Notes

* Just some high level things I think to add somewhere that I’m writing here so we don’t forget
* How we plan to scale our business
* USP + Competitive edge - highlight we have both the hard and soft skills
* Maybe we need to paint the picture about expected demand for AI/Data/Ml adventures as alluded to in above article



**Seboca Business Plan**

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## **1. Confidentiality Notice**

This Business Plan is conﬁdential and contains proprietary information and intellectual property of Seboca. Neither this Business Plan nor any of the information contained herein may be reproduced or disclosed under any circumstances without the express written permission of Seboca. This Business Plan does not constitute an offer to sell or solicitation of an offer to buy securities of Seboca.

## **2. Executive Summary**

The Executive Summary simply summarises the entire plan. Not everyone will have time to read every business plan they receive and will therefore use this summary to make a quick decision on whether they need to read all the fine detail or not.

Highlight the key areas of each section here to give readers a quick overview of what to expect.

## **3. Business Focus**

### **3.1 - Mission Statement**

*Seboca brings data-based insights and AI skills into SMEs and NGOs in Africa to foster a more efficient and sustainable environment.*

Our target audience are marketing managers, data managers, and business owners in small and medium-sized companies as well as NGOs in South Africa who are seeking to gain actionable insights from their data. Businesses and teams in times of the internet have access to much more data about their day to day operations than they had in times of manual forms and paperwork. Currently only few businesses are using their data to its full extent. This is a direct consequence of their lack in expertise in processing and modelling data into a set of actionable insights.

Seboca is seeking to bring value not only to for profit businesses but to organizations that are serving a social cause. We believe that data analytics can bring large benefits to NGOs by tracking their impact and optimizing their operations.

We are bringing insight into data. Our focus is to deliver understandable and usable models. We want to make sure that people working with our results know how to use and explain them. That is why we are focusing on educating people within businesses.



We are focusing on industries that match our skills and passions:

1. FinTech - FinTech startups are disrupting traditional financial services by developing innovative ways of producing and consuming financial products and services that meet consumer needs more efficiently or cheaply.
2. Food - We believe that the food and hospitality businesses especially in South Africa are not tapping into their full potential by using the data that customers provide. UCook is only one example of companies that could better utilize their data.
3. NGOs - Social businesses always face the problem of having scarce resources and this is one reason why data analytics is at the back of their agenda. Advanced data analytics and predictive models will allow these NGOs to attract more funding from large scale corporates that can now better quantitatively grasp the impact of the NGO.

As we want to extend our knowledge and portfolio, this is only a starting point. As we onboard new talent with new passions and expertise we are opening up to other industries.

What we value:

1. Constant learning and curiosity
2. Giving back to the community and sharing our knowledge and skills
3. Promoting a more sustainable and efficient world.

### **3.2 - Business Details**

In July 2018, Seboca AI was founded by four Data Science Masters students from the African Institute for Financial Markets and Risk Management at the University of Cape Town. The team started acquiring their first clients Luno and UCook whilst setting up their online presence (<https://www.seboca.com/>) and their office at RISE at the Woodstock Exchange in Cape Town.

Seboca’s team harnesses AI and machine learning techniques to drive efficiencies and innovation for businesses who are facing real world challenges often related to understand their data. Most SMEs are lacking the inhouse expertise required to exploit the possible efficiencies afforded to them through their data information.

The company is setup as a [partnership](#_y0qrfkiqfg4p) of the four founders Bryony Ortlepp, Jonjon Clark, Masego Modibane and Teresa Riedl. Seboca’s initial advantage is being able to start right away without needing a large amount of capital upfront.

