

Steve Marr's

GUIDE TO LAUNCHING YOUR BUSINESS

GOD'S WAY



www.BusinessProverbs.org

Steve Marr's

GUIDE TO
LAUNCHING
YOUR BUSINESS

GOD'S WAY

www.BusinessProverbs.org

© 2006 Steve Marr's Business Proverbs. All Rights Reserved

TODAY'S BUSINESS... ANCIENT WISDOM

In today's business world of uncertainty, high risk, and daily pressure, God's Word still speaks. The message is clear, "Do not forsake wisdom, and she (wisdom) will protect you; love her, and she will watch over you." (Proverbs 4:6 NIV). Savvy business leaders understand this and come to rely on wise advice and calm insight. They look to a sage to offer wisdom gleaned from years of experience.

You can get that sage advice and sound wisdom from Steve Marr.

Steve pairs 26 years of business experience with the ancient wisdom of the Bible to help you avoid the mistakes and headaches of growing a business. Working one-on-one, Steve uses spiritual and practical insight to pinpoint issues and recommend actions that bring lasting personal and business success.

Ask Steve. He can help you find peace of mind, hope and satisfaction in doing business God's way.



Get started today with a free 30-minute consultation with Steve.

For more information, visit BusinessProverbs.org
or call (520) 529-8470 to find out more.

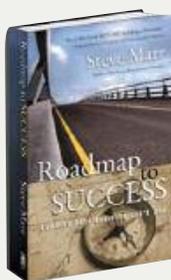
INTRODUCTION

Crafting a working business plan will help you stay focused, make the right decisions and ultimately succeed. Plan for success, or stumble into failure. This guide will help you identify:

1. YOUR VISION
2. YOUR FINANCIAL PLAN
3. ACTION STEPS TO MAKE THE PLAN A REALITY

Many people are tempted to skip a business plan. In their excitement they prefer to just jump in and begin without doing the proper research and taking the time to determine if their dream is an actual possibility. Jesus said, *“For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, to see if he has enough to complete it?”* (Luke 14:28 NASB) Solomon added, *“Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed”* (Proverbs 16:3 NIV).

Think of your plan as a roadmap designed to get you from where you are now to the business you imagine for the future. Aren't maps supposed to save you time and energy? Aren't maps designed to make things easier? Absolutely! Effective planning will save you time, energy and money.



This business plan guide is adapted from Steve Marr's book *Road Map to Success*. Drawing on his experience as CEO of the fourth largest import- export firm in the U.S. and grounding that firsthand experience in the wisdom of the Bible, Marr offers a plan for starting and running your business God's way. *Road Map to Success* applies biblical principles to starting a business and helps you achieve your business dreams.

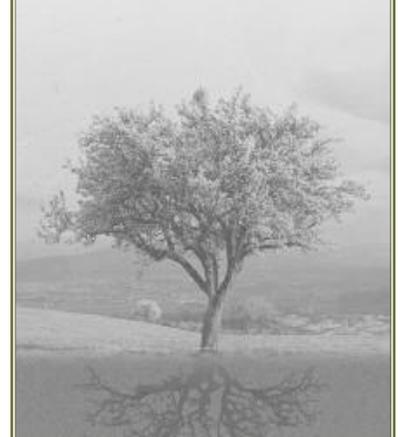
Visit BusinessProverbs.org or call (520) 529-8470 to purchase a copy.

PROVERB

If God spends time planning, who are you to think you can succeed without a plan? Planning is taking the time to figure out who will do what, by when, and determine the expected outcome.

“For I know the plans that I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope”

- (Jeremiah 29:11 NASB)



I. CREATING YOUR BUSINESS VISION

The first step for creating your business plan is to explain—in very detailed terms—what your business will look like. This is your business vision. There's no room for vague overviews or skipping particulars. Take time to explain your business succinctly and then add step-by-step detail how you're going to make it happen.

