be able to complete your “SMART” goals. Setting a Completion Date will allow you to develop an all-encompassing Action Plan.

Now, fill out the next worksheet, and remember that you can find an example of a completed Action Plan worksheet in the tools and templates section of DreamBuilder.

<i>Business Area</i>	<i>"SMART" Goals</i>	<i>Completion Date:</i>
Management	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	___/___/___ ___/___/___ ___/___/___ ___/___/___ ___/___/___
Marketing	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	___/___/___ ___/___/___ ___/___/___ ___/___/___ ___/___/___
Finance	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	___/___/___ ___/___/___ ___/___/___ ___/___/___ ___/___/___
Operations	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	___/___/___ ___/___/___ ___/___/___ ___/___/___ ___/___/___

Step 4: Identify the Challenges:

Every “SMART” goal that you identified in Step 3 will come with its own unique challenges. Drill down into these “SMART” goals and identify the unique challenges that you may face. Again, categorize these challenges as they address each area of your business.

<i>Challenges to Completing Your “SMART” Goals</i>	
Management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
Marketing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
Finance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

Operations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
-------------------	--

Step 5: Consider Your Allies and Resources:

Now that you have considered your “SMART” goals in Step 3, and the challenges you may face to achieve them in Step 4, it’s time to consider your allies and resources. Your allies and resources can help you overcome challenges and reach your goals.

Allies are the people that you can reach out to for help, and resources are the things that you can use to overcome challenges.

In the box below, list the allies and resources that will help you overcome the challenges you identified for each business area in Step 4. If you need to review the allies and resources topic, now is the time to open the next topic of the “Turning Your Dream Into Reality” course.

<i>Allies and Resources to Accomplish Your “SMART” Goals</i>	
Management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

Marketing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
Finance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
Operations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

Step 6: Make Your Action Plan Matrix

Congratulations! The previous five steps were a lot of work. Now it is time to create your Action Plan Matrix using the information that you input in Sections 3-5.

The following four pages are organized by each area of your business: Management, Marketing, Finance and Operations. On each page, you will transfer the information that you wrote down in Steps 3-5 about the Goals, Completion Date, Challenges, and the Allies and Resources that you have in each area of your business.

****Action Plan Matrix for Each Business Area on Next 4 Pages***

Action Plan Matrix - MANAGEMENT

Today's Date ____/____/____

	Goals	Completion Date	Challenges	Allies and Resources
MANAGEMENT	1.	___/___/___	1.	1.
	2.	___/___/___	2.	2.
	3.	___/___/___	3.	3.
	4.	___/___/___	4.	4.
	5.	___/___/___	5.	5.
		___/___/___		

Action Plan Matrix - MARKETING

Today's Date ____/____/____

	Goals	Completion Date	Challenges	Allies and Resources
MARKETING	1.	___/___/___	1.	1.
	2.	___/___/___	2.	2.
	3.	___/___/___	3.	3.
	4.	___/___/___	4.	4.
	5.	___/___/___	5.	5.
		___/___/___		

Action Plan Matrix - FINANCE					Today's Date ____/____/____
	Goals	Completion Date	Challenges	Allies and Resources	
FINANCE	1.	___/___/___	1.	1.	
	2.	___/___/___	2.	2.	
	3.	___/___/___	3.	3.	
	4.	___/___/___	4.	4.	
	5.	___/___/___	5.	5.	

Action Plan Matrix - OPERATIONS

Today's Date ____/____/____

	Goals	Completion Date	Challenges	Allies and Resources
OPERATIONS	1.	___/___/___	1.	1.
	2.	___/___/___	2.	2.
	3.	___/___/___	3.	3.
	4.	___/___/___	4.	4.
	5.	___/___/___	5.	5.
		___/___/___		

Step 7: Get Feedback on Your Plan

It is important to get honest feedback about your plan from people who you trust and respect. They may bring a different perspective to your idea, or help you make your plan more concrete.

In the box below write the name of up to five people with whom you would be willing to show your Action Plan. These people can be family or friends. However, it is helpful if they have experience in the market that you are targeting, the product or service that you are providing, or running their own business.

<i>People to Provide Feedback on Your Plan</i>
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Now that you have completed all seven steps in this worksheet, you can go back and add any new information to your business plan. This worksheet should help you make your business plan more concise, and also give you an idea of the next steps you need take to either expand your existing business or start a new venture. You now have the foundation to turn your dream into reality.