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Gamer Crow Design

BUSINESS PLAN

# 



**Insert a colour company logo or picture representing company or product/service**

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[DATE]

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# Executive Summary

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The executive summary will provide our Review Panel with a brief yet dynamic description of the key components of the business plan. To make sure it is clear and comprehensive, it is often the last section to be written. A first-time reader should be able to read the summary by itself and know what your business is all about. The summary should stand-alone and should not refer to other parts of your business plan.

The summary, between one to three pages in length, will motivate readers to continue reading the remainder of the business plan in more detail.

**The summary should include the following subsections:**

## Business Description

Provide a brief description of your company. The opening paragraphs should introduce what you do and where. From this section, our Review Panel must be convinced of the uniqueness of the business and gain a clear idea of the market in which the company will operate. The legal form of the business such as LLC, S-Corporation, C-Corporation, Partnership, or Proprietorship should be stated as well as the objectives of the business via a mission statement that clearly states the business' purpose and values. Include a vision statement as well as where you see the business in five to ten years. Be sure to answer the following questions that are usually asked by our Review Panel:

* What form of business are you in?
* What type of business is it (e.g. manufacturing, consulting, reselling, services)?
* Is it a new business, a takeover, a franchise?
* What is your product or service?

## Products and Services

This should include a very brief overview and description of your products and services, with emphasis on distinguishing features. Be sure to answer the following questions that are usually asked by our Review Panel:

* How will the products be made or the services performed?
* What will they do for the customers/clients?
* What is different about the product or service your business is offering?
* What value do you add to your product?
* What is it that separates your company from the rest of the pack?
* Is your product or technology proprietary, patented, copyrighted?

## The Market

Provide a brief description of the market you will be competing in. Here you will define your market, how large it is, and how much of the market share you expect to capture. It is important to reference credible sources and include the name of your source(s) of information along with a date. Indicate how you will market the products/services and which channels will be used to deliver your products/services to your target market(s) (i.e. website, direct sales force, Value Added Resellers, channel partners, etc…). Be sure to answer the following questions that are usually asked by our Review Panel:

* What are the key drivers, trends, and influences in the market?
* To whom do you market your products and services?
* How will you educate your customers to buy from you?
* Who is your target market?

## Competition

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It is important to demonstrate that you have investigated the competition. Identify the direct and indirect competitors, with analysis of their pricing and promotional strategies, as well as an assessment of their competitive advantage. Based on this analysis, you can identify key obstacles for your business, the additional services you might offer, competitive challenges, as well as opportunities ahead. Briefly describe the competitive outlook and dynamics of the relevant market in which you will operate. Be sure to answer the following questions that will be asked by our Review Panel:

* Is your service better, faster, cheaper and if so why?
* Is your advantage a temporary “window” and are there steps you can take to protect your position?
* What have you learned from the competition? From their advertising?
* How is their business currently? Steady? Increasing? Decreasing?

You may also wish to include the following table:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Competitor Name | **Sales** | **Market Share** | **Nature of Competitor** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

**Main Competitors**

## Operations

Operations is defined as the processes used to deliver your products and services to the marketplace and can include manufacturing, transportation, logistics, travel, printing, consulting, after-sales service, and so on. This section should briefly outline how you will implement all of the above and include a brief description of the organizational structure and the expense and capital requirements for operation. Be sure to answer the following questions that are asked by our Review Panel:

* Are your staffing requirements on par with the rest of the industry, is your pay and benefits package appropriate?
* Have you contacted suppliers and distributors and decided which you will choose?
* Do you have insurance? If so, does it provide adequate coverage?
* Have you prepared a contingency plan if some difficulties should occur?
* What facilities and equipment do you require? How much does they cost?
* What inventory will you have on hand? Where will you keep it?

## 

## Management Team

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The quality of a company’s management team is one of the best predictors of success, thus we will look very closely at the individual(s) who will be managing the company. The ideal scenario is that senior managers have previously started and successfully managed companies in the same business. If your management team cannot show this kind of background, you should emphasize the previous relevant experiences of the team. Mention past experience, education, positions held and milestones achieved. Be sure to answer the following questions that are usually asked by our Review Panel:

* President /Lead Programmer/Web Developer/Artist and Marketing manager

Current work position is that of Video Game Company General Manager oversees all production and head of Programming, Art and Human Resources.

Education Background: Marketing and Advertising 3 years

Web Development 8 months

See resume and web portfolio

Video Game Design and Development 2.5 years.

* Lead Programmer - A Programming wizard who will plan structure, and manage code base of all projects. Problem solver and maintains code executing.

Video Game Design and Development 2.5 years.

* Financial Officer /Accountant
* Programmer
* Video Game Interns
* Art Interns
* Website Development Interns

## Risk/Opportunity

Risks are a part of any business, especially a new one. In this section, it is important to show our Review Panel that you have taken into consideration the risk involved with starting or expanding your venture. Illustrate the market, pricing, product, and management risks as well as how you plan to overcome these risks.

Convey to our Review Panel that the company and product/service truly fills an unmet need in the marketplace. Describe and quantify the opportunity and where you fit. Explain why you are in business along with the reasons why you will be able to take advantage of this opportunity. Be sure to answer the following questions that are usually asked by our Review Panel:

* Have you considered all the possible risks involved?
* Does your business have a contingency plan in place for all of the risks mentioned?
* What makes this opportunity unique?
* What are the financial risks for your business? How will these risks be minimized?
* What is the worst-case scenario? How will your business handle it?

## Financial Summary

The financial section of the business plan will help you estimate how much money will be required and how much profit and sales will be generated. This process will force you to think through the various scenarios that may arise through the course of business and the respective responses to each. Be sure to answer the following questions that are usually asked by our Review Panel:

* Have you stated your break-even point?
* What are the potential problems you are certain your business will face and what are the solutions to these problems?
* Are the balance sheet and income statement completed for three years?

This table should include a recap of your income statement:

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|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Year 1** | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 |
| **Revenue** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Cost of Goods Sold** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Gross Profit** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Operating Costs |  |  |  |  |  |
| Finance & Admin |  |  |  |  |  |
| Sales & Marketing |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Total Expenses** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Net Income Before Tax** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Less: Income Tax** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Net Income** |  |  |  |  |  |

This table should include a summary of your balance sheet:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| As of [Date] | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 |
| **Assets** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Liabilities** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Equity** |  |  |  |  |  |

**Financial Summary**

## Capital Requirements

Clearly state the capital needed to start or expand your business. You should have a very clear idea of how much money you will need to operate your business for the first full year. If possible, summarize how much money has been invested in the business to date and how it is being used. Describe why you need the funds and why the opportunity is exciting. Keep in mind that one of the most common causes of new business failures is under-capitalization. The following tables are useful to portray the sources and uses of funds:

**Source of funds:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Source** | **Amount** | **Percentage** |
| Your contribution (If any) |  |  |
| Grant |  |  |
| Loans |  |  |
| **Total** |  |  |

**Use of funds:**

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|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Amount** | **Percentage** |
| Sales & Marketing | 2000 | 0.2 |
| Capital Expenditures |  |  |
| G & A Expenses |  |  |
| Other |  |  |
| **Total** |  |  |

**Executive Summary checklist:**

* Does your Executive Summary capture the essence of your business plan?
* Does your Summary sell your distinctive competence for executing the plan?
* Does it sell your strategy for success?
* Does it stand-alone from your business plan (without reference to the business plan)?
* Is your Summary short, clear and exciting? Does it make the reader want to dive into the complete plan for more details?
* Do you cover all of the main elements of your plan (Business Description, Products and Services, The Market, Competition, Operations, Management Team, Risk/Opportunity, Financial Summary and Capital Requirements)

# 1. Business Description

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## 1.1 Industry Overview

The gaming industry in Canada already employs 14,000 people, according to a 2010 report from the Entertainment Software Association of Canada. It’s worth $1.7 billion in direct economic activity, not including retail sales.

The lucrative industry is poised to grow even more.

Canada is set to be the fastest-growing entertainment and media market in North America, with a projected annual growth of five per cent between 2010 and 2014, the report says.

Brainy graduates of video game and animation programs have generally flocked to Quebec and B.C., Canada’s established gaming hubs. But industry players say Toronto – and the rest of Ontario – is catching up.

B.C. has the Electronic Arts studio in Burnaby – the largest studio owned by the California based company. Electronic Art, known for The Sims, Medal of Honor and Madden NFL titles, also has a studio in Montreal.

Radical Entertainment, known for its Crash Bandicoot series, was founded in Vancouver.

Toronto has more small game companies than Montreal or Vancouver, but overall, the industry still employs fewer people.

Ian Kelso, the president of Interactive Ontario, a not-for-profit digital media trade organization, said he’s seen a surge over the past three years in the number of gaming companies starting up in Ontario.

“Toronto has become globally recognized for its thriving independent scene. We’ve seen it reflected in our membership, which has gone from about 120 companies to about 300 companies,” Kelso said. “A lot of those are game start-ups.”

To support these start-ups, the Ontario government announced in last year’s budget they would increase the Ontario Digital Media Tax Credit to 40 per cent from 30 per cent for corporations that develop and market their own products.

This means video game companies can get help covering labour costs, and marketing and distribution expenses.

The Ontario Media Development Corporation (OMDC) also doles out the interactive digital media fund. Last month, it announced 19 recipients from across the province would share $2 million in funding.

Most of those recipients’ projects were gaming related.

Financial incentives and industry growth have helped foster a supportive and creative environment, said Kristine Murphy, the OMDC’s director of industry development.

“Ontario is a thriving independent game development jurisdiction,” she said. “There’s growth in the independent games, (particularly) for games being developed for a variety of platforms: the iPhone, BlackBerry, all of the small hand-held devices (and) social media games.”

More platforms means the games will appeal to a broader range of people.

Forty-nine per cent of gamers play on the computer, according to the Entertainment Software Association of Canada.

Thirty-four per cent play on a console like the Xbox 360, 10 per cent play on a hand-held system and seven per cent use a mobile device like a cellphone.

## 1.2 Company Description

Video Monkeys (Our company) is a brand new Video Game/App Development and Website Design company that is in the initial phases owned by Alexander A Sanchez. Video Monkey will compete in the latest market trends producing video games and applications primarily and as an aside will also offer the design of websites to companies.

Video Monkeys is a virtual office with no physical address at the present time and that is because with the funding we are requesting we only require to cover the costs of members wages and the tools to fulfill their duties and with that being said the company members can work from home during the first year of production the company exists virtually as the programming members that conform the company will be using file sharing tools to keep in close communication during the development of any applications or games and the members will meet accordingly once or twice a month in an office space or meeting room.

As an alternative location the members of this company also happen to all be alumni of the same college and are welcome to use the college campus for their meetings as part of the relationship established between the owner and the college also included in this harmonious relationship in which both parties benefit is us accepting their pre-graduates in to our internship programs.

Video Monkeys hopes to become the next Big Viking or Digital Extremes as it opens its doors for the first time as a smaller indie video game development company its hopes and aspirations are not limited to its physical size. The talented outfit that is Raven strives to make quality video games and software applications that will leave a serious and positive imprint in today’s players.

