

Ready to **START & SCALE**
your business,
READ ME



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International
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Tekki-fii
MAKE IT IN THE GAMBIA



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Introduction: Welcome to your new career as an entrepreneur!

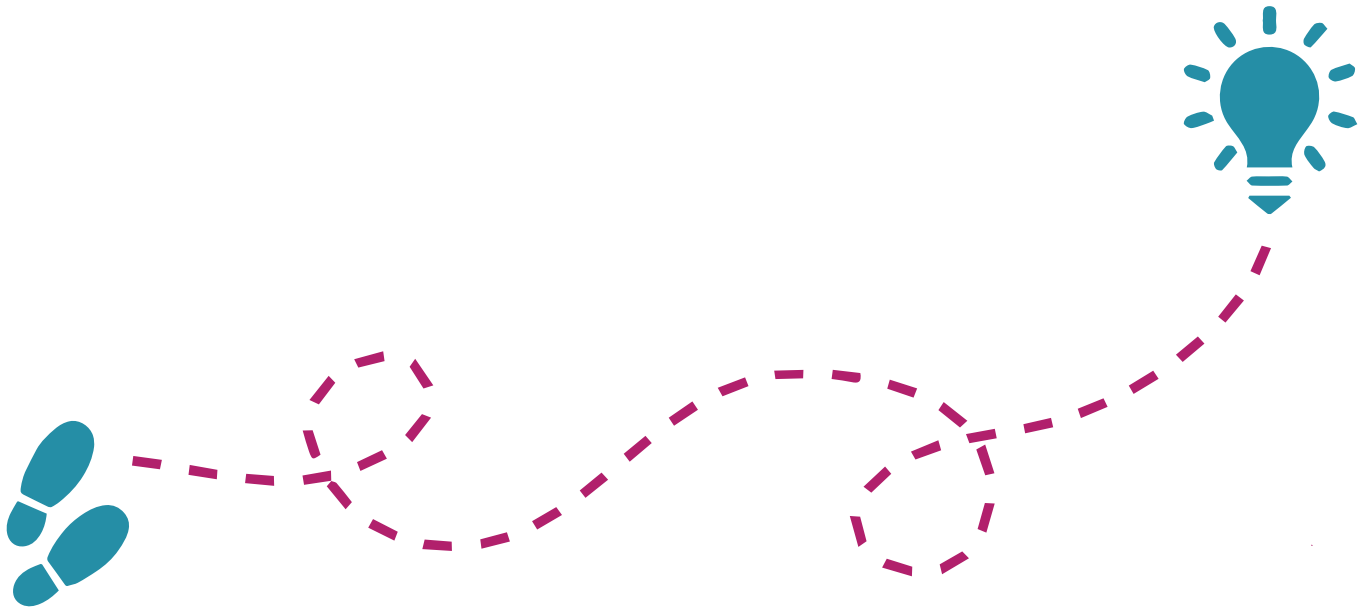


Dear Future Entrepreneur,

If you have picked up this handbook, it surely has attracted your attention because you are interested in starting your own business in The Gambia.

Starting a business is a long and winded path, but also a very rewarding one.

This handbook is here to help you as you move through the stages of starting a business.



For this chapter you need:

- a pen;
- the templates on the following pages; and
- the interest and motivation to become an entrepreneur



You can start with this chapter anytime, even if you have not spend much time on developing a business idea yet.

And even if you have already started your entrepreneurial career, it is still worthwhile to reflect a bit about yourself in this chapter

At the end of this chapter you will know

- about your own strength and weaknesses
- what a SWOT analysis is and how to do it
- what are important characteristic for a successful entrepreneur
- how to set you own SMART goals
- and where to find a mentor to guide you throughout your entrepreneurial career

KNOW YOURSELF

Before you start thinking about your business, let's talk about YOU. To come up with a good business idea and to start a successful company, it is helpful to build on your strengths and know about your own weaknesses

Start by reflection upon yourself and take notes on:

your activities throughout the last year

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and how you liked them

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what you do easily and where you achieve good results

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You can also speak to family, friends and co-workers to ask them what you are good at

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Look at all the things you noted above. Is there anything that you think you could turn into a profitable business idea? For example, do you have a specific talent that others could benefit from? Did you gain any experience that you can build your company on? Which sectors interest you the most? What do you like to do? This is important as well – you need to be passionate about your future business and it should match your strengths!



Let's take these considerations a step further. Knowledge about yourself is not only important when developing your business idea. To become a successful entrepreneur certain skills are needed.

A useful tool to know about how ready you are to be an entrepreneur is what is called the SWOT analysis. The SWOT is a simple table with four components for you to fill out.

STRENGTHS: Here, fill in factors or things that make you ready to be an entrepreneur in the sector of your choice. Think about the skills you have, the leadership qualities you have, even your financial stability.

WEAKNESSES: Here, fill in things that you find as a weakness. It is important to be as honest as possible in this section to guide your business to success.

OPPORTUNITIES: Here, fill in the positive things in the environment that would be helpful in establishing a business. Is the market expanding? Are there opportunities to be trained?

THREATS: Here, think of things in the environment that could harm your business. Are there too many competitors of the sector you're interested in in your local area?

Your personal SWOT-Analysis

Use the table on the next page to make your own SWOT analysis

	Positive	Negative
Internal (Think about your own qualities)	Strengths	Weaknesses
External (Think about the qualities of your environment)	Opportunities	Threats

And now?

Did you discover weaknesses and the need for training on specific aspects in your own SWOT analysis? Use this handbook to get the basic information on the main issues that an entrepreneur needs to be familiar with. Also make use of the included references to training institutions, experts and entrepreneurs who can support you with your venture!

Apart from knowing now where you need to improve, you will also have figured out what your passion is, what you love to do. This is important as well – being an entrepreneur is not always easy, but if you love what you do, you will be more committed and stick with entrepreneurship

The right attitude for a successful entrepreneur

As an entrepreneur, you will be busy dealing with several different things at the same time. Therefore, you need to organize yourself well and be efficient. This will be easier for you if you set SMART goals:

- › **Specific** - they detail exactly what you want to do and achieve
- › **Measurable** - you can review and measure your progress periodically
- › **Achievable** - they are accepted by those who work with you and support you to achieve them
- › **Realistic** - it's possible to attain the objective with regard to skills, manpower, money, time, etc
- › **Timed** - state a time period during which it should be achieved

Improve your financial management skills to an advanced level within the next two months? Find a store to rent and start your own shop until the end of the year? Obtain a bank loan of GMD 150,000 to buy the necessary inputs within the next six weeks?

Those are examples for SMART goals, which you could break down in smaller sub-goals and keep track of them by writing them all down in a table like this:

Goal	Subgoals	Achieve until	Status
1. Obtain a bank loan of GMD 150,000 to buy the necessary inputs	1.1 Research loan offers from all local banks and decide for which one to apply	15 July	Done
	1.2 Gather all relevant documents	1 August	Pending
	1.3 Hand in application for loan	5 August	Pending

Now that you have set your goals, you will need to focus on them – be able to politely say no to tasks that don't help you to move forward on your entrepreneurial pathway and set routines to concentrate on the most important to-dos.

Set a clear schedule in order to effectively manage your time to ensure that tasks are successfully executed and that goals are achieved. But also fix time for family, eating, sleeping and exercising – planning in advance will help you to become more efficient and be fully work-focused when you need to.

Being fully committed to realizing your business idea and boosting your career as an entrepreneur is very important. The process of starting your own company is not easy and you will face many obstacles along the way. Therefore, you need to be determined and patient enough to keep going and turn your plans into reality in the end.

“You just need to get going and never give up. Things can get tough but there is just one thing that you should be sure about: that you are not giving up. Some of these challenges you can face by talking to people who have been in the same industry and get their advice. And also have the ability to filter form all the advice you get and find a fine line that is in context with you larger vison and what you want to accomplish and then just execute. Work hard and really smart. Don't reinvent the wheel, don't be a copy cat, find a unique skillset that you can add to your business and focus on what you are going to offer your customers, focus on delivering a valuable product and once you do this successfully you will see your business grow quickly.”

ASSUTECH



Getting support

To develop your business successfully, it is helpful to learn from the experience of others. This is just what mentoring schemes are for. There are different mentoring opportunities in The Gambia, which match you with an experienced entrepreneur who can give you advice, share his lessons learnt and help you achieve your business goals.

So how do you find a mentor? You can either just venture out or ask people you know – they might be able to help you themselves or they could recommend you to someone who is willing to share their experiences with you. Or you could go to one of the following institutions that offer mentoring schemes:

Bridging Gaps Advisory Mentoring Programme

6-month mentoring scheme for female entrepreneurs between the ages of 20-35 years, already engaged in business activity

Contact: Ramatoulie B. Gaye, CEO & Founder
rbgaye1@gmail.com; 2234735

Link: bridginggapsadvisory.com



National Enterprise Development Initiative (NEDI)

Business development advisory services and mentoring

Contact: Abass Bah, Acting General Manager
info@nedi.gm; 3721878 | 3800434

Link: www.nedi.gm



Global Youth Innovation Network Mentoring Programme

6-month mentoring scheme

Contact: Mamadou Edrisa Njie, Executive Director

gambia@gyin.org; 3938929 | 6181700

Link: www.gyin.org/gambia



The Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCCI)

Business Development Services

Contact: Sarata Conateh, Director, Business Development

info@gcci.com; 4461450 | 9985747

Link: www.gcci.gm



EMPRETEC Gambia

Entrepreneurship training anchored at GIEPA

Contact: Yusupha Keita, Enterprise Development and

Support Manager

info@giepa.gm; 4377377 | 4377378 | 3740266

Link: www.giepa.gm

empretec-Gambia

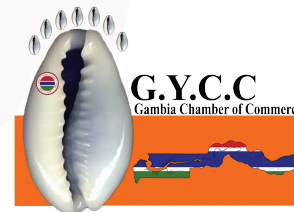
The Gambia Youth Chamber of Commerce (GYCC)

Business Mentorship and Coaching services

Contact: Baboucarr Kebbeh, CEO

gyccthegambia@gmail.com; 7866640 | 3047400

Link: www.gycc.gm



Startup Incubator Gambia (SIG)
Mentorship and Advisory
Contact: Alieu Jallow, Project Manager
info@startupincubator.gm; 3489213 | 7318046
Link: www.startupincubator.gm

GENERATE YOUR BUSINESS IDEA

- > a pen
- > the templates on the following pages
- > additional paper
- > to be aware of your own skills and talents
- > and, ideally, have a first idea of the product or service that you would like to offer

Once you have gone through chapter I., you know quite a lot about yourself already, which is the basis to properly generate your business idea. If you don't have any idea yet what business you would like to start, which services or products you would like to offer, take a bit more time for the first part of this chapter to come up with at least one or even several ideas – you will build on and develop these ideas further from here on.



At the end of this chapter you will know:

- ✓ where to find inspiration for your own business idea
- ✓ how to do market research
- ✓ how to assess your own business idea
- ✓ what are the targeted customers
- ✓ how your product provides value to them
- ✓ what a unique selling point is



Develop your business idea

Finding inspiration

When deciding which product to sell or which service to provide as an entrepreneur, it makes sense to start by thinking about your own work experience, knowledge or hobbies and what you like or are good at. This is what you did in Chapter 1 and it makes it easier for you to start a business if you turn your skills onto a marketable product or service.

However, it is also very important to think about who would purchase your product or service and why: Your business won't survive for long if not enough people want to buy what you have to sell. So it is helpful to think about

- > offering a product/service in a new area;
- > add value to an existing product/service; or
- > Create a completely new product/service in a what is referred to Niche market

To get inspired and come up with a business idea that will attract the interest of many customers, it can be useful to

- > Draw on your own experience as a customer: did you ever look for a certain product or service but could not find it? Are you unhappy with the quality of a product or service offered and you think you could improve it?
- > Listen to others: do they complain about the lack of a certain service or product, not having enough alternatives to choose from or being dissatisfied with the existing offers?
- > Look around carefully in your local business area and scan your environment: what is already on offer and what is missing? Are there special resources or skills in your area that you can make use of?

To answer these questions in a more structured manner, you should conduct market research. This is important and you should take the research seriously as people will only buy from you if they need what you offer and if they are willing to spend enough money on it

Digression: Doing market research

Identify the objective of your research.

When you start doing your market research, you should have in mind a clear purpose for doing the research. This could be something broad:

“Find out which products or services are missing in my area”

or something more specific when you already have a business idea:

“Find out if setting up a cashew processing business will be profitable in my area.”

