



James J. Hill Reference Library

Guide to Business Planning Resources Online

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Understanding the importance of a business plan is your first step toward starting a successful business. By creating a business plan, you will have a detailed management tool that will help your business get started, grow, and remain successful for years to come.

This research guide is intended to be representative, rather than comprehensive. For more information about subscription and print resources available on this topic, visit http://www.jhill.org/research/publications_guides.cfm and look for the companion guide, or consult with one of our Business Information Specialists (via email at info@jhill.org, or call 651-265-5500).

Business Plans: Guides and Samples

Starting a business often means creating a business plan, and there are many resources that will provide you with step-by-step instructions for writing your business plan, as well as providing you with sample plans.

BizPlanIt's Virtual Business Plan

Web resource <http://www.bizplanit.com/vplan.html>

The Virtual Business Plan walks you through the process of creating a business plan, section by section, with advice and tips for success.

Bplans.com – Sample Business Plans

Web resource http://www.bplans.com/Sample_Business_Plans/all_plans.cfm

Created by the maker of Business Plan Pro, this Web site offers free online access to over 100 sample business plans created with their software product.

Canada Business Service Centres Interactive Business Planner

Web resource <http://www.canadabusiness.ca/ibp/en/>

This Web application allows you to prepare a 3-year business plan for a new or existing business, including financial projections based on information you provide.

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Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh Business Plans and Profiles Index

Web resource <http://www.clpgh.org/research/business/bplansindex.html>

This index lists types of businesses and a corresponding sample business plan, profile or book about the business. Entries that refer to actual sample plans are in bold print. If the plan or profile is online, a link is provided. While the list covers print sources in the Business Department of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, the sources may be available to you through your local public or academic library.

SCORE Business Templates

Web resource http://www.score.org/template_gallery.html

Download planning and financial templates. Save the files to your computer and modify for your business needs. Includes planning and financial templates.

Financial Analysis / Benchmarking

BizStats.com

Web resource <http://www.bizstats.com/>

Business statistics such as financial and operating ratios, turnover, profitability for sole proprietorships, employee productivity, industry averages, and more. Also includes statistics on specialized topics.

Business Performance Dashboard

Web resource <http://www.entrepreneur.com/benchmark/>

This site from Entrepreneur.com brings together sales statistics on dozens of industries. Statistics include sales by industry, sales per employee, and revenue by business age.

CAPS Benchmarking Reports

Web resource <http://www.capsresearch.org/Research/Benchmarking/Benchmarking.aspx>

Industry-specific reports as well as cross-Industry data to help purchasing professionals compare their performance against that of their peers in the same industry. Free registration required for full access.

Corporation Tax Stats – Data by Industry or Sector

Web resource <http://www.irs.gov/taxstats/bustaxstats/article/0,,id=96388,00.html>

These reports from the IRS provide various financial statistics on corporations by broad industry heading. Use these stats to compare your balance sheet and income statements to industry averages.

Industry Overviews, Competition and Customers

Information and statistics relevant to your industry, customers, and competition can be vital assets to a business plan. See the Hill Library's guides *Researching an Industry*, *Researching a Company*, and *Market Research* for information on researching these specific topics (http://www.jjhill.org/research/publications_guides.cfm).

Financing

The following resources provide information about various financing options, from government loans to venture capital firms.

BusinessFinance.com

Web resource <http://www.businessfinance.com/>

Whether you are starting a business, buying a business, or growing your existing business, use this site to locate suitable sources of funding.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance

Web resource <http://www.cfda.gov/>

The *Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance* provides access to a database of all available Federal Programs. Most of the assistance programs for small business are in the form of loans.

Money Tree Survey by PriceWaterhouseCoopers

Web resource <http://www.pwcmoneytree.com/moneytree/index.jsp>

A quarterly study of equity investments made by the venture capital community, the Money Tree Survey serves as a barometer of regional and national economic health and identifies promising industry segments. Quarterly data is provided by geographic region, industry, stage of development, financing sequences, venture capital form, and invested company.

Quick Pick Chart for Financing Solutions (Business Owner's Toolkit)

Web resource http://www.toolkit.com/small_business_guide/sbg.aspx?nid=P10_1200

This excellent tool divides funding sources into categories based on the age of your business and the length of financing, as well as identifying primary and secondary sources.

Small Business Administration: Financial Assistance

Web resource <http://www.sba.gov/financing/>

The SBA guarantees major portions of some loans made to small businesses, enabling its lending partners to provide financing when funding is otherwise unavailable on reasonable terms. This Web site provides information on loan programs, forms, lending statistics, and various studies.

Small Business Administration: SBIC Directory

Web resource http://www.sba.gov/aboutsba/sbaprograms/inv/inv_directory_sbic.html

This site provides a state-by-state listing of small business investment companies, giving details of preferred investments.