### Mission Statement

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### 

Everything we do at Raven Entertainment is based on the success of the gaming experiences we provide our players. The goal of each discipline within the company – be it art, programming or customer support – is to make our games as immersive as possible for as many people as we can reach. Video Ravens strives to touch the heart of the players who will remember our games for all the marvel and level of excellence and hard work that was invested in to each game or application we create.

Quality is our top priority all throughout the development of each product. The highly adept team of Raven Studios is determined and driven to contribute their greatest talents to making games that will be remembered by the masses for many years yet to come.

Our Vision is .

## 1.3 History and Current Status

Raven Studios begins with a lifetime devotion and a soul passion for video games. Like many of the greatest Video Game company predecessors we begin with the love for the art of video games. The love for video games is so great the owners decided to go to school to learn how to make games and that they did and became leading edge candidates for competing and becoming leaders in today’s current video game crazed markets.

Raven Entertainment is just beginning as a brand new company in a conceptual and virtual stage of existence. The members of Raven Studios have all completed the Video Game Design and Development Course at Trios College in London Ontario and have established great bonds during the time of their enrollment and continuous relationship established with the schools administrative members and faculty.

**Internship Enrollment Program**

A great part of our companies members will be conformed of students who have completed their courses in college and are searching to complete their required internships and gain practical experience in a real life work environment and from this all parties can benefit from each other and work in harmony in the exciting venture which is video game and website development.

Interns will also have to opportunity to join our smaller or larger projects during their 4 months of internship as a follow up advancement course which all interns of the Video Game Design and Development course require to complete their course and graduate.

The internship is not only limited to those who graduate the Video Game Design and Development course as we are video game and software application company we can employ many interns from different career paths which are all related in our field of study and work in one way or another such as the Video Game Technical Artist course which focuses on the artistic aspect of game development with the development of 2 dimensional artwork for character sprite-sheets and GUI elements like game Heads up display(HUD) or game interface as well for 3Dimensional games they have the knowledge and required technical skill for the creation of 3D models that are used in most modern console games like Playstation and Xbox or pc games.

But that is not all and certainly not where it ends we would also be able to extend and open our doors to the Website Development course and offer interns the hands on practice that they can only receive in a real life work environment and we could benefit mutually from these internship programs and in turn our company can have these different aspects covered and our reach is that far greater as we will be able to offer a more flexible and fun environment to work for our employees and interns and extend our service capacity and not limit ourselves to the sole development of video games only.

## 1.4 Goals and Objectives.

##### Objectives

The main objective our company has is to touch the hearts of our players and that we may be remembered and thought of by our final consumers, as that is the signature mark of a great video game. Our intentions to put our stamp in the masses and offer high quality games that are either strictly for entertainment value or in some way send a positive message and or partake in the educational realm of mobile applications for children and our many target markets. We hope to expand and double in size by the end of our first year of production and any further expansion is most certainly welcome. We believe we do have the possibility of growth especially since we will be able to employ many college interns at no cost to us and cover higher productivity volumes and assure that quality will exist in every aspect of development. As time continues to move forward we will be opening our doors to anyone who would like to join one of our departments and there is a possibility to host many interns at one time. Success will come later once our products are produced and available in the different mobile device stores. Diversity exists of course wherever there is a science or form of art and we try and remain open minded and flexible and with our technological backgrounds can offer so much to ensure company growth. Our long term goals are to become a larger studio that could employ 80-200 people like Digital Extremes and be their top competitors in the production of triple A titles that are played and enjoyed by so many.

## 1.5 Critical Success Factors

* Our success relies on the efficient utilization of hours worked by our programmers and their abilities will determine how productive each hour of work measured.
* The company will also rely on some of the minor or more trivial tasks to be completed by our programming and artist interns.
* Creative ideas and distinct and professional artwork produced by our artists.
* The developer tools that will be used like the 3D game engine Unity will allow programmers to complete the games much faster than coding everything from scratch like is the scenario with most programming languages and environments.
* File sharing tools are also a good way to measure the work being done by an individual working on a project as there are time stamps and details including metrics analysis for programmers number of commits on a project.
* Some of the internal and external elements that have an immediate and direct impact on our company might be the changing trends and rapid changes in technology.
* The originality and quality of our games separate us from the bunch
* Some of our competitive strengths are our cutting edge artwork and original style games along with our extensive video game programming knowledge.
* If you are asking for funding, go on to explain how the new capital will help you successfully meet your upcoming challenges.
* We are requesting funding to essentially pay for our programmers wages myself included being that our primary cost that makes everything possible along with the developer tools that are needed to make our games and most file sharing systems are free to use like GitHub.
* Educational games and applications for children

## 1.6 Company Ownership

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This section will identify the owners of the business and should address the following:

* Who are the owners? How much of the shares do they own?
* Who are the people in the management team?
* List the name of the individual and the position held
* Describe the owners' plan for succession. Who takes over after you retire?

Use the following table to clearly show how the ownership will be broken down:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| As of [Date] |  |  |  |
| **Name** | **Title (if Applicable)** | **Number of Shares** | **Percentage of Ownership** |
| Alexander Auriel Sanchez | Owner /President/Lead Programmer/Art Director and head of Web Development Department | 100% | 100% |
|  |  | 0% | 0% |
|  | TOTAL | 100% | 100% |

**Ownership of Company**

## 1.7 Exit Strategy

In the case that I may want to exit the company the sale or merger of the company is one sure way to go as we live in the Hub for video game development and there are so many website companies here before us. As an alternative there is also the possibility of a management buyout if the lead programmer or lead artist just underneath in the company structure would want to purchase the company shares.

* The sale or merger of your company
* A management buyout

# 2. Products / Services

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This section is a detailed description of the products and/or services you will be selling or providing. Since the reader may not be familiar with your product/service, make sure to explain and describe it carefully. Begin to sell your idea by generating some excitement about it. Be honest about capabilities. When our Review Panel has finished learning about your product or service, they should be enthusiastic about reading the marketing and financial details of your venture.

Try to describe the benefits of your goods and services from a customers' perspective.

Make sure to include technical specifications, drawings, photos, sales brochures, and other items that you deem appropriate in the appendix.

**In a few paragraphs, answer the following questions:**

* What exactly is your product or service?
* What marketplace needs does your product address?
* Who will purchase it?
* How will your product or service benefit the customer? What are its features?
* How does your product work or how is the service used?
* Which after-sales services are provided? (e.g. delivery, warranty, support, follow-up, or refund policy)
* What proprietary rights do you have to the product/service? Patents, copyrights, trade secrets, non-compete agreements? Other proprietary knowledge or skills?
* What is your pricing strategy?
* What are the sales price, cost, and profit margin for each product line?
* Which products/services are in demand?
* What are your current sales?
* What are the boundaries of your business?
* Are there other vendors involved and if so who and where do they fit?
* What is included in the product's bill of materials? (Major components only)
* Are there any current/potential component supply problems?

**The Products/Services section should include the following subsections:**

## 2.1 Product/Service Description

Begin by stating your [YOUR COMPANY NAME] and the product or service you provide. List all products/services in order of highest to lowest sales or importance of product line. If possible, try to refer to patents, diagrams, product displays, or other supporting material.

For each product/service, describe the main features and benefits. State at what stage of growth your product/service is in [introductory, growth, maturity] and when you initially developed your product/service. When possible, provide a historical summary of product developments, introductions, and improvements up to the time of the business plan in a table.

Raven Gamer prides itself in offering exciting and high quality video games and mobile device applications across many developer platforms including IOS and Android and also has the possibility of website development to offer a large gamma of software development to private companies and the final consumers.

Studio Monkeys is a Video Game Development studio that produces primarily cutting edge technology Video Games and applications at affordable consumer prices online in app stores. Much of the focus of internal resources is spent on these projects and finally to help sustain the business in the first years of operation we offer clients small websites and software solutions.

### Existing Products

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* Animal Tales learn to spell children’s game/app
* Our products or games are high quality and made with love and high standards using production code our programmers are professionally adept to make excellent software.
* Professional Artwork designed with the latest in technology.
* We make games people will want to play
* Immersive, captivating
* Affordable
* Educational
* Entertaining and we promote good ethics and moral values, most of our games will be for the General audience.
* We are starting the business so we have to make the games once we hire the team.
* Weaknesses or limitations might include we are a small outfit and in direct competition with console and triple A titles we are a completely different market and in comparison to these titles that take 2-4 years to make they sell their games anywhere from $30-$90 we sell our games at no more than 3.99 a download and can only be played on mobile devices which could prolong the time required to meet our sustainability. The reason for this of course is the size and work capacity that our team hence we limit ourselves to the development on smaller platforms like mobile devices until we get up on our own feet. There are visions of triple-A titles being produced within the company perhaps 3 or 4 years later in its life cycle of the company and by then we will be in direct competition with companies like Big Viking and Digital Extremes also home based here in London, Ontario.
* Some of our target markets include : General audience and or Children of all ages
* Video game fanatics.

### Description of the Products

* General concepts
* Specific features
* The cost and labor of production methods
* In what stage of development are the products?
* Product liability considerations?
* What is your pricing strategy?
* All our applications are made by video game programmers and professional career artists.
* All games and applications generally have a Menu and interface with which the player interacts with the games different events, sounds music, animations, and creative artwork.
* Creative design and artistic originality so we use all original artwork
* Web Design services will be offered
* Does your service create a competitive advantage?
* We will focus on servicing with smaller websites and be able to offer them to companies at ½ the going rate as they will be created by interns under the supervision of myself the Web director.

### Stage of Development

### 

Briefly describe the current status of your product or service:

* Where is the product in its lifecycle (early, growing, mature, declining)?
* Is it ready for the market, or is it in development?
* What obstacles remain?
* What is the timeframe for introducing these products to the market?
* How up-to-date are your products? Address potential obsolescence or losses of market share.
* Has your product been tested / evaluated and if so, where, when and what were the results.
* Products are early in the production stages. There are game demonstrations in beta and silver versions created in Unity and a Windows 8 store app which we feel we could invest the resources and make fully functional polish the artwork and make ready for release in 2-3 months.
* Obstacles include to recreate some of the same titles in other platforms to allow them to compete in the major mobile store environments like IOS for IPhone and Android.
* Our applications vary in the amount of work and resources that are allocated to each product depending on its technical requirements.

## 2.2 Unique Features or Proprietary Aspects of Product/Service

In this section you will show how your product or service is unique. Explain the unique value-added characteristics of your product line or service and how these value-added characteristics will in turn give your business a competitive advantage.

Begin by stating why your business is unique (e.g. patent, secret ingredient, new production process, unmatched know-how). Explain how the competition may provide a similar product/service but provide the reasons why your business is able to differentiate itself in the market.

Be sure to give the details on any patents you have applied for, been granted, or been licensed. Provide a summary of the patent in the appendix. Point out your lead product/service and demonstrate how it addresses customer needs and benefits.