Doing market research at a later stage of your business development, e.g. if you think about diversifying your offer, is also helpful. However, for the most part it is good to keep in mind that market research should be a continuous process

What I did first, I conducted market research. I developed questionnaires and used google forms where I put my questionnaire and then I send these out as a survey. When I got my results back, I realized who my target customers actually are.”

ANSUBEES

“ What do they think about my product? What do I need to change about my price, my packaging, the taste, the quality of the product? I intend to be carrying on with research as I go on because people change and the market is very dynamic. If you want to be innovative, you need to carry out research and know what is trending. ”

AFRITASTE

Find out whom you need to consult.

When you assume that people would be interested in buying your product or service, you usually do so from your own perspective. However, the likings of other people might differ. Therefore, the idea of research is to do it in an objective way – don't let yourself be influenced by your own opinions and don't only speak to a few people who are close to you. Getting to know different points of view from strangers and critical people is often more valuable. If you conduct research to find a business idea or assess its viability, you should

- > Speak to as many people as possible. If you only talk to a handful of people, their answers might not be representative. When you realize that you keep hearing the same answers and that conversations with other people at different places do not add any new content, you probably got a good overview over all the relevant opinions and information that is available out there.
- > Go to the right places. It requires some careful consideration to figure out where you actually find the people you want to consult – it should be those who you expect to be your future customers and buyers, but if possible also your competitors.
- > Use information from additional sources that already exist on top of speaking to people. You can for example consult websites of other companies, their brochures and flyers, read the local newspaper, read reviews of goods and services on online platforms or look into comments made on social media

Speaking to people and doing little interviews with them is called primary research – you collect new data yourself. Using existing sources is called secondary research. Combining both helps you to gather the maximum amount of information possible

Ask the right questions and find the needed information

The questions you ask either yourself while doing secondary research or other people when doing interviews must match the objective you have. If your objective is to find out if setting up a cashew processing business is profitable, you might look for information on:

- > how many people would want to buy processed cashews;
- > how much are people already spending on processed cashews;
- > who are the other businesses who are selling the same products;
- > how much the competitors are charging for their processed cashews

Especially when speaking to people, you need to have prepared your questions in advance. Potential questions could be:

- > what product/services do they purchase mostly
- > where they buy it from
- > why they buy from there
- > how much and how often they purchase the product or service
- > how much they are willing to pay for it
- > whether they are happy with the services or goods offered
- > what their opinion about other companies in the market is
- > what problem are they facing currently and would like your product/service to solve

It might seem difficult for you to start a face-to-face conversation. What you could say, is:

- > First of all, introduce yourself.
- > Then explain the context: you are about to start your own business and want to make sure that you offer a product or service that is needed and valued by the customers.
- > Therefore, you would like to hear their opinion on certain relevant aspects and would be happy if you could ask a few questions.
- > Speak in their local language if possible

Never forget to take structured notes. Market research is a systematic process and especially when speaking to a lot of people, you will hardly be able to remember everything they say. Also, you might want to revert to the information from your market research at a later stage. A template like the one below could be helpful to prepare your market research. Have a look at the example

Research objective: e.g. Find out if setting up a cashew processing business will be profitable in my area		
Sources to use	Questions to ask	
Customers of existing cashew products – aim to speak to at least 20	Do you ever buy cashews? If yes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Why do you buy them?- How often do you buy them?- Which quantities do you buy?- At which price to you buy them?- Are you satisfied with the offer? In case asked people answer no: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Why don't you buy them?- Under which conditions would you buy them?	

Where to find this source: in local supermarket

When to consult this source: during peak period hours of the supermarket throughout the week from 3rd to 9th December

Now go out yourself and conduct your own market research! But don't only speak to family and friends – we recommend you to speak to as many critical people and strangers as possible. This is often more valuable as it is better to know such critical perspectives before you launch your business. Then it will be easier for you to counter the criticism, e.g. by considering objections against your service or product already while working out its design or when developing your marketing plan

Research objective		
Sources to use	Questions to ask	
Where to find this source	When to consult this source	
Where to find this source	When to consult this source	
Where to find this source	When to consult this source	
Where to find this source	When to consult this source	

Analyze your findings

Once you have collected enough information to meet the objective of your research, you need to sit down with all your notes and look at them carefully. You could structure them by writing down all questions you had on one side of a paper and then write the various answers and information you got from different sources on this question next to it. Instead of writing all down on paper, you could also use an online form, e.g. a Google spreadsheet , sticky notes etc

Questions	Answers	Source
Sources to use	Questions to ask	
How many people would want to buy processed cashews?	“I would like to offer processed cashews in my store, but I cannot find them of sufficient quality” “Cashews are really popular, there is a high demand” “Do you have a recommendation where I could get cashews from at a decent price?”	Owner of local supermarket Vendor on local market Question asked in an online forum

You will then realize certain patterns: For example, you got the information from 8 out of 10 sources that there is a need for a company offering processed cashews of good quality but at an acceptable price. This indicates that there is a demand for your product but that the quality and pricing would be aspects that you would need to pay special attention to

Do you already have an objective in mind for your own market research? Which information would you try to obtain and which sources would you consult?

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“I did an investment without doing market research. In the end, the business failed. The products were there but customers were not actually buying them and eventually, I was kicked out of the market. The second time I was about to start a business, I really did my market research and made sure that what I was offering to the customers was actually what they need. So I learnt my lesson and I learnt it really well. Every failure is a lesson – if you learn from, it you won’t make it again. It is really good to learn from your mistakes.”

Nature’s Gift Care

Assessing your idea

Once you have come up with one or even several business ideas, you need to outline them properly to gain a better understanding and present them to other people as well. Filling out the following form will help you to structure your thoughts

My business idea is:

- > My type of business would be:
- > Manufacturing
- > Wholesaling (buy large quantities, resell to retailers) Service provision
- > Retailing (purchase from wholesalers, resell at profit)

My product/service looks like this

.....
.....

I will sell it to:

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.....

My product/service is needed because:

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.....

I can make a profit with it because:

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.....

I chose this idea because:

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.....

I still need to:

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.....

If you still have several different business ideas, doing research as described above and filling out this template for each idea separately will help you to decide which one is the most promising that you should develop further.

While filling out the above questionnaire, you already had to think about who your customers are and why they need your product. As knowing your customers is key to the success of your business, let's work on your knowledge of your customers in more detail in the next section!

“It is very important to understand your customers. If you segment your customers, you understand these people are my customers, then you can set promotions and market your product to these people. The market becomes much easier for you.

ML's Poultry

Your target customers, the business model and its value

One product or service can hardly satisfy everyone's needs. Therefore, it is necessary to focus on the type of customer that you are able to satisfy the best to successfully sell your product or service to them. These groups are called target customers

Your target customers, the business model and its value

One product or service can hardly satisfy everyone's needs. Therefore, it is necessary to focus on the type of customer that you are able to satisfy the best to successfully sell your product or service to them. These groups are called target customers

Note that you can still expand your business once it is up and running to offer goods or deliver services to additional customer groups

When you think about your target customers, ask yourself what is their background:

Are they mostly men or women?

.....

How old are they?

.....

Where do they live? (e.g. cities, rural areas, foreign countries)

.....

What is their social background?

.....

What do they do for a living?

.....

Your customers, as everyone, have many different things they need to get done at their workplace and in their private life. Let`s call these things jobs. A job could be: a task to complete, a problem to solve, a need to satisfy.

While people try to get those things done, they often encounter problems, obstacles and risks that prevent them from or at least make it more difficult to get a job done. These are pains of your customers.

There are several different types of pains and they can differ with regard to their intensity, depending on how much they affects the customer.

A pain could be emotional if it makes the customer experience negative feelings. It could be a social pain, making a person look bad within society. Or it could be a functional pain if something is not working properly

Then there are outcomes and benefits customers would like to have – gains that make the life easier, that they dream of and that make them happy. Often, we differentiate between several types of gains

they can be required as without them, a solution or a tool wouldn`t work. They can be expected – even if a tool or a solution would work without it, we still expect to receive these gains. If they go beyond our expectations but we wish to have them, they are desired. And, finally, unexpected gains are more than we expect or desire – something that we wouldn`t even dream of, but that satisfies us a lot

An example

Imagine a car mechanic: he wants to make profit by offering his repair services (= one job). He therefore wants to get as many customers as possible (= another job). Then he also needs to offer high-quality work to his customers (= another job). And he wishes to be respected by his employees (= another job). A pain for the car mechanic is that he always has to travel long distances to the next retailer when he needs to buy new repair tools. An expected gain would be that the car paint he uses does not only fulfil its function of protection but also looks nice.

The product or service you offer should correspond to and match the jobs the customers need to get done, pains they encounter or be something they wish to gain.

A product or service creates value for your customers if it

- > helps them to get a job done;
- > relieves a pain; or
- > creates a gain.

This is the so-called value proposition of your product for a customer.

To offer a value proposition to the exemplary car mechanic, you could for example start an online retail platform, where the car mechanic can easily order the tools he needs and they are delivered to his workplace. Or develop and sell the special car paint he wishes to have

Thinking about your own business, write down

My customers need to get these jobs done:

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My customers experience these pains:

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My customers would like to achieve these gains:

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My product/service helps my customers with these jobs:

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My product/service relieves this pain:

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My product/service helps to achieve these gains:

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.....

“ You do not start from the technology and figure out what you are doing with the technology. You start with a problem and work backwards to pick a technology to solve this problem ”

At the same time, you should not offer a product or service that is too similar to one that exists already – your need to differentiate yourself from your competitors. To find out who your competitors are and what they offer, refer back to the digression on market research earlier in this chapter.

What you need to create is what we call your unique selling point (USP). Whatever kind of product or service you offer, it needs to have such a USP and you need to be aware of it. When trying to figure out what your USP is, it might be helpful to start by asking yourself what you have that your competitors don't have. You need to offer your customers a special advantage, which could be

- > the highest quality
- > the best price
- > the quickest delivery
- > the most reliable supplier
- > the best customer experience
- > the first-ever product of its kind

If you communicate your USP clearly, your customers understand why they should buy from you and not from anyone else. This is important, because if every product or service appears to be the same, customers won't know which one to buy and they may not see the value you are offering. On the other hand, if your USP is convincing enough and communicated in a successful way, it can help you to attract new customers. A proper USP will enable you to convince people to buy from you and will make your business successful

A good USP should be:

- > one strong benefit,
- > which is unique,
- > easy to remember,
- > clear to communicate,
- > and which you can truly promise to fulfil

You should be able to present your USP in just a few sentences or even words!

Write down the unique selling point of your own product or service here! You should be able to present your USP in just a few seconds or words. Present it to families, friends and even strangers to see how convincing your USP is and ask them for feedback – would they purchase your product or service after having heard what your USP is ?

My USP is:

.....

.....

.....

“I give you my shea butter as an example. The shea butter is made with completely natural products, no chemical ingredients to it. We are trying to consider the environment and be eco-friendly. What this means: we are trying to cut down on the amount of waste that we are producing. If you buy this pot of shea butter, you can bring it back and we refill it at a discount. This makes us eco-friendly, which our competitors are not doing. The problem of my customers that I am solving is their need for products that are not full of chemicals. Affordability, and having something that is made in The Gambia and if they have any problems they can come back to us and ask for improvements.”

ANSUBEES

Sell your products

For this chapter you need:

- > a pen
- > pencils in different colours
- > the templates on the following pages
- > additional paper
- > a bit of creativity
- > ideally, internet access and
- > your own business idea, which you want to develop further.



To plan your business in this chapter, it is important that you have your business idea already in mind. Maybe you have gone through some of the following steps before, e.g. you might have a Facebook page already – then you can easily skip those parts and continue with the next section that provides you with new information and input

At the end of this chapter you will know:

- > what branding is
- > how to create your own logo
- > what marketing objectives, channels and techniques are
- > how to use social media, flyers and business cards for marketing
- > what a marketing plan is
- > how to get sales
- > how to care for your customers and handle even difficult situations professionally

1. Your brand

Branding is the public image by which you are known and remembered. It includes the whole experience that customers have with your business: what people can see, touch, taste, smell and hear about your business, the service you provide, what you promise and which emotions it evokes. Make your business stand out and create your own brand – to achieve this, a good logo is essential.