Determining your mission and vision is important in accomplishing three goals:

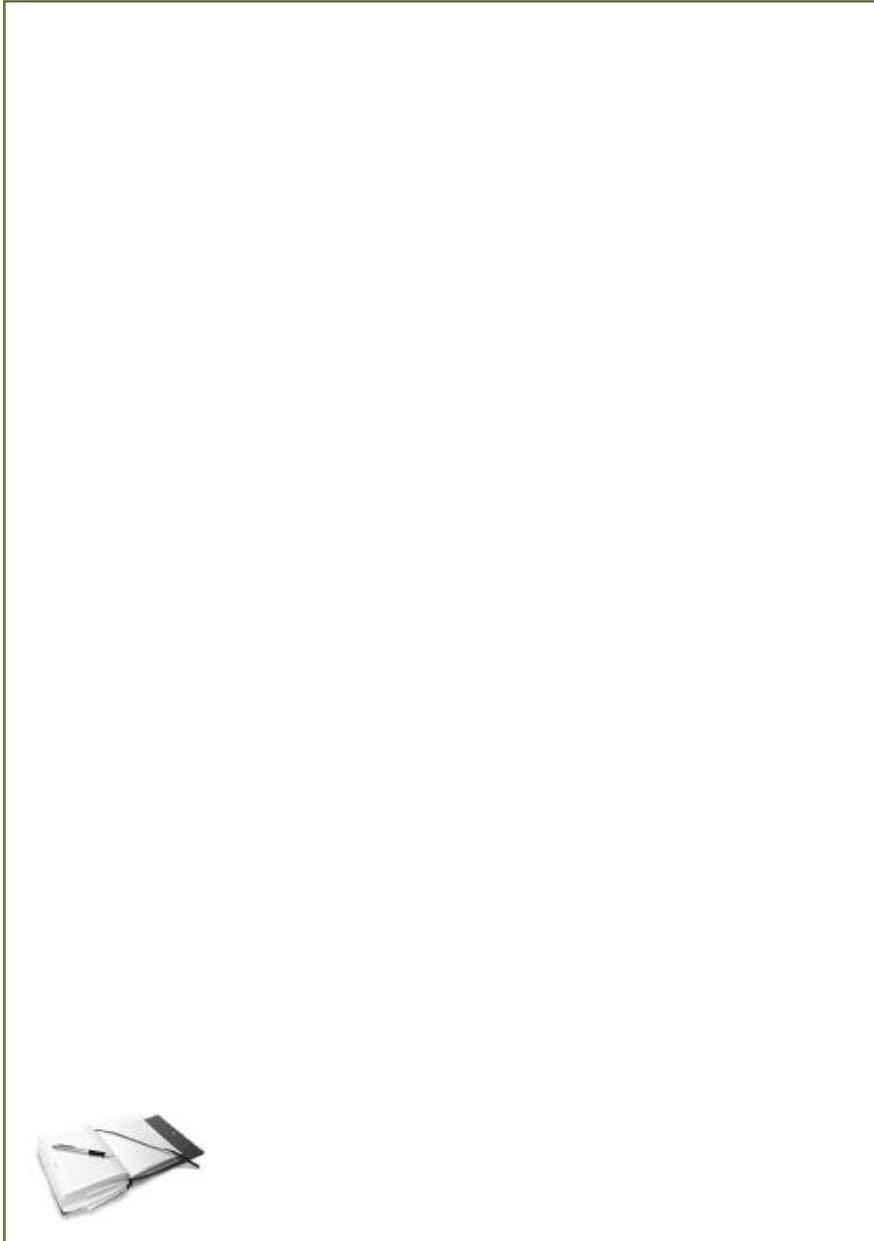
- **TO STAY ON TRACK!** You are unlikely to get pushed and pulled off your core business plan when you know where you are going. The energy you spend is effectively channeled.
 - **TO COMMUNICATE CLEARLY!** You can clearly communicate to your staff what is expected and how you expect them to perform.
 - **TO SELL THE VISION!** You can clearly communicate to customers what you do well. If done effectively, they will choose to spend their money with you.
-

In this section you will:

1. Describe what your business will do
2. Write your mission statement
3. Describe the way you will distribute your products or services
4. Identify your target market and market opportunity
5. Identify the size and potential of your target market
6. Differentiate yourself from your competition

1. DESCRIBE WHAT YOUR BUSINESS WILL DO

Use the space below to make a list of the products or services you will offer and how. A pizza place may offer the following: varieties of pizza, pasta side dishes, delivery service and soft drinks. Every product or service will need to be included in your business plan. Be comprehensive.



How much detail do I need?

Ask Steve at BusinessProverbs.org >>

PROVERB

Each product or service should directly tie to your mission. If you operate a day-care center, selling vitamins, even to parents of kids, would be off target. You can't be everything to everyone. You'll lose focus and your business will ultimately suffer

“Look straight ahead, and fix your eyes on what lies before you”

- (Proverbs 4:25 NLT).