In today’s mobile store market there is a great constant unmet demand for top quality standardized games and applications that are as incredibly immersive and captivating as they are well produced. Henceforth we plan to instill our presence and offer high quality software products that are both well designed and produced by an adept crew of professional technicians conformed of software developers and artists. Our programming team strongly advocates object oriented programming and good software design and the artists use advanced techniques in the latest in 2D and 3D artwork with programs like Photoshop, Illustrator, Maya and Blender. Our games are very lustrous and rich in its look and feel. The environments that exist in the game worlds are very engaging and atmospheric effects the edge of their seats and wanting more. Games can be made quickly and under licensing with high powered 3D game engine Unity 5.Our team of artist produce high resolution and polished artwork to make our games genuine and original. We take making games very seriously and the quality of the games speaks for itself.

## 2.3 Research and Development

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If your business is big enough to have either a Research and Development department or employee, specify the people in charge and their major objectives. List what your Research and Development has accomplished in the past such as innovative products/services. Account for what has been spent in the past year in percentage of revenue or actual dollar amount. If there are any plans for the future, give the percentage of revenue or dollar amount that will be allocated and the duration of the plan.

Selecting a product/service from idea to market can be a difficult task. It is a good idea to have criteria in place for deciding which product/service to move forward with. These criteria may include but are not limited to:

* Relatively low investment requirements
* Positive return on investment
* Feasibility of development and execution
* Uniqueness in the market
* Relatively low risk
* Timeliness of results

## 2.4 Production

This section will give more details on how your product/service is manufactured or delivered. To better assist you in writing this particular section, a product-oriented approach and a service-oriented approach are provided.

### Product

There are a number of things to address when your business is product oriented. First, state if your product(s) is manufactured in-house or assembled in-house from various vendors, then list the raw materials, sub assemblies, or components used for your product. Identify where you purchase your materials or any manufacturers you may use for sub assembly.

List the critical factors in the production of your product.

Specify and explain capital equipment, material, and labor requirements. Are the above items readily available? Do you have multiple supply sources? List inventory requirements, quality, and technical specifications, and hazardous materials.

### Service

Service-oriented businesses will address issues in a different manner. Anyone operating a service-oriented business will state if his or her service is provided by internal staff or subcontracted to field consultants. If there are procedures for delivering the service it will be described in this section.

List the critical factors for the delivery of service.

Specify if there will be a particular service level that has to be maintained and how you will maintain these levels.

## Website Development Department

A team of web design interns will operate in this division and put to practice their skills in the development of small applications and small client websites.

## 2.5 New and Follow-on Products/Services

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As your business expands, there will come a time to launch new products and services. If you already have new products in mind, point them out in this section. Specify whether they will be an extension of an existing product or completely new products. Your plan should include when and how you will launch the product/service (e.g. at major trade shows, industry events, through free samples, contests, etc.). Provide a target introduction date for the product/service.

### Future Products

* Are there plans for future or next generation products? If so, what and when?
* Are these new products included in your revenue and cost projections?
* List of Products that are included within revenue and cost projections and their respective production timeframes :

Animal Tales (2-3 months)

Vampire Runner (2-3 months)

Squirrel Adventures 1 and 2 (4-8 months)

Anti-Bullying Double Dragon Spinoff

(the Amazing Adventures of Fluffy and Spike)(4-6 months)

### Market Comparison

In one or two paragraphs, position your new product or service in its marketplace:

* Who are your principal competitors?
* What are their products?
* Why is your product/service superior and how is it different?
* What is unique about your product/service?

# 3. The Market

The success of many new ventures is often determined by how well they have prepared this section of the business plan. The section itself should be broken down into subsections for industry analysis, market analysis, and competitor analysis. To properly write this section of the business plan, conducting or gathering market research is very important. It is for this reason that we have supplied a short segment on Market Research before the subsections.

### Why do market research?

Every business can benefit from doing market research to ensure it is where it wants to be. Use the business planning process as your opportunity to uncover data and question your marketing efforts. Rest assured it will benefit your business in the future and is time well spent.

There are two types of market research: primary and secondary.

**Primary market research** involves collecting your own data. Some examples of primary research include using the Internet and yellow pages to identify your local, national, and global competition. Conducting surveys, group interviews, and focus groups to learn more about potential consumers and niches for your particular business. Paying for professional research could be hard for anyone starting a new business. However, there are a number of books on the market, which can show small business owners how to conduct effective research by themselves.

**Secondary market research** involves using published information such as industry profiles, trade journals, newspapers, demographic profiles, magazines, census data, and books. This type of information is available from public libraries, industry associations, chambers of commerce, vendors who sell to your industry, business information centers, government departments, and agencies.

**The Market section should include the following subsections:**

## 3.1 Industry Analysis

The industry analysis subsection should objectively describe the industry in which you will compete. The government and suppliers of equipment for your industry are great sources of information. Use the Internet to research stats and reports. When completed with this section, our Review Panel should understand the dynamics, problems, and opportunities driving your industry.

**Try to find answers to the following questions:**

* How is your industry defined? What is its NAIC (North American Industry Classification) code?
* How is the industry segmented? How are the segments defined?
* What are current trends and important developments?
* Who are the largest and most important players?
* What problems is the industry experiencing?
* What national and international events are influencing this industry?
* What are growth forecasts?
* What is the total estimated industry sales (i.e. current, 5-year, 10-year outlook)
* Are there any general industry standards, benchmarks and performance requirements

### General Information

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* Economic sector, service sector, manufacturing methods, distribution channels
* Particular type of industry (e.g. Manufacturing, Consumer Goods, Retail, Technology, Life sciences, Transportation, etc.)
* Industry structure
* Level of competition, dominant players, presence of conglomerates, noticeable past failures, noticeable new entries

### Size, Growth Rate, Trends, Drivers of the Industry

* Rate of expansion. How does it compare to GNP growth?
* How your specific sector might be different
* Predicted trends and the strategic opportunities they offer
* Major industry trends, fashion and fads
* Changes of use of product

### Sensitivity to Economic Cycles & Seasonality

* How will national and international trends affect your business?
* How will local industry affect your situation?
* How will seasonal variations in business affect your cash flow?
* Demand cycles

### Legal, Political and Economical Factors

* Present and future laws as well as policies affecting your business
* Presence of government agencies and regulating bodies
* Corporate tax shelters
* Government spending
* Political climate (e.g. stable, war setting, etc.) and stability of government
* How can local and national regulation affect your business? (Inspection standards, wage and tax changes, etc.)

### Sociocultural Factors

* Lifestyle and sociocultural changes
* Environmental concerns
* Change in use of disposable income
* Living conditions (amenities, utilities, pollution)

### Technological Factors

* Breakthrough technologies or processes, technologies under development
* Rate of technological innovation
* Relative cost of technology, research and development
* Industry dependence on technological factors, impact of technological innovation
* Energy use

### Finance Norms & Patterns

* Terms with vendors, customers, the capital market
* Standard markup of products
* Inventory par levels
* Profit expectations, etc.

## 3.2 Market Analysis

In your market analysis subsection, you have to describe the specific market in which you will be competing. Your market will probably be smaller than the entire industry defined above. Much of the research you do for this subsection will be to talk with experts in the marketplace, potential customers, competitors, sales representatives, wholesalers, distributors, and retailers. A thorough research of the market is the most important part in the development of a business plan. As well, it will help to isolate a target market and the behaviors and habits of the people within this market to better understand customer needs and expectations.

If it is a locally based business, you need to evaluate the demand for your product/service within a specific radius, based on what you determine is a reasonable distance from your business. If it is a web-based business or a business that relies on both the Internet and local traffic for revenues, you will need to evaluate demand on a local, national, international, basis. Be sure to identify any voids in the market which are currently not served, and which you presumably will fill. A research report from sites such as Forrester Research can cost hundreds to thousands of dollars. However, you may be able to get some basic information simply by using the Internet and its many search engines and directories.

### Market Segmentation and Target Market

Identify and segment the customers in your marketplace. The research you conduct for this subsection will be with customers and potential customers. It is imperative that you do sufficient customer research to convince our Review Panel (and yourself) that there is an unmet need in the marketplace. The description will be completely different depending on whether you sell to other businesses or directly to consumers. If you sell a consumer product, but sell it through a channel of distributors, wholesalers and retailers, then you must carefully analyze both the end user and the middlemen businesses to which you sell.

You may well have more than one customer group. Identify the most important groups. Then, for each consumer group, construct a Market Segment profile with the following breakdown:

**Demographics**

* Age, income range, sex, occupations, marital status, family size, ethnic groups, education, sophistication, home or auto owner, etc.

**Geographics**

* Area served 🡪 neighborhood, city, region
* Density 🡪 urban, suburban, rural
* Nature of the location 🡪 downtown, business, shopping, residential
* Transportation 🡪 how can customers and employees access the store (walk, drive, public transportation)?

**Lifestyle**

* Family status (single, newly married couple, full nest I, full nest II, etc.)
* Hobbies, sports, entertainment interests
* Television, radio, magazines, and other media preferences
* Political and other organization affiliation

**Psychographics**

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* Status seeking or trend setting?
* Socially or environmentally conscious?
* Free spending or conservative?
* Practical or fun seeking?

**Buying** **Factors and Sensitivity**

* Price, quality, brand name, service
* Special product features, advertising, packaging
* Location, store design, ambiance, sanitation
* Nature or quantity of other customers

### Market Size and Trends

Begin by stating the market you are competing in, how big it is in terms of a dollar amount and your source/date of information. Next, state any future trends you believe will occur in the market and your reasoning behind your beliefs. This can be achieved by listing the primary or secondary research you have performed. Once again, be sure to reference any source of information you have used to show our Review Panel that you have done your homework. Some common questions this section should address:

* How big is the target market?
* How fast is it growing?
* Where is the market heading?
* What economic and social factors will be influencing the market?
* How will the market’s needs be changing and why?

### Market Needs

Define any current needs in the market and how your product or service will fulfill those needs.

**Market Growth**

Gathering information on historical development and growth will aid in assessing potential market opportunities for the future. Business success is determined by not only recognizing what "today's" customers want, but also what "tomorrow’s" customers will need. Try to identify the future makeup of the market you are entering and state whether the market will be growing or maturing in the short and long run.

* Will the price of your product increase/decrease in the future?
* How fast is it the market growing?
* What is the stage of development of the market? (Growth, maturation, decline)
* How is the market affected by the state of the economy?

## 

## 3.3 Competitor Analysis

Competition occurs on a daily basis no matter what line of business you are in. Advances in technology can send the profit margins of a successful business into a tailspin causing them to plummet overnight or within a few hours. When considering these and other factors, we can conclude that business is a highly competitive, volatile arena. Because of this volatility and competitiveness, in some cases, it is important to know your competitors, what they have accomplished, and the challenge you have before you. Your competitors have preceded you into the market. They have established position, distribution, market exposure, and a customer base. The success of your business depends on your company’s ability to take market share away from these competitors or to address a segment of the market that is not currently being addressed. If you are anticipating taking market share, you need to explain how you are going to do it. There are a number of issues that you should consider in completing your competitive analysis. Our Review Panel should have the sense that you have insights into your competition that they cannot get from reading the competitors' website or prospectus.