2. Your own logo

Why do you need a logo at all? You can consider your logo as the face of your company – it significantly shapes and influences the first impression that potential customers get of your company. It visually represents your business and therefore needs to be appealing and trigger the right emotions when customers look at it.

The following step-by-step description gives you some ideas on how to design your own logo

Define which message you want to convey

> Start by thinking about how to describe your company, product or service and what your company represents. Gather all your knowledge about the value your product or service offers.

> Resulting from that, focus on a few main key words characterizing your company and write them down.

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3. Look at the logos of other companies in your sector

- > You want to make your business stand out. Therefore, it is important to know the logos of the other businesses in your sector.
- > Try to find out what people like or dislike about them by using your newly acquired research skills from chapter II

Sketch first drafts for your logo

Now it is time to draft a first sketch of your possible logo. You can do this by hand or use online tools. Of course, you could also hire a professional designer, though this would be more expensive. See below the list of some graphic designers in the country

- > Yusupha Njie – **n9neGrafix (freelance)**
- > Lamin Marenah – **Studio361**
- > Pa Ebou Lowe – **Imadeit (freelance)**
- > Yusuf Sama – **Yusgeek (freelance)**

*** Some basic rules to consider are:

*** Your logo must be unique – set yourself apart.

*** Your logo should be easily recognizable.

*** Having a simple logo makes it easier to recognize and recall. Don't be too detailed, but keep it uncomplicated

➤ The logo should be appropriate with regard to your product or service and your customers. Remember that your logo does not equal your advertising. You don't need to explain everything in your logo and you don't need to picture in detail what your company does or sell. For example, it is not necessary that a whole bike is pictured in the logo of a bicycle repair shop. Instead, you should make clear who you are, what values your company offers, what feelings your product or service evokes, etc.

➤ Your logo should include the name of your company, as you want people to remember it

*** It could just be a word, an abbreviation or a single letter.

*** It could be an abstract symbol.

*** It could include a (reduced, rather abstract) drawing

*** Or it could be a combination of all of this.

*** It can be either black and white or in color

- When using text elements in your logo, e.g. your company's name, chose the font carefully: don't use several different ones (maximum two) and chose a font type that mirrors the personality of your business, that is modern and readable.

- Colours need to be selected even more thoughtfully. Try not to combine too many different colours depending on your type of business – e.g. for a company focusing on children you can surely use more colours than for older target groups. Consider that colours have different meanings and are therefore used in different contexts

Use this page to sketch a few first ideas



4. Share first ideas to get feedback

Receiving feedback is always important – others might discover what you oversaw, the message of the logo might be interpreted differently than intended and in the end it is most important that your customers have a positive attitude towards your logo. You should find out about this as early as possible: show your first drafts to family, friends and (potential) customers, e.g. by sharing on social media and asking for feedback

5. Create variations of design options

Determine which version gets the best responses taking into account the feedback you received, create a handful of variations of the logo. They could differ for example with regard to the colours or the font type. Again ask for feedback to decide which version to choose

6. Finalize your logo and ensure a coherent style

Based on the feedback you only need to finalize the version you chose!

Then ensure that you incorporate your logo as your visual identity consistently across all aspects of your start up – e.g. in all your marketing activities, on your business card, on flyers, on your website and social media profiles, etc. Here are some examples; **Think Big, Think Different, Think Assutech, Go Further-Ford Motors ; Inspire the world, Create the future-Samsung**

Marketing

Marketing means to literally take your product or service to the market and show your potential customers what you offer. This is supposed to make your business known, build and strengthen your position vis-à-vis competitors and make the customers understand the value of your good. Another objective is to win your customers' loyalty. Marketing happens offline and online – by participating in fairs, advertising in newspapers, distributing flyers, using social media, setting up a website, etc.

Successful marketing will enable your business to thrive and is especially important for a young business starting out: At the beginning of your business activities, few people will know about it, so you need to invest even more time, effort and money into marketing to get your business running

Marketing allows you to get the word out about your business and create awareness among potential customers; it will make people recall your products or services easily and can help you to gain a good reputation; as the word spreads, more people will hear about you and recognize your company immediately when they see it - you expand your customer base; if done correctly, it will increase your sales and enable you to compete even with large, well-known companies

Good marketing is important: you can make the greatest product in the world but if people don't know about it, you really don't have a product. Because a product is useful if people use it – when they don't use it, then your product is just a white elephant.

Marketing is so important because the reason why you build your solution is for people to see it, so you need to have this outreach and show them how your solution can solve this problem. Market your product efficiently to improve your customer base.”

ASSUTECH

SMART Marketing Objectives

Firstly, it's important to define your marketing objectives – goals you want to achieve with your marketing activities.

Marketing objectives could be, for example:

- Promoting new products;
- Reaching new customers;
- Building loyalty;
- Increasing your sales or profit;
- Increasing customer satisfaction



For all these objectives the knowledge of your customers you previously gained is very important: To promote new products, for example, you must know how they match your customers' needs. And you will only be able to increase your clients' satisfaction if you know what they like or dislike.

When setting your objectives, consider the skills of you and your employees, where you might need to get help and which image you want to present. Make sure that your objectives are SMART – not only smart in the sense of the word, but Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timed, as you have learnt in chapter 1.2. Already!

The right channels and techniques to achieve your goals

Marketing channels are everything you can use to spread the word about your business:

- Billboards or posters;
- TV, radio, or newspaper adverts;
- Catalogues, brochures, or flyers;
- Emails, WhatsApp, and other social media messages;
- Telephone calls;
- Websites or online blogs;
- Social media pages, posts, tweets;
- Sales partners;
- Concessions in larger stores; or
- Own stores

These are just a few examples – being creative and coming up with new ideas can only be favorable for your business.

While the channels are platforms and places you can use for marketing purposes, techniques are strategies or mechanisms for your marketing. Creativity and inventiveness are helpful here as well, while bearing in mind who your customers are and which campaigns, events or activities are the most likely to attract their attention and interest.

Some examples for marketing techniques are:

- Organize or participate in events
- Word of mouth marketing – motivate your customers to tell people about your business, e.g. by offering them a discount if they bring others with them or write a review for you online
- Recognize and reward recurring customers, e.g. by offering a discount on their fifth purchase
- Write a column in a local newspaper
- Join a local business groups, partner with other companies
- Add new features to your offer, launch new products or regularly include new, relevant content to your website
- Host competitions and hand out giveaways; or
- Launch a new storefront design and present it as a special event to which you invite your loyal customers.

The channels and techniques you choose must be aligned with your customers' profile and your marketing objectives. They need to attract the attention and interest of your customers and at the same time they need to further the achievement of your initial objectives. For example, to expand your customer base, you should use new channels that you haven't used before to target a new audience.

Can you think of your three most important marketing objectives?

.....
.....
.....

Which channel could you use to achieve these goals?

.....
.....
.....

Which marketing techniques could you apply?

.....
.....
.....

Gather ideas about the content you want to provide before creating an account on a social media platform – having a page without any content will rather backfire.

.....
.....
.....

Social media is especially useful for start-ups' marketing as it allows to reach out to hundreds of people while not paying much or not paying at all! It can help you to establish your brand, gain new customers and increase the loyalty of your current clients. On the next pages you will find out how to set up and make use of Twitter and Facebook pages.

Your Own Social Media Accounts

Every company is unique and therefore the use of social media must be tailored to the target customers. Before actually creating content for your profile you first of all need to decide how you want to portray your business and which kind of content would be inspiring for your customers. Considering your clients, do they prefer a straightforward, fact-oriented style or do you want to present yourself to them in a more easy-going, relaxed way? Have a look at how your competitors are using social media to learn from them and at the same time to find out how you can set yourself apart

TWITTER

Signing up

To sign up on Twitter, you just need to go to twitter.com and click “Sign Up”. You will then be asked to provide some information such as your username (your company`s name), your phone number and/or email address, come up with a password and verify your phone number.

Establishing your business` presence on Twitter

Most importantly, you need your @name, which is your unique identifier on Twitter and cannot be changed. It appears below your username and can consist of up to 15 characters.

The next important thing is your profile photo. It should be a picture that represents your business as it will appear next to every Tweet you post – it will become the face of your business on Twitter. It would make sense to use your logo to ensure a coherent image for your brand.

Below your name, you can add a short description about your company. You have 160 characters and could use them e.g. to inform people about your offers, where you are located or about the opening hours of your store, and include a link to your website

Facebook

Signing up

To sign up on Facebook, you just need to go to www.facebook.com/business and click “Create a Page”. You then need to choose a page category. Your category is “Business or Brand” to be able to show off your products or services. You will then have to give your page a name – normally, you would choose the name of your company to make the page easy to find for your customers. Then you select a sub-type within the business category that your company corresponds to

Establishing your business’ presence on Facebook

Just as in the case of Twitter, you will now need images to make a good visual impression: For one thing, there is the profile picture. It appears on the top left of your page and next to every post or comment you write. As a business, it is sensible to use your logo here. And then you can choose a cover image. This is similar to the header on Twitter and should also showcase what is at the core of your business. If you have several pictures you would like to use, you can either change the cover image regularly or create a slideshow or even have a video as your cover image

You will have to add a short description – use this as an opportunity to explain what your business offers and what people visiting your page need to know. Don` t have a long text, stick to the essentials.

Then click “Create a Username for Your Page” – it is like the @name on twitter and allows people to find your page when searching, so try to make it short and to the point.

On your page you will find an “About” section in the menu on the left side. You can fill in your contact information, a story of your business, your start date and also depending on your type of business possibly opening hours or even a menu. Remember to keep this up to date as people often look at the “About” section.

Facebook automatically adds a “Send Message” button on your page. But it is possible to change this to a different call to action – you could change it to “Book now”, allow them to shop with you or learn more about your business

Start posting

Now you can start posting! As with Twitter, you have the possibility to pin a post to the top of your page.

When you have started posting, it will be interesting for you to see what your audience likes and who reacts. You can learn this from your “Page Insights”. They will show you how many people liked your page over the last days; how many people saw your posts; how many comments, shares and reactions your posts received; at which time of the day the people who like your page are viewing your content and many other useful information that will help you to understand your audience better and adjust your social media strategy!

Content for Social Media

Now you know how to get started with your Twitter or Facebook page. In the long run, you will need enough good content to keep your followers interested. Below you find some advice, which might be useful for both platforms

- Diversify your content: don't only post text, but also images, videos or infographics. When using pictures make sure they have a high quality.
- Keep texts short: try not to use more than 250 characters!
- Have interactive content such as quizzes, surveys and open-ended questions to engage with the followers. It will help you to broaden your reach and build a community. This includes answering questions timely, responding calmly and professionally even to negative comments, moderate discussions and recognize what others do – like other pages, retweet, follow and comment on their content as well.
- Not only talk about your own business – you could also share interesting articles, stories or pictures of others, which are related to your product or service.
- Plan what you will post when. You could also have a regular publishing scheme or start a video series and post a new part of it on a specific weekday. Take into account at which time your followers are the most active.
- You can use hashtags #, to organize posts with similar content, to promote your page and to get more attention – people will find your page when searching for this specific hashtag.
- However, don't overdo it: only use two hashtags for one post
- Use simple words when you create a new hashtag – but it is even better to use existing ones that are popular to draw more attention to your page. You could have one hashtag for your business which you always use and one hashtag that is specific to the content of the post and popular among users – find out about existing hashtags by just searching for them on the respective platform-

In the end, social media is all about being creative, innovative and providing appealing, original and engaging content to your followers regularly, showing them your business and inviting them to connect with you. From here, it's a process of learning by doing!

But marketing does of course not only happen online – you should always combine online and offline efforts to make people aware of your product or service. An easy but powerful tool are flyers. They can be tailored to any purpose – making advertisement for a new product or for a special sale, announcing the opening of your new store, inviting people to an event, etc. – and they can take on various shapes and sizes

“My main avenue of marketing is social media. I am currently working from home, I don't have an outlet of my own. In order for people to know that I have these products, I have to be very active on social media. So I am using Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat and Instagram to promote my products there. First of all I try to create an atmosphere of suspense – I would post something like ”Hey guys, I have something for you.” Then people would be very eager to know: what does she have? Then I post pictures of my products online and people will send me messages to know more about them. We are going to take it a step ahead now. We will have a weekly post on ingredients in our products. We have identified models who are going to use our products and then we are going to show the success, what our products have done for them. We are going to do this to engage our customers more.”

ANSUBEES

Producing Flyers for Marketing Purposes

There is not “the one” perfect flyer design – of course you have to adapt it, depending on the aim and the target group. But there are certain does and don`ts and knowing about them will help you to create the ideal flyer for your purpose.

Here are a few Does and Don`ts for when creating a flyer:

Don`t let your flyer look messy

Instead, your flyer needs to have a clear focal point: there should be one part of the layout which is most striking and therefore catches the attention of everyone who looks at it. You will have to decide on one aspect that comes to the fore of the layout – this should be the part of the flyer that contains the most important information, as it will most likely be the first thing the viewers see.

Don`t confuse the viewer

In addition to the focal point you also need to consider the visual flow – where will the viewer look next after his attention has been drawn to the most important component of the flyer? There should be a hierarchy of the content – the most important information is presented in the most prominent way, while the attention of the viewer is directed to the less important information only afterwards. You can support this for example by using a larger font size for the more important information and a smaller size for the rest or by using more prominent in contrast to less eye-catching colours. Bullet points, arrows, banners or text boxes are also helpful to structure the design

Often symmetric layouts look neat

Make use of proximity – related information should be placed close to each other.

Also consider that normally we scan a flyer from the left to the right and from the top to the bottom, so it makes sense to place the most important info near the top of your layout, while you might have your contact details at the bottom of the flyer.

Don't forget to send a concise message

Depending on what you use the flyer for, there will be a message that you want to convey – e.g. inform about a new product or service or invite people to come to an event. When people look at the flyer, they must immediately understand this message. You shouldn't have different messages on one flyer – this might seem cost-saving to you, but it will confuse the people who see the flyer and make it less effective.

Make sure to stick to the main points that you need to inform people about: **Who? What? When? Where? Why?** The answers to these are the key aspects of your message you need to convey.

Use plain speak instead of words that are difficult to understand.

Include a call to action if it fits the purpose – e.g. if you want invite people ask them to “Join the event!”. Such a call to action is motivating and addressing people directly is likely be more effective, as they will remember the message more easily.

Don`t put too much text on your flyer.

Always have a visual component. Depending on the purpose of the flyer and on the style of your business, this could be graphics, e.g. icons or abstract shapes, a photo or even a hand-drawn illustration which underlines the message you want to convey. If your flyer is supposed to inform people about a new product you sell, you may put a photo of it on the flyer. For a celebration you might use colorful shapes. For a special sale, a sale icon will always catch the attention of people easily.

But don`t have too many different visual elements.

Rather have one large image than too many. Especially when you design a small flyer, bear in mind that the visual components are not too detailed and don`t include too many of them.

Generally, don`t overcrowd your flyer

A good layout needs to be balanced and well-spaced. Don`t be afraid to leave blank areas without any graphics or texts. This helps to make your flyer clearer, more structured and it will be easier to understand the message you want to convey.

Don`t forget the image and style of your brand!

People who look at your flyer should be able to associate it with your business. After all, that`s the aim of marketing and branding – showing your company to people. Of course you should include your logo on the flyer. But also consider the style of your company for the whole flyer design – you might use similar or even the same colours and fonts as those of your logo

Don` t chose too many different, conflicting or hardly legible fonts.

You want people to be able to read the information on the flyer, so obviously your fonts should be legible. Keep in mind the size of the flyer and chose a font size that is large enough. Contrasts of color and the right style of fonts also help to increase readability.

If you have enough space on your flyer, using two different fonts can help to avoid monotony. But when choosing several fonts, make sure they match.

The fonts should fit the theme of the flyer – the mood of the design must match the purpose.

Don` t chose the colours randomly.

Of course your flyer could be in black and white just as you could also use several different **colours**.

What the best choice is depends on your business and the aim of the flyer. Consider the different meanings of different colours and the feelings they evoke.

In any case, the colour scheme should emphasize the message of the flyer and it should not conflict with the colours of your logo, which is included in the flyer as well.

Another possibility is to use black ink on a coloured paper.

Don't print your flyers on thin paper.

After the design is finalized, paper thickness is important to consider – if the paper is too thin, the flyers won't look professional and will wear out quickly.

Use this page to sketch a few first ideas for a flyer considering what you have just learnt:

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for sketching ideas for a flyer. The box is currently blank.

Your Business Cards

You may not think about this at first, but business cards are actually a useful marketing tool that can open up many opportunities for you, so it is important to know how to design a good one. Business cards can be the first item that a future client receives from you – therefore you must ensure that they look good and appealing. Customers are more likely to connect emotionally with your business if they like the design of your card and if it engages their imagination.

Business cards are quite easy to use for your marketing – just take one out of your pocket at any opportunity and give it to someone who seems interested in your business. Even if the other person just stuffs the card into his or her pocket at first, she will find it there again later and will thereby be reminded of you and your business. They are also convenient for you to carry around all the time and you should do so – you never know when a promising networking opportunity comes up or when you meet a possible new client and you need to be prepared. Never knowing whom you will meet, you should always have at least a few cards with you.

You can hand out or exchange business cards

- in one-on-one encounters, when having a chat with someone (no matter where – be it in a business environment or just in the queue of the supermarket), who turns out to be a potential business partner, contractor or customer;
- at trade shows, conferences and events;
- as part of marketing kits;
- by adding them to mailing campaigns;^and
- by adding them to the packaging of your products – even though the people receiving the business cards in this case already know you, it can be useful to give them your card, as then they will know how to contact you again or they might even pass it on to others if they were satisfied with your product or service.

There are a few things to consider when designing your business card to make it look good

1. Define who will receive your business card

As you have seen, there are many possibilities to make use of your business cards. Which ones apply for you depends on your type of business, your product or service and your customers. Depending on where you mainly want to use your business cards and who your customers are, you will design your card differently.

2. Getting help?

Of you could do it all yourself: just design your business card in a word document and print it yourself. This will certainly be the cheapest and quickest option to get your cards. However, a well-designed business card will make you appear more professional and this will be an advantage in many cases.

There are various online platforms where you find free templates for business cards and easy tools to create a customized card (mention platforms, e.g Canva; Crello; Biz Card Maker; DesignHill,??). This is an easy option to make your business cards look more professional than they would if you would do it all yourself. But using a template entails the risk that your business card will look similar to many others and less original and will therefore be less memorable and less effective.

If you are able and willing to afford it, you could enlist a professional designer. But even if you get help from a professional, you should still get familiar with the most important does and don`ts develop your own ideas how you want your card to look!

3. Decide which content to have on your business card

As business cards are usually very small - 85 x 55 mm is the usual size - you don't have much space available. So you need to consider carefully which information you want to include and what to leave out. "Remember that a good business card is an effective networking tool for sharing your business's contact information. You may look at it an extension of your business brand that conveys the right information about who you are and what you do in a memorable, powerful and meaningful way."

Most obviously, you need your name on the card and the name of your company.

You also need to have your logo on your business card. If the name of your company is included in the logo, you don't need to include the name separately.

Then you want people to be able to contact you. Therefore, include your phone number and your email address.

Now you have done the minimum and provided the crucial information. However, in many cases it will make sense to add a few more: your physical address, website address or another phone number in case you have an office phone number and a mobile phone number. If these information are necessary or not depends to a large extent on your company - if you have a store, you should certainly provide the physical address. If you have a web shop, it makes sense to print the link on your card

But: Don't clutter your business card: a clean, structured, simple design looks way more professional and is more effective. Also remember that the font size must still be readable, so don't include too many information but rather present those that you chose nicely and in a readable size. Also don't be afraid to leave white space!

4. Many possibilities: decide whether you want to include images and/or use the backside of your business card

A supporting image can be a nice eye-catcher and allows you to present yourself or your products visibly. When people see your logo on the card, they will remember you more easily and a photo of your product can arouse their buying interest. But bear in mind that the photo will be small on the printed card so it should be a minimalistic photo motive.

The backside of your business card could be left blank, you don't need to have any content on there. If you decide to use it, you should do so only for information that is supplemental – for example, you could write your company's slogan or mission on the back, have a larger picture there or maybe print a map on it to make it easy for people to find your store, shop, restaurant, etc. But don't have any other contact details or important information on the back – it needs to be clear, which side of the business card is the front.

5. Chose the shape of your card

Though the typical business card has a rectangular shape, this doesn't mean that you cannot deviate from this. Your card could also have rounded corners, an unconventional shape that represents your product, it could even be triangular or round. A special shape will surely set your business apart and make your card memorable. But it might be more inconvenient if the card deviates from the standard size that fits in any pocket. Furthermore, such special formats might be more expensive to produce and their appropriateness depends on the respective business.

6. Select the material

Typically, a business card consist of paper. But depending on your brand, you could also select a different material that matches what you are doing or selling: recycled paper for a business that portraits itself as , textured material for a tailor or even metal for a car mechanic, for example.

7. Chose colours and fonts

A business card can but doesn't need to be in black and white. You can chose a colour that makes your card more noticeable but be careful not to make it to colourful and select colours that are easy to read. Ask yourself which colours your customers would like and how they match your business. If you have a logo, it makes sense to use the same colours for your business card.

Use clear and readable fonts for your business cards, especially for the most important information. Decorative fonts could be used for names or texts in larger sizes, but don't combine more than two different fonts.

8. Get your business cards printed

Finally, after having finished the design of your business card and done the proofreading, you need to get it printed. You could use your own computer to print it. However, a professional printer will be able to supply you with a higher quality.

9. Make use of your cards!

Once you have received your finalized business cards, remember the scenarios you saw in the beginning and make the most of this tiny but powerful marketing tool!

Use this template to sketch a first draft for your business card:

The Marketing Plan

You have now learnt about marketing objectives, channels and techniques and you have a clear image of your customers in your head. This all leads to your marketing plan, which can be summarized by 4 Ps:

1. Products – which goods or services will you offer?
2. Place – how will your customers get your good or service?
3. Price – the process of setting a price is very important as you need to balance your interest in making a profit and the necessity of keeping it affordable for the customers.
4. Promotion – how will you get your customers' attention?

The hotels will be contacted both with flyers and an email campaign

There are 4 further Ps, which are also considered as important:

5. Packaging – a good packaging can attract the customers attention; at the same time the packaging must protect the good from damage too, so it must be both good-looking and functional.
6. People – well-trained employees also play an important role and can make your business stand out.

8. Physical evidence – this means the way that your business is perceived by the customers and is therefore similar to the branding.

On the next page, you find an exemplary marketing plan for an entrepreneur with a soap making business.

Have a look at it and then complete your own afterwards by filling out the template!

1. Product: Our exemplary entrepreneur with her soap making business would write down: Handmade soap with local fragrances.
2. Place: Tourists like local produces as souvenirs and the easiest way to reach them are shops in hotels.
3. Price: The soap will be sold to hotel shops GMD 100 for example at to cover the costs, make a profit and remain affordable at the same time.
4. Promotion: To get the attention of the tourists themselves, flyer could be distributed in the hotel rooms and banners could be set up on the compounds.
5. Packaging: The soaps will be wrapped in cling film for protection and then be decorated with a label and a ribbon.
6. People: Staff with sales experience is needed to contact the hotels professionally.
7. Process: The soap will be produced in a small soap making workshop, then delivered directly to the hotels where it will be sold. At the hotel shop, the customers are invited to step in the shop and look around by a banner at the entrance. The shopkeeper tells them about the local ingredients and fragrances which are used to make the soap and explains to them where the products come from, so they decide to buy them as a souvenir.
8. Physical Evidence: A well-maintained Facebook page with information on the production of the soap and the latest offers, high-quality packaging, a nicely designed logo and matching signage in the hotel shops will make the overall appearance of the soap appealing for the customers.

My Personal Marketing Plan

1. Product:

.....

2. Place:

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3. Price:

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4. Promotion:

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5. Packaging:

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6. People:

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7. Process:

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8. Physical Evidence:

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You might want to use as many marketing channels and techniques as possible. But, there will be limits and constraints, especially when you have just started your business. Therefore, you need to consider:

- your personality;
- your business type;
- your budget;
- and, your time when designing your marketing plan.

There is no universal rule how often you should revise your marketing plan. However, while you implement it, keep checking and revising it – if the circumstances change or you set new marketing objectives, it might need to be adapted as well! We recommend you to refer back to your marketing plan and make any necessary updates on a quarterly basis.

Keep in mind that your also your marketing plan should be SMART and in line with your marketing goals!

Do you need more help to write your own marketing plan? Find support here!