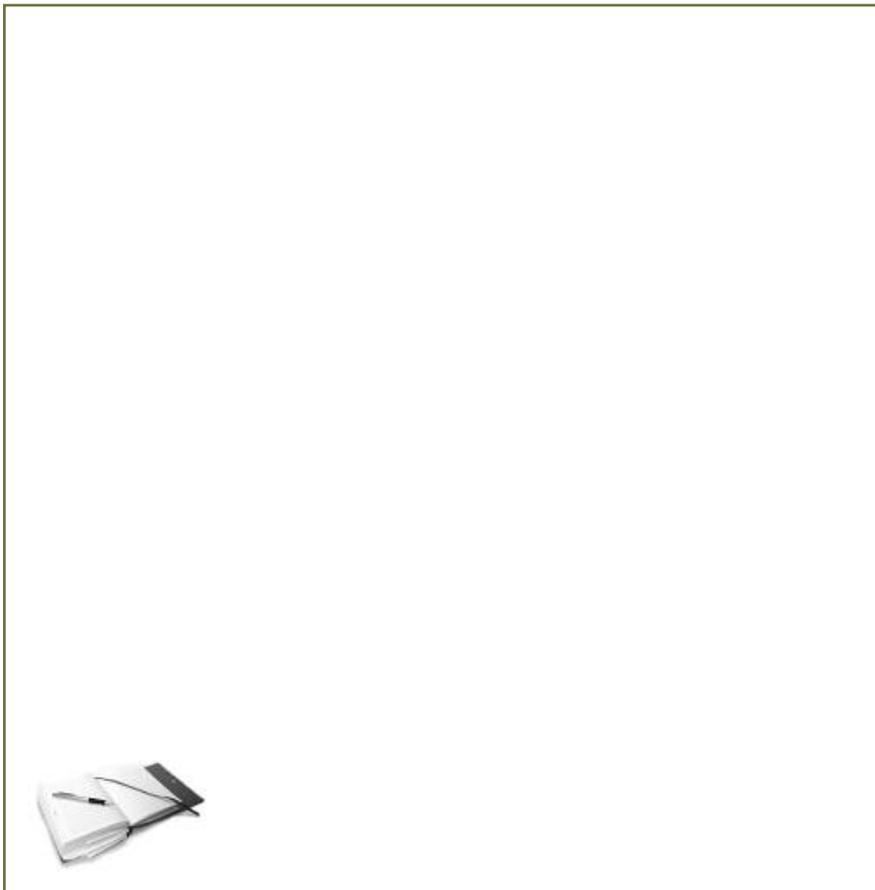
2. WRITE YOUR MISSION STATEMENT

Your mission statement should explain in one or two sentences your purpose, what niche you will fill in the market, and what you will do as well or better than your competition. Your vision is what you do; your mission statement is how you will accomplish that vision.

Your mission statement will guide you throughout the life of your business by keeping you focused and preventing you from going in too many directions, which is one of the common causes of failure. You need to be able to communicate your mission clearly to customers to gain future business.

Your mission statement should include:

- What your organization does.
- Why it exists.
- Your competitive advantage.
- Who will be your customers.
- What your business does well and why others should do business with you.

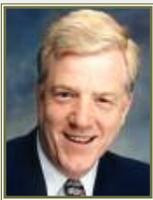


Using the information in your mission statement, write a one or two sentence statement directed to a customer stating why they should use your product or service.



Stuck on what to write?

Ask Steve at BusinessProverbs.org >>



STEVE MARR ONE-ON-ONE CONSULTING

Hammering out your business plan isn't always as easy as filling in the blanks. You have to ask yourself hard questions and sometimes you just don't know the answer. You need an outside perspective to help narrow your focus and hone in on your specific vision. Steve Marr's one-on-one consulting can help you answer those questions and narrow your focus.

Start today with a free 30-minute consultation.

Visit BusinessProverbs.org or call (520) 529-8470 to find out more.

PROVERB

Scripture states, *'Present your case, the Lord says. Bring forward your strong arguments'* (Isaiah 41:21 NASB). You must connect with customers quickly or opportunities are lost. You've got three sentences—maybe 30 seconds—to connect with perspective customers and explain what you do and why they should do business with you. Get to the key point and stay there.