### Competitive Landscape

* Focus only on the competitors who are targeting the same market
* Indicate level of competition in industry (e.g. fierce, moderate) and number of competitors
* Describe type(s) of competition affecting your business (product/service competition, competition at the level of corporate/marketing strategy or business model, or competition based on specific attributes such as price, quality, features, etc.)
* Categorize the competition by type (e.g. chain restaurant, in-house facility, lunch wagon)

### List your major competitors:

* Names & addresses
* Identify main sources of competition (direct competitors, indirect competitors, substitutes, potential entrants, related products) and evaluate relative intensity of competition arising from each sources
* Identify major competitors and lesser competitors and list them in categories based on source type (refer to above item) and/or based on their threat level
* Identify the factors that give power to competitor(s) (e.g. marketing strategy, superior product, established company, strong financial backing, expertise, relationship with key industry members, etc.)
* Identify the strategies and/or market conditions that have allowed competitors to achieve good results and, if applicable, what caused them to fail

### Compare your products/services with competition:

Use the following table entitled *Competitive Analysis* to compare your company with your three most important competitors.

In the first column are key competitive factors. Since these vary with each market, you may want to customize the list of factors.

In the cell, labeled "Company” state how you honestly think you stack up in customers' minds. Then check whether you think this factor is a strength or a weakness for you. Sometimes it is hard to analyze our own weaknesses. Try to be honest. Better yet, get some disinterested strangers to assess you. This can be a real eye-opener.

Now analyze each major competitor. In a few words, state how you think they stack up.

In the final column, estimate how important each competitive factor is to the customer. 1 = critical; 5 = not very important.

Competitive Analysis Table

| **FACTOR** | **Company** | **Strength** | **Weakness** | **Competitor A** | **Competitor B** | **Competitor C** | **Importance to Customer** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Products** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Price** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Quality** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Selection** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Service** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Reliability** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Stability** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Expertise** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Company Reputation** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Location** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Appearance** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Sales Method** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Credit Policies** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Advertising** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Image** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

### Competitive Advantage and Comparative Evaluation

Having done the competitive analysis matrix above, write a short paragraph stating your competitive advantages and disadvantages for both you and your competitors:

**Goals**

* Price (and hidden costs), credit policies
* Location
* Quality
* Special product features
* Image/style/perceived value
* Service (and special service features), customer relations, social image.

**Internal Strengths**

* Financial strength, volume purchasing power
* Marketing and promotional program and budget
* Operational advantages, strategic partnerships
* Company morale🡪 personnel motivation, commitment, productivity

**Market Share and Distribution**

* How is the market distributed?
* Does any one or two companies dominate the market?
* How will you obtain sufficient market share?

### Strategic Opportunities

* How can you use your competitive advantage to exploit opportunities in the marketplace?
* Where are your competitors vulnerable and how will you be able to take advantages of these weaknesses?

### Barriers to Market Entry and Exit

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Defined as a cost that must be incurred by a new entrant, entry barriers can benefit some new businesses while stopping others in their tracks. No matter which side of the barrier you are on, it is important to identify any barriers your business will have to overcome or have set in place for new entrants. Some of the more common barriers to entry include:

* High capital costs
* High production costs
* High marketing costs
* Consumer acceptance/brand recognition
* Government regulations
* Changing economy
* Change in technology
* Shipping costs
* Patents and proprietary knowledge
* Unions

Barriers to exit limit the ability of a firm to leave a market and can exacerbate rivalry. Examples of entry and exit barriers can be found below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Easy to Enter if there are:**   * Common technology * Little brand loyalty * Access to distribution channels * Low scale threshold | **Difficult to Enter if there are:**   * Patented or proprietary know-how * Difficulty in brand switching * Restricted distribution channels * High scale threshold |
| **Easy to Exit if there are:**   * Salable assets * Low exit costs * Independent businesses | **Difficult to Exit if there are:**   * Specialized assets * High exit costs * Interrelated businesses |

# 4. Marketing Strategies and Sales

The Marketing and Sales section of your plan will make or break the prospects for your venture. A great idea is meaningless if you cannot find customers. Carefully drafted and logical financial projections are irrelevant if nobody buys your product/service. In this Marketing Strategy section you must convince our Review Panel that there is indeed an eager market for your product. The Marketing Strategy section is where you show how you are going to fit into the market structure you just finished describing. What are unmet needs in the marketplace and how are you going to fill them? How will you differentiate your product/service from your competitors? What unique features, benefits, or capabilities will you bring to the marketplace? Who are your customers? Research you do for this subsection will be with customers, potential customers, plus any necessary secondary data. It is imperative that you do sufficient customer research to convince our Review Panel (and yourself) that customers will indeed come flocking to buy your product or service. Customer research can include simply talking with potential customers to get reactions to your product idea, conducting focus groups, undertaking walk-up or mailed surveys, putting up a mock demonstration of your concept and soliciting customer feedback, and so on. Be creative in finding ways to get honest customer input about your product or service. Finally, do not inadvertently cook the books here. Since you are enthusiastic about your concept, customers will notice your enthusiasm and often reflect it back to you, leading to erroneous conclusions about customer acceptance. It is therefore preferable to be neutral and factual as you collect data.

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**The Market Strategies and Sales section should include the following subsections:**

## 4.1 Introduction

Begin with the fundamentals of your marketing plan. State target market segments you wish to penetrate, how you plan to achieve this (e.g. through retail, mail order, multi-level marketing, the Internet) and the period for capturing a specific percentage of the market share.

## 4.2 Market Segmentation Strategy

Explain your strategy for each segment you have described in section 3.2 (Market Segmentation and Target Market). Describe the unmet need of your target consumers that your product/service fulfils or the problem it solves. The main types of segmentation strategies are as follows (you may also choose a combination of strategies):

* Geographic segmentation: segmenting customers based on geographic area (city, country, postal code, metropolitan statistical areas, time-zone, etc.)
* Product-user segmentation: segmenting customers based on product usage (amount and/or consumption patterns of a product category or brand)
* Lifestyle segmentation: segmenting customers based on lifestyle (which includes: values, beliefs, perceptions, leisure activities, preference for social events, sports interest, media usage, political views, etc.)

## 4.3 Targeting Strategy

Identify the targeting strategy to implement. This will determine which market segments you will focus on. The three main targeting strategies are:

* Mass Marketing: go after the market as a whole with one offer that answers common needs
* Differentiated Marketing: go after several market segments with offers tailored to each
* Target (Niche) Marketing: go after a small segment or sub-segment with a tailored offer

## 4.4 Positioning Strategy

Here you will include the strategy you will use to position your product vis-à-vis competitors. Some of the common product positioning strategies includes:

* Positioning in relation to competitor (head-to-head comparisons, differential advantage)
* Positioning in relation to a product class or attribute (e.g. low energy consumption, environmentally friendly, efficient, time saver)
* Positioning in relation to target market
* Positioning by price and quality (high-quality, low-price leader, luxury)
* Repositioning (gives old product new image)

### Corporate Message and Image

* The message you portray through all your marketing efforts should be clear, consistent, and reflect your corporate image
* Image can be portrayed directly (through a description of products, pricing, services, etc.) or indirectly (through suggestive design elements, logos, or uniforms, etc.)

## 4.5 Product/Service Strategy

Describe how your product/service has been designed and tailored to meet the needs of your target customer and how it will compete in your target market:

* What specific product/service features meet the needs of your customers?
* What differentiates your product in your target market?
* How does it differ from that of your competitors?
* What are the strengths of your product/service? Its weaknesses?
* Why will customers in your target market buy your product rather than the competition's?
* How will you differentiate yourself from your competitors?
* Why will customers switch to or select your product?
* How quickly and how effectively can competitors respond to your business?

## 

## 4.6 Pricing Strategy

Your pricing strategy is a marketing technique that is part of your overall marketing/positioning strategy. Upon examining the pricing strategy your competition is currently using, explain your pricing strategy and why it will be effective with your target customers.

Begin by stating your pricing strategy. Explain how you arrived at your pricing strategy (e.g. based on cost, gross margin objectives, market prices, perceived value). Point out how your pricing strategy compares to the competition. Be sure to include when you will review your pricing strategy, i.e. monthly, quarterly, annually.

Some common pricing strategies include:

* Retail cost and pricing
* Competitive position
* Pricing below competition
* Pricing above competition
* Price lining
* Multiple pricing
* Quantity discounts
* Cash discounts
* Seasonal discounts

In structuring your pricing plan, make sure you have considered all of the following:

* Competitor pricing
* Direct/indirect costs
* Prices you plan to charge, typical gross and net margins for each product and service
* Credit arrangements, returns policy, etc.
* Profitability
* Financial justification
* Customer needs and what they are willing or not willing to pay for
* How customers view additional features and benefits
* What kind of cost savings might interest customers

## 

## 4.7 Distribution Channels

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A distribution channel consists of the set of people and processes involved in the transfer of a product from producer to ultimate consumer. Describe your distribution strategy and explain why it is the best for your marketplace.

Begin by providing the distribution channels your business will use [wholesalers, cataloguers, mass merchant retailers, consolidators, DISTRIBUTORS] and how they are good fits for your end users because of [customer profile, geography, seasonal swings, other factor]. Then point out the distribution channels used by your competition and the reasons why your choice of distribution channels is advantageous for you.

* List your major current customers or consumer groups including a one or two sentence description for each and demonstrate how your product reaches the end user. A chart or diagram may be useful.
* Identify geographical or sales territories to be covered
* Specify whether middlemen are:
  + Gathering marketing information
  + Providing marketing research information down and up the supply chain
  + Promoting your product
  + Adding a price markup
  + Transporting and sorting goods
  + Negotiating with customers and/or other middlemen

## 4.8 Promotion and Advertising Strategy

How you advertise and promote your goods and services is crucial to gaining acceptance in the market and successfully generating a profitable sales volume. Having a good product or service and poor advertising is like not having a business at all. Many business owners operate under the mistaken concept that the business will promote itself, and channel money that should be used for advertising and promotions to other areas of the business. Advertising and promotions, however, are the lifeline of a business and should be treated as such. Your purpose is to introduce, promote, and support your products in the marketplace. Although considered a cost, a properly designed and executed campaign is an investment.

Explain your advertising and promotion strategy. It is critical that you educate your target market about your product or service, inform it about its availability, and regularly communicate your benefits to that market.

* How will the business advertise and promote its product or service?
* How will the business communicate with its customers? Advertising? Public relations? Personal selling? Printed materials? Other means of promotion?
* Why will this strategy be effective in reaching your target customer?
* If you have identifiable repeat customers, do you have a systematic contact plan?
* How do you get the word out to customers?
* Why this mix of advertising channels and not some other?

**4.8 Promotion and Advertising Strategy**

Launch your campaign months before your game's targeted release date.