### **3.3 - Professional Support**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Our team is currently graduating from the African Institute of Financial Markets and Risk Management. The post-graduate institute of the Faculty of Commerce at the University of Cape Town is educating people from various backgrounds to complement the needs of today’s banking environment. As Finance is more and more about technology the Masters in Financial Technology was launched to educate for skills in Artificial Intelligence, Financial Software and Blockchain Engineering. AIFMRM is supporting through access to their large network, our workspace at Rise and by enhancing our skill set over the last year tremendously. |
|  | Rise Cape Town is a co-working space and network hosted by Absa. Besides launching events, acceleration programs and connecting their members through internal functions, Rise supports with advice, access to potential clients and a productive working environment. |
| \*\*IN NEGOTIATION\*\* | Silvertree is an investment, holding and operating company for early- and mid-stage startups that use tech to reach African consumers. Our work with Ucook, who are a constituent of the Silvertree portfolio, has led to our connection with silvetree.No formal offers have made, however, we are confident that a deal would be struck based on the successful completion of contract work with Ucook demonstrating our company value. |

### **3.4 - Team**

The team consists of four data scientists with different backgrounds. The roles are allocated according to personal strengths and previous work experience. A detailed partnership agreement can be found in the appendices.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Masego Modibane  Partner | Masego is highly talented individual who obtained her honours degree in mathematical statistics with distinction. She has experience working with one of South Africa’s top wealth management firms along will multiple teaching positions and advanced analytics roles. She has been part of mathematics focussed research groups and is always on the cutting edge of any new innovation.    Her consistent drive to push herself and learn has led her to pursue a Masters in Data Science specialising in Fintech. Her strong data engineering skills and academic background have helped her excel throughout the program. She is a strong believer that Seboca will help impact the lives of the people in communities across the world. |
| Bryony Ortlepp  Partner | Bryony is hard working individual who excels at solving problems. She obtained an honours degree in mathematical finance before accruing over 5 years of risk management analytics experience at a major South African bank. Her strong technical and financial skills have allowed her to excel at this role and spearhead innovation in the bank through the creation of new optimised credit models. She is a fast learner and enjoys working in team environments.    Her passion for the community has led her to perform advanced data analytics for NGO’s in the past to optimise the functioning of these charities. She is a Masters in Data Science candidate who is constantly expanding her skill set. |
| Jonjon Clark  Partner | Jonjon majored in Finance, Mathematics and Computer Science before further obtaining his Computer Science honours with distinction. He has experience working in a niche Venture Capital firm focused on tech related innovation along with advising multiple startups. He has spoken at numerous crypto-related events, notably the Ciphertec Applied Cryptography conference where he unpacked concepts surrounding anonymity in Blockchain structures.    His passion for education has seen him tackle diverse teaching roles: from teaching primary school mathematics in South African townships; to lecturing final year Computer Science at the University of Cape Town.    He is in the final stages of completing his Data Science Masters degree. |
| Teresa Riedl  Partner | Teresa is passionate individual with a degree in Management and Technology from the Technical University of Munich. She led projects for international corporations to help them gain insights, ideate and prototype. Most recently she helped building the foundation for DStoq, a borderless stock exchange on the blockchain. She quickly analyses complex situations and has a prominent business acumen that has allowed her flourish in many different environments.    Teresa always looks for ways to make the world a better place. She was a scholar at the Social Entrepreneurship Academy, helped out in a refugee transit camp in Croatia and taught English in a Columbian orphanage.    After several qualitative research projects, she was drawn to data science and is currently completing her Masters degree in it with a specialization in Financial technology. |
| Co-Pierre Georg  Advisor | Co-Pierre is a Research Economist at Deutsche Bundesbank and a Senior Lecturer at the African Institute of Financial Markets and Risk Management (AIFMRM) at the University of Cape Town. His research interests focus on systemic risk and financial interconnectedness with a particular interest on agent-based models of the financial system. He obtained his PhD from the University of Jena in 2011 and has published both in finance and interdisciplinary journals.  Co-Pierre’s research has received awards from the European Central Bank, the SAFE Center of Excellence at Goethe University, the Volkswagen Foundation, and the Institut Louis Bachelier. He has been a consultant at various central banks and held visiting positions at Oxford, Princeton, Columbia Business School and MIT.  Co-Pierre is an educator and mentor to the Seboca team. He is brainstorming strategies and opens his network for potential supporters and clients. |

### 

### **3.5 - Operations Tools**

Seboca has setup tools to support daily operations. We believe that getting the right processes in place without over-complicating is key to managing different projects at a time and to fostering a quick growth.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Google Suite**  Email, internal and external document sharing, document creation