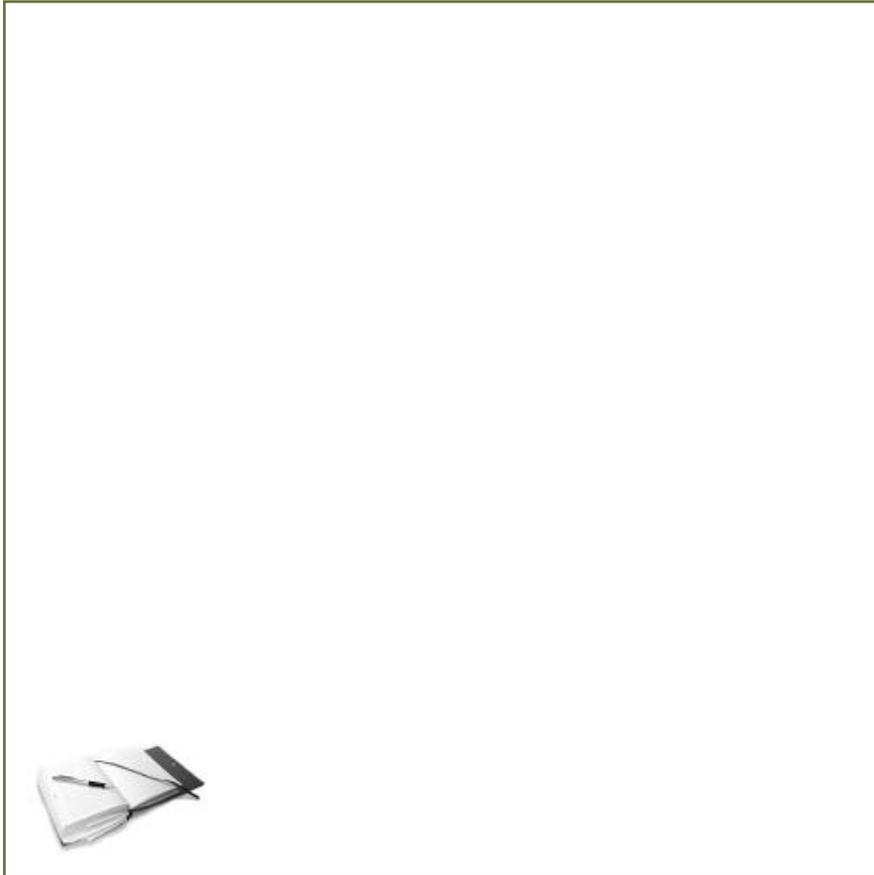
"Where there is no vision, the people perish..."
- (Proverbs 29:18 KJV).



3. DESCRIBE THE WAY YOU WILL DISTRIBUTE YOUR PRODUCTS OR SERVICES

Outline how you will deliver services or products. For example, a pet grooming business may require 60 clients each week. Appointments will be set Monday through Saturday. The model needs to identify the capacity needed for profitability: i.e. a bed and breakfast may need a 65% occupancy rate, or the pet grooming business 45 weekly appointments. Consider using different hours of operation. A pet grooming business may be more successful offering hours of operation of 12:00 noon through 9:00 p.m. M-F, and all day Saturday. The later hours will accommodate customers that cannot make daytime hours due to work commitments.

The more detail you can write out, the easier you can focus your efforts.