* A Website that acts as our home base where our games and apps are promoted and featured for sale or redistribution.
* Social Media (Facebook and Twitter)
* Developer Blogs
* Steam
* YouTube Trailers and possibly links to demo versions
* Print Press
* How do you get the word out to customers?
* Why this mix of advertising channels and not some other?
* *A website:* Whether your website acts as a home base for all of your games, or just the one you're currently working on, it needs to be updated frequently and departmentalized. The home page should feature an extended overview, captivating screenshots (a picture of your UI isn't all that exciting), and relevant links. You'll also need a media page that houses images or videos.
* *To do the social media thing:* Sorry, there's really no avoiding it. At the very least you should have a Facebook page and a Twitter profile. If your game is small or mid-sized this is probably enough, but in theory you could subscribe to dozens of social media outlets. More on this below.
* *A development blog:* While development blogs are less essential than a website and a strong social media presence, gamers and developers alike love to read about the personal struggles and triumphs associated with making a game. Keep it personal, as if you're speaking directly to your readers. Humanize yourself and viewers will connect with and appreciate your plight. Post as frequently as necessary, but try to avoid posting about every little bug fix or new art piece. It's enough simply to prove that your game is coming along.
* *Trailers:* This comes a bit later, but is probably one of the single most important things you can do to get people excited to play your game. Don't overload it with cheesy titles, and don't think you have to be an expert cinematographer to produce a compelling video. Instead, target each facet of gameplay at least once, clearly display the game's title and the name of your company (you do have one, right?), and keep the cut scenes down to a minimum.

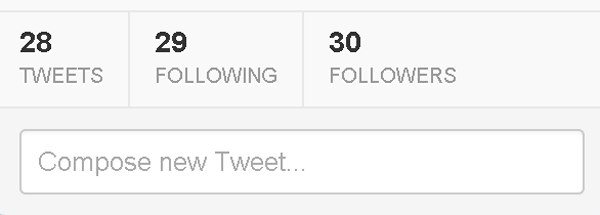
You can never have too many trailers. Triple-A games and movies release dozens of teasers, spotlight and full trailers, and they do so for good reason. If you do decide to release multiple videos, you can ignore the previous rule and tailor each one to a specific aspect of gameplay. One could be a combat demo, another a introduction to the game world and the story, and a third solely dedicated to your protagonist. Be sure to space them out—it's the best way to generate hype.

See also: [How to Make an Indie Game Trailer With No Budget](http://gamedevelopment.tutsplus.com/tutorials/how-to-make-an-indie-game-trailer-with-no-budget--cms-20825).

## Publicize Yourself

You can create all the websites, dev blogs, and trailers in the world, but if no one knows who you are, they're not going to matter. Perhaps the toughest part about marketing a game is making the public aware that it exists. Once they know about it, the rest is actually pretty easy. Well, it also helps if your game is, you know... good.

Let's break down the different ways that you can get people talking about your game without cramming it down their throats.

  
So, now that I signed up for an account, why isn't anyone following me?

### Social Media

We've already mentioned that social media is an integral part of the marketing process. Fair enough, but how do you transition from relative unknown to Internet superstar?

#### Tips for Posting on Twitter

Of all the social media outlets, Twitter is the one that affords developers the easiest access to potential fans, members of the press and other burgeoning developers. Use it, learn the science behind it, and master it. Here are a few tips:

* Do not use Twitter to approach random members of the press—no one likes a beggar. Instead, view it as an opportunity to see what they're plugging and what genres of gaming they feel most passionate about. Feel free to reply to their Tweets, but only if you have something engaging to add to the conversation. If you're lucky they'll toss you a follow. And then, when you Tweet about your game, there's a chance they'll see them.
* Going further, if a member of the press favorites or retweets one of your posts, don't dismiss it. That's not to say you should immediately request a preview of your half-finished game, but it's a firm indicator that when your game is ready to be showcased, someone might have genuine interest in plugging it.
* Post your game development updates during peak hours, ideally somewhere between 11am and 11pm EST. Better yet, post them twice—once in the morning and once during the evening hours. (The reason being that if you only post updates during the middle of the night, then by the time your followers check their feed your post will have already been long buried.)
* There's a tendency among game developers to follow just about anyone who is making an independent game. These "Serial Followers" care more about receiving a follow in return than they do about your game development team.  And if you dare to not follow them in return, they'll drop you faster than Mario can say "It's-a me."
* *Don't become a "Serial Follower."* Instead, follow those who you are genuinely interested in hearing from. Indie developers that you admire are a good starting point. Your favorite indie gaming sites should be included as well. In the beginning it's OK to follow more people than people that follow you, but it's far more preferable to follow 500 people and have 1,000 followers than to follow 2,500 people and have 3,000 followers. If you find yourself falling into the latter category, chances are you've become a "Serial Follower." Do you follow?
* #gamedevand #ScreenshotSaturday are your friends. Look them up.

#### Other Social Media Tips

* The [IndieGaming](http://www.reddit.com/r/indiegaming" \t "_self)subreddit is a great place to link your YouTube trailers, preview, reviews and game demos. Save the Steam Greenlight plugs for [/r/greenlightquality](http://www.reddit.com/r/greenlightquality/). And whatever you do, don't inundate your reddit post title with flashy buzzwords. "Innovative 2D RPG with pioneering game mechanics and epic storyline" doesn't tell me much.
* Your website should link to your social media accounts. Your Twitter account should have links to your Facebook page and website. Your Facebook page... you get the point.
* It's worse to have a grossly outdated Facebook page and website than none at all. Keep things current.
* If you must relay your gamedev failings to the Internet, try to be funny about it. Same goes for your announcements.

To illustrate the last point, this recent Twitter post fared particularly well for us:

*"After two years of toiling, sleepless night and neglected wives we're finally close to releasing an #EchoesofEternea game demo. #gamedev"*

As did this musing:

*"The difference between coding a 2-hour platformer and a 20-hour RPG: 62 gray hairs, 7 doctor co-payments, and 2,000 hours. #gamedev"*

### Gaming Booths

Despite the theory that all game developers are vampires who dwell in dark basements, getting out into the light of day and attending public gatherings is one of the smartest things you can do to promote your game. I promise you won't turn to ash.

But in order to snag a booth at one of the bigger conventions like [PAX](http://paxsite.com/), you'll have to reserve a portion of your meager budget for travel and venue expenses. If you have the money it's well worth the effort. If you're on a tighter budget, consider submitting to [Indie Mega Booth](http://indiemegabooth.com/). Through them, qualified game developers can have their game showcased at PAX for as little as $500—quite the bargain.

Better yet, you can submit your game to [IndieCade](http://www.indiecade.com/" \t "_self) for a paltry 80 bucks. Now, that won't guarantee you entry into the festival, but if you are accepted, you'll gain a slew of additional exposure, the likes of which supersede your upfront costs by a colossal margin.

Even if you can't afford a booth or are rejected from festivals, go to conventions anyhow and make good use of your social suave. Hand out flyers, physical CDs of your demo, a slip of paper that says "Buy My Game"—anything so that gamers won't instantly forget who you are.

See, as a game developer it's important to connect with other developers, but it's arguably more important to connect with the people who will actually be playing your game. Gaming conventions will allow you to do that and more. By meeting with your target audience face to face, it will further humanize you and your efforts. In addition, it will give gamers the opportunity to play your game, and you the chance to receive meaningful feedback.

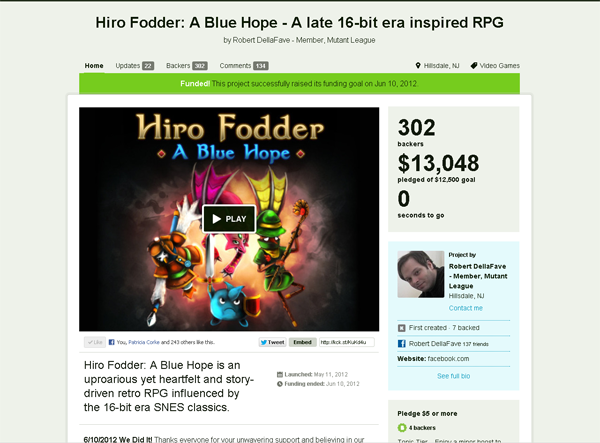
See also: [Tips for Game Conference Success](http://gamedevelopment.tutsplus.com/articles/surviving-gdc-tips-for-game-conference-success--cms-20359).

### Crowdsourcing

Crowdsourcing is generally thought of as a way to procure a budget for your game, but it's also useful as a marketing device. Our current project, [Hiro Fodder: A Blue Hope](http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/561303485/hiro-fodder-a-blue-hope-a-late-16-bit-era-inspired), benefited from crowdsourcing in several ways.

Firstly, it forced us to create a video and write a detailed description about our product. Secondly, our page was hit tens of thousands of times over the course of a month. So even though we only got a little over 300 people to back the project, it was great exposure for our little RPG. Finally, and this was something that we didn't anticipate, we spent a lot of time communicating with other developers, even going as far as to sign up as the programmers for another project that had over 1,500 backers. We've since grown very close with the developers behind [Echoes of Eternea](http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/1465600975/echoes-of-eternia-a-modern-take-on-a-classic-desig) and have become fully immersed in helping their game become a reality.

Now if only we had realized just how long developing two 20-30 hour, homegrown RPGs would take! But fear not, we're getting close!

  
Kickstarter: A great way to make money and friends.

The great thing about crowdsourcing is that a lot of smaller indie game journalists keep up with new campaigns. Several journalists wrote articles about Hiro Fodder without even asking us first. We have since established a great working relationship with these writers, and will definitely be calling on them when the game gets closer to release.

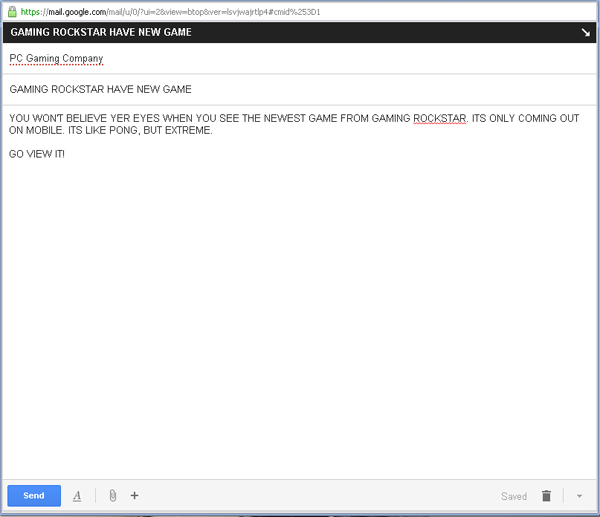
See also: [A No-Name Developer's Guide to Succeeding on Kickstarter](http://gamedevelopment.tutsplus.com/articles/a-no-name-developers-guide-to-succeeding-on-kickstarter--gamedev-10892) and [Kickstarter Post-Mortem for Hiro Fodder: A Blue Hope](http://gamedevelopment.tutsplus.com/articles/kickstarter-post-mortem-for-hiro-fodder-a-blue-hope--gamedev-11105).

