

**United States Network of Virtual Enterprises & Merrill Lynch
National Business Plan Competition**

Produced by

Working in Support of Education (W!SE), the U.S. Network of VE Center for National Activities

Business Plan Oral Presentation -- Judges' Rubric (2009)

8-12 minute presentation followed by 8 minutes of Q&A

THE COMPETITION RESERVES THE RIGHT TO DISQUALIFY A FIRM, AT ANY POINT DURING OR AFTER THE COMPETITION, IF THE PRESENTATION SIGNIFICANTLY REFLECTS A PRESENTATION BY THE FIRM IN A PREVIOUS YEAR.

1. Introduction Business Information 8%

Category	Poor/Satisfactory	Commendable	Exemplary
Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement of purpose • Mission Statement • Business Objectives • Company Description • Staffing of Key Personnel <i>(Rate on strength of info)</i>	0 1 -Weak status/progress report or request for funding - need, amount, time, purpose, (collateral - <i>optional</i>) -Goals not measurable, time-based, and/or realistic -Guiding principle/focus for firm is not realistic or achievable -Description of Company and organization chart need improvement	2 3 -Good and clear status report or explains request for funding - need, amount, time, purpose, (collateral - <i>optional</i>) -Goals stated, mostly measurable, and time-based -Mostly realistic & achievable guiding mission/principle & focus for firm -Good description of products and services, location, type of business, organization chart	4 5 -Outstanding, realistic report on the status/ progress or explains request for funding - need and anticipated use of funds being requested, amount, time, purpose, (collateral - <i>optional</i>) supported by the plan -Goals stated, realistic, specific, measurable, time-based -Succinct, realistic & achievable guiding mission/principle & focus for firm -Concise, outstanding, description of products and services, location, type of business, organization chart

Statement of Purpose for the Business Plan: A brief statement indicating why the business plan was written. The business plan can be a request for financing (a loan or investment funds) or a document to plan strategically or report on business projections for the period of time stated. If the plan is a request for financing see the elements required in column A below. If the plan is for any other reason, see column B below.

Mission Statement: Brief statement (2-4 sentences) that sets the tone, defines the path, and provides direction for the company. It is the guiding principle for the entire business. The statement should represent what the company stands for and their focus for the future.

- Narrow enough to give direction and guidance to everyone in the business
- Broad enough to allow the business to grow and realize its potential
- Must be realistic, achievable, and brief
- Captures the essence of the organization without being so vague that it could apply to other organizations as well.

Business Objective: Specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-based goals that the company wishes to achieve, which can be monitored and measured.

EXAMPLES: "Achieve annual sales of \$1.1 million in 2006;" "Maintain gross margin of 25 percent for 2006."

Company Description: Provides a clear and concise picture of what the company will do/does, what it will/does offer, where it will/does operate, when it will/does transact business, and how it will succeed or current status.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type of Business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Industry segment(s) ○ Company offerings • Legal Description <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Location of Company formation ○ Company structure (sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation) • Effective Date – Date the company originally opened for business. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company Location – Address, City, State, Zip • Organizational Chart • History of Company (existing businesses only) • Current Status (existing businesses only) • Future Goals |
|--|--|

Staffing of Key Personnel: Brief highlights of key personnel including the CEO and management team.

- Name
- Job title
- Personal qualifications – (Students' actual qualifications)

2. Market 16%

Category	Poor/Satisfactory	Commendable	Exemplary
Market <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of the real industry • Analysis of the virtual enterprise industry • Marketing plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Product ○ Price ○ Placement ○ Promotion ○ Target market ○ Market segmentation • Current Economic Conditions <p><i>(Rate on strength of info)</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">0 1 2 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Little and mostly irrelevant knowledge about the product market competition and industry considered in drawing conclusions -Unrealistic description of marketing plan -Description of products and services and need improvement - Little and mostly irrelevant knowledge about the product target market, competition and industry considered in drawing conclusions -Lacks creativity, persuasiveness, and evidence of marketing mix appropriate for the target audience -Demonstrates little understanding of the current domestic and global economic situations and how they affect the existing business environment 	<p style="text-align: center;">4 5 6 7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Basic and sometimes relevant knowledge about the product market competition and industry considered in drawing conclusions - Mostly realistic explanation of marketing plan -Somewhat creative, persuasive, and evidence of marketing mix appropriate for the target audience -Demonstrates some understanding of the current domestic and global economic situations and how they affect the existing business environment 	<p style="text-align: center;">8 9 10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Thorough and relevant knowledge about the market, competition and industry considered in drawing conclusions - Realistic and accurate explanation of the market - Very creative, persuasive, and evidence of marketing mix appropriate for the target audience -Demonstrates considerable understanding of the current domestic and global economic situations and how they affect the existing business environment

Market: Consists of the following elements:

Industry Analysis: Industry research used to benchmark projections against the performance of other firms in related industries, and markets of BOTH the real-world industry and the Virtual Enterprises industry. It should provide competitive national or local business trends, identifying strengths and threats to be addressed in long and short term planning. It should also be used to compare the company vision and experience against averages for similar operations.

Marketing Plan: Outlines the specific actions the firm intends to carry out to interest potential customers and clients in their product and/or service and to persuade them to buy the product and/or service offered.

Product: The physical product/service offered to the consumer. Also refers to any services or conveniences that are part of the offering.

Price: Takes into account profit margins and the probable pricing response of competitors. Includes not only the list price, but also includes discounts, financing, and other options such as leasing.

Placement: Associated with channels of distribution that serve as the means to getting the product/service to the target customers.

Promotion: Decisions related to communicating and selling to potential consumers.