What's my best choice for a business model?
Ask Steve at BusinessProverbs.org >>

PROVERB

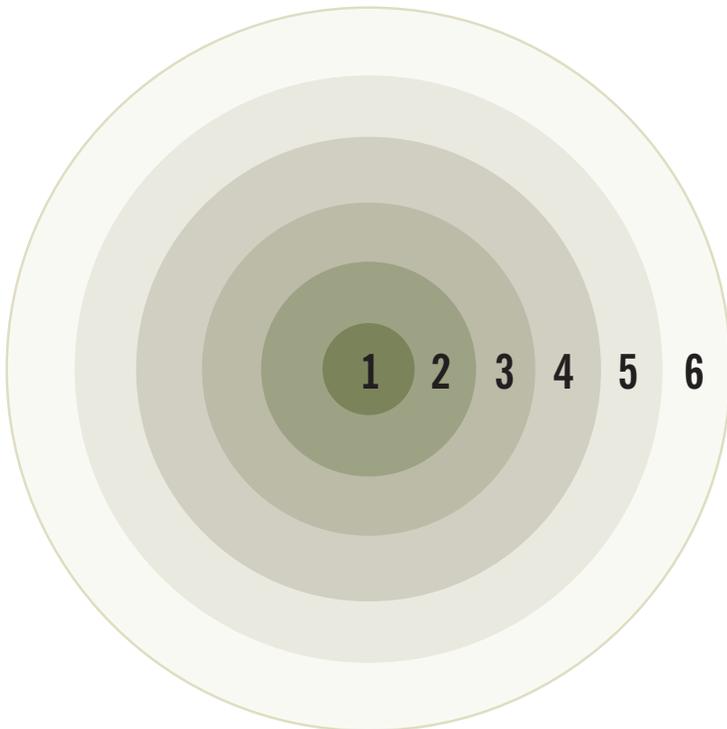
A business model is a picture of how you will deliver to customers. You need to establish a pattern of service and document that pattern. Then you can evaluate what works well and what does not work, making adjustments as you go. But if you don't first establish an effective pattern then you'll have no plumb line to make changes. We then tend to deliver inconsistent service and quality.

"See that you make them after the pattern for them, which was shown to you on the mountain"
- (Exodus 25:40 NASB).



4. PROFILE YOUR TARGET MARKET TO IDENTIFY YOUR MARKET OPPORTUNITY

Profile and identify your expected customers. You won't be able to sell everything to everyone. Based on your product or service, and what you have determined you will do best based on your mission, who are the most likely customers?



1. **EAGER:** Will buy when offered
2. **INTERESTED:** Will buy, but will shop for best
3. **ATTRACTED:** Needs persuasion
4. **NEUTRAL:** Requires clear presentation and effort
5. **NEGATIVE:** May buy on impulse
6. Not a customer for my product

Sales and advertising efforts must be aimed at the center of the target. Take time to describe in as much detail as possible the kind of person in each ring of the target.

- How many people live in your service area?
- How many of these people are possible customers for your product?
- How many have the finances to be customers?
- How many people “need” my product? (i.e., a babysitting business needs to know the number of families with children requiring sitting)
- How many possible customers already buy your product?
- How will you be able to take business from competitors?
- How far will people travel to buy your product?
- What price will customers pay?
- What service and quality level will be needed?
- Write out the profile of the customer that just can’t wait to buy.
- Do the perspective customers have the education needed for your product?
- Are customers at the appropriate stage of life, i.e., retired, have young children, or are single to use your product?
- Where do your prospects live, shop and play?



Need to see a few examples?
Ask Steve at BusinessProverbs.org >>

PROVERB

Any business person will have limited time and money to attract customers. By identifying the best customers, you can focus your efforts toward the best prospects. While you may want to sell to everybody, logic dictates some folks are better customers than others. Using your limited time and money targeting the best prospects generates the greatest return.

“...we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind...”

- (Ephesians 4:14 NASB).



5. IDENTIFY THE SIZE AND POTENTIAL OF THE TARGET MARKET

Identify what part of the market you believe you can penetrate, the actions necessary to obtain those customers, and the basis from which you will compete: price, location or service. For example, a dry cleaner may locate in a community of 40,000, containing 16,000 households, 30% of whom are likely to use a cleaner, or 4,800 households. Can you offer lower prices, faster service or a more convenient location?

-
- How many people live in your service area?
 - How many people use your product in your service area?
 - What is the total market size for your product or service?
 - Who is already offering a similar concept?
 - How many customers can you obtain based on your competitive advantage?
 - How often will they buy?
 - What would be your income based on projected customers and the buying frequency?



Need ideas?
Ask Steve BusinessProverbs.org >>

PROVERB

When looking at the potential market, be realistic. Most customers of a pizza store will be within 2 miles, so thinking folks will drive further is unrealistic. You will need to consider what actions, personal visits or advertising will generate the projected customer sales.

“Set up for yourself roadmarks,
place for yourself guideposts;
direct your mind to the highway”
- (Jeremiah 31:21 NASB)

6. DIFFERENTIATE YOURSELF FROM YOUR COMPETITION

While we do not need to be afraid of competition, we need to understand competition. When facing Goliath, David knew enough about Goliath, the competition, to avoid a direct assault. So, he carefully planned his attack using a sling and stone. List your competitors and rate their key advantages over you, and the advantage you will bring to the marketplace.

COMPETITOR:
KEY ADVANTAGES:

COMPETITOR:
KEY ADVANTAGES:

COMPETITOR:
KEY ADVANTAGES:

YOUR ADVANTAGE:



How can differentiation help me achieve my business objectives?
Ask Steve at BusinessProverbs.org >>

PROVERB

Everyone has competition. Your task is to understand competitors and determine where you can offer a better deal, enhanced service or a new product. Competing with Wal-Mart based on price is a losing battle. David defeated the stronger Goliath by understanding his own advantage and using that advantage. Better to know when to back off and when to charge ahead.

David said, "Let no man's heart fail on account of him. Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine"
- (Samuel 17:32 NASB).



II. FINANCIAL PLAN

The financial plan is where the business dream must face reality. By putting numbers to those dreams you begin to see whether your business can actually work. The problem is that too many business leaders dream about the numbers, too, ending up with an unrealistic financial plan and a recipe for failure.

In this section you'll figure out:

1. The cost of opening your doors
 2. Your expected income and expenses
 3. How much start-up capital is needed and where to get it
-



STEVE MARR SEMINARS & SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Get it straight from the source and book Steve Marr for a seminar or speaking engagement for your organization. He shares practical insights with business and ministry leaders on a range of topics including starting a business, hiring effectively, integrity in the office and more.

Visit BusinessProverbs.org or call (520) 529-8470 to find out more.

1. THE COST OF OPENING YOUR DOORS

Your success depends on being honest with how much money your business will spend, earn and lose. Many businesses take years to be profitable; it's a reality you must plan for it. So, step out of your dreams into cold, hard reality as you put down realistic numbers.

Fill in a figure for each item needed to start your operation. Keep in mind that some costs are one-time costs while others are reoccurring costs.

• Building purchase cost	
• Improvements	
• Equipment	
• Showcases and display equipment	
• Office equipment	
• Office supplies	
• Stationary	
• Business forms	
• Rent and deposits	
• Required utility deposits	
• Signs	
• Vehicles	
• Tools	
• Telephones	
• Fax, copy machine	
• Computers, printers	
• Insurance (facility, liability, vehicle)	
• Professional fees (accountant, attorney)	
• Required licenses and permits	
• Professional association dues	
• Publication subscriptions	
• Starting inventory	
• Advertising	
• Accounts receivable necessary to carry the business	
• Cash on hand needed to operate the business	
• Other categories	
• Contingencies	



How can I predict start-up costs?
Ask Steve at BusinessProverbs.org >>

PROVERB

You need to carefully count the cost of starting a business. It's easy to become over-enthusied, over-optimistic and underestimate the costs of starting. When you fall into this trap, you may need to later cut back on very needed spending—like advertising—because you ran out of start-up money. Many business owners have spent all their start-up money and then had nothing left for advertising.

“For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost, to see if he has enough to complete it?”

- Luke 14:28 NASB



2. YOUR EXPECTED INCOME AND EXPENSES

Preparing a planned income statement serves several important purposes. First, you have a tool to help determine how much operating cash you require before opening. Most businesses take one to three years of operation before they start providing a return. Over that period of time, you need to plan how much operating cash you will require.

The list below will give you a way to estimate your profit or loss. You should prepare estimates for each month which can be consolidated into quarterly and annual forecasts. Some expenses will occur every month at a set amount (i.e. rent), while others will be variable (i.e. heating).

• Sales from what sources:	
• Cost of goods sold:	
• Employee items:	
• Staff wages:	
• Owner's wages:	
• State employment taxes:	
• Social security taxes:	
• Medical insurance:	
• Other insurance(s):	
• Facility expenses:	
• Rent:	
• Mortgage payments:	
• Utility expenses:	
• Cleaning:	
• Maintenance:	
• Trash hauling:	
• Office expenses, supplies:	
• Loan payments due:	
• Repair and maintenance expense:	
• Accounting fees:	
• Payroll services:	
• Banking fees:	
• Credit and debit card discount expense:	
• Bank monthly fees:	

• Sales tax due:	
• Bad debt expenses:	
• Delivery expenses:	
• Equipment lease expenses:	
• Other:	
• Contingencies:	

Most new business owners will overestimate sales at the beginning of a venture. To make a reasonable estimate you need to follow a carefully researched process. Start with your market analysis and what you expect to be able to develop as sales. Next, review what can reasonably be expected to come from your initial advertising. When making these estimates, ask other business owners (even if they are from a different area) how their businesses developed at the beginning. Factor the experience of others into your sales estimate.