**Github**  Code storage and publication, collaboration

**Slack**  Internal communication, client project communication

**Asana**  Project management tool, task allocation

**Toggl**  Time tracking tool, integrated with Asana and Drive

**Freshbooks**  Automated quoting and invoicing tool, financial statements

### **3.6 - Operation Cycle**

A complete project cycle which is initiated by Seboca’s [Business Development actions](#_kasxmegnzkw8) would start of with brief research from the team (1). Team members would typically screen companies where they believe there is potential to innovate through data. This process would also include investigating the company website, understanding their current team composition and their job offerings. An ideal scenario would be finding an open data scientist position that is overdue to be filled. Then the team member reaches out to the company (2). A successfully used email template is provided in the [appendix](#_m8dio6iikk7).

The next step is an initial meeting (3) which serves as an open space for getting to know each other, learning about the potential client’s business and its challenges and for brainstorming ideas for potential projects. The goal of the meeting is to identify potential challenges that Seboca can help with, to define who the relevant stakeholders at the client’s company are that need to be on board and sign off the project and for Seboca to draft a proposal including the cost structure.

With this information Seboca’s team can prepare for the project presentation meeting (4) where all relevant stakeholders have to be convinced that we are the right team to work on the project and what we are expecting to learn. Relevant people in the project meeting which can range from legal, marketing, compliance, technology, product and data team representatives can then ask questions and come up with concerns. In an ideal scenario Seboca can resolve all questions and concerns. Realistically there will remain a few open questions that have to be answered after more in-depth research. The next step after the project presentation is a scoping meeting (5) which will be a group of at most four people: the project leads on both sides and if needed technology experts to assist with the scoping. The result shall be the project plan and the basis for the formal proposal (6) including the key deliverables that needs to be signed off by the client.

We elaborate on our pricing structure in the [Marketing plan](#_g5spni895kyy) of the report. One of the keys for the scalability of our business is having smooth and standardized processes and re-usable templates for proposals, non-disclosure agreements and invoices. From our past experience we are aware that there can be several iterations once the proposal is out. By closely working together with the client on the key determinants we are reducing those as much as possible. Once the project is signed off (7) the project phase starts.

Project

### **3.7 - Payment**

Delayed payments are the a major reason for small businesses, agencies and consultancies to face bankruptcy and being behind with paying their employees salaries. It is common for consultancies to charge 30% as an initial deposit once the project is signed. Depending on the duration of the project we are charging rates in monthly intervals or, in case the project duration is less than two months.

Each invoice is based on the following payment terms:

* Delivery date and invoice date are equal
* Reverse charge applies
* Payment is due within 1 week of the invoice date
* Seboca accepts bank transfers only (accounts are set up in South Africa and Germany)
* Unpaid balances accrue interest at 25% per annum, calculated monthly

For cross-border payments we recommend transferwise.com to avoid high fees.

### **3.8 - Aims & Objectives**

This section lists what you want to achieve with your business and how you will achieve it. We split this into 3 sections

**Short Term - end of December 2018**

* + Business setup: Seboca has limited initial setup costs. The team has each put in an initial 5k ZAR to get the basic processes running such as: publishing the company website, subscribing for an invoicing tool, getting the pro version for our project management tool asana and paying for travel and other expenses.
  + Track record: The time from now until end of December is dedicated to build Seboca’s reputation. We have acquired clients such as Luno and UCook who have already committed to working with us. Moreover we are in conversations with NGOs such as Love Justice which is a global organization seeking to prevent human trafficking.
  + Case studies: Besides working for clients we are working on case studies to be published on our website for potential clients to get a feel for what we do and an idea about how we could help them.

**Medium Term - 2019**

* + Turnover:
  + Projects / Formalization or sth along those lines:
  + Education:

**Long Term - 2020 and further**

* + Scale: hire people
  + Turnover:
  + Publications / Community building / Internationalization ?

