

Small Business Management: Program Outline

Program Goal

To teach how to plan for success, market products or services, find the right sources to finance a business, and write an effective business plan step-by-step to start your own small business or manage a small business for someone else.

Program Outcomes	Courses	Evidence of Learning
Identify the typical qualities and behaviors of successful entrepreneurs, and the benefits and drawbacks of starting one's own business, buying a franchise, and purchasing an existing business	Preparing for Business Success	Multiple-choice lesson exams
	Choosing Your Business	Multiple-choice lesson exams
Develop clear, measurable goals and a comprehensive mission statement for a business	Keys to Success	Multiple-choice lesson exams
	Basics of a Business Plan	Multiple-choice lesson exams
	Writing a Business Plan	Multiple-choice lesson exams
	Creating Your Business Plan	Graded project
Comprehend techniques used in successful networking, including how to make a good first impression, how to introduce your business to a potential contact, listening skills, and how to follow up with a promising contact	Business Connections	Multiple-choice lesson exams
Distinguish between primary and secondary research and determine appropriate question types for various research situations	Market Research	Multiple-choice lesson exams
	Marketing that Works	Multiple-choice lesson exams
	Creating Your Business Plan	Graded project
Establish an effective marketing strategy which includes an advertising platform and a public relations campaign	Marketing that Works	Multiple-choice lesson exams
	Creating Your Business Plan	Graded project
Develop and draft a business plan according to a five-part comprehensive structure	Basics of a Business Plan	Multiple-choice lesson exams
	Writing a Business Plan	Multiple-choice lesson exams
	Creating Your Business Plan	Graded project

Program Outcomes	Courses	Evidence of Learning
Identify an appropriate business structure to match the business plan, including considerations for hiring management and staffing	070036 Your Business Structure	Multiple-choice lesson exams
	070044 Creating Your Business Plan	Graded project
Recognize the features and benefits of different types of funding in order to identify the right money sources for a particular business	Financing Your Business	Multiple-choice lesson exams
	Creating Your Business Plan	Graded project
Understand the range of legal regulations that affect starting a new business, including licenses, zoning approvals, and basic tax knowledge, and apply these to a business plan	Legal Requirements and Resources	Multiple-choice lesson exams
	Creating Your Business Plan	Graded project
Identify the components of a solid business team such as employees, suppliers, and distributors, and techniques used in identifying personal and business characteristics that will enhance a business	Building a Team	Multiple-choice lesson exams
	Creating Your Business Plan	Graded project
Comprehend the scope and function of the Internet, the advantages and hazards of an online presence, resources for developing an online presence, and features of successful commercial websites	Putting Your Business Online	Multiple-choice lesson exams
	Creating Your Business Plan	Graded project
Differentiate between types of pricing strategies and business evaluations, and use cost and expense data to prepare a budget as part of a business plan	Preparing a Budget	Multiple-choice lesson exams
	Creating Your Business Plan	Graded project
Recognize the features and advantages of well-organized business records and how business records can be used to inform major business decisions	Keeping Business Records	Multiple-choice lesson exams
	Creating Your Business Plan	Graded project

Program Structure

Instruction Set 1	
Lesson 1	Starting Your Program
Lesson 2	Preparing for Business Success
Instruction Set 2	
Lesson 3	Choosing Your Business
Lesson 4	Keys to Success
Lesson 5	Business Connections
Instruction Set 3	
Lesson 6	Market Research
Lesson 7	Basics of a Business Plan
Lesson 8	Writing a Business Plan
Instruction Set 4	
Lesson 9	Your Business Structure
Lesson 10	Financing Your Business
Lesson 11	Legal Requirements and Resources
Instruction Set 5	
Lesson 12	Marketing That Works
Lesson 13	Building a Team
Lesson 14	Putting Your Business Online
Instruction Set 6	
Lesson 15	Preparing a Budget
Lesson 16	Keeping Business Records
Lesson 17	Creating Your Business Plan
Learning Aid	CD: Start Your Own Business

Course Descriptions and Objectives

Starting Your Program

The Starting Your Program course is designed to help you make a smooth transition to Penn Foster, including learning how to use all the tools and resources that are available to you. The goal is to help you become a confident, independent learner.