Start-up Incubator Gambia (SIG)

Business and Marketing Plan Advisory

Contact: Alieu Jallow, Project Manager

info@startupincubator.gm; 3489213 | 7318046

Link: www.startupincubator.gm

3. Get Sales

Sales are the strategies of selling your product or service.

It includes everything you do to make interested customers buy from you when they are already at your business. This often involves direct contact and creative ideas to keep them interested. Don't forget that you not only sell a product, but also the idea and the vision of the company or a certain feeling connected to the product or service.

The feeling connected to buying soap could either be one of luxury and a sense of well-being sparked by local fragrances and high-quality ingredients. Or it could rather be about cleaning and health

Try to understand which feelings your customers are looking for and present your product accordingly, e.g.

- > with a good display in your shop;
- > by letting customers try new products;
- > by giving interactive demonstrations of certain goods;
- > by including a leaflet that tells the story of your product;
- > or just by speaking to your customers in a friendly way, aimed at establishing a human connection while at the same time always remaining professional. Be convincing in your conversation but don't shove your potential customers too much and accept if they don't buy straight away

For some people it is easy and natural to convince and gain customers and make sales. For others it requires practice, practice, practice

Do you need more help with sales? Find support here!

The Gambia Youth Chamber of Commerce (GYCC)

info@gycc.gm; 7866640 | 3047400

The Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCCI)

info@gcci.com; 4461450 | 9985747

Customer Care

“The customer is king” is rule number one for each and every business. Without customers, your business cannot succeed, as there will be no revenue. And, unhappy customers may not come back to buy from you again. This is why you always need to make sure that your customers feel satisfied. To do so, customer care is important. First and foremost, an entrepreneur always needs to be professional.

This means to:

- > be polite, friendly, helpful, attentive, responsible, efficient, patient, competent, and knowledgeable;
- > show empathy and fairness, honesty and integrity;
- > demonstrate a positive attitude, value diversity and each other;
- > be a good communicator, listener, and team player and receptive for constructive feedback;
- > give customers the feeling that they are important and deliver information in a transparent and time-saving manner;
- > respect your customers and their opinions, including when they decide not to buy; and
- > always try to offer the best possible product or service.

It might sound like a lot of effort to be professional, but there are a few easy steps to take and rules to follow to come across professional:

Use “please” and “thank you” to show politeness and respect.

Communicate in a clear and organized way – think before you speak!

Speak to your customers and ask them for feedback to improve your products and services.

Adjust your language and tone of voice depending on who you speak to, but be respectful to everyone.

Keep eye contact while interacting with others, greet people with a smile and a friendly word and make warm hand gestures.

Wear neat, clean and appropriate clothes.

Be on time, stick to the business hours you set and meet commitments, deadlines and expectations.

Respond to requests timely and give accurate information.

“Without customers, your business would not exist in the first place and it will not grow. So I take my customer service very seriously. It does not matter how you come to me – I always try to present my best. And the people I work with, I also make sure to train them about customer service and the importance of it to our business.”

AnsuBees

“Whenever your customer comes to you with a problem, just find a solution no matter what it takes. Sometimes customers will come to you with complaints and problems, that do not fall under your scope of responsibility. Your job would be to figure out how do I find a solution to this problem even if it is not your responsibility, how do I point this customer to a solution? The customers need to feel: every time I call this guy, he finds a solution.”

Assutech

“The importance is that the customers are the kings of every business. If you don’t treat your customers as your boss, you will be going out of business.”

MLs Poultry Farm

Considering this will pay off in the end – professionalism makes you feel more confident, creates a good climate in your enterprise and your customers will be more satisfied, so they will keep coming back and even recommend you to other people. This is what we call “word of mouth marketing”.

Word of Mouth Marketing

Word of mouth is about what people tell others about you and your business – if people recommend your business, you can benefit from a powerful marketing channel without even having to pay for it. In fact, when customers receive good service they tell 10 - 12 people on average. But, when customers receive poor service they tell up to 20 people. This makes good impressions, reviews, ratings and recommendations very important and highly relevant for any company. But especially if you are a young start up with a tight budget for marketing, making use of word of mouth can be essential for your success. It`s an old and free but still very effective marketing tool. The extensive use of social media among customers makes it even easier and quicker for them to share their opinion about a business with others – positive opinions just as negative opinions.

You might think you can hardly influence what people think – either they like your product or service or they don't. But there are a few strategies that you can use to kick off a positive word of mouth campaign:

Share every positive review that you get. You could post them on your Facebook page or on Twitter or include a review section on your website.

Offer incentives to encourage people to tell others about a positive experience they had with your business. For example, you could offer a discount for referrals. Or you offer “two for one” of your products if your customer brings a friend or relative along, who is not your customer yet - they get two items and only have to pay for one.

Reward the loyalty of recurring customers with discounts or special events – if they are satisfied, feel valued and privileged, they are even more likely to tell others about your business.

Encourage user-generated content – this is any kind of content, e.g. images, videos or texts, which is produced and posted by users of online platforms. It could be a creative hashtag that is specific to your business and that you invite your customers to spread. Or you ask them to take a picture of themselves with your product (wearing the shirts from your brands, eating your delicious cakes or riding the bicycles you sell) and share it on social media. You can come up with some really creative ideas on this!

Usually, the first impression stays with your customers. They prefer to buy from businesses where they experienced respectful and professional behavior. Once they have a negative first impression, it will be difficult to change their mind. Still, it can happen to you that difficult situations occur – in this case it is all about dealing with them in the right manner!

“You should not to be selling something that is not quality, not telling lies or what is not in your product to customers. Lying to one customer can make you lose a million customers. Telling the truth to one customer can bring you a million customers. This is my philosophy.”

AfriTaste

Dealing with difficult customer service situations

If a difficult situation arises, it is most important to keep your cool and that you remain professional. Just because a customer is not polite does not mean that you should go down to their level. If you remain courteous yet assertive, you will stand out as particularly professional. Having a plan for difficult situations helps to stay cool and calm when such situations arise, which could be:

- **Miscommunication:** this can occur easily if insufficient or incorrect information is provided, if the wording is unclear or when rumors circulate. To avoid it, think carefully before you speak and choose your words thoughtfully, especially when talking about sensitive issues, and organize and structure your sentences clearly. Also ensure that your employees are well informed and don't spread any wrong information or rumors, engage in gossiping or communicate in an unclear way.

> When miscommunication occurs, solve it by asking the customer to clarify what they didn't understand or how they interpreted the message to allow you to provide the precise piece of information that is missing or providing clarification. In the end, confirm with the customer that understanding has been achieved

- **Complaints:** When a customer has experienced a problem with your product, service, or their customer experience and they report it to a member of your team, they are making a complaint. This will certainly happen to you at some point, no matter how well you do. Always maintain a positive spirit and professional behavior and see the complaint as an opportunity to correct your mistake and to learn from it. When a customer's complaint is dealt with correctly and the customer is satisfied with the response, there is a good chance that this customer will return to do business with you again.

- > Thank the customer for pointing out the problem and show willingness and personal commitment to improve your services. You might offer repairs or replacement of products or a discount as a result of the complaint. Whatever measures you are taking, make sure you act immediately and don't postpone it.

- > Never lose self-control, argue or interrupt – rather stay calm, point to the facts and show records to be transparent.

- > Involve the customer by suggesting alternative solutions and also see the interaction from the perspective of the customer.

- > Do not forget to respond to complaints made on the telephone, by letter or by email quickly and appropriately as well.

Another difficult situation could also be that you have to close your sales space or postpone an appointment on short notice. To remain professional and display good customer care, you should obviously aim to always honor your commitments and appointments and stick strictly to your opening hours. But there may be occasions when this is not possible due to unforeseen circumstances. Your customers will most likely understand if you inform them timely and transparently, if you excuse and politely suggest an alternative. However, note that if this happens more often your reputation might suffer and you may lose customers.

Manage Your Finances

For this chapter you need:

- a pen
- copies of the empty templates in the annex
- additional paper
- basic maths skills
- a calculator and
- a precise idea of the business you want to start

In this chapter, we will figure out the precise costs you will have when you start your business and prepare the main financial worksheets that each business needs for you. This is not a theoretical exercise – you will fill out the templates for your own business. Therefore, for this chapter, it is necessary that you have successfully developed and assessed your business idea as described in the previous chapters. If you are still unsure with regard to what you actually want to offer, go back to the previous pages and come up with a good business idea to move ahead with this chapter.

At the end of this chapter you will know:

some basic principles about finances;
about the costs you will have when starting your business;
how to acquire funds to start your business;
the main financial tools and instruments, including the book of accounts, the budget, the profit and loss statement, the cash flow statement and the balance sheet; and
how pricing works.

Manage your Finances

Before we start, there are three basic principles you should know about finances:

Keep Records!

It is very important for you to keep records of your expenses.

DO keep receipts, even for small expenses, orderly in a safe place.

DO keep a record of the expenditures and revenue for your business.

DO keep a record of money you owe, and money that you are owed.

In case it is not possible to get a receipt – even not on explicit request – it is the more important to carefully note what you spent the money on, including how much, where and when you spent it

“Knowing your finances and bookkeeping is key, it is very essential in any business that wants to succeed. If you have money that needs to be invested in your business, and you have no knowledge of financial literacy, you end up making wrong decisions. If you get to learn about financial literacy, it really helps and guides you in achieving the best result. The reason why it is important: human beings forget, we are not computers. If you depend on your brain doing all the calculations for you, you end up losing track. But if you have everything in place, track your sales, track your investment, everything you do in your business, it can help you. You might realize: last month I did not make as many sales as this month, during the winter I make more sales than during the summer, so when summer comes you know the actual amount of products you are going to produce. All this can be achieved if you have your records in place.”

Nature's Gift Care

Keep Business and Personal Separate!

Business expenses is the money you need to run your business, e.g. for paying employees, buying supplies, etc.

Personal expenses is the money you need for your own life, e.g. to pay your house's rent, to buy groceries, to afford petrol for your car, etc.

DO keep a separate record for business and personal expenses.

DO have two separate boxes for business and personal receipts.

DO set a monthly salary from your business to support your personal expenses.

DO NOT let your personal expenses exceed the amount you set as your own salary.

Initially, when I started my business, I was not really separating my business account from my personal account. After I learnt the importance of separating this I noticed that my business was growing as I was not using my money for what it was not for anymore, I was using the money for the right purposes and keeping track of it.

AnsuBees

Start Small!

You don't necessarily need lots of money to start your business. Just start with the means and resources you have and grow slowly but steadily from there!

“You need to try your best to implement the best standards and practices in finances. At the end of the day, it is the financial status that will determine the life of your business – whether it is going to stay alive or it is going to die.”

Assutech

Getting seed funding to start your business

The Costs

Starting a business can be costly – it involves initial costs and in order to make sure that your business runs smoothly, **you should have six months of expenses before you start the business.**

Expenses can be grouped into these components:

1. Business Expenses – Set-up Cost

- > This is the money that you need to actually start the business.
- > Have a look at Table A how this would look like. In the annex1, you find a full template for the set-up costs for own business, which you should fill in yourself: note the cost items, the amount you need to pay for each item and in the end add up all the costs!

2. Business Expenses – Running cost

- > After you have prepared the necessary set-up to start your business, you will need money to keep the business running.
- > Table B gives you an idea of what these costs include. Again, you find a full template to calculate your running costs per month in the annex2.
- > Each month requires this money to run the business. If you want to find out how much money you need to be able to cover the expenses of the first six month, multiply each expense by six

3. Personal Expenses

- > In addition to the professional expenses you have when you run your own business, you still need to get some money to support your own, private living. This is separate from your business expenses – you should set a monthly salary from your business to support your personal expenses.
- > To calculate a sensible salary for yourself, start by listing all the expenses you personally have. You find an example for this below (Table C) and the full template in the annex 3. Again, this is the sum per month. In order to find out the costs for the first six months, multiply the personal expenses by six. At the same time, you need to anticipate how much revenue you expect to make each month – if your business plus your personal expenses exceed the expected revenues, you need to cut down some costs, which would likely be your personal expenses – unless you can cover your personal expenses with savings or you receive another income separately from your business.

4. Any other Income

> If you need additional money and you feel you can handle a second job parallel to starting your own business you might decide to keep another job in the beginning. The salary you receive from this extra job can help you to cover (part of) your personal expenses. **See Table D.**

Now fill out Table A, B, C and D in the annex 4 one by one. Tick off what you have completed in the checklist at the beginning of the chapter. Once you filled out all the four tables below, you can figure out the costs you will have when setting up your business.