## **4. Market Research**

This section is all about researching your customers and competitors and evaluating your prospective business against them. You need to show if there are **customers** and **demand** for your product and service.

### **4.1 - Client Research**

Here, we talked about where our client base would be founded and identified some problems they might have that our service could solve. It’s also a good idea to try and identify a **typical customer** based on your service and past experience. We found this particularly hard for web design as customers can vary a lot.

Instead of identifying a very specific customer, we identified sectors and markets to target our services and went from there in hope of finding a trend or niche.

### **4.2 - Evidence of Customer Demand**

Newness

Big data is still a relatively new environment and the majority of businesses is using - if even - simple model. Companies who are making use of advanced data analytics can gain a significant competitive advantage. Algorithms help to predict consumer behavior and allow businesses to bring their brand to mind before the customer need arises. Optimizing production and supply chain help businesses to cut costs without losing out on quality or increasing product prices. Analyzing user behavior on online platforms can help companies to detect malicious behavior and therefore to protect honest users.

Growth

Companies feel the urge to step up their data game.

*“IBM Predicts Demand For Data Scientists Will Soar 28% By 2020”*

Forbes (May, 2017)[[1]](#footnote-0)

There is little doubt about the need for data science skills across the globe. In May 2018 Forbes projects the worldwide Big Data market to grow from $42 billion in 2018 to $103 billion in 2027[[2]](#footnote-1). The Economist even states that “The most valuable resource is no longer oil, but data”.

Scarcity

Due to the newness and the growing demand for data scientists, there is a vast skill gap that is yet to bridge. Data Scientists with skills in Machine Learning are earing $100.000 in the global market.

South Africa

Business in South Africa mainly happens in the Western Cape as well as Gauteng. Currently (August 2018) there are about 800 open positions in those two locations combined. The major universities are educating about 30 students with advanced Data Science skills. Considering that data scientist are scarce globally and needed in various industries, theses students are most likely employed before they graduate.

Initial Feedback

Over the past months the Seboca team aimed to acquire 1-2 clients to initiate their business. Each single interaction with businesses lead to an initial meeting or phone call. Eight out of ten initial meetings resulted in further discussion and four of them in concrete projects. “You are onto something here!” said UCook CEO David whilst referring us to the Silvertree to work on more business challenges of their portfolio firms.

### **4.3 - Competitor Profiling**

### 

### **4.4 - SWOT Analysis**

Following the extensive market research that has been done, a SWOT analysis of our business and its initial objectives was conducted (please see below).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Strengths* | *Weaknesses* |
| * We are driven individuals pursuing a Masters in Data Science specialising in FinTech degree, which will give us an advantage above competitors as we have been introduced to the latest trends in the Data Science and Machine Learning space. * We are a partnership, so each member contributes what they can personally, with their skills, and financially. * We come from a variety of backgrounds and thus can have different approaches to the same business problem but we all can implement these different solutions since we now have the same set of Data Science tools. * We are all young entrepreneurs with a passion for data-driven solutions and the stamina to learn different solutions and techniques to certain types of problems * We are majoritarily female, which makes us unique and more attractive to investors. | * We do not have any previous experience running a data-driven consultancy business, which could make us subject to making mistakes. * We do not have experience completing a product solution for a company * We have limited resources |
| *Opportunities* | *Threats* |
| * We have links to the Silvertree holdings investment platform via our contacts at UCook, who are more than willing to connect us to them if funding may be required. * Many of us have links to successful businesses that are not currently using data-driven solutions which can be approached by our business. * We are interested in markets that are not the focus of our main competitors and therefore, hope to create a unique market of our own. | * The data-driven consultancy industry in Cape Town, is growing and competitive. We need to make sure that these companies do not tap into the markets we are looking into, as they have the advantage of resources and reputation, by insuring we deliver quality solutions. |

## **5. Marketing Plan**

The marketing plan is the section where you talk about how you will position and market your services including your USP, pricing policy and sales strategy.

### **5.1 - Service**

Here, go into detail about the services you plan to offer. It’s important to include enough detail as some people who read the plan might not be experienced in your industry.