By the end of this course, you'll be able to do the following:

- Further express your goals and expectations
- Navigate the Penn Foster learning environment, including your Student Portal
- Describe what it takes to be a successful online learner
- Identify your preferred study aids and learning styles
- Determine personal financial goals
- Practice some important study and time management skills
- Access and use helpful resources, such as the Penn Foster Virtual Library, and various help features

Preparing for Business Success

With the technological advances that are available now—including overnight delivery services, intercontinental services, secure online ordering and banking, broadband Internet availability, and new forms of rapid communication—starting your own business, anytime, anywhere, has never been easier. This study unit will help you begin the journey. First we'll look at the pros and cons of starting your own business. That will help you look at the big picture and ask the right questions. Starting a successful business venture is very possible, but it's not to be taken on lightly. One of the most important considerations is whether or not you have what it takes to accept the challenge. That's why we'll also explore the characteristics that are typical of entrepreneurs. This section will allow you to see for yourself whether you have these traits.

By the end of this course, you'll be able to do the following:

- Understand the pros and cons of starting your own business
- Describe the advantages and disadvantages of starting a new business, buying an existing business, or investing in a franchise
- List the personality traits of an entrepreneur
- Identify the 10 most common mistakes made by entrepreneurs
- Use online resources to find information for small business owners

Choosing Your Business

During this lesson, you'll discover how to research the different types of businesses from a variety of resources. You'll determine if there's a possible niche in a business. Next, you'll examine the four main types of business entities that exist today. Lastly, you'll cover the relevance of your personal style on the development of the business.

By the end of this course, you'll be able to do the following:

- Identify different business types
- Determine costs
- List the four main business entities
- Recognize your business personality

Keys to Success

Success in business is founded on elements that occur long before any actual business takes place. Only with research, preparation, and careful consideration of your goals and values can your business grow in a way that brings satisfaction and fulfillment to your life.

It's vital to think long and hard at these early stages about the things you want to achieve, what's most important to you, and how you measure success. Then plot your course. This lesson will provide you with the tools to begin this process.

By expressing your goals and values as a mission statement, you'll clarify your purpose and take direct aim on your target. When your mission statement appears at the front of your business plan to explain what your business is all about, you'll have taken your first firm steps toward success.

By the end of this course, you'll be able to do the following:

- Create clear, measurable goals for your business
- Identify three elements of a mission statement

Business Connections

A strong business plan, clear goals, solid financing, reliable employees, good location—these elements are all important to the success of your business. But few businesses can succeed without the vital business connections that bring in customers, open doors, offer partnerships, and make many unexpected things possible. Some people seem to have a natural ability to form these connections, while others have to learn how. These people will introduce you to others, and so your network grows.

This lesson will explain the importance of making business connections through networking, the process just described. It will also describe many of the skills you'll need in order to do it. Consider this lesson an introduction, one that will reward you for the rest of your life, if you put time and energy into it. Both professionally and socially, the ability to make lasting connections with others is an infinite resource.

By the end of this course, you'll be able to do the following:

- Examine various networking strategies
- Develop networking skills

Market Research

Most entrepreneurs are used to following their hunches on a daily basis. In a crisis, they're particularly likely to "go with their gut," even when making the most pivotal decision. But the smartest and most successful business people apply the old adage: "Trust, but verify."

Market research can tell you exactly who is most likely to buy it and why. It can also tell you whether a trend has peaked or is still going strong. For instance, if every time you turn around someone is complaining that you can't buy a good taco in town, market research can tell you whether these same people will actually buy tacos if you open a stand.

This lesson will explain some of the benefits of doing market research that you may not have realized before. It will introduce you to the idea of identifying a primary and secondary target market for your business and explain their importance.