### Contacting the Press

One could easily write an entire article on dealing with the media. It is such a critical part of running a successful marketing campaign that overlooking it would already place your game at a severe disadvantage. But it's one thing to communicate your game to the press; it's another to do it effectively.

Here are a few tips:

* *Be realistic:* Before you contact any of the major players in the gaming community, assess what you hope to achieve. You're probably not going to get IGN to write a feature piece on your Match-3 game, but you may get a smaller indie-focused mag to give you a shot. Once your game garners enough press from smaller sources, you should start taking more chances. No harm is going to come out of telling Kotaku or Joystiq about your upcoming game.
* *Target the right websites:* It may seem painfully obvious, but if you're targeting a mobile device, don't contact PC mags. You'd be surprised how often game developers make grievous missteps like emailing PC Gamer about their revolutionary new game for Android devices.
* *Be yourself:* You're not writing a cover letter, so don't treat your emails to press members like one. Starting your email with lines like "[Company X] is proud to bring you an innovative gaming experience like no other..." is off-putting. Instead start with something simple, like "Hello." Tell them who you are and a little about your game. Provide them with a few simple links to your media or demo. If you can say what you have to say in fewer words, do so. Remember, these guys probably receive dozens of emails each and every day from developers just like you. Be humble, be straight to the point and never, ever tell them how much you love their site. Sucking up is not a virtue.

  
People actually send emails like this, but you won't.

When dealing with the press via email:

* *Don't*forget to send members of the press working copies of your game.
* *Don't*cram your opinions down their throats. You might think your game is fun and awesome, but let the press draw their own conclusions.
* *Don't*forget to include your unique selling point. This is usually a game mechanic that's particular to your game. For instance, our unique selling point is the ability to store accumulated Action Points for future rounds, allowing you to unleash powerful attacks at the risk of leaving your character vulnerable while charging up. Is it revolutionary? No. But unique, yes.
* *Don't*wait. Reviews will hardly help you three weeks after your game is released. Better to have the press mention your game in the weeks and months before it's due to launch.

Advertisement

## Late Stage Marketing

By the time your game hits alpha, you should really consider a few of the more recently available marketing options:

* *Alphafunding:* Mid-sized online distributors like [Desura](http://www.desura.com/) offer this service, which allows fans to play your incomplete game and watch it evolve. Even better, they're allowed to contribute money to your game. It's sort of like Kickstarter, except the only thing you're obligated to provide to your fans is an awesome game. It's a really sweet deal, and an awesome way to get people pumped about your upcoming release.
* *Steam Greenlight:* At the initial writing of this article, getting your game Greenlit was a difficult task. These days, so many games are accepted that the real hurdle is making your game stand out among the masses. But that doesn't mean you shouldn't place your game on Greenlight. Quite the contrary. The site is visited by tens of thousands of gamers, and you are guaranteed to win some of them over with your game, most of whom will purchase it from your personal website or another distribution portal that isn't Steam. It's not as prestigious as it was a year ago, but Greenlight is still an opportunity that should not be missed. See also: [Tips for Getting Greenlit on Steam Greenlight](http://gamedevelopment.tutsplus.com/articles/tips-for-getting-greenlit-on-steam-greenlight--gamedev-13938).
* *Press Releases:* Press releases probably won't help that much unless your game already has a solid following. But if you ran a sound marketing campaign, there's a good chance it might. Target major distributors like [PRWeb](http://prweb.com/) and smaller ones tailored towards indies. You should probably only do this about a week before the game is released.
* *Other avenues:* If you're an active streamer on [Twitch](http://www.twitch.tv/) or belong to forum communities, now would be an excellent time to let the public know that your game is nearing release. Just don't become a member of a bunch of well-established communities for the sole purpose of plugging your game. It comes across as obnoxious.

  
Definitely a good thing for indies.

## Conclusion

There you have it. Marketing your game is probably as important as debugging and polishing it. Without marketing, you're completely reliant on gamers knowing about your game without you telling them. Now, if you win a major contest or get picked up by a major distributor, that could very well happen, but for the rest of us, it won't.

It's not entirely necessary to do everything listed in this article, but at the very least you should:

* Create a website.
* Create an account and post regularly on Twitter.
* Post a YouTube video of your trailer.
* Contact a few game journalists who have shown prior interest in your type of game. (Remember, keep your emails short and personal.)
* Place it on Steam Greenlight (as long as it's not super-casual).

Do at least that, and you'll stand a chance of developing your brand. Happy marketing!

### Marketing Vehicles

You must decide how you will generate awareness of your product or service among potential customers. Employing the following promotional activities can generate awareness:

* Brochures, flyers, leaflets
* Print media – newspapers, magazines, specialty publications, Yellow Pages
* Direct mail, (e)mailing lists
* Broadcast media/electronic – television, radio, Internet, movie theaters
* Promotions (2 for 1), dining clubs, credit card discount programs
* Signs – on store, billboards, public transport, blimps
* Hotel – in-house publications, video guides, concierge relations, services
* Charity events
* Samples, coupons
* Specialties – packaging, T-shirts, stickers, mugs, etc.
* Trade shows, networking
* Point of sale devices, promotions, and employee practices
* Public relations

### Promotional Budget

There are four common promotional budget methods:

* Percentage of sales
* All available funds
* Following the competition
* Budgeting by task or objectives

State and give details of the method you will apply to your marketing strategies. Be sure to consider the following questions when completing your promotional budget:

* How much will you spend on the marketing vehicles listed above
* Should you consider spending less on some promotional activities and more on others?
* What is the budget for all phases of the marketing effort?

## 4.9 Sales Strategy

Depending on your business, a strong sales team may be a critical component of your success. Remember: "nothing happens until the sale is made." An effective sales strategy is critically important for most manufacturers, publishers, software firms, and many service providers. Do not overlook the importance of formulating an effective sales strategy.

* Discuss how and where you plan to sell and distribute your product or service
* How will your product or service be sold? Personal selling? TV infomercials? Direct mail?
* Who will do the selling? An internal sales force? Manufacturer's representatives? Telephone solicitors, call-centers? Internet Marketing?
* How will you recruit, train, and compensate your sales force?
* How will you support your sales effort? (e.g. internal staff, service operations, motivators, etc.)

## 4.10 Sales Forecasts

Now that you have described your products, services, customers, markets, and marketing plans in detail, it is time to attach some numbers to your plan. Prepare a month-by-month sales forecast for a projected twelve-month period. The forecast should be based upon your historical sales, the marketing strategies that you have just described, market research, and industry data if available.

It is preferable to do three forecasts: 1) "best case", 2) ”expected case”, and 3) "worst case" (a low estimate that you are confident you can reach no matter what happens).

For this section, please refer to the Sales Forecast in the appendix.

Remember to keep notes on your research and assumptions as you build this sales forecast and all subsequent spreadsheets in the plan. Relate the forecast to your sales history, explaining the major differences between past and projected sales. This is critical if you are going to present it to funding sources.

# 

# 5. Development

In this section, you will outline how you intend to improve your business. This section is often sadly under-developed in many business plans. Assuming you have a dynamic marketing plan and customers do indeed come flocking for your product/service, you must be able to deliver it to them.

The Development section is a road map of how you are going to get from where you are now to where you want to be in the future. If you are starting a business, what are all of the steps that you need to accomplish to get the business up and running? If you are expanding a business, what do you need to do to make it grow? These steps can be as routine as securing retail space, or as critical as applying for and getting a patent on key technology. Do not go into too much detail here. For example, the need to get business cards printed probably does not belong in a development plan (although you might include it in a detailed checklist in the appendices). Use your judgment.

**The Development section should include the following subsections:**

## 5.1 Development Strategy

What work remains to launch your company and your products? What factors need to come together to make your concept work? What are the risks threatening the successful implementation of your development plan? Are they technological risks, cost risks, competitive risks? How will you mitigate these risks?

## 5.2 Development Timeline

What is your timetable for launching your company and your products? Go out as far in the future as you have can. Consider adding a chart or table here.

## 5.3 Development Expenses

Include here a description of the development costs and assumptions that appear in your financial statements.

# 6. Management

Venture capitalists often assert that there are three attributes important for a successful start-up business: management, management, and management. Many venture capitalists claim they will invest in a strong management team with a mediocre idea, but will decline to fund a weak management team with a great idea. The purpose of the Management section, therefore, is to convince our Review Panel that you have a great management team to complement a great business concept. This is not the place for modesty or self-depreciation. Be honest, but highlight your accomplishments and your capabilities while mitigating any obvious shortcomings or weaknesses. For example, if you are young and inexperienced, accentuate your energy, capacity for hard work, and willingness to learn, while downplaying your lack of experience. When readers are finished with this section, you want them to be confident that your venture is in good hands and will be competently managed.

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**The Management section should include the following subsections:**

## 6.1 Company Organization

Describe how your company will be organized.

* How will your business be organized? What does your organizational chart look like?
* What is the ownership structure of your company?
* Will you have a board of directors? Who will be on it? What will be their role?

## 6.2 Management Team

### Biographies of the Management Team

Our company is comprised of a few administrative members starting with the President and sole owner who is also the Lead Programmer/ Art Director and Head of Website Development Department.

These capital duties will be fulfilled by myself. I have 3 years of Marketing which I received in University along with my natural talent and ability for art , 1 year of Web Development , finally 2 and a half years of Video game development plus 4 months of internship and a whole year of work experience as manager of a Video game company Auto – Obsessions and Lead Programmer and Creative Arts director and manager which are my titles in my current position make up a perfect nomenclature for the roles I wish to fill seeing as I already have the experience of fulfilling each of these roles with efficiency and efficaciousness in my current position and we have worked on many games including our main web based game Auto Obsessions available at this link. [www.auto-obsessions.me](http://www.auto-obsessions.me).

Just underneath me in the company totem pole is a Lead Programmer Tyler Drury who has an extensive background in all programming languages and has even more programming experience than myself and has also been lead programmer in the past during his time at Sky Orchard in London Ontario. Later was hired by Auto-Obsessions as support lead programmer under the management of Alexander Sanchez. Together they build and currently maintain the Auto-Obsessions Video Game which is a game like Fantasy Football for Automobile Auction fans. His role at Video Monkeys is to oversee quality and all Video Game Interns as well as lead and partake in collaborating in all major projects video game or apps.

The management section should include the names and backgrounds of lead members of the management team and their respective responsibilities. Describe the founders and principal managers who will run your business.

