

Social Enterprise Business Plan Contest

HELP Session

Executive Summary and Presentation tips

OR

how to compress 6 months of hard work into

2 pages and a 15 minute story

SE Business Plan Elements: Recap

- The problem and the opportunity
- Mission
- Theory of change
- Your solution (strategy & business model)
- The team
- Growth strategy
- Measuring results
- Competition
- Risks
- Financial Plan

Some thoughts on the Executive Summary

- They will read it first, but you should write it last.
- ES should motivate the reader to take some action – for your purposes, to read the rest of your plan.
- ES should communicate the essence and excitement of your plan:
 - Not an annotated table of contents
 - Not an abstract
 - Is your b-plan in miniature
- One page is great, two pages is fine, three pages is too long.
- Reader should come away thinking, “So that’s what these folks are up to!”

Source for this slide: David Gumpert, *How to Create a Really Successful Business Plan*, October 2000

Created by Stacey Childress in March 2002, Harvard Business School. Revised November 2006

Tips for Getting Started on an ES

Attempt to crystallize the most important idea of each section of your plan into 2 or 3 punchy sentences (at most), including the financials.

- Everything in the ES should be backed up by more explanation and evidence in the rest of the plan.
- First sentence or two should describe your idea clearly and simply. This is also a useful way to begin your 30 second pitch (although not the only way).
- Make sure you tell the reader how much money you need to get started.
- Last sentence or two should answer the question, “Why is this a compelling idea?” (or in more mundane terms, why should I give these people money?)
- Enlist a few people who know little about your plan to read the ES and then explain what you’re doing to you. Revise until they “get it”.

Specific tips for HBS Business Plan Contest

CONTENT

- Assume the judges know nothing about your plan prior to your presentation.
- **REMEMBER:** To get into their wallets, you must first get into their hearts and minds. Grab their attention with a story, a demo or an interactive q&a that makes your plan real.
- If questions are raised it's because info was not clear – instead of repeating material, understand what is being asked, and respond directly to the question.

Presentation tactics

6 general tactics for telling the story persuasively*...

- Keep it simple – “clarity is the soul of persuasion”
- Share vivid stories – “it’s easier to argue about numbers than about symbols, which provides at least one reason to use symbols either alone or in conjunction with analyses”
- Know your audience – “different people have different agendas”. Refine your pitch for the audience of the moment.
- Repeat yourself – say the most important thing more than once
- Choose your words carefully – words can be value-laden
- Make your message real – your passion is powerful

*paraphrased from Professor Nitin Nohria, “Principles of Effective Persuasion,”
HBS Case No. 9-497-059

Specific tips for HBS Business Plan Contest

PROCESS

- You own the room. Introduce your team briefly by name to the judges and ask who they are and what organization they represent – this does count against your 15 minutes.
- Who presents? Okay to have one person do it, okay to switch off among team members, but it should seem natural.
- DON'T turn off the lights. If you are using power-point make sure the color scheme works with the lights on.

HBS Business Plan Contest Common Mistakes

- Team not clear and concise on business model
- Team members don't say who they are and why they are pursuing this idea
- Team doesn't engage judges (reads from notes or stands by computer)
- Team runs out of time, without details on substance
- Team is defensive during Q+A/feedback

Final thoughts

Act of imagination

-Bill Sahlman

Act of aspiration

Act of inspiration