By the end of this course, you'll be able to do the following:

- Examine types of market research
- Discover your target market
- Assess your target market

Basics of a Business Plan

Writing a business plan greatly increases the chances that your new business will succeed. Not only will you have an impressive, professional document to present to future investors and other interested parties, but you'll also have an invaluable blueprint for the business that will guide you through each stage of its development and help keep you and your employees on track.

This lesson will help you put together each element of your business plan. In your final project at the end of the program, you'll compile each of the elements, then complete, refine, and make any remaining adjustments necessary for each section. If you prepare each phase thoroughly, your final project will be a snap! And you'll have created a solid business plan without feeling stressed or overwhelmed.

By the end of this course, you'll be able to do the following:

- Analyze a business plan's five basic elements
- Perform background research

Writing a Business Plan

In this lesson, you'll begin the process of writing your business plan. If you follow the suggestions presented here, several elements of your business plan will be complete by the time you've finished the activities in this unit.

The following elements of the business plan are covered in this lesson:

- Introduction and Overview
- Mission Statement
- Products and Services
- Target Customers
- Market Position
- Competition

You've already begun to develop several of these sections in earlier lessons. The groundwork you've laid will enable you to write these sections more easily and thoroughly. Each one will be set aside and saved for inclusion in the final project—your completed business plan.

By the end of this course, you'll be able to do the following:

- Explain the purpose of your business plan
- Write an initial draft of your introduction or executive summary
- Complete your mission statement
- Identify your company's products and/or services
- Complete the Business section of your business plan
- Describe your market position
- Explain how you'll compete with similar businesses in your market

Your Business Structure

In this lesson, we'll address the details of the day-to-day operation of your business. They include various elements of your business structure, such as the type of business entity you'll form, the location of your business, the management style you'll use, the staffing decisions you'll make and the daily processes that you and your staff will go through to get the job done. While that might not sound too exciting, planning the layout and daily activities of your business will make it feel very real to you. With each step, you'll be more eager and more motivated, because you'll see your business taking shape before your eyes.

This lesson will also provide models for segments of your business plan that fall under the category of Operating Plan. In the Building Your Business Plan assignments, you'll write up those sections and save them for the final project, where they'll all be compiled into your business plan.

The easiest way to finish your business plan is to complete each assignment as it comes up. That way, the material will be fresh in your mind, the notes you made will be easy to expand upon, and your enthusiasm will still be high. If you wait until the final project is due, it may seem overwhelming to do the entire plan.

By the end of this course, you'll be able to do the following:

- Identify and choose a business structure
- Describe the relationship between a business plan and its processes
- Explain management processes
- Summarize good management styles
- Discuss Total Quality Management
- List considerations for hiring staff

Financing Your Business

In this lesson, you'll explore some of the types and sources of potential funding for your new business venture. You'll also be preparing the brief Financial Requirements section of your Business Plan. A further discussion of the more complex financial documentation you'll need for your Business Plan will be covered in later study units. For now, you'll learn about the options for meeting the financial needs of your business. You'll also consider which banks, venture capitalists, potential equity partners, angels, and other investors you may turn to for financial assistance from the beginning of your business.

By the end of this course, you'll be able to do the following:

- Distinguish among different types of funding
- Identify the right money source for your business
- Recognize sources of additional funding
- Investigate financial resources available on the internet

Legal Requirements and Resources

While this lesson will help familiarize you with the kinds of requirements you'll encounter in setting up your business, regulations vary greatly among industries and localities. It's best to consult a good attorney or certified public accountant (CPA) who has experience in setting up businesses to be sure you comply with all the regulations that apply to your business.

By the end of this course, you'll be able to do the following:

- Discuss the range of legal regulations and requirements for starting a new business
- Identify the most common regulations, licenses, and approvals needed for new businesses
- Explain the basic taxes required of a business owner
- Describe several legal and tax resources for business owners
- Find specific legal and tax resources on the internet

Marketing That Works

This lesson will introduce you to a variety of methods that can help promote your business—the kind of marketing that works.

Successful entrepreneurs are also skilled marketers. They know the importance of effective techniques, attitude, and skills in reaching their target customers. Successful marketing can make the difference between a thriving business and one that struggles along.

You'll learn about public relations campaigns, advertising, and marketing plans in this lesson. And you'll hear the insider observations of a marketing consultant who has seen the winners and losers in business and has drawn clear-cut conclusions about what it takes to win.

Marketing will be a constant in your business, no matter how successful you become. Consider this lesson a beginning. In the future, you'll investigate websites, workshops, and other sources of marketing tips to study what works. And, since the market is constantly changing, staying on top of marketing trends is an ongoing activity. But it's one you may enjoy.

By the end of this course, you'll be able to do the following:

- Explain the difference between publicity and public relations
- Explain the difference between advertising and marketing
- Describe the characteristics of successful advertising

- Recognize why some marketing plans fail and others succeed
- Write the marketing plan section of your business plan

Building a Team

In this study unit, you'll learn about the importance of creating a winning team for your business. Employees, distributors, experts, suppliers, vendors, and other key players all make important contributions to your success. In addition to the advantages of working with a united team, you'll learn about what to look for when choosing the members of your team, from your receptionist to your tax attorney.

By the end of this course, you'll be able to do the following:

- Evaluate your need for specific team members
- Describe several effective ways of choosing employees
- Select suppliers, distributors, and experts for your team
- Identify potential threats to team unity
- Explain criteria used in choosing a bookkeeper or tax adviser

Putting Your Business Online

This lesson will provide you with a foundation for getting your business online. It will present some of the primary considerations and concerns of many business owners. And it will offer you a host of resources for pursuing your efforts to develop a presence on the web.

By the end of this course, you'll be able to do the following:

- Explain the value of an online business
- Discuss the considerations in establishing an online business
- Describe the value of word-of-mouth for expanding your business online
- List criteria for choosing a web designer
- Identify resources for getting online
- Apply knowledge of search engines to find further resources

Preparing a Budget

In this lesson and the ones that follow, you'll learn the principles involved in creating your own financial statements. Even though you may choose to use a financial expert such as an accountant, CPA, or attorney to prepare or review these financials, it's essential for you to understand the basics yourself so that you can make use of the data as your business grows.

In the course of making realistic financial projections for your business, you'll also have to measure the performance of your business. Since the bottom line reflects the success of the day-to-day operations of your business, you need to keep a close eye on processes.

By the end of this course, you'll be able to do the following:

- Make sound financial projections
- Evaluate financial management software
- Set prices and costs
- Work with experts to develop a financial analysis of your business
- Use performance measurements to evaluate and improve your business
- Write the pricing, performance measures, and financial analysis segments of your business plan

Keeping Business Records

This lesson will not only explain the nature of each of these statements, it will also introduce you to some of the basic terminology and bookkeeping procedures you'll need to know. The computer software program you've chosen for your financial statements will help you set up the formatting and will do the calculations for you.

It's advisable, however, that you consult an accountant or CPA, since you're setting up these statements for the first time. With the help of your expert, you'll know they're set up correctly from the beginning, which can save you a great deal of trouble later. It may also save you from some very serious financial miscalculations down the line. At the very least, have your accountant or CPA look over the statements after you've prepared them.

At the end of this unit, you'll begin preparing the financial statements you'll need for your business plan. Then you'll be ready to compile all the elements of the business plan that you've worked on thus far.

By the end of this course, you'll be able to do the following:

- Explain the importance of keeping records
- Cite ways that financial records help in making business decisions
- Summarize the basics of bookkeeping
- Identify your business status
- Discuss standard financial terms related to your business
- Complete pro forma financial statements for your business plan

Note: The titles of your learning materials may be different from those listed on your program outline. There is no need to call your instructor about these differences. While the titles of certain learning materials may differ, the educational content is the same. All learning materials are designed to give you the finest education in your field. If you need instructional assistance, however, be sure to call for help. We reserve the right to revise the program of study and the instructional materials and to substitute for the items of equipment offered.