* Who are the key managers?
  + What will be their duties and responsibilities?
  + What unique skills do they bring to the business?
  + How will they be compensated?
* Summarize resumes of key management and owners
* List education, skills, experience (including past duties). Focus on important past accomplishments but do not be too lengthy. Detailed resumes may be included in an appendix.
* What additions to the management team are you planning? When?
* If there is a key position that is not yet filled, explain your plans to do so
  + Briefly describe the job and the profile, compensation, and qualifications of the prospects

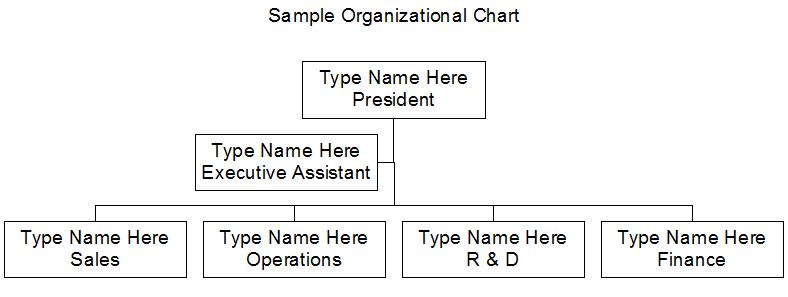
|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Officers and Key Employees** | **Age** | **% of Ownership** |
| President | 33 | 100% |
| Vice President of Sales & Marketing | 33 | 100% |
| Vice President of Finance | 42 | 0% |
| Vice President of Operations | 33 | 100 |
| Vice President of R & D | 33 | 100 |
| Controller |  |  |
| Corporate Attorney |  |  |

## 6.3 Management Structure and Style

### Organizational Chart

If you have more than ten employees, do an organizational chart showing the management hierarchy and who is responsible for key functions. A very simple organizational chart will help explain how the company is organized, the reporting structure, and the positions that you plan to fill. The chart should reflect both current and open positions, or you can have two charts – pre- and post-funding. Two charts would be more applicable if you foresee significant changes in the organizational structure after funding.

Insert your Organizational Chart below.



### Management Style

* Describe your company's management style. Management style should reflect and support the general corporate style (suggested in the mission statement)
* Include any innovative or unusual aspects of management style that would affect growth or give a competitive advantage

## 6.4 Ownership

The company has one sole owner and no shares are offered to any of its members. T**he sole ow**ner and founder of the company is Alexander Sanchez.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **# Shares Held** | **% Ownership** |
| [Founder] Alexander Sanchez | 100 | 100% |
| [Inventor] Alexander Sanchez | 100 | 100% |
| [Management Team] | 0 | 0% |
| [Seed Ventures] | 0 | 0% |
| [Stock Option Pool] | 0 | 0% |

### 6.5 Professional and Advisory Support

Here you will list service providers your business may consult or from whom you will obtain additional services, who are not a part of your internal staff. These may include:

* Corporate attorney
* Accounting firm
* GoDaddy Webhosting service providers

## 6.5 Board of [Advisors OR Directors]

If your business will have a Board of Advisors or Directors be sure to list each member, detailing where and why they add strategic importance, what experience they have and what contacts they can contribute. How will the Board be compensated?

# 7. Operations

The Operations section outlines how you will run your business and deliver value to your customers. Operations is defined as the processes used to produce you products/services and deliver them to the marketplace and can include manufacturing, transportation, logistics, travel, printing, consulting, after-sales service, and so on. In all likelihood, about 80% of your expenses will be for operations, 80% of your employees will be working in operations, and 80% of your time will be spent worrying about operating problems and opportunities. Be sure that you carefully link the design of your operations to your marketing plan. For example, if high quality will be one of your comparative advantages in the marketplace, then design your operations to deliver high quality, not low costs. Remember that you will probably have to make trade-offs with your operations. It is impossible to have the lowest costs, highest quality, and best on-time performance in your industry all at the same time. Often, high quality means higher costs, low costs means less variety and less flexibility. Be careful how you make these trade-offs so that you can deliver products to the market in accordance with your marketing plan.

Operations checklist:

* How will you produce and deliver your product/service?
* What will you do in-house, and what will you purchase (make vs. buy)?
* How will you use your operations to compete? Cost? Quality? Timeliness? Flexibility?
* What comparative advantages do you have with your operational design?

**The Operations section should include the following subsections:**

## 7.1 Operations Strategy

In this subsection, describe how you will fulfill your marketing strategy using operations:

* How will you use operations to add value for customers in your target market?
* How will you win in the marketplace on the dimensions of cost, quality, timeliness, custom service and flexibility?
* Which dimensions will you stress and which ones will be less significant?

## 7.2 Scope of Operations

* All of our production takes place in-house. The finished product is the software that is purchased by our users who download a game or application.
* The relationship with vendors is our membership to develop and sell for their platform or user base for example we intend to become members of the Android and Ios stores so we can develop and sell our games in their stores.
* We will need to hire people who are qualified in video game or software development as well as technical artists for the development stages of our products.

## 7.3 Ongoing Operations

How will your company operate on an ongoing basis? Include details in an appendix.

Our products have a high quality focus being the nature of quality software development. There is a very significant financial focus of allocated funds to employee wages and software technologies. This includes the wages of our three main programmers on which we heavily rely to produce our games during the developmental phases of production. The first few months of operations will be establishing the company. Once the company is established and legally registered and incorporated we can begin with the developmental phases in which our games will be made.

Our products are made by the programmers. With their ability to write code or program their software and the contracts we make with our artists.

## 7.4 Location

Our location is our website and home of business. We are a digital company that hires executives that work mostly from their homes.

We rent office spaces to meet once a week.

In the near future we hope to rent a small office to home-base our websites department.

Our location only requires an administrator who can speak to clients and handle all customer relations not required by myself.

The location of your business can play a decisive role in its success or failure. Your location should be built around your customers, it should be accessible, and it should provide a sense of security.

State where your primary office will be located as well as any other facility where your business will operate and then explain the reasons for those locations. Give the actual size of each office and/or facility and along with a description of how each will be used and the duration in number of years these facilities will be adequate for operations. Some issues you may address include:

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* What are your location needs?
* Describe locations of production, sales, storage areas, and buildings
  + Are the premises leased or owned?
  + Why is this area desirable?
  + What kind of space will the business require?
  + What renovations are needed, and how much will they cost?
* Describe access to buildings (e.g. walk in, parking, freeways, airports, railroads, shipping)
  + Is it easily accessible, is parking available? Is public transportation available? Is street lighting adequate?
* What are your business hours?
* Are market shifts or demographic shifts occurring?
* Include a drawing or layout of your proposed facility if you are seeking an expansion loan
* Location of the competition

### Facilities and Equipment

* Location 🡪 addresses, floor plans, etc.
* Lease 🡪 terms, length, important details
* Improvements 🡪 plans, funding, budget
* Key factors 🡪 expansion potential, proximity to market, unique aspects
* Physical condition

## 

During our first year of operations the administrative members of Raven studios will work from the home and use file sharing systems to communicate and contribute to projects. An office space may be attained for once a week meetings if funding allows. We are a small team primarily with only 3 main developers the rest of our company will consist of the internship program we will host for Video Game Design and Development pre-grads as well as Technical Artists and Web designers that are allowed to work from their homes or classrooms all enabled and monitored using our file sharing systems like GitHub which can record the amount of work that is contributed by each its projects members.

Our business hours are during the day from 9am -5pm and interns are only required to work within that time block for 5 hours a day.

## 7.5 Personnel

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This section is broken down to include the following:

* Number of employees
  + Will your employees be full-time or part-time?
  + Three employees (2 are full-time and 1 is part-time.
  + In the future if success strikes big we will employ as many as the company sees fit and can afford.
* Type of labor (skilled, professional)
  + Must have graduated the Video Game Design and Development course
  + Expert in software development
  + At least 3 years programming experience in all the major languages C, C++, Java, HTML5, Javascript, PHP and so forth.
  + Good Programming Design Practices and implementation. MVC etc.
  + Problem solving , analytical thinking and processing and leadership skills
  + Lead and maintain a project
* Quality of existing staff
  + What unique skills do they bring to the business?
  + Alexander Sanchez is an amazing programmer with all the above required met with an even more amazing natural ability for art.
  + Who does which tasks?
  + Are schedules and procedures in place?
* Pay structure
  + Will you pay salaries or hourly wages?
  + Certain employee benefits are mandatory. Find out what they are.
  + What benefits, if any, can you afford?
  + Will you provide additional fringe benefits? If so, which ones? Have you calculated the costs of these additional fringe benefits?
  + Will you utilize overtime? If so, you may be required by law to pay time and a half, double time, and/or extra expenses such as meals.
* Procedures for acquiring new employees
  + Are the people you need available?
* Training methods and requirements
  + Will you have to train people for both operations and management? If so, at what costs to the business?

## 7.6 Production

Explain your methods of production or how you deliver your service.

* Production techniques and costs
  + How and where are your products/services produced?
  + Description of manufacturing process (if applicable)
* Quality control
* Customer service

## 

## 7.7 Operations Expenses

Include here a description of the operating costs and assumptions that appear in your financial statements. Most expenses are often referred to as overhead expenses. Overhead expenses are all the non-labor expenses required to operate the business. Expenses can be separated in two ways: fixed (expenses that have to be paid no matter the volume of business) and variable or semi-variable (expenses which change according to the amount of business).

Overhead expenses normally include any or all of the following:

* Travel
* Maintenance and repair
* Equipment leases
* Rent
* Advertising and Promotion
* Supplies
* Utilities
* Packaging and Shipping
* Unrecoverable receivables
* Professional services
* Insurance
* Loan Payments
* Depreciation

In order to develop the overhead expenses for this portion of the business plan, you need to multiply the number of employees by the expenses associated with each employee. The following equation can be used to calculate the sum of each overhead expense: *Overhead = Number of Employees x Expense per Employee*

### Cost Controls

* Inventory 🡪 forms, systems (computer), practices
* Food and beverage 🡪 check systems, management practices, training, periodic inventory
* General 🡪 management, inventory

### Administrative and Financial Controls

* Bookkeeping systems and policies (payments, billing)
* Accounting systems (report intervals)
* Sales systems (computers)

## 7.8 Legal Environment

Describe each of the following elements as they apply to your business:

* Licensing and permits
* Bonding requirements
* Health, workplace or environmental regulations
* Special regulations covering your industry or profession
* Zoning or building code requirements
* Insurance coverage
* Trademarks, copyrights, or patents [pending, existing, or purchased]

## 7.9 Inventory

Explain how you will manage your inventory. Give the details on each of the following elements of inventory:

* The kind of inventory kept: raw materials, supplies, finished goods
* Average value in stock
  + What is your inventory investment?
* Rate of turnover an how this compares to industry average
* Season buildups
  + Will there be seasonal buildups?
  + How will you handle seasonal buildup?
* Lead-time or ordering

## 7.10 Suppliers

Identify the supplies you will use for your products and services. Be sure to document the following in this section:

## 7.10 Suppliers

**Go-Daddy and Unity3D**

Our suppliers are few and consist of the support team at Go-Daddy who will host our home site and the software of our choosing Unity 3D who are both solid service providers who have a long life of commercial existence and are well established in the developer community.

# 8. Financials

The Financials section should be frosting on a cake. You have outlined a great business concept, demonstrated a real need in the marketplace, shown how you will execute your ideas, proven that your team is just right to manage the venture, and now you will show how much money everyone is going to make. Note, however, that if your business concept is weak, there is no market for your product/service, your execution is poor, or if your management team is incompetent, then your financial plans are doomed to failure. If you have not convinced our Review Panel by now of the strength of your concept, then they will not be convinced by your financials.