We found it useful highlighting particular aspects and principles of our service(s) and relevant examples of previous work.

### **5.2 - Unique Selling Point**

* Great service, quick response time
* Initially we have a great pricing to offer for the first 5 clients
* We are 3 women in tech
* Creative, hands on
* We have a strong network of more data scientist in industry

What makes you different from other companies in your sector and why will customers want to use your service? This can be really difficult, but what we found helpful was identifying the simple things that customers want – unique does not have to mean crazy and different. A lot of companies fail their customers with simple problems such as good customer service.

As above, we used the the [6 Steps to Creating a USP](http://www.sitepoint.com/blogs/2009/09/12/how-to-create-unique-selling-proposition/) article to identify a USP. Using that as a guide we structured it under these headings:

* + **Our target audience**
  + **The problem we solve**
  + **Three benefits of our service**
  + **What we will offer**

### **5.3 - Pricing Policy**

We are still in the process of deciding on which long term pricing policy we feel will be best to encourage growth and profitability. Initially, we will charge a flat rate per person per day, to be quoted per project. We will offer a very reasonable rate to begin with, as we need to build up a portfolio of clients who have been happy with our services. Once we have delivered on a few projects and started building a reputation, we will increase our rates to be market related.

In addition to this, we are going to investigate the viability of introducing a profit share model for certain projects. We would offer our clients our services for free or minimal rates upfront, upon agreement that they will pay us a percentage of their increase in efficiency thanks to our contribution. This is a lot more lucrative, as it would take Seboca AI from being a cost center where we only charge our time to being a profit center. The difficulty with this model is to quantify the impact we’ve made to the clients processes. Some businesses are seasonal and others may have a marketing strategy that perhaps runs parallel to our project, making it impossible to attribute improvements to one project or another. However, other companies in the industry have successfully implemented this model and we believe that with a bit more work experience, we will be able to implement this pricing policy on certain projects going forward.

### **5.4 - Sales & Marketing Strategy**

How are you going to market your product or service so that potential customers will know about it? Are you going to create any set packages that customers can buy off the shelf or will it all be on a bespoke basis?

For our marketing strategy, we split our plans up into **online** (website, blogging, social networking) and **offline** (mail drops, networking events etc.) strategies.

We didn’t have much of a budget for marketing and had to think of creative ways to market our services. You also have to think of methods that are relevant to your business though – For example, I wouldn’t say flyer or billboard advertising are suitable mediums for a web design agency.

## 

## **6. Financial Plan**

*To accompany this business plan template, there is a* [*financial planning spreadsheet*](https://docs.google.com/previewtemplate?id=0Ak4IcvXFn613dDlVVUFzMmdaNWZHY3B5bS1WdXZTS1E&mode=public) *you can use. You’re free to use the spreadsheet to calculate the financials and then copy and relevant tables and graphs here into the business plan.*

### **6.1 - Start Up Costs**

One of the key strengths of our business plan is that we require very little capital upfront. The four of us are students and are not expecting to draw a salary until we have built up a bit of a cash reserve and until the business becomes profitable. We have agreed to each invest R5000 of our own funds to spend on the start up costs and other expenses which may crop up before we start earning money. We are also very privileged and grateful to have support from AIFMRM in terms of Rise Membership for the rest of the year and access to their server, should we require it.

The startup costs that we have identified are:

* Equipment
  + AIFMRM server accessible until end 2018
* Software
  + GoDaddy Domain Registration 14,48 USD
  + Wix G Suite Mailbox 1 year 148,75 USD
  + Wix Premium Plan 1 year 117,81 USD
  + Would we need any other pro versions?
* Office Space
  + Rise Membership paid by AIFMRM until end 2018
* Marketing materials
  + Business Cards ZAR 862,50 incl VAT per person

### **6.2 - Sales Forecasts**

We are all studying this year and need to ensure that we do not over-commit to clients, as our primary responsibility is to complete our thesis by the end of the year to get our qualification. Due to this constraint, we have limited our available days to two full days per week per person until the end of 2018. We will need to manage client expectations in this regard, but we believe that although it could reduce our sales for the first few months of the business, in the long term, being able to boast four Masters graduates will improve our reputation and increase demand for our services.

We have already had interest in the services which we offer and we are currently in contract negotiations with potential clients. The clients who we are in discussions with are:

* Luno: Luno has a big project for us which could keep us busy until the end of the year. We had hoped to have all of the contracts signed already so that we could begin work, but this has taken longer than expected and negotiations are still underway. We anticipate charging R10,000 per resource per day and will dedicate 50% of our resources to this.
* UCook: UCook has a lot of data but currently aren’t utilising it to choose recipes which their customers will like. We will be partnering with UCook, initially for free, in exchange for contacts within Silvertree and other exciting businesses, as well as publicity in the form of a press release when the project goes live. We will dedicate 25% of our resources to this project initially and should receive data in the second week of September.
* LoveJustice (NGO): LoveJustice seeks to reduce human trafficking by intercepting victims at the airport, before they are picked up by the traffickers. Since LoveJustice is an NGO, this is one of the projects which we will work on for free. We will dedicate 25% of our resources to this project and we should be done by end October. We are waiting for
* SPCA (NGO): The SPCA is the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and we think that we could assist them in finding value in the data which they already have. We have only recently reached out to them, but we hope to do work for them when we finish on the LoveJustice project.

Forecast sales for 1-2 years, or as many years as deemed necessary. This is difficult, but has to be done. It helps to use your knowledge of past clients/experience and then apply this to prospective client projects (e.g. you could generalise projects, such as: basic e-commerce website, branding design package, business card design).

Use your pricing calculations to calculate how many hours you have available in a week/month and how many projects you can fit within these hours. You could use your marketing strategy to illustrate when you expect to see a surge in sales or when you predict there might be a lull (e.g. Christmas period).

### **6.3 - Cash-flow Forecasts**

Your cash-flow is used to demonstrate your income and expenditure for each year, displayed on a month-by-month basis. **Income** can include sales, funding, loans etc. and **Expenditure** shows your outgoings such as rent, stationary and wages.

### **6.4 - Other Financials**

There are other tables you can include in your financial plan such as a profit & loss account for each year and a balance sheet. **Profit & loss** is fairly self-explanatory and a **balance sheet** shows your assets and liabilities.

We got more outside help with these other financial tables/charts than the rest of the business plan. There’s nothing wrong with that and I’d definitely [recommend getting help](http://www.happycry.co.uk/blog/archives/starting_a_design_business_get_the_ball_rolling/) with parts you’re uncertain about as well as your start-up plan as a whole.

## **7. Appendix**

### **7.1 - Market Overview**

### **7.1 - Financial Charts**

### **7.2 - Partnership agreement**

### **7.3 - References → ie luno NDA, a lead list with prospects etc?**

### **7.4 - Images of work → our case studies**

### **7.5 - Templates → Sales pitch for UCook, email templates // not super necessary but might make it more real to him**

|  |
| --- |
| Dear (HR Manager / Lead Data Scientist / Business Owner),  I trust my email finds you well.  I know that Luno was already in touch with CoPierre Georg from UCT to arrange one of your managers speaking to our class. We are the Masters Data Science & FinTech stream.  Three fellow students and I just started our own AI company, called Seboca AI (<https://www.seboca.com/>) and we help companies to solve their data & AI challenges. At this point we are acquiring the first projects.  I saw on your job board that you are searching for a data scientist  (Link to Job Description). That's why I assume that you have several data challenges to solve.  What we want to offer is four skilled data scientist from various backgrounds (computer science, stats, risk management and engineering) working on one of your data challenges in the following weeks. We are passionate about building some cool models.  Would you or someone from your data team be able to take half an hour this week to talk to us to see if we can work together?  Best Regards,  (Seboca Team Member) |

1. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/louiscolumbus/2017/05/13/ibm-predicts-demand-for-data-scientists-will-soar-28-by-2020/#7a33976d7e3b> [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/louiscolumbus/2018/05/23/10-charts-that-will-change-your-perspective-of-big-datas-growth/#3a1677ba2926> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)