

COCC Business Development Center eSBDC Compass and Small Business Client Characteristics Proposal

Thinking Small Business Client Characteristics

Your Idea:

- What is your business idea?
- What products and/or services will you offer?
- Are you starting a new business, buying an existing one, or buying a franchise?
- Will you need to protect intellectual property through trade name, trade mark, copyright and/or patents?

Is Your Idea Feasible?

- Are you ready to be in business?
- Do you have the skills, experience and time?
- How much money will it take and can you raise it?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?

What's Your Market?

- Who is your target market, how big is it, and where is it located?
- Is there sufficient demand for your product or service?
- Who is your competition and what are their strengths and weaknesses?
- Why will people purchase your product or service versus your competitors?

Your Business Structure:

- What's the best legal structure (sole proprietorship, LLC, Corporation)?
- Will you have employees and what's required if you do?
- What licensing, zoning and permits are required?
- What insurance and tax issues are there?

What is Your Business Plan?

- Have you started on a business plan?
- What's in a business plan?
- How do you develop a business plan?

Launching Small Business Client Characteristics

Attracting Customers

- How will you attract your target customers and promote your business?
- What is the best use of your marketing budget?
- What is your price, quality and customer service strategy?
- What is your overall marketing plan?

Managing It All

- How will you manage the day to day details of operating the business?
- What are your staffing needs and how will you build a winning team?
- What are your bookkeeping, accounting, cash flow and tax needs?
- How much working capital will you need for inventory and money management issues?

Product, Service and Delivery Operations

- How will you deliver your product and/or service to your customers?
- What are your facility, equipment and furniture needs, layout and design?
- What are your capacity capabilities, workflow and process design?
- What business systems do you need to control the business operations?

Ensuring Financial Success

- How much money does it take to support you, your business and your creditors?
- What level of profits do you need to ensure financial success?
- What are the total cash flow needs on a monthly and yearly basis?
- How will the financial performance of the business support future growth, goals, etc?

Funding It All

- How much money and capital will you need?
- Where will you get the money?
- Do you have a business plan for investors to consider?

Growing Small Business Client Characteristics

Increasing Market Awareness

- What is the market potential for growth?
- What is your promotional strategy to reach your target market?
- Have you defined a marketing budget?
- Do you have a marketing plan?

Your Management Strategy

- Do you have a defined organizational structure?
- Do you have a defined way of doing things to ensure consistent quality?
- Do you have defined systems, processes and controls in place?
- Are training and coaching programs in place to help ensure quality?

Your Operational Plan

- Do you have the capacity to meet current and future sales levels?
- Do you need new equipment, more personnel and/or additional working capital to increase capacity?
- Do you need to increase efficiencies and effectiveness through better production processes, less waste and increased quality?
- Do you need more space and bigger facilities to meet capacity needs?

Your Key Personnel Plan

- Do you have the right people on board?
- Do you have a plan for attracting future key team personnel?
- Do you have defined duties, responsibilities, skill and experience needed for each position?

Your Financial and Funding Plan

- How much capital will you need for business expansion?
- How will you raise this capital?
- Do you have a business plan for investors/lenders to review?
- What are your anticipated sales, profits and cash flow based your expansion plan?

Reinventing Small Business Client Characteristics

Your Challenge:

- What new circumstances is your business facing?
- Are the marketplace and/or industry changing?
- Do your products or services need updating, upgrading or elimination?
- Are you prepared to change directions in your business strategy?

Where is the Business Right Now?

- What provides the best foundation for change?
- Do you need to expand existing markets or explore new ones?
- What are your best performing products?
- What is your current productivity and can it be increased?

What Can You Do?

- Where is there room for improvement and/or change?
- Can you increase sales and profitability?
- Can you expand a product line or add new items or services?
- What about automation or outsourcing?

Planning for Change:

- What will help you make the adjustments?
- Do you need to change strategic direction?
- Do you need a new product or service plan?
- Do you need a new business plan?

Funding:

- How much money will this cost and where will you get it?
- How much can you increase profits and improve cash flow?
- What are your possible sources of capital?

Exiting Small Business Client Characteristics

Why Leave?

- What's the reason for exiting your business?
- Are you burned out or bored, ready for retirement, or ready for a change?
- Are there distressed market conditions and/or increased competition?
- Has the industry changed?

What Are Your Options?

- How do you rid yourself of responsibility?
- Do you sell?
- Do you hand over to a family member or key employees?
- Do you close up shop and liquidate assets; and/or file bankruptcy?

The Transition Stage:

- Do you have a defined exit strategy and/or succession plan?
- Are there buy sell agreements in place between owners?
- How does your exit strategy affect your personal estate plan?
- What are the legal and tax considerations of transition or sale of the business?

Status Report:

- What are your business' assets and/or liabilities?
- What is the market of inventory and long-term assets?
- What are the level and trend of sales and profits over the last 3 to 5 years?
- Is cash flow positive or negative?

Naming Your Price:

- What is your business worth?
- Is there a valuation formula?
- How much "good will" do you have?
- What can be leveraged to increase the value?