Demographics

Demographic sources can provide information about your prospective markets and customers, based on geographic location or other criteria.

American FactFinder

Web resource http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en

View, print, and download statistics about population, housing, industry, and business. Using FactFinder, you can also find U.S. Census Bureau products, including the in-depth demographic-rich American Community Survey; create reference and thematic maps; and search for specific data.

Census 2000

Web resource <http://www.census.gov/main/www/cen2000.html>

Results from the latest decennial census, such as population totals, rankings, comparisons, summaries and reports. Data available down to the Census Block level.

Census Scope

Web resource <http://www.censuscope.org/>

This site provides an easy-to-use way to graph and chart Census 2000 data. You can chart population growth, or segment by race, age, and other criteria at the national, state, county, or metro level.

DataPlace

Web resource <http://www.dataplace.org/>

Data Place is one of the most comprehensive sites for finding statistics on cities, counties, and states on the Web. Pulling together data from the Census Bureau, the IRS, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and other governmental departments and councils, this site conglomerates a complicated search into one simple interface.

Population Reference Bureau (PRB)

Web resource <http://www.prb.org/>

The PRB analyzes population data and research to create reports, studies, and papers on demographic trends, hot topics, and international regions.

Site Selection Online

Web resource <http://www.siteselection.com>

Site Selection magazine's Web site provides free access to detailed demographic data covering states and metropolitan areas. Click on the "area demographics" link to access the state and metro area indexes. Requires free registration.

Selected Small Business Resources

Biz Info Library

Web resource <http://www.bizinfo library.org>

The Biz Info Library (BIL) is a free online library of relevant, credible, and practical information on starting and growing a business. BIL is a collaboration between the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, the Edward Lowe Foundation, and the James J. Hill Reference Library.

BizToolkit

Web resource <http://www.biz toolkit.org> (click on free access)

BizToolkit is a free gateway to business information tools, databases, and research resources organized by stage of business. All resources are chosen and annotated by business librarians from the James J. Hill Reference Library.

Edward Lowe Peerspectives

Web resource <http://www.lowe.org/index.elf?page=wwd&function=PRS>

The Lowe Foundation “champions the entrepreneurial spirit” by providing information, research, and educational experiences for growing companies. *PeerSpectives* provides information and articles on topics such as business planning, HR issues, financial statements and ratios, advisory boards, marketing, and market research.

Entrepreneur.com

Web resource <http://www.entrepreneur.com/>

This Web site from the publishers of *Entrepreneur* magazine contains practical information and concise, hands-on advice. Covers the latest developments in franchises, management, marketing, and more.

eVenturing Entrepreneur’s Resource Center

Web resource <http://www.eventuring.org>

Information on starting and growing your business from The Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. Reviews and categorizes other sites on topics such as business plans, market demographics, boards, protecting your idea, and more.

Nolo.com

Web resource <http://www.nolo.com>

This free online resource specializes in “putting the law into plain English.” The site offers practical information about starting a business, choosing a business structure, writing a business plan, legal concerns, and business taxes.

Small Business Administration

Web resource <http://www.sba.gov>

The Small Business Administration's home page provides information on starting, financing, and expanding a business. Links to local SBA offices, small business statistics, business laws, regulatory assistance, links to disaster recovery programs, and training opportunities are also provided.

SBA – Small Business Guide to Exporting

Web resource

http://www.sba.gov/aboutsba/sbaprograms/internationaltrade/exportlibrary/sbge/OIT_SB_GUIDE_EXPORT_INDEX.html

Developed by the Small Business Administration's Office of International Trade, this resource is designed as an informational tool to assist American small businesses in developing international markets. This guide covers the creation of an international marketing plan, identifying markets, and transporting goods internationally, and points the user to other sources of information.

SBA Subcontracting Network

Web resource <http://web.sba.gov/subnet/>

Prime contractors use SUB-Net to post subcontracting opportunities. These may or may not be reserved for small business, and they may include either solicitations or other notices -- for example, notices of sources sought for teaming partners and subcontractors on future contracts. Small businesses can review this Web site to identify opportunities in their areas of expertise.

Small Business Development Centers (SBDC)

Web resource <http://www.sba.gov/sbdc/>

SBDCs offer one-stop assistance to individuals and small businesses by providing a wide variety of information and guidance in central and easily accessible branch locations. The program is a cooperative effort of the private sector, the educational community, and federal, state, and local government.

SCORE

Web resource <http://www.score.org/>

SCORE is a volunteer organization offering individual counseling on all aspects of small business management for anyone starting a business.

WSJ.com: Small Business

Web resource <http://online.wsj.com/small-business>

The *Wall Street Journal's* small business content provides information on franchising, financing, and general information on running a business, as well as links to business tools.

Questions? Consult with a Business Information Specialist!
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