It is important to have strong, well-constructed financials. If you cannot show that your great concept is going to make (lots of) money, our Review Panel will quickly lose interest. To construct your financials, it is highly recommend that you start with your development and operations plan to create a schedule or timetable of development and operational activities. From these development activities, you can then create cash-flow projections, income statements, and *pro forma* balance sheets for at least three years into the future, and sometimes five. As a rule of thumb, your financial projections should extend far enough into the future to the point where your business has achieved stable operations. The first year of your financial statement projections should be month-by-month since cash flows are critical in the early stages of any startup. Second and third year financial statements should be quarterly, and fourth and fifth years should be annual. If possible, it is useful to include best case, expected case, and worse case scenarios for your financials. This allows you and our Review Panel to explore the upside potential and downside risks of your venture. Be sure that your financial projections are in congruence with the other sections of your plan. For example, if you say you will open three stores in Year 2 and your financials show you opening five stores, our Review Panel will quickly lose confidence in your plan.

The Financials section should be a discussion and description of your financial projections -- put the actual financial spreadsheets in the appendices. Describe the timing and amount of investment that you will require to achieve your plans. Then demonstrate that this investment is a good one by showing that profits, assets, and ROI are all favourable as the business progresses. When our Review Panel finishes with this section, they should be anxious to grant funds to you.

### Guidelines

* Consult experts
* Be conservative and honest
* Use standard industry forms and formats

## 8.1 Start-up Funds

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Described in sections are the start-up funds required to cover the costs to operate the company for the terms of a year and as well for the terms of 6months of production. The operating costs to run the company are divided in to legal, labor, software, and as well as accounting and marketing or developer costs.

# Legal

Corporation costs $1200 -$1500

To handle any liability issues and the protection of intellectual property.

Total Legal = $1500

# Labor

AS Labor $18/hr x 40 hours = weekly = $720

X 4 weeks = $2880

TD Labor $15/hr x 35 hours = weekly = $525

X 4 weeks = $2100

3 Labor $14 x 24 = weekly = $336

X 4 weeks = $1344

Total Labor Monthly = $6324

Total Labor 1 year = $75888

Total Labor 6 months = $37944

**Software**

Unity3d Pro Edition $75/month

X 12months = $900

X 6months = $450

Payroll Tax Software = $500 -$1000

GoDaddy Web Hosting 20/month

X12months = $240

X6months = $120

Total Software 12 months $2140

Total Software 6 months $1570

Total Labor + Total Software 12 months = $2140 + $75888 = $78028

Total Labor + Total Software 6 months = $1570 + $37944 = $39514

Total Labor + Total Software + Legal = 12 months = $2000 + $75888 = $79388

Total Labor + Total Software + Legal = 6 months = $1550 + $37944 = $40994

Elements to consider when preparing a start-up budget include:

* Personnel (costs prior to opening)
* Legal/ Professional Fees
* Occupancy
* Equipment
* Supplies
* Salaries/Wages
* Income
* Utilities
* Payroll expenses
* Licenses/Permits
* Insurance
* Advertising/Promotions
* Accounting

## 8.2 Current Financial Position (current, takeover or franchise businesses only)

Provide in detail the current financial position of the company. Present the current balance sheet in an appendix. Include all outstanding debts in an easy to understand format. A debt schedule may be useful here.

The company’s current financial position is zero. As a minor and only contribution possible at this time is a home base website which I have designed to serve as a marketing means to make our products and news accessible to our public.

### Debt Schedule

This table gives in-depth information that the financial statements themselves do not usually provide. Include a debt schedule in the following format for each note payable on your most recent balance sheet.

Debt Schedule Table

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| To Whom Payable | Original Amt. | Original Date | Present Balance | Rate of Interest | Maturity Date | Monthly Payment | Security | Current/Past Due |
| Alexander Sanchez |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Tyler Drury |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Brian Pope |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Go-Daddy | 200 |  |  |  |  | 20 |  |  |
| Unity 3D | 900 |  |  |  |  | 75 |  |  |

## 8.4 Operating Forecast

This section should provide an estimate of the sales and expenses your business will incur for a twelve-month period. (Please refer to Appendix for Financial Projections.)

Be sure to document any sources of information or any assumptions used for calculations.

## 8.5 Break-Even Analysis

This section should provide a calculation for the break-even point in dollars and units for the business. Include all assumptions upon which your break-even calculation is based. *(*Please refer to Appendices for Break-Even Analysis spreadsheet.)

A break-even analysis determines sales volume in dollars, at a given price, required to recover total costs.

Expressed as a formula, breakeven is:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |
| Break-even Sales $ = | Fixed Costs |
| 1- Variable Costs |
|  |  |

Fixed costs are expressed in dollars but variable costs are expressed as a percent of the total sales dollar amount. To obtain the break-even point in terms of number of sales, simply divide the break-even sales (dollar amount) by the price of your product.

## 8.6 Balance Sheet

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The balance sheet is a "snapshot" of what you own and what you owe on a specific date. A "Pro Forma Balance Sheet" shows how things will be in the future, under given conditions, rather than how they are now.

A balance sheet follows a standard format (please refer to the appendix for Balance Sheet template), however, it may contain additional items depending on circumstances relating to the business for which it is prepared. State the assumptions you used for all major changes between your last historical balance sheet and the projection.

## 8.7 Income Statement

The income statement is a financial statement that reveals whether or not a business has earned a profit or has suffered a loss after a specified period. (Please refer to the appendix for Income Statement template.)

An income statement may also be referred to as a "profit and loss statement" (PNL) or an "operating statement.”

A "Pro Forma Income Statement" is used to show how things will be under given conditions rather than how they are at present.

Be sure to state any assumptions when creating your Income Statement.

## 8.8 Cash Flow

Explain your major assumptions, especially those which make the cash flow differ from the Profit and Loss Statement, such as:

* Labor during the development phases of production
* Software
* Are there irregular expenses, equipment purchase or inventory buildup which should be budgeted?

# Labor

AS Labor $18/hr x 40 hours = weekly = $720

X 4 weeks = $2880

TD Labor $15/hr x 35 hours = weekly = $525

X 4 weeks = $2100

3 Labor $14 x 24 = weekly = $336

X 4 weeks = $1344

Total Labor Monthly = $6324

Total Labor 1 year = $75888

Total Labor 6 months = $37944

**Software**

Unity3d Pro Edition $75/month

X 12months = $900

X 6months = $450

Payroll Tax Software = $500 -$1000

GoDaddy 10/month

X12months = 100

X6months = 100

Total Software 12 months $2000

Total Software 6 months $1550

Total Labor + Total Software 12 months = $2000 + $75888 = $77880

Total Labor + Total Software 6 months = $1550 + $37944 = $39494

# 9. Funding Request

## 9.1 Capital Requirements

Raven Studios is requesting $100,000 to cover our production costs for the first year of operation. These funds will be used mainly to cover the wages of its elemental employees that are absolutely necessary for the production and supervision during the development stages of our products. Funding would also cover the costs of the tools which are 2 Apple computers and software that required for the development of the games and applications.

## 9.2 Risk/Opportunity

Risks are a part of any business, especially a new one. Here, it is important to show our Review Panel that you have taken into consideration the risk involved in starting or expanding your venture. Illustrate the market, pricing, product, and management risks as well as how you plan to cope with them.

Some of the risks our company might be faced with is the possibility that one or more of our games does not reach popularity and success.

We try and safeguard against this by the rapid production of mini games and applications that might consist of a simple but creative idea made with a polished and fully functional feel so that we have more opportunities that one of our games become popular.

Some of these smaller applications that are not as involved would mean a lot less time for development and higher art focus could be geared towards children in small but fun educational apps that teach children who to read write, spell and even practice their math.

As humans we have many different learning capabilities based on what methods are used for the learning and with that being said some of us are more audial or visual for example others require only the written text whatever the case might be our apps hope to provide a focus to each of these areas to make the learning process for children more immersive and effective.

These applications will be easier to produce using game engines henceforth shorter on development time and can be assigned to interns who assist us in our many different projects to cover more ground.

There is definitely a market and a need for educational children’s applications that are both functional and entertaining now that more and more children come in to the possession of mobile and cellular devices.

We hope to promote good values in all of our products and we can make learning fun or entertaining thanks to technology.

We also understand that many just want to kill time while they commute and just need to play. For this market we aim to please and make the most adventure pack cutting edge graphics games that our public mandates.

We also intend to tackle the social media game market on popular websites like Facebook where we can establish a developer relationship and produce games that people will want to play.

Worst case scenario would be that our company is not selling as many of our games as we would like after the developmental stages but the company also has its Website development department that will offer small businesses websites at competitive rates.

## 9.3 Exit Strategy

All good business plans include a section that lays out the strategy you will follow should you decide or need to cash out and can involve, for example, selling the business, merging, a buyout by a partner/shareholder, getting acquired or issuing an initial public offering (IPO). The strategy to be laid out here can be based on a target dollar figure you want to reach, revenue growth, the market's reception to your idea, or a consensus among top officers.

# 10. Refining the Plan

The generic business plan presented above should be modified to suit your specific type of business and the audience for which the plan is written.

## 10.1 Refine According to Type of Business

### Technology Company / Web-based Business

* Economic outlook for the industry
* Do you have information systems in place to manage changing prices, costs, and markets?
* Do you employ the best available technologies and does it keep up with updates/upgrades?
* What is the status of R&D? And what is required to:
  + Bring product/service to market?
  + Keep the company competitive?
* How does the company:
  + Protect intellectual property?
  + Avoid technological obsolescence?
  + Supply necessary capital?
  + Retain key personnel?

If your company does not predict a foreseeable profit, you must provide longer-term financial forecasts to show when profitability will occur. All your assumptions must be well document and well argued.

# 11. Appendix

The appendix is where you should provide all of the documentation that supports the body of your business plan. Include those documents that are required (e.g. financial projections), those that are helpful (e.g. results of marketing studies), and those that assist in selling your idea (e.g. letters of interest from potential customers). Do not include lots of tangential information such as newspaper clippings or tables of data unless they really serve to bolster your plan. One way to deal with information that is voluminous and/or lengthy (such as a large market research study) is to summarize it, and note in the plan that the complete document is available upon request.

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Templates for all financial documents below are provided separately in this document.

Appendices checklist:

* Include financial documents such as:
  + Start-up Budget
  + Financial History and Ratios
  + Financial Projections
  + Break-Even Analysis
  + Balance sheet
  + Income statement
  + Sales Forecast
  + Cash flow statement

Include documents which you believe could be of interest to our Review Panel. This may include:

* + Product literature and brochures
  + Market research data
  + Surveys and Studies
  + Detailed account of ongoing operations
* Have you included all documents needed to support your plan?
* Do you provide support for assumptions, trends, and comparisons
* Do you provide support for your development plan?