You can calculate your initial cash needs over the first six months by adding the total from the first three tables and then subtract the additional income you might have from other jobs:

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{Set up Costs (TOTAL A)} \\ & + \text{Running Costs (TOTAL B)} \times 6 \\ & + \text{Personal Expenses (TOTAL C)} \times 6 - \text{Other Income (TOTAL D)} \\ & \hline & = \text{Initial cash needs for the first six months} \end{aligned}$$



A. SET UP COSTS

Cost Item	Amount Of Money
Licenses and permits Do you need to obtain a license or a permit first before even being allowed to start your business? Here are some examples: Audit firms, Pharmacy business, etc	
Registration	

Fee for business registration Fee for domain name registration	
Office supplies Paper, pens, notebook and boxes to keep record. Maybe even a computer And a (mobile) phone. A desk with a chair or any other furniture Your own business cards. <hr/>	

TOTAL A



RUNNING COSTS

Cost Item	Amount of money per month	Total amount of money (x 6)
Rent For your store For your production facility For your land		
Equipment lease Any equipment, e.g. machinery, that you did not buy but have to lease and pay for the lease on a monthly basis		
Utilities Water Electricity		

TOTAL B



PERSONAL EXPENSES

Cost Item	Amount of money per month	Total amount of money (x 6)
Food		
Rent		
Electricity		

TOTAL C



INCOME

Income source	Amount of money per month	Total amount of money (x 6)
Salaries from other side-jobs		
Any other revenue		

TOTAL D

Now that you know how many funds you need to start your business and cover all the costs for the first six months, you need to find the right source of funding. There are different options available.

Funding

A. Personal Savings

Some businesses don't need much start-up capital and the entrepreneurs prefer to rely on themselves rather than accepting money from someone else. If you want to fund your start-up completely with your private money, you need to have enough savings

Savings allow you to cover your start-up costs independently – you won't have to provide a collateral, pay back expensive interest rates to a bank or share your business with an investor

But depending on your specific business idea, you will have to save a high amount of money before being able to start. This will take you time and requires the right habit

The process of setting aside money for future use should go hand in hand with reducing your spending and increasing your income where possible. You should also consider carefully where to keep the money you are saving – at home, paid to a cooperative, deposited with a microfinance institution or with a bank

Instead of relying on your personal savings, you can also try to obtain money from other people – but if you do so, consider the implications:

B. Grants

You can receive a grant from a donor to fund a specific component of your business. To obtain a grant, you usually have to hand in a convincing project proposal and a proper application. This means that even so a grant appears to be free money, you have to spend time, effort and sometimes also financial means to come up with a thoughtful project proposal to secure this kind of funding.

Grants are a great opportunity to finance certain aspects of your business – they don't require a collateral and you neither have to pay an interest rate nor repay the money.

However, no entrepreneur who wants to build up a sustainable business can base his or her activities solely on grants. It is difficult and time-consuming to obtain a grant and you cannot expect to receive a grant that covers all your costs.

Therefore, when looking for funding opportunities, search for grant offers as an additional financing mechanism, but be aware of their upfront costs and don't make yourself entirely dependent on grants

YEP mini-grants

Contact: Saikou Touray

Tel. +220 4497028; +220 2257333;

minigrantschemegambia@gmail.com

Link: yep.gm/opportunity/mini-grant-scheme



C. Equity financing

Equity is money that cannot be taken back out once invested in a business. In return, the investor receives a proportional share of the company and, along with this, ownership of the business, dividends and a say in relevant decisions regarding the management of the company

If you don't have enough money yourself to start your business, no assets that are accepted as a collateral by a lender and you want to avoid the burden of having to pay back borrowed money, a partner for equity investment can be the ideal financing mechanism for you.

But bear in mind that you can no longer take decisions on your own, but will have to agree with the investor as a new shareholder on all major decisions. You should not give more than 50 per cent of your business away to investors – as otherwise you will not have a proper say in the company anymore.

Therefore, when deciding to fund your start-up by obtaining equity investment, chose your investor carefully to ensure you both agree on the future direction of the company, and don't give more shares away than necessary

D. Debt financing

Debt financing means that you borrow money from someone else, which you have to repay at a later point. You receive a certain amount of money, called principal, from a lender; you borrow it at the cost of an interest rate; and you repay the principal plus the interest rate either in instalments, e.g. on a monthly basis, or all at once, depending on what you agreed to with the lender.

You will usually have to present a solid business plan and in most cases have a collateral. This needs to be a valuable asset that the borrower would seize in case of default, if you fail to repay the money as it was agreed. Apart from the collateral being seized, not paying back borrowed money will also negatively affect your reputation.

The advantage of debt financing is that you don't need to invest your own savings and you don't have to hand over shares to another person.

But often interest rates are high, you need to have a collateral, and you risk to lose the assets that you bring in as a collateral in case you fail to repay the money in time.

Therefore, to obtain debt financing, you should have a feasible and convincing business plan, find a lender with the lowest possible interest rate – it must not be higher than your profit margin –, calculate realistically your ability to pay back the money timely, only borrow the money when you need it and pay it back as soon as possible – the longer you keep it, the higher your costs

Different institutions offer debt financing:

Banks usually offer several options to borrow money as a loan. To obtain it, you need to meet certain requirements, which usually include:

- > a proper business plan
- > a bank statement to show your financial history
- > your profit and loss statement, and your balance sheets;
- > a cash flow forecast;
- > your personal and business tax returns; and
- > a statement on how you intend to use the loan

Microfinance Institutions mainly offer financing at lower interest rates to individuals and SMEs who struggle to obtain loans from commercial banks. Cooperatives often offer a fund to group members, from which loans can be withdrawn at lower rates than those of commercial banks.

YEP Mini-Loan Scheme
Contact: Mr. Lamin Jobarteh
Director of Operations, SDF
info@sdfgambia.gm | lmfjobarteh@sdfgambia.gm
baijobs137@gmail.com; 220 4399963/4
Link: yep.gm/opportunity/mini-loan-scheme

National Association of Co-operative Credit Unions (NACCUG)
Contact: Baboucarr Jeng, General Manager
info@naccug.gm | infonaccug@gmail.com;
4497028 | 4497026 9968850
Link: www.naccug.gm

E. Money from Family and Friends

You don't necessarily need to borrow from an institutions – if you present your business idea to family and friends in a convincing way,

When choosing from the many existing options to fund your business, you need to do thorough research and evaluate all the existing options, their terms and conditions properly. A mix of different sources can also help to get the necessary funding and mitigate the risks connected to some of the financing mechanism.

Financial tools and instruments

There are five different financial tools and instruments which are used in business and are therefore important for you to know. Learning what they are and how to use them helps you to ensure that you can deploy them for maximum effect in your business start-up activities

Book of Accounts

The Book of Accounts is a basic tool to keep track of financial records in a business. The process of filling the book of accounts is called “bookkeeping” and is usually done by the owner in most startups. As your business grows you might afford to hire a bookkeeper, but anyway it is important to know the back principles of bookkeeping, which involve collecting, recording, storing and retrieving information of financial transactions.

- **Collecting means to gather all the important documents from every transaction to enter them correctly into the Book of Accounts: Sales orders, invoices, receipts, payment vouchers, debit notes, etc. Always note the date, a brief description and the accurate amount for each document and make sure each document is signed by the right person**

- **Recording is about organizing and writing down the information from the documents properly. It will help you later to track all your financial transactions. This is done with the help of three basic books, which are called ledgers**

- > In the Sales Ledger you record the names of all your customers and the transactions you made with them.

- > In the Purchase Ledger you record all your transaction with suppliers – you put down the relevant information for all the items your business buys from suppliers.

- > You use the Stock Ledger to keep an overview over the amount of goods that you have in stock to constantly be aware if you need to restock something. Regularly count the items in your stock and compare the numbers to the balance you have in your Stock Ledger

It makes sense to fill out the three ledges regularly – the more often you do this, the less of work it causes and the better is your overview. For example, you could schedule one time slot each week to enter all the transactions of the week into the ledgers, based on all the documents you collected.

On the following pages, you find examples for all the three ledgers with explanations on how to fill in those tables. In the **annex Page 114** you then find empty ones which you can copy to keep track of all your business transactions once it is up and running

Sales Ledger							
Customer Name							
Customer Address							
Contact Details							
Invoice Number	Invoice Date	Item Description	Quantity	Unit Price	Credit Sales	Payment	Balance
Each invoice receives a unique number	Note the date that the transaction took place	Describe what has been sold	Note how much has been sold/how many of the items	Note the cost of the item per unit	If you sold it on credit, the payment or at least part of it is delayed, so the customer still owes you money – write down the respective amount here	Write down how much the customer paid already	Multiply the Unit price with the quantity. Subtract this from the payment that has been made already to find out what is left to pay – this should equal the credit sales.
1	28.11.2018	Handmade soap with honey fragrance	5	25	125	0	-125

Purchase Ledger

Supplier Name							
Supplier Address							
Contact Details							
Invoice Number	Invoice Date	Item Description	Quantity	Unit Price	Credit Purchase	Payment	Balance
Each invoice receives a unique number	Note the date that the transaction took place	Describe what you bought from the supplier	Note how much you bought	Note the cost of the item per unit	If you bought it on credit, you still owe the supplier money – write down the respective amount here	Write down how much you paid already	Multiply the Unit price with the quantity. Subtract this from the payment that you made already to find out what is left to pay – this should equal the credit sales
1	27.11.2018	Honey	3 L	200 per L	0	600	0

Stock Ledger

Stock Name						
Stock Type						
Date						
Note on which day you either got new stock or removed something from your stock	Details	In	Out	Unit Price	Balance Quantity	Balance Value
	Note further details, e.g. for which purpose you removed the stock	In case you got new stock, note here how many items you added to your stock – how much went in.	In case you removed items from your stock, note how many went out	Note the cost of the item per unit	Note how many items are left by either adding the amount that went in or subtracting the amount that went out from the previous balance quantity	Multiply the unit price with the balance quantity
29.11.2018	Repurchase of beeswax for production of next month	2 kg		40 per kg	3	120

- Storing is about filing the documents orderly by sorting them in an organized and logical way in a safe place, so you can easily find them when needed. You could have a special cabinet or bookshelf where you keep all these documents in separate folders. In The Gambia, you need to keep records for at least five years
- Then you are able to retrieve the documents whenever you need them to verify information.

Budget

The next important document is your budget, which allows you to match estimated income with expenses. When preparing your budget, which you should do in advance for each month, you basically make plans for the spending of your business, to ensure that you don't spend more than your revenues over a longer period of time, which would lead to losses. The three basic components of a budget are

- **Sales or Revenues:** how much money your business earns. Obviously, you can never be completely sure about how much future revenues you will have – you must make an estimate or forecast, drawing on market research, your own experience or advice from other business owners, and past data. Rather be conservative than overly optimistic when estimating your revenues – it is better to make more revenues than expected at the end of a month than having less.
- **Total Costs:** what your business needs to spend. Remember the running costs you already learnt about in chapter IV.1?
- **Profits:** subtract the costs from your revenues to calculate your estimated profits. As the aim is to make a profit, your costs should be lower than your revenues

Have a look at the template on the next page to learn how to create a budget and find an empty template in the **annex page 124** to use for your own business.

Budget of the Month			
Revenues			
Item	Unit Cost (Price)	No. of items to be sold	Revenue
Here, you identify your source of revenue – what your business sells to earn money	What is the price at which you sell this product or service? This tells you how much you earn by selling one unit of this product or service.	Estimate how many units of this product or service you will sell each month.	Multiply Unit Cost and Number of Items to be Sold to find out the revenues you make with this one product.
e.g. Melons	15	500	7,500
Add any other items your business sells, e.g. Mangoes	10	1000	10,000
Total Revenue			17,500 Add the revenue for each item to get your business' total income per month

Expenditure

Item	Unit Cost (Price per month)	No. of items	Expenditure
Now write down everything that your business has to pay a fixed amount for each month....along with the costs for each item per month.	How often do you need to purchase this item each month?	Multiply unit cost and number of items to receive the expenditure for this specific item each month
Rent of warehouse	2500	1	2500
Rent of motorbike for transportation	2000	1	2000
Variable Costs			
Then think of all the other costs which you might not pay on a monthly but rather a daily basis or those costs that varies, e.g	Costs for the item per unit	How many units of this item you purchase each month	Multiply unit cost and number of items to receive the expenditure for this specific item each month
The wage of an employee who works	and is paid 200 per day,	being employed for 20 days per month	and therefore earns $200 \times 20 = 4,000$ / mn

for your business on a daily basis...			
Fertilizers	2000	1	2000
Total expenditure			6,000 Add the expenditures for each item to get your business' total expenditures per month
Profit			11,500 Subtract the total expenditure from the total revenues to know the profit you make. If this is a negative amount, you need to either increase your revenues or cut down your expenses

Profit and Loss Statement

This is one of the most important documents in a business: it tells you if your business is profitable, breaking even which means that expenses equal revenues, or if it is making a loss. It is of high importance for every entrepreneur to know whether his or her business is making a loss, as in this case you would need to adapt your financial planning to stop making losses. You usually prepare this document either for a whole year, a quarter or a month

In order to make this statement:

- list all the income or revenues of the period you chose
- and all the costs or expenses of the same period for your business.

The total income minus the total expenses is called your “net worth”.

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{Total Income/Revenues/Sales} \\ - \text{Total Costs/ Expenses} \\ \hline = \text{Net Worth} \end{array}$$

The result of this calculation can either be:

- Positive ----- This means that your business is profitable as the income is higher than the expenses.
- Zero ----- This means that your business is breaking even as the income equals exactly the expenses and you therefore neither make a profit nor a loss.
- Negative ----- This means that your business is making a loss as the expenses are higher than the income.

There is a difference between the income/profit and loss statement that you prepare periodically to review your profits and losses and the pro forma version of the income/profit and loss statement, which you prepare as a start-up even before you begin your business activities to make financial projections. For now, you need to prepare a pro forma statement. It serves as a financial projection to find out whether your business will generate enough profit, based on the current planning. Have a look at the template in the **annex on page 114**. You need to make:

> a sales forecast: forecast the sales that you expect to make for each product. In order to do so, write down the quantity you expect to sell of each product along with the price per unit for each product. Be realistic regarding the quantities and don't expect your sales to sky rocket right from the beginning – for the statement to be credible, you should not be overoptimistic.

Then multiply quantity by unit price to find out the total amount of income you will receive from selling this product. Add up the estimated amount of each product you plan to sell to figure out your predicted total income

> a forecast of your direct production costs and indirect costs, which are your expenses: Start with your direct production costs, which are linked to the production of a specific good as inputs, such as raw materials or labor hire and note the quantities you will need and the unit price you pay for the respective input. Again, multiply quantity by costs and calculate your total production costs by adding up the amount you spend on each input

You can then deduct your direct production costs from the total income you estimated before. This gives you the production profit margin, i.e. the revenue after subtracting the costs that you have to produce the respective goods.

Indirect costs such as rent, electricity, costs for sales and marketing, insurance, interest, taxes, etc. also need to be considered when writing down the expenses of your business.

When you deduct the total direct production costs and the total indirect costs from the total income you receive the net profit/loss you project for your business.

Cash Flow Statement

The Cash Flow Statement is calculated based on your sales or income and expenses and helps you to keep track of the money that flows into your business as income and the money that flows out of it as expenses over a certain amount of time. In the cash flow statement, you note the monetary in- and outflows for every day each month. Therefore, you should have 12 separate sheets, one for each month. Ideally, you note the cash flow for each day every evening when you close your business in order not to lose track of the money flows. You find a monthly cash flow worksheet with instructions on how to fill it in on the next page. An empty template of provided in the **annex page 121**. You should copy this one 12 times and store it safely in a separate folder to fill it out for each day every month.

You can either be

- cash flow positive: the money you are getting from sales is more than what you are spending; or
- cash flow negative. you are spending more than what you are earning from your sales

It can happen that a business has a positive Profit and Loss Statement, but is cash flow negative. For example, this happens if many customers bought on credit – their payment is not yet among the cash inflow. If you buy from your suppliers on credit, it could also turn out the other way round.

In case you are cash flow negative, you don't have enough cash to pay your expenses. Consequently, you will need to negotiate for a bank overdraft, a temporary loan or delay spending to reduce your outflows, e.g. by negotiating the possibility to buy on credit from suppliers.



Monthly Cash Flow Worksheet

Cash Balance at the beginning

Note the amount of cash you have at the beginning of the month

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 31	Monthly Total
<p>Cash Inflows</p> <p>Note all the income/revenues you generate, e.g. from cash sales for each day</p>					Add the cash inflow for each day up to a monthly total
<p>Cash Outflows</p> <p>Note all the expenses you have, e.g. for advertising, bank service charges, insurance, payrolls, rents or leases, supplies, taxes, licenses, office equipment, utilities, etc. – look at your running costs from chapter IV.1 again!</p>					Add the cash outflow for each day up to a monthly total
<p>Ending Cash Balance</p> <p>Subtract the cash outflow from cash inflow to receive the balance</p>					This shows the cash balance at the end of the month

Even if you have not yet started your business, you can predict your cash flows. This is important to plan and avoid becoming cash flow negative.

- > Again, note the current cash balance with which you start.
- > Then make a forecast for the cash receipts for the next 12 month.
- > Also, estimate the payments you will make for direct production costs and indirect costs within this period.
- > Add what your customers will owe you as debtors who have bought on credit.
- > Note what you owe suppliers, having bought from them on credit.

Then add cash receipts and expected receipts from debtors to the opening cash balance and deduct payments and what you owe creditors to find out the expected net cash position

Amount	
Opening cash balance	
+ cash receipts over next 12 month	
- payments for next 12 month	
+ expected receipts from debtors	
- expected payments to debtors	

Balance Sheet

The Balance Sheet shows the company's financial position at a specific point in time. It tells you what the company owns and what it owes on a specific date – this is of interest in particular to banks regarding loans and credits or investors. It is composed of

- **assets:** resources with a future economic value that a company owns and that can be expressed in a monetary value, e.g. cash, investments, supplies, stock, land, buildings, equipment, prepaid expenses etc..
- **liabilities:** are what the company is obliged to pay, e.g. what it owes to creditors, wages that need to be paid to employees, credit that needs to be paid back to suppliers, etc.
- **equity:** is what the owner(s) contributed to the company and what remains as earnings after all liabilities have been deducted

Assets and liabilities are normally differentiated into current and fixed or long-term assets/liabilities. While current means that the assets can be turned into cash within 12 month or the liabilities can be paid of within this timeframe, fixed assets provide a future economic benefit but cannot be sold anytime soon and long-term liabilities will take a longer time than a year to be paid off

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{Assets} \\ - \text{Liabilities} \\ \hline = \text{Owner's Equity} \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{Owner's Equity} \\ + \text{Liabilities} \\ \hline = \text{Assets} \end{array}$$

On the next page you find an exemplary balance sheet. Go to the annex page 124 for an empty balance sheet template for you to fill out

BALANCE SHEET	DATE
ASSETS	
CURRENT ASSETS	
CASH	
SHORT-TERM INVESTMENTS	
STOCK	
SUPPLIES	
PREPAID EXPENSES	
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	

BALANCE SHEET	
FIXED ASSETS	
LAND	
BUILDINGS	
EQUIPMENT	
LONG-TERM INVESTMENTS	
TOTAL FIXED ASSETS	
TOTAL ASSETS	

LIABILITIES	
CURRENT LIABILITIES	
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE	
SHORT-TERM LOANS	
ACCRUED WAGES	
CURRENT PORTION OF LONG-TERM DEBT	
INCOME TAXES PAYABLE	
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	
LONG-TERM LIABILITIES	

EQUITY	
OWNER'S INVESTMENT	
RETAINED EARNINGS	
TOTAL EQUITY	

More help needed on financial literacy and planning?

National Enterprise Development Initiative (NEDI)

Contact: Abass Bah, Acting General Manager

info@nedi.gm; 3721878 | 3800434

Link: www.nedi.gm

National Association of Co-operative Credit Unions (NACCUG)

Contact: Baboucarr Jeng, General Manager

info@naccug.gm | infonaccug@gmail.com;

4497028 | 4497026 9968850

Link: www.naccug.gm

The Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCl)

Contact: Sarata Conateh, Director, Business Development

info@gcci.com; 4461450 | 9985747

Link: www.gcci.gm

Startup Incubator Gambia (SIG)

Contact: Alieu Jallow, Project Manager

info@startupincubator.gm; 3489213 | 7318046

Link: www.startupincubator.gm

Pricing

An important question remains: how do you determine the price for your product or service?

As you have seen, you determine your profit by deducting the costs from the revenues. To make a product with every item you sell, the price at which you sell it needs to be higher than the costs for this item. This means that if your costs rise, you might have to increase your prices to remain profitable.

When you decide on the price, consider:

- All the costs you have – make sure not to forget any!

> Think of: production costs which include the money you spend on the material that goes into each product and that you use to make the product or offer the service but also the labour costs you spend on wages for the employees that work in the production of your goods or services.

> And non-production costs, meaning all the other expenses you have to run your business, like rent, electricity, insurance, licenses, interests on loans, salaries for employees that are not directly involved in the production like accountants, cleaners, etc.

The prices of your competitors

> Be aware of how much customers have to pay for similar products or services offered by others – know the highest and the lowest prices of your competitors. This does not mean that you cannot charge higher prices, but in this case, you need to offer a better value and communicate this clearly to your potential customers.

> If you offer a higher quality, you can charge higher prices than your competitors. Does the price match the quality of the product? Be honest with yourself!

Your customers

- > In case you offer a completely new product, it is of course impossible to compare with other companies. In this case, you could ask your future customers: do market research on how much they would be willing to pay for your product or service! If you offer a higher quality, you can charge higher prices than your competitors. Does the price match the quality of the product? Be honest with yourself!
- > Does the price matches your target customers? Bear in mind the knowledge you gathered about them and their social background

Some strategic considerations

- > Whether you prefer to sell at a lower price to possibly attract more customers or at a higher price to make a larger profit with each item you sell.
- > If you are willing to offer a discount at all and if yes under which conditions, e.g. if people buy larger quantities.
- > If you will allow people to buy on credit

Build Your Team

For this chapter you need:

- a pen;
- the table which starts on the next page;
- additional paper;
- your own business idea that you want to realize together with co-workers.

By now you should know what kind of business you want to start. Based on this and on a more advanced level, you will now figure where you will help to get started with your own company successfully and how to create a motivated team

At the end of this chapter you will know:

- > why it is important to get support;
- > where you need support;

where you have to enhance your own skills; and
how to successfully lead a team in a professional work environment

Need for support – power of the people

It is quite normal that when you start your business you don't have all the skills of an entrepreneur yet. Businesses involve many different tasks and latest when your company grows, you will need additional support.

There are different types of people with different skills – so getting the right team members to work with on board can boost your business and make your life as an entrepreneur easier

As people are one of the biggest costs for a company due to the salary you have to pay them, it is important to choose your team carefully. Most start-ups also only begin by employing one person and then increase the number of team members later as they grow. Take some time to think about how many people you actually need and which skills they should contribute to complement what you are already able to do yourself. You will get a better idea about this if you think about your own skills first and then decide in which fields you would rather like to acquire the necessary skills yourself by making use of trainings offered and for which tasks you will need to hire employees. Use the worksheet below to figure it out!

SKILLS	I ALREADY POSSESS THIS SKILL	I ACQUIRE THIS SKILL BY...	I NEED TO HIRE SOMEONE
PERSONAL BUSINESS SKILLS			
ORAL PRESENTATIONS			
WRITTEN COMMUNICATION			
COMPUTER SKILLS			
ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS			
SALES			

PRICING			
BUYING			
PLANNING			
NEGOTIATING			
DIRECT SELLING TO BUYERS			
GETTING CUSTOMERS FEEDBACK			
CUSTOMER SERVICE			
TRACKING COMPETITORS			
MARKETING			
ADVERTISING / PROMOTIONS			
PLANNING MARKETING OBJCTS			
IDENTIFYING MARKETING CHANNELS AND TECHNIQUES			

PRICING			
PACKAGING			
FINANCES			
ACCESSING FUNDS			
CASH FLOW PLANNING			
BOOKKEEPING			
KEEPING BALANCE SHEETS			
MONTHLY PROFIT AND LOSS STATEMENT			
BILLING			
TAX PREPARATION			
ADMINISTRATIVE			
SCHEDULING			

PAYROLL HANDLING			
BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION			
PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT			
HIRING EMPLOYEES			
FIRING EMPLOYEES			
MOTIVATING EMPLOYEES			
GENERAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS			
PRODUCTION			
SKILLS IN PRODUCING THE GOOD/DELIVERING THE SERVICE YOU WANT TO OFFER			
EXPERIENCE IN THIS AREA OF BUSINESS			

When you decide to employ people for certain tasks, don't forget that it is not only about the skills of the people you employ – they should also share the values of your brand and be people with whom you can easily work together in a team!

Leadership and staff management

Managing your personnel well is important for a successful business. You need a strong and motivated team, which you can trust – and to achieve this, you should lead by example and inspire your co-workers. Even so, everyone needs to find his or her own leadership style, find below a few recommendations:

- > Have a good communication with all team members at any time: talk about the business with everyone from the beginning on and be as clear as possible to avoid misunderstandings. Establish communication channels to speak to and receive feedback from your employees – unclear communication can lead to confusion and unhealthy working relationships.
- > Make your expectations clear and agree with your employees on their responsibilities. Put job instructions and agreements in writing to avoid arguments later. Clarity in roles is essential.
- > Have a clear mechanism of how to settle disputes that everyone agrees to.
- > Build mutual trust among you and your team members and make them feel valued.
- > But also make the consequences clear if they behave on purpose in a way that harms your business.
- > Coach your employees and give them a chance to develop their own skills.

Get The Formalities Done

For this chapter you need:

a pen;
additional paper;
your final business idea

It makes sense to start this chapter only once you have finalized your business idea and secured the financial means as well as the human resources to start your business activities. Of course, you can also look at the information provided on the next pages in advance, but you can only proceed with putting this into practice once you have successfully completed all the previous steps.

At the end of this chapter you will know:

- > what to consider when deciding where to set up your business;
- > how to register your business; and
- > how to pay taxes for your business correctly.

1. Where to set up your business

Where you set up your business should be based on a conscious decision rather than just a random place. What a good business location is, depends on where your customers are. Especially when starting your business, you will need to go where the customers are – as they won't know your company yet, they most likely won't come to you.

Once you are known and you have successfully established your brand, people might come and look for your store. But as long as you are just starting your business operation, it is good to be located in an area where many people pass through.

However, it is not only about where your customers are, but where they are in the mood to buy. You need to sell the right thing in the right place – most likely, people won't like to buy flowers along a busy highway. But a snack bar in a shopping street would make sense. Sell swimwear close to the beach but not in the backcountry.

Depending on the product or service you offer, a mobile shop can make sense as well – having a stall with which you can go to different locations can increase your reach and visibility and help you to gain more customers. Obviously, it might be difficult to move around with a whole clothes store. But, a mobile juice bar that you can set up in different streets and at different places depending on where people are could be quite profitable.

No matter which location(s) you choose, make sure that you let people know where to find you with your marketing activities and set clear opening hours to which you stick firmly: You don't want people to pass by your shop, store or office and find it closed. Consider that the best time to sell can differ for different products or services – your snack bar definitely needs to be open during noon for people to get a light lunch, but can possibly close earlier in the evenings compared to a proper

2. Register your business

The Registrar of Companies is responsible for the registration of all forms of businesses in The Gambia. In accordance with the Laws of

The Gambia, you can register your business either as Sole Proprietorship business, Partnership business or Limited liability companies. Afterwards, certificates of incorporation and business registration is issued for foreign and local companies while certificates of registration is issued for sole proprietorships and partnerships in accordance with the Companies Act 20

• Some important documents you must have in order to register your business make sure not to forget any!

- > Personal identity card e.g. National ID, Voters Card, or Passport
- > Tax identification number (TIN)
- > Tax clearance form from GRA
- > Employer registration form from SSHC
- > Registration fees depending on the type of business registration

For more information regarding Business Registration

Ministry of Justice – Attorney General’s Chambers

Business Registration

Marina Parade, East Building

Contact – Judicial Secretary

Info@moj.gov.gm ; 220 4225352/4229908

Link: www.moj.gov.gm

For this chapter you need:

a pen;
the notes and filled out templates from all the previous chapters;
the template and checklist provided on the next pages; and
all you have learnt while working through this handbook.

This final chapter brings together all you have learnt throughout the handbook. It serves as a summary as well as an overview for you pull together and to reflect about the progress you have made in developing your own business. At the same time, it provides an overview on where to find further help for a successful future of your business

At the end of this chapter you will know:

what the business model canvas is;
what a business plan is; and
where to find further support while you move forward in your entrepreneurial career

Business Model Canvas

All you have learnt by going through this handbook leads to the Business Model Canvas. It is a table that you can already fill out now. But it is a flexible tool – you might not yet be able to fill out all the fields and even throughout your entrepreneurial career your answers might change as you face and solve new challenges. There is no right or wrong – you can come up with some ideas first and exchange or chose between different alternatives at a later point.

Have a look at the next two pages: You find two templates for the Business Model Canvas there, one with explanations of the different fields, the other one for you to fill out with your own ideas. You will surely be able to fill out many of the categories based on what you have learnt by know! If you are unsure about what to write in some of the fields, refer back to the mentioned chapters

<p>Key Partners Who are your partners in running this business? It should be someone who shares your ideas about the future development of your company, who contributes resources or skills you lack and thereby complements your competencies, and with whom you can work together professionally. Suppliers should also be noted here, along with the criteria of how to select them – consider a good balance between a low price and a good quality of the inputs they supply you with.</p>	<p>Key Activities What do you need to do to propose the value, to deliver the product and to establish relationship with customer?</p>	<p>Value Proposition Remember what you have learnt in Chapter II.3. – What are the jobs, pains and gains of your customers and how does your product or service help them?</p>	<p>Customer Relationships What kind of relationship will you maintain with your customers? How will you interact with them to receive their feedback and make them feel valued, so they remain loyal to your business?</p>	<p>Customer Segments Remember the idea of target customers – who are they? Try to describe them as much in detail as possible, bearing in mind that your product or service must offer them a specific value – in order to achieve this, you must know your customers well. Refer back the beginning of chapter II.3.</p>
<p>Cost Structure What does it cost to run this business? How does your cost breakdown look like? See chapter IV.</p>	<p>Revenue Structure How are you going to earn money through this business? Charging a price for your product does not automatically guarantee that you earn money, given the costs you have. See chapter IV.</p>			

Key Partners	Key Activities	Value Proposition	Customer Relationships	Customer Segments
Cost Structure	Key Resources		Channels	
	Revenue Structure			

**You have completed many important steps on the way to starting your business meanwhile!
Tick off below what you have done so far:**

- Conducted my own SWOT-Analysis
- Defined my own SMART Goals
- Conducted my own market research
- Made an assessment of my own business idea
- Created a profile of my customers
- Defined the value proposition of my product or service
- Defined the USP of my product or service
- Designed my own logo
- Started my own Facebook page
- Started my own Twitter account
- Set my marketing objectives
- Developed my marketing plan
- Figured out my set up costs
- Calculated my running costs
- Figured out my personal expense
- Figured out my other income
- Secured my start-up funding
- Started my book of accounts
- Made my budget
- Prepared my profit and loss statement
- Prepared my balance sheet
- Set my prices
- Found my team members
- Found my business location
- Registered my business

The Outlook: Your Business Plan

You have nearly reached the end of this handbook now and you have learnt a lot! So what will be the next step? One thing that every entrepreneur should do is to prepare a business plan. A business plan summarizes everything relevant about the business you want to start and includes all the important information. Having this document ready will help and guide you – for example, it helps you to identify the direction in which you want your business to move, like a roadmap for your business; it shows you where your opportunities are, where improvement is required and where critical points might be; and you need it when trying to obtain a loan from a bank.

Once you have completed your plan, you should look at it regularly and adapt it if necessary, e.g. when the circumstances change or as your business grows.

The sub-sections of a business plan are normally the following:

- > Executive Summary
- > Table of Contents
- > Company Description
- > List of Products and Services
- > Market Analysis
- > Operations Plan
- > Marketing and Sales Strategy
- > Financial Projections

You surely realize that you have learnt about all these components while working through this handbook and you will be able to prepare a draft for your business plan already now. But you might have more questions and despite all that you have learnt, much remains to do on your entrepreneurial pathway and you might want to get further help in the future. Therefore, you find a table below, which summarizes which institutions will be able to help you. Feel free to contact them and make the most of your career as an entrepreneur!

ANNEX TEMPLATES

The Cost



A. SET UP COSTS

Licenses and permits

Do you need to obtain a license or a permit first before even being allowed to start your business?

Here are some examples of such businesses; Audit firms, Pharmacy, private investment firms etc

Amount of money

Registration

Fee for business registration

Fee for domain name registration

Office supplies

Paper, pens, notebook and boxes to keep record.

Maybe even a computer

And a (mobile) phone.

A desk with a chair or any other furniture

Your own business cards

Equipment

Any machinery you need to produce your products or offer your services

Cash boxes for a shop.

Fridges in case you want to sell fresh food that needs cooling.

Tractor, irrigation equipment, solar panels, etc.

The Cost



A. SET UP COSTS

Leases

Do you need to lease a piece of land to start your company, e.g. in the case of agri-business?

Or do you have to lease a car?

Amount of money

Note any initial payments you have to make to obtain a lease – you might have to pay a deposit for a lease

Beginning stock

You cannot start your own store with empty shelves – you need to have your goods readily produced once you start to sell.

Advertising for the opening

Flyers;

Posters;

Ads in Newspapers;

Radio spots; or

Any other marketing channels you want to use to let people know about the start of your business.

Possibly also travel costs.

The Cost

A. SET UP COSTS

Insurance

- Do you need to insure your property?
- Do you want to have a product liability insurance?
- An insurance for company vehicles?
- A professional indemnity insurance in case a client gets damaged?

Here are names of some insurance companies in The Gambia: Prime Insurance, Takaful Insurance, Gamstar Insurance etc.

Amount of money

Professional fees

- A lawyer to help you get your business registered.
- An accountant to compile all the necessary financial documents for you.

Cash

- You need to have change.
- Available petty cash

Unanticipated expenses

Always set a certain amount of money aside, dedicated to unforeseen expenses that can occur anytime!

Other

Total

ANNEX 2

Cost Item

A. RUNNING COSTS

Rent For your store For your production facility For your land	Amount of money per month	Total amount of money (x 6)
Equipment lease Any equipment, e.g. machinery, that you did not buy but have to lease and pay for the lease on a monthly basis		
Utilities Water Electricity		
Communication Internet charges Telephone charges		
Repairs and maintenance Does any machinery require regular maintenance? How much money to you expect to spend each month on repairs of your tools and equipment?		

Staff payroll(s) Do you have employees? Then you need to pay each of them a monthly salary	Amount of money per month	Total amount of money (x 6)
Taxes Calculate the amount you have to spend monthly on taxes. See chapter VII.2 for more information		
Insurance Do you need to pay monthly instalments for your insurances?		
Loan installment In case you took on a loan to start your business, you will need to pay it back in monthly instalments		
Interest Normally, you need to pay a monthly interest rate as the cost of borrowing for your loan		
Bank service charges You will need a bank account for your company and banks normally charge you a monthly service fee.		

OTHER

TOTAL B

ANNEX 3

Cost Item

C. PERSONAL EXPENSES

	Amount of money per month	Total amount of money (x 6)
Food		
Rent		
Electricity		
Water		
Household supplies		
Transportation (e.g. fuel, bus)		
Private telephone charges		
Private internet charges		
Entertainment and recreation		
Other		
Total		

ANNEX 4

Income source

D. INCOME

D. INCOME		
Salaries from other side-jobs	Per month	Total (x 6)
Any other revenue		
Total		

Total Direct Production Costs		
Production Profit Margin		
Indirect Costs		
Total Indirect Costs		
Net Profit / Loss		

Monthly Cash Flow Worksheet

Cash Balance at the beginning

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 31	Monthly Total
Cash Inflows					
Cash Outflows					
Ending Cash Balance					

BALANCE SHEET	Date:
Assets	
Current Assets	
Cash	
Short-term Investments	
Stock	
Supplies	
Prepaid Expenses	
Total Current Assets	
Fixed Assets	
Land	
Buildings	
Equipment	
Long-term investments	
Total Fixed Assets	
Total Assets	

Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts payable	
Short-term Loans	
Accrued wage	
Unearned Revenue	
Current Portion of Long-term Debt	
Income Taxes Payable	
Total Current Liabilities	
Long-term Liabilities	
Total Long-term Liabilities	
Total Liabilities	
Equity	
Owners Investment	
Retained Earnings	
Total Equity	