



MODULE 9

I develop my green business plan

Learning outcomes

You will learn here:

- You can build and develop a business plan from scratch.
- You can find and select the right business plan tools to build your plan.
- How to manage and organise your time effectively.



Figure 1: Business Plan

Basic information



In this module, you will learn about how to develop a business plan for your green business.



This module contains four exercises.



You will need 15 h to finish the module.



You need 66% correct answers to pass this module.



Your lecturers are Amer and Ahmad

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Welcome to Module 9

In the first part of this module, you will learn how to write your business plan. We start with arguments about why it is important to develop a business plan and familiarise you with the essential elements of a business plan. At the end of the first section, you will write a Mission Statement to prepare you for writing your business plan later.

In the second section, we want to introduce you to the Business Model Canvas. A Business Model Canvas is the simplest and most effective method for writing a business plan. With Canvas, you can create your plan on a single sheet of paper. At the end of this section, you will make your first Business Model. And you will write an Executive Summary of your planned Green Business.

Since you need to work effectively, the last section is dedicated to time management techniques. We will present easy-to-use methods to help you organise your tasks effectively.

How to develop your business plan

Starting a new business requires writing a proper business plan. Yet such a process seems complicated for many businesses, tiny ones. Business planning can be time-consuming. And it can be stressful to conduct the necessary research and gather the required materials. It can also be challenging to know exactly what format your business plan should be in and what information to include. However, this step is crucial, and we will guide you through it step by step.

What is a business plan?

Simply put, a business plan is a document that includes the objectives and goals of your business. Mainly it provides information on the business's overall operation framework and how such business activities lead to achieving the business goals, including sales, marketing, and product development. It can also list individual goals for the business, for instance, where funds will come from, how employees will contribute to the business goals, and how the company can make a profit.

Starting a business is not easy and can be risky, but also rewarding if done in the right way.



Please also remember the SWOT Analysis you have learned in **Module 5**. The **SWOT Analysis** can help you to **reduce uncertainty, ambiguity and risk**.

By creating a business plan, you can structure the steps you need to take to build your business well. And a business plan will help you achieve your business's intended goals. When you create a business plan, you get to realise more of the potential of your business idea and reduce risks.

Why is a business plan important for you?

According to an article published by Indeed (2021), there are 18 reasons you need a business plan, and here you find the most important of them:

“It puts a clear plan in place in the launching phase.”

There are so many elements to consider when starting a business. On top of finding a business idea, you also need to define the specifics aspects of the company, like, services or products you will sell, where you will do business (online, offline, and in which geographical region), and also who will you hire to work with you.

“To conduct the necessary research.”

A business plan can be built at different stages of developing your business. It can be done when your business is still an idea, and it can be done when your business is already running but in need of change. Whether you build or change your business plan, doing so requires research on the market, customer segmentation, and profitability. Hence, you already learn much about your business and its potential by working on the project.

“To evaluate competitors and find your customers.”

By identifying competitors, their market activities, and their position in the market, you can better understand and predict your position and target audience.

“Sets objectives for employees and managers.”

A clear division of labour, tasks, and responsibilities is one of the main success factors of any business. This also helps you hire the right staff for your business by setting clear expectations and objectives. This process also helps you develop your HR processes, making it easier to onboard more employees in the future.

“To determine when new employees are needed.”

Over time your business and revenue will grow, and you will have to hire new employees. However, the timing of hiring is critical since it can have negative results when the business is not ready for it. At this point, a business plan can help you decide the right time to hire new employees and what exact duties they should have so your business can remain on track.

“To provide a guide for service providers.”

Small businesses usually hire freelancers and external service providers to help deliver necessary tasks for the company. A business plan allows you to easily share information and sections with those you rely on to support your business while ensuring that all involved parties are aligned with their work.

“Assists you in making important business decisions.”

Some strategic business-related decisions, such as location or expanding your business, are complex and tricky. With a clear business plan, you can determine the specific times or goals you must fulfil to make these important decisions.

“To determine how you will find funding.”

At some stage of the business, you might consider going for investors to fund your business. This huge step requires much preparation, and a business plan will help you pitch your idea. Moreover, a business plan is mandatory to register your business in some countries like Germany; also, it's a must to have if you apply for a bank loan. A business plan is also helpful in determining how much money you will need to start and sustain the business for some time.

Help you predict problems.”

There are several challenges your business might go through at some stages, such as low seasons of selling or a change in the market trends; a business plan can help you address these challenges and be ready for them.



Figure 2: Solutions

“To avoid the big mistakes.”



There are many reasons why businesses fail; according to **data from CB Insights**, some of the most common causes include the following:

No market need: No one wants what you're selling.

Lack of capital: Cash flow issues or businesses simply run out of money.

Inadequate team: This underscores the importance of hiring the right people to help you run your business

Stiff competition: It's tough to generate a steady profit when you have a lot of competitors in your space.

Pricing: Some entrepreneurs price their products or services too high or too low—both scenarios can be a recipe for disaster.

“To prove the viability of the business.”

When starting a business, motivation and passion are great, but more is needed to build a successful business.

Planning exactly how you will turn that vision into a successful business is the most critical step between passion, vision, and reality. A business plan is a right path toward converting the vision into a real business idea.

An essential component of your business plan is market research. It lets you deeply understand the market, your reasonable entry points, competitors, etc. While market research is a must for new businesses, it can be of great value also for existing businesses since markets have

changed quickly in the last few years.

“To secure financing.”

You are 2.5 times more likely to secure funding if you have a business plan. This applies to pitching to investors, asking for a loan from a bank, and even selling your business in the future. After all, anyone interested in putting money into your company will want to know your plan and vision of the business and how it is intended to sustain in the long run. To prove all that, a business plan is what you need to have.

“To reduce risk.”

Starting a business always includes some risk; it is inevitable. However, drawing up revenue and expense projections, mapping logistics and operations, and understanding the market and competitive landscape can significantly help reduce the risk of starting and managing a business. A business plan gives you much clarity on your business and enables you to make the right decisions, leading to lower risks.

Green Business and Business Planning

Building a green business plan is similar to a regular business in terms of structure and practicality. Both apply the same structures and techniques in filling in the information you need to have your business plan ready. However, an essential difference exists when using our values and ethical thinking in the business plan. Starting a green business comes from a motivation to combine business while doing good for nature and society.

Hence, when we design a business plan for our green business, it is crucial to keep in mind how

- the activities
- value propositions
- funding
- and all the main elements of the plan

reflect our ethical and moral responsibilities when planning and practising our business idea. This part will be further clarified in the videos and presentation we have for this module. There we give practical examples of how to apply a green business mindset in business planning.

The Key Elements of a Business Plan

A lot of prep work needs to be done before starting a business plan; one of these primary works is knowing the elements of a business plan and what they serve.

Here are the key elements of a good business plan:

Executive Summary

An executive summary provides a clear image of your business strategy and goals from the very early stages. The summary is extremely helpful for others to understand your business in an easy way and for you to reflect on how you are turning your business idea into reality.

Business Description

A business description makes all your business processes easier to understand and clearer to all involved parties. An excellent business description will explain the size and structure of the business as well as its position in the market in comparison to competitors. It also specifies the products and services a company will offer. Most importantly, it defines the unique selling point of the products or services as compared to your competitors in the market.

Market Analysis

A thorough market analysis helps to understand the current position of a business and its potential scope of growth. This also helps in evaluating investments, promotions, marketing, and where to sell products. In-depth market understanding also helps a business survive and grow in competitive environments, especially in the age of digital business.

Operations and Management

These two elements explain to outsiders the uniqueness of the business and how it plans to achieve it. It also shows how businesses intend to have a better position in the market via high performance and decent management.

Financial Plan

This is the most important element of a business plan because it is what allows you to get the funds you need to start and grow your business. It requires a company to reveal its financial policies and market analysis. Moreover, the documentation of financial plans over a few years can be very helpful in analysing performance and making some future projections.

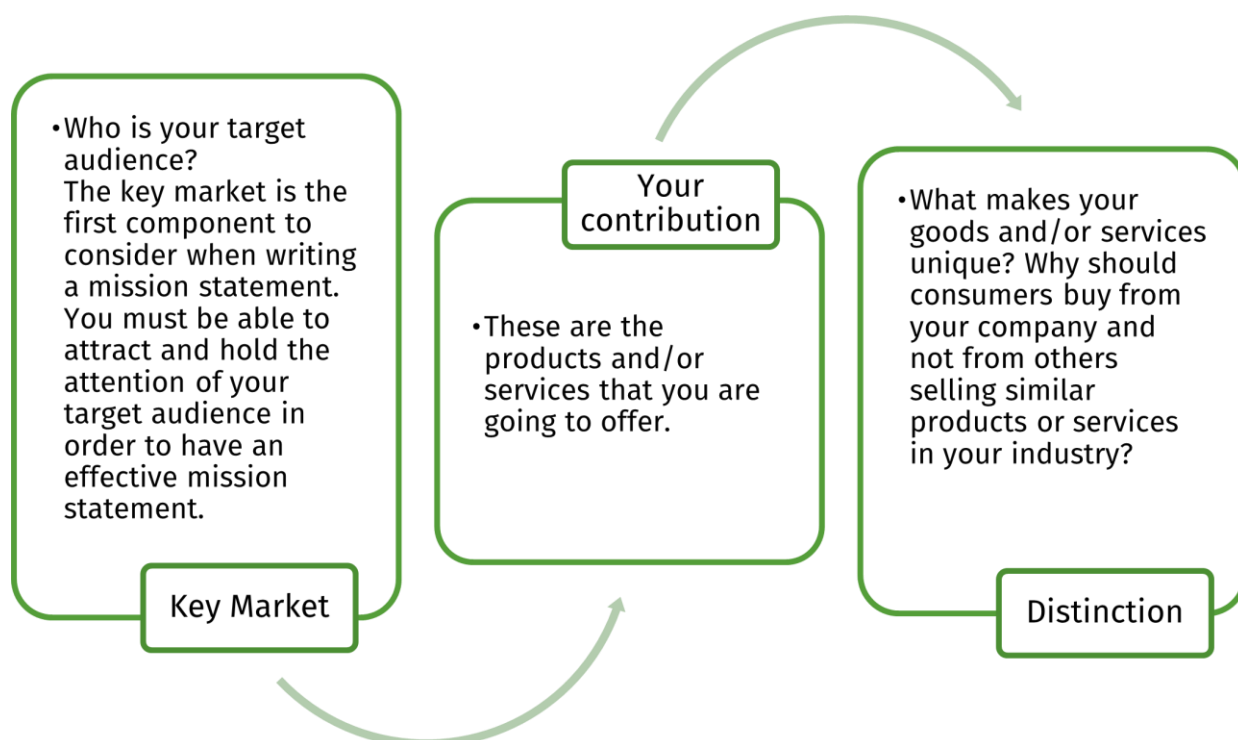


The Mission Statement of Your Green Business

You will be asked to write a Mission Statement in the following exercise. You will do this in preparation for writing your Business Plan later. We have brief explanations and tips for you to make this a success.

Use a Mission Statement to explain the reason(s) for your Green Business. Do this in simple and concise terms. A Mission Statement usually consists of one sentence or a short paragraph.

Very often, a mission Statement consists of the following three parts:



Here are some examples of Mission Statements to inspire you to find your own one:

Tesla: “To accelerate the world’s transition to sustainable energy.”

Patagonia: “Build the best product, cause no unnecessary harm, use business to inspire and implement solutions to the environmental crisis.”

Nike: “Bring inspiration and innovation to every athlete in the world. If you have a body, you are an athlete.”



EXERCISE 1



M 9_E 1: Your mission statement

Open a writing programme or take a sheet of paper. On the top, write the number of the module and the number of this exercise.

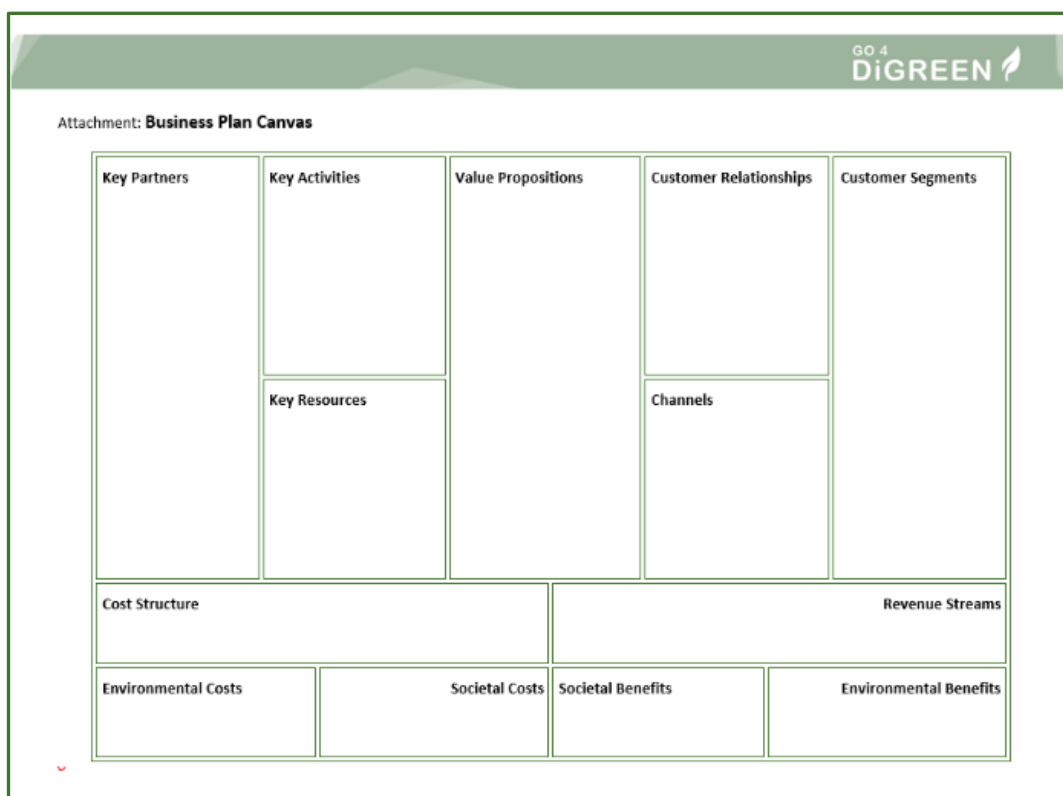
Write a mission statement about your green business before writing your business plan.

When you have completed the exercise, name your digital document after the number of this exercise and save it in the folder to Module 9! If you did the exercise on paper, take readable photos and keep them.



Business Model Canvas

A business model canvas is the most straightforward yet most effective way to create a business plan. The Canvas allows you to build your plan all on one paper. And this is what the Business Model Canvas looks like:



The image shows a Business Model Canvas template. At the top right, it says "GO 4 DiGREEN" with a leaf icon. Below that, it says "Attachment: Business Plan Canvas". The canvas is divided into several sections:

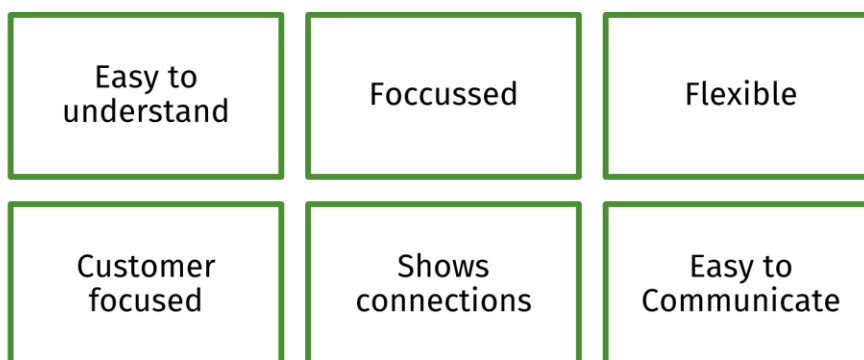
Key Partners	Key Activities	Value Propositions	Customer Relationships	Customer Segments
	Key Resources		Channels	
Cost Structure			Revenue Streams	
Environmental Costs	Societal Costs	Societal Benefits	Environmental Benefits	

Figure 2: Business Model Canvas - template

And what is great about it is that it can be used to describe any company – from the largest company in the world to a startup with just one employee. Later you will find a link where to download this template. And we have also attached this template at the end of this Module.

Advantages of the Business Model Canvas

We first tell you about the advantages of using this template. Then we will immediately explain all sections of the Business Model Canvas to you.



Easy to understand

The canvas is built on one page, including many visual figures, making it very easy to follow.

Focused

It elements all ambiguities and unnecessary elements that might have been developed in the business plan.

Flexible

It's designed to give easy access to making changes and bringing in new ideas at any stage.

Customer Focused

It is heavily customer oriented. The canvas gives the most value to how your customer is perceived and how the value is delivered to them.

Shows Connections

A business plan is written over many pages, which makes it hard to connect points and aspects of the business together. The canvas allows everything to be on one page, making the process of connecting dots across the business aspects easier.

Easy to Communicate

Because the canvas is so easy to understand you'll be able to share and explain it easily with your team, making it easier to get them on board with your vision.

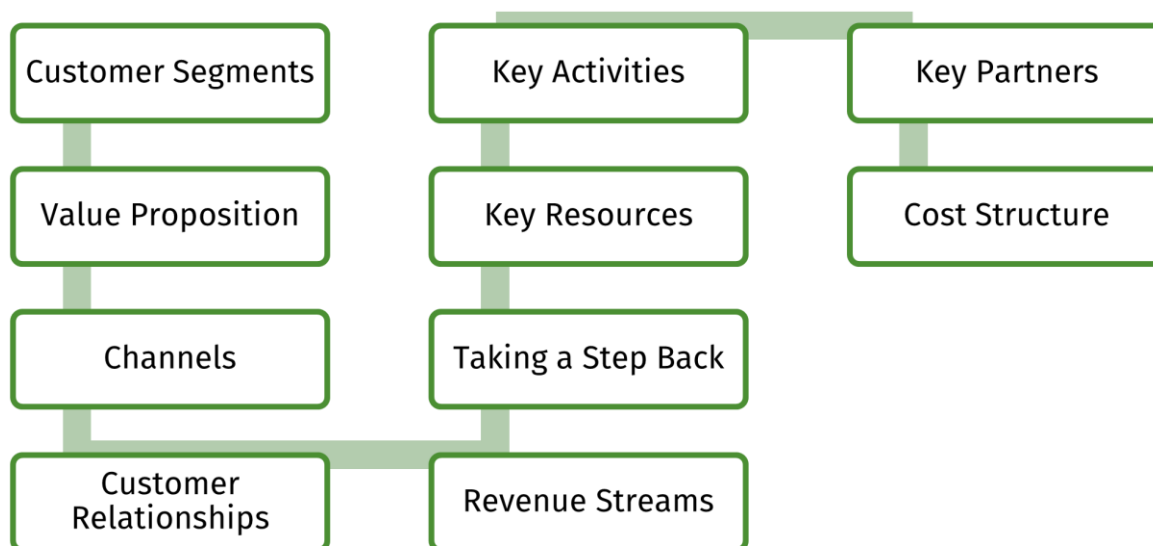


Figure 3: Advantages

Components of the Business Model Canvas

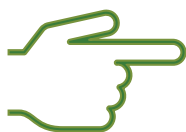
Now let's go into more detail and describe the different sections of this template.

We will explain the different sections of the Business Model Canvas in the following order:



1. Customer Segments

In this section, you list the groups of people and companies you plan on selling your product or service. To do so, you will need to outline your target group's main features/characteristics, such as age, gender, geographical location, etc. The process of identifying these segments is also done via persona building. Read more here:



blog.hubspot.com/marketing/buyer-persona-research



When working on this section, a very important mindset is to make your approach customer-oriented. This means you are the one who is going out and offering your product or service. Customers have many options out there, and you are the one who needs to go to them.

Many businesses have only one customer segment, but others have more than one. Personas and segmentations also depend on your business model; for instance, are you selling only to a specific group of people B2c or other companies b2b?

2. Value Proposition

The value proposition is a crucial element in a business canvas. It tells the story of your business by addressing what problem your business is solving. And what makes your solution unique so customers will come to you? This aspect is also very important when building a green business.

Some of the most common value propositions are:

Newness	High performance	Ability to customize
Design	Brand	Price
Cost reduction	Risk reduction	Convenience



3. Channels

Channels are simply about how your products or services are sold to customers. To complete this section, ask yourself how your customers want to be reached. How are you getting them now?

Generally, such channels can either be owned by you, or you can collaborate with service providers to help you with that.

Your own channels might include any combination of online and offline stores you own, a sales force you employ, or your website.

Partner channels could include several options, from working with media and marketing affiliates who help you sell your product or using Google Ads.

4. Customer Relationships

This section answers how you get, keep, and grow customers.

Get

How do customers find out about you and make their purchase/order? For example, this could be through advertising on Google or other platforms.

Keep

How do you keep customers after they buy from you? For example, excellent customer service might help keep customers.

Grow

How do you get our customers to buy more from you? For instance, you could send out a monthly newsletter informing them about your latest products.

The best way to define these steps is by designing a customer journey. That is how customers find out about you, investigate whether to buy your product, purchase it and how they are managed after purchase.

5. Revenue Streams

This section is about where does the money come from? How do you generate it?

This might sound super simple, but it isn't. You're trying to figure out what strategy you'll use to capture the most value from your customers? Many strategies can be applied here, including monthly subscriptions, including free products to the order a customer makes

Consider Google. Advertisers pay Google to place their ads in front of users with buying intent. For example, if you search for "organic eggs," you will see ads. If you search for something without purchasing intent, such as a "picture of flowers," you probably won't see any ads.

6. Taking a Step Back

If you look at what we have done so far, we've filled in our Value Proposition and the building blocks to the right. In a nutshell, we've developed our understanding of everything that relates to our customers. We need to work on the area to the left of the value proposition. We need to build our infrastructure to provide the best value proposition.

So, let's move on to the first infrastructure building block, Key Resources.

7. Key Resources

This section includes the most important long-term assets your business model needs to be successful and generate revenue.

Physical: buildings, vehicles, machines, and distribution networks.

Intellectual: this includes brands, specialist knowledge, copyrights, partnerships, and customer databases.

Human: sometimes the people you hire or work with will be your most key resource; this is particularly true in creative and knowledge-intensive industries.

Financial: such as lines of credit, cash balances etc.

8. Key Activities

These are the most important things you need to do to make your business work, and they should be generated from your value proposition.

If your Key Activities are not relatable to your Value Proposition, something is wrong because the activities you view as most important aren't delivering any value to customers.

Key Activities can typically be broken down into three broad categories:

- **Production:** This is simply about delivering your product. You can either focus on high quality or high quantity while producing.
- **Problem Solving:** Many service providers can help you solve significant issues you might face. It can be management consultancies or similar service providers.
- **Platform/Network:** Networks and software platforms can function as a platform. For example, a key activity for Facebook is updating the platform.

When filling this section, the most important thing is to list only the core activities your business needs to deliver its value, not just relatable ones.



9. Key Partners

In this building block, you list the tasks and activities that are important but that you will not do yourself. Instead, you will rely on external service providers and partners to do this for you.

Let's look at Spotify. Spotify's key activity is updating its platform. However, as it doesn't produce its own music, one of the key partnerships of Spotify will be the deals it strikes with record labels and publishing houses, without which it would have no music!

There are usually three reasons for creating a partnership:

- Economies of scale.
- Reduction of risk and uncertainty.
- Acquisition of resources or activities (e.g. music for Spotify).

10. Cost Structure

In this section, you want to map the key activities with costs, but these costs must be linked to your value proposition.

It should be straightforward to determine your most important and expensive costs after you've defined your Key Resources, Key Activities, and Key Partnerships.



In **Module 8**, you learned how to **draw up a budget for your green business**.



Creating Your First Business Model

If you're going to create your first Business Model Canvas, then here are some tips to help you get started:

- Don't do it alone: Don't try to create your model alone. Instead, get a small team of 3-5 people together so you can brainstorm ideas.
- Use a whiteboard if you can.
- Have plenty of different coloured whiteboard pens and sticky notes.
- Plan on the process taking about an hour to complete your first draft of Business Model Canvas.
- Decide which building block you're going to fill in first. Usually, it makes sense to start with Customer Segments or Value propositions and then work from there

To help you manage the process, here are some tools you can use to get started with your business plan.

Online Tools

This set of online tools walks you through each section of a traditional business plan in a step-by-step format.

For instance, SBA's Build Your Business Plan Tool - The SBA's Business Plan Tool is a step-by-step guide that allows you to save your progress and return to it later, even if you are not done with it.

Enloop

With this tool, you only need to write in your business details, and the tool will generate your business plan based on the details you reported.

LivePlan

LivePlan is an online service that makes the whole business planning process more simple for you. The service with budgeting, forecasting, and performance tracking.



Business Plan Tutorials

These five-business planning how-to documents will help you get your business plan started.

How to Write a Simple Business Plan

An easy 8-step business plan tutorial that helps you create a simple yet focused business plan as a starting point for a more traditional business plan.

SBA's Video Business Planning Tutorial - This series of video tutorials includes nine videos that are about 2-10 minutes each. The videos are made to help you understand and design your business plan.

You can pick and choose where to start or run through them in the original order.

[How to Write a Simple Business Plan](#)

Entrepreneur's Elements of a Business Plan

An in-depth review of the seven essential sections of a business plan. It also tells you what to be included, what you shouldn't have, how to work the financial plan, and additional resources you can use for help.

[Entrepreneur's Elements of a Business Plan](#)

Comprehensive Business Plan Outline

An outline that walks you through each section of a basic business plan, including an overview of what should be included, examples and tips for writing each section of your business plan effectively.

[Comprehensive Business Plan Outline](#)

Shopify's Ultimate Guide to Business Plans

A comprehensive 9-chapter business plan guide covers every critical aspect of writing a business plan.

[Shopify's Ultimate Guide to Business Plans](#)

Business Plan Templates

If you prefer a more accessible format to start your business plan, one of these templates may be what you need.

SCORE Business Planning Templates

Several business planning templates are for new and established businesses where you can fill in your business info.

[SCORE Business Planning Templates](#)

BPlans' Business Plan Template

A downloadable template that gives you a clear idea of a traditional business plan.

[BPlans' Business Plan Template](#)

The \$100 Startup One-Page Business Plan

Easy to download and quickly fill in your business plan data.

[The \\$100 Startup One-Page Business Plan](#)

EXERCISE 2



M 9_E 2: Create your first business plan with the Business Model Canvas

Open a writing programme or take a sheet of paper. On the top, write the number of the module and the number of this exercise.

Download the following Business Model Canvas template and complete all sections of this table:

businessmodelsinc.com

Also, use the explanations from the Business Model Canvas as a guide.

You can also use the template we provided at this module's very end.

Write the **Business Model Canvas** together with a friend.

When you have completed the exercise, name your digital document after the number of this exercise and save it in the folder to Module 9! If you did the exercise on paper, take readable photos and keep them.



Executive Summary of your planned Green Business

Now that you have completed your first Business Plan, let's move on to the Executive Summary.



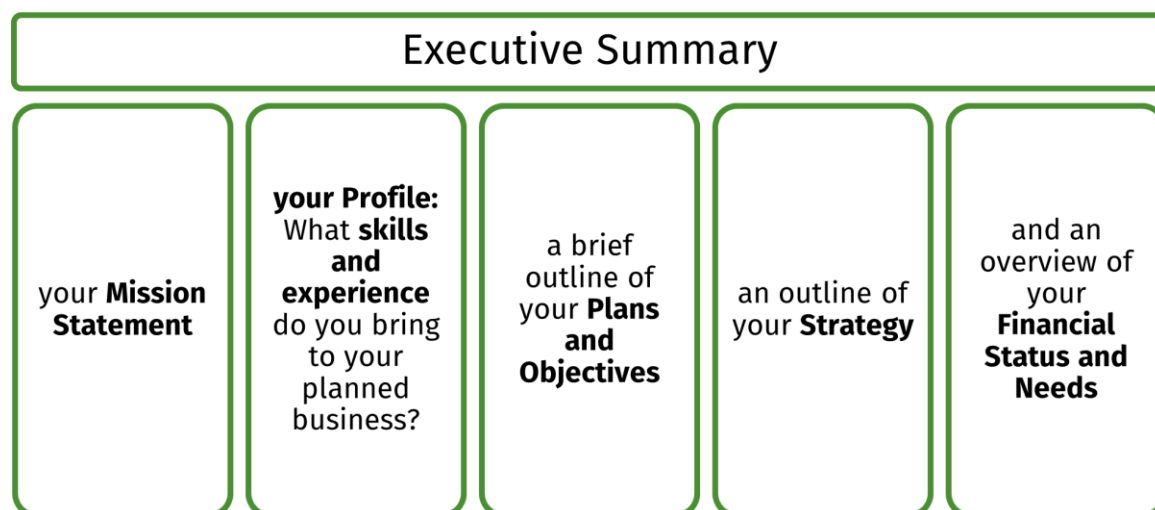
You already read about the Executive Summary in this Module when we explained the **Key Elements of a Business Plan**.

There we said:

“An executive summary provides a clear image of your business strategy and goals from the early stages. The summary is beneficial for others to understand your business easily and for you to reflect on how you are turning your business idea into reality.”

Now let's go into more detail:

The executive summary should be only one or two pages long. It includes the following headings:



You have already filled out your mission statement. That's good!

And you have filled in the Business Model Canvas. This is a great help when you formulate the Executive Summary because, with the Business Model Canvas, you already have a good overview of your entire business idea.



Therefore, look at the completed Business Model Canvas template and note the following:

To formulate the sentences for the three remaining headings, take a look at the notations you made in the following sections of your Business Model Canvas:

Headings Executive Summary	Areas in the Business Model Canvas
Plans and Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Value Propositions• Key Activities• Key Resources• Value Propositions
Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Customer Relationships• Channels• Customer Segments
Financial Status and Need	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cost Structure• Environmental Costs• Societal Costs• Revenue Streams• Societal Benefits• Environmental Benefits

Before you start writing the Executive Summary, please consider the following points:

- The Executive Summary consists of the most important points of your business plan in a concise and comprehensible way (2 pages maximum).
- In addition to your idea and your founder profile, the critical data from your financial plan are critical.
- Investors use the executive summary to decide whether they will continue to deal with you and your idea or whether your business plan will end up in the discard pile.

- Write short, clear sentences and avoid spelling, grammar and layout mistakes.
- Get feedback from family and friends and take inspiration from examples of other business plans when writing your executive summary.

This may also help you! Watch this video on how to write an Executive Summary:



[Youtube Video](#)

EXERCISE 3



M 9_E 3: Write an Executive Summary

Open a writing programme or take a sheet of paper. On the top, write the number of the module and the number of this exercise.

Write your first Executive Summary on a maximum of two pages, including the following headings:

Mission Statement, your Profile, Plans and Objectives, Strategy, Financial Status and Needs

When you have completed the exercise, name your digital document after the number of this exercise and save it in the folder to Module 9! If you did the exercise on paper, take readable photos and keep them.



Time Management Techniques

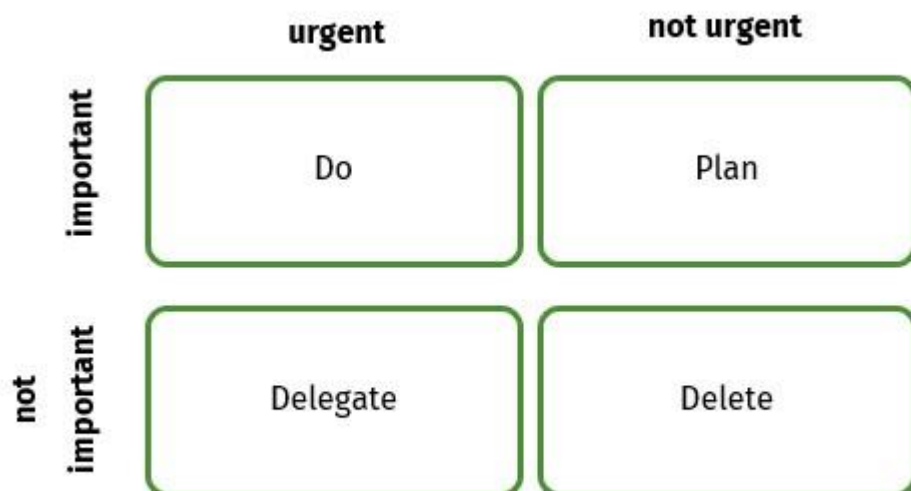
Especially as a self-employed person, it is important to be able to manage your time well. In the following, we present two methods that can be helpful in this regard.

Eisenhower Matrix

The story of this technique goes back to the former president of the US in 1953, Dwight Eisenhower. He served as an Allied Forces Commander in the U.S. Army during World War II. He faced many situations with difficult decisions every day that led him to invent what is now called the Eisenhower matrix, or the urgent-important matrix.

How it works:

Organise your task list into four separate squares, sorting them by important vs unimportant and urgent vs not urgent, as shown in the graphic below. Urgent tasks are those which need to be done immediately. Important tasks are those that contribute to your long-term goals. Ideally, you should only work on tasks in the top two squares—the other tasks you should postpone or delete.



Time Blocking Method

This method is mainly associated with Elon Musk. He manages his time so efficiently that he can work over 80 hours weekly and still find time for himself. How does he do it? Time blocking.

How it works:

From the moment you wake up, assign each time block in your day to a task. These tasks can be anything from personal private time, such as breaks and lunch, to having meetings and executing specific tasks. The best way to do that is to use a google calendar where you can very easily add blockers with start and end times, descriptions of the blocker and the task, and so on.

A very important step here is to estimate how much time each task will take so you can organise your day in a good way.

Add buffer times between each time block to allow for daily adjustments.

This method is used by most people in the business and the nonprofit sector too.



Figure 4: Calendar Management

EXERCISE 4



M 9_E 4: Write an Executive Summary

Open a writing programme or take a sheet of paper. On the top, write the number of the module and the number of this exercise.

Got to your Google Calendar or any calendar you have and plan your next days using the Time Blocking Method

When you have completed the exercise, name your digital document after the number of this exercise and save it in the folder to Module 9!

If you did the exercise on paper, take readable photos and keep them.



Congratulations!

You finished Module 9. You are now able to take a quiz on the platform to test your knowledge and apply for a certificate with ECQA.



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Attachment: **Business Plan Canvas**

Key Partners	Key Activities	Value Propositions	Customer Relationships	Customer Segments
	Key Resources		Channels	
Cost Structure			Revenue Streams	
Environmental Costs	Societal Costs	Societal Benefits	Environmental Benefits	