Example: 4,000 people live in your town. 2,000 go out to dinner once a month, 500 twice a month, 500 three times a month, 500 four times a month, and 500 20 times a month. 31,500 meals are purchased, 25% of them fit into your price of \$10.00 to \$15.00 per meal. Considering an average of \$12.50 per meal, the total market is \$98,400 per month. If you believe you can win 10% of the market, your projected sales would be \$9,840.00 per month.



How can I figure out how much will come in and go out?
Ask Steve at BusinessProverbs.org >>

PROVERB

Understanding and planning for realistic income is critical. 90% of business owners overestimate sales and underestimate expenses when starting out. The issue is tough, because you don't have experience to provide guidance, but good solid homework and honest, conservative and objective income planning will keep you out of the first valley.

"...the people are bringing much more than enough for the construction work which the Lord commanded us to perform"
- (Exodus 36:5 NASB).



3. START-UP CAPITAL

HOW MUCH DO I NEED TO GET STARTED?

The amount of cash needed will differ for each enterprise. A home based business started part time may only require a few hundred dollars, while large enterprises need millions. By effectively calculating your start up costs, and likely operating losses early on, you can decide on the amount of cash you need.

Once you know how much cash your business needs, you'll need to determine where that cash will come from. Often, business owners start with available cash and then build a plan around that cash. This can work, but only if the available cash is enough to succeed. Too many people cripple their business from the start with a lack of cash. They commit to an inexpensive but poor location or fail to invest in advertising and then fail because the business did not enough cash invested in it to develop.

Initial start up costs (from page 14):	
Expected operating losses year one:	
Expected operating losses year two:	
Expected operating losses year three:	
Total investment required (add the four lines):	

NOTE: Few businesses turn a profit the first year, and many require three years of operating before turning a profit.

WHERE WILL THE MONEY COME FROM?

Most businesses need some cash to start and grow.
Now it's time to figure out where that money will come from:

- Investors
- Loans
- Family/Friends
- Personal Savings

To calculate whether you have enough money to start a business God's way do the following:

1. List all possible sources of capital:

SAVINGS

Banking accounts:	
Investment accounts:	
Retirement accounts to be liquidated, less taxes:	
Personal assets to be sold (boat, cars, art, etc.):	

BORROWING

Home refinanced mortgage:	
Personal loans:	
Credit card advances:	
Bank loan:	
Small Business Administration loan:	
Loan from family members:	
Loan from friends:	

INVESTMENT BY OTHERS

Stock sale:	
Friends equity investment:	
Family member investment:	
Silent partner investment:	
Venture capital investment:	

2. Add up all the sources of money which you could spend without negative consequences (like, losing your house, losing your brother's house, renegeing on a loan, etc.):

3. Divide that amount by the amount you need to get started. This will give you a percentage:

If you are unable to start your business with 85% or more in risk capital (money you and your investors can afford to lose) then you should consider waiting to launch your business.

Walking into a car dealership with \$15,000 to buy a \$20,000 car won't work; you will need to come up with the extra \$5,000. Likewise, in business if you are likely to come up short, you need to understand that reality, plan for it so you can be ready to avoid failure. Not having enough risk capital is a good sign that God wants you to wait to launch your business.

WHERE WILL YOU SECURE YOUR START-UP CAPITAL?

So where is your start-up capital going to come from? Determine the source of your funding, figure out what the process is to secure that funding, and get started.

SOURCE:

PROCESS:

TIME INVOLVED:

You may need to use extra paper to list all your funding sources.



Should I spend my own money or borrow?
Ask Steve at BusinessProverbs.org >>

PROVERB

Borrowing should be done very carefully. Never allow family members to invest in a business if they can not afford to loose the investment. Furthermore, in the Bible the Lord never instructed anyone to go out and borrow money. The Lord always provided adequate funds. Today, operating without credit may be difficult, but careful planning can keep debt to a minimum.

“The wicked borrow and do not repay...”

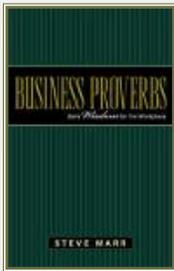
- (Psalm 37:21 NIV)



III. NEXT STEPS

The key to your plan is execution—putting your plans in motion. Put some legs to your plans by figuring out what the next steps are. It is good to start with a 30/60/90 day action plan. Here are the three key parts to work out in the plan:

1. Build your team
 2. Sales and marketing strategy
 3. Action plan
-



BUSINESS SPECIFIC DEVOTIONAL RESOURCE

Steve Marr's *Business Proverbs* is a devotional of 250 daily readings that applies biblical wisdom to business situations. Each one-page reading includes a poignant question, a passage from the Bible, a brief business application and a verse from that ancient book of wisdom, Proverbs.

Visit BusinessProverbs.org or call (520) 529-8470 to purchase a copy.

1. BUILD YOUR TEAM

Unless you start as a one-person band and will not hire staff, you will need a team to accomplish your mission. The complete cost, wages, taxes and benefits should be in your financial plan.

Before you hire anyone, write out a job description identifying the responsibilities for each position. Then determine the skills and competencies needed to succeed on the job. For example, a job requiring data entry will require solid keyboard skills.

Fill out each section below for every position you'll need to fill.

POSITION:

RESPONSIBILITIES:

REQUIRED SKILLS:

REQUIRED EXPERIENCE:

JOB DESCRIPTION:

PROVERB

Few new business owners will take the time to write out a job description; however, a well-written job description is the first step in hiring the right people and holding them accountable. Unless you take the time to write a job description, how can you begin to hire wisely?

“An employer who hires a fool or a bystander is like an archer who shoots recklessly”
- (Proverbs 26:10 NLT).



What kind of organizational structure do I need?

Go to BusinessProverbs.org >>

2. SALES AND MARKETING STRATEGY

You need to find, connect and sell to customers to start cash flowing into your business. Given that you are clear on your mission, products, target market and competitive advantage, craft the steps that will bring in customers. Some steps will cost money, like printing and advertising, so insure these costs are included in your ongoing or start-up cost plan. With each step determine what result you expect, by when, so you can redirect funds that fail to produce.

ACTION	COST	EXPECTED RESULT	TIME PERIOD

Work at measuring results for each activity; ask customers how they learned about you. If you advertise in the newspapers, use a coupon. Studies show 50% of advertising works and 50% fails, so understand what is effective and what is not.



What sales strategy do I need for my business?
Ask Steve at BusinessProverbs.org >>

PROVERB

Ralph Waldo Emerson said, 'Build a better mousetrap and the world will beat a path to your door.' This is only true if folks know you have built a better mouse trap. Sales and marketing is connecting with customers, demonstrating why your mouse trap is better and then closing those sales.

"Present your case, bring forward your strong arguments..."
- (Isaiah 41:21)



3. ACTION PLAN

An action plan is a step-by-step guide of who will do what, by when. List all of the activities that must happen before and after you open. Establish dates when each item will start and must be finished. Determine what steps must be done first. For example: writing a mission statement.

ACTION STEP:

START:

FINISH:

COST:

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE:

DUE DATE:

COMPLETED DATE:

ACTION STEP:

START:

FINISH:

COST:

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE:

DUE DATE:

COMPLETED DATE:



Need a sample action plan?

Ask Steve at BusinessProverbs.org >>

PROVERB

You will easily take on more work than can be accomplished, overestimating what you can do and underestimating the time needed. Be willing to adjust your schedule and change your plan as you determine how fast you can proceed.

“He who watches the wind will not sow and he who looks at the clouds will not reap”

- (Ecclesiastes 11:4 NASB).



CONCLUSION

“The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but the victory rests with the Lord” (Proverbs. 21:31 NIV). A war horse requires years of training to enter battle and to learn the maneuvers needed to fight.

However, once we have done our part diligently, we must then rely on the Lord’s strength.

If you've followed this plan for putting together your business plan then you're on the right track. Now you just need to stick with it. A plan doesn't help if you deviate from it.



HOW CAN I KNOW MY PLAN WILL WORK?

If your plan isn't coming together easily or you're having trouble sticking with it, get help. Steve Marr offers one-on-one consulting that can help you apply the proverbs and stick to your plan.

Visit BusinessProverbs.org or call (520) 529-8470.

www.BusinessProverbs.org

E-mail: stevemarr@BusinessProverbs.org

3434 Anthem Way, Suite 118, PMB 184, Anthem, AZ 85086-0449

Phone: 1-(520)-529-8470