Target Market: A defined segment of the market that is the strategic focus of a business. Normally the members of this segment possess common characteristics and a relatively high propensity to purchase a particular product or service. As such, the members of the target market segment represent the greatest potential for sales volume and frequency. Characteristics that often define the target market include:

- Geographic
- Demographic
- Psychographic

Market Segmentation: Used to help the company focus on different types of potential customers. Identified market may be divided into workable segments such as:

- Age
- Income
- Product type
- Geography
- Buying patterns
- Customer needs

Current Economic Conditions: The description of the overall performance of the domestic and global economy as determined by examining various indicators that measure factors like production, interest rates, employment, trade, exchange rates, sales, price levels, homebuilding, etc. The team needs to show an understanding of such conditions, their potential affects on the VE firm, and the challenges to doing business that they create.

3. SWOT Analysis 8%

Category	Poor/Satisfactory	Commendable	Exemplary
SWOT Analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Internal Audit:</i> Identification of strengths & weaknesses • <i>External Audit:</i> Identification of opportunities & threats • Discussion of business risks 	0 1 - Mostly irrelevant, unrealistic, and inaccurate description of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats - Strategy or plan to address risk is provided but is limited	2 3 - Somewhat relevant, realistic, and accurate identification of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats	4 5 -Very relevant, realistic, and accurate identification of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats

SWOT Analysis: Tool used for auditing an organization and its environment. It is the first stage of planning and helps marketers to focus on key issues. It provides a good framework for reviewing strategy, position and direction of a company or business proposition, or any idea. This analysis should be used to build on strengths, resolve weaknesses, exploit opportunities, and avoid threats.

Internal Analysis

- Strengths – A firm’s resources and capabilities that can be used as a basis for developing a competitive advantage.
- Weaknesses – List of areas where the company might struggle. The absence of certain strengths which may be viewed as weaknesses.

External Analysis

- Opportunities – Areas that may reveal certain new opportunities for profit and growth.
- Threats – Changes in the external environment which may present threats to the company.

Discussion of Business Risks

- Risks Identified – Possible areas where the business may be in jeopardy of reaching stated goals.
- Risks Addressed – Clear evidence of understanding of identified risks and feasible solution/strategy proposed.

4. Financial Data 21%

Category	Poor/Satisfactory	Commendable	Exemplary
Financial Data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balance sheet (actual dollar amounts as of Nov. 30th). 3- Year projected income statement 1-Year (12 month) projected cash flow statement Break-even analysis Explanation of financials Projections support the plan <p>Note: - Start-ups should include Loan Document and Budget Projections</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">0 1 2 3 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Few detail of start-up budget (if a new firm) prudent, logical, related to the plan -Superficial financial information supported by the balance sheet, 3 yr. projected income statement, 1 yr. (12 month) projected cash flow and current year break-even analysis -Weak explanation of financial position or status and not a definition of statements -<i>ALL</i> components covered but financial position <i>NOT</i> clearly explained -Report on financials unsatisfactory to fair 	<p style="text-align: center;">5 6 7 8 9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Good detail of start-up budget (if a new firm) prudent, logical, related to the plan -Clear financial information supported by the balance sheet, 3 yr. projected income statement, 1 yr. (12 month) projected cash flow and current year break-even analysis -Clear explanation of financial position and not a definition of statements -<i>ALL</i> components covered & clearly explained -Report on financials good with room for improvement 	<p style="text-align: center;">10 11 12 13</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Excellent detail of start-up budget (if a new firm) prudent, logical, related to the plan -Outstanding financial information supported by the balance sheet, 3 yr. projected income statement, 1 yr. (12 month) projected cash flow and current year break-even analysis -Excellent explanation of financial position or status and not only a definition -<i>ALL</i> components covered & demonstrated understanding of data -Realistic financial reports/projections

Financial Data: Financial information should include a **review and explanation** of each of the following:

Start Up Budget*

- Detail regarding specific assumptions and expenditures associated with start-up costs.
- * New firms should provide a Start-up Budget showing that attention has been given to the resources needed for the first year (start-up phase) of the business. After one year of operation, firms are no longer in a start-up phase and do not need a Start-up Budget. Instead, for these existing firms, the relevant financial document used to forecast income and expenses is an operating budget, or a projected income statement. Also, if any firm is requesting money, they must take interest rates into account and explain how it affects the finances.

Start-up and Existing Firms...

All firms are required to have the following financial statements included in their business plan:

Balance Sheet: Quantitative summary of the company's financial condition that includes assets, liabilities, and net worth (actual dollar amounts as of Nov. 30th)

- Include footnotes that explain or provide additional detail about the method utilized to determine numbers in the financial statements. (Example: how inventory is valued, first-in, first-out, last-in, last-out)

Income Statement: Accounting of sales, expenses, and net profit for a given period

- Three year projected summary (Pro-Forma)
 - Detail by month for first year
 - Quarterly for years two and three
 - Assumptions upon which projections are based
 - Include footnotes that explain or provide additional detail about the method utilized to determine numbers in the financial statements. (Example: what rate of growth the projected sales is based upon.)
- Income tax expense needs to be reported on the Income Statement:
 - C Corporations should have deductions for taxes on profits.

Cash Flow Statement (*Equals cash receipts minus cash payments*) **See attached example**

Measure of the company's cash position or change in cash position over a given period of time

- One year projected summary (Pro-Forma)
 - Detail by month over 12 months
 - Analysis should include the actual cash flow vs. the projected cash flow and include the assumptions upon which the projections are based

Break-even Analysis: Tool used to determine when a business will be able to cover all its expenses and begin to make a profit

- The breakeven point is reached when revenue equals all fixed and variable costs. (You could assume that all costs are fixed, except Cost of Goods Sold, which is a variable cost)

Explanation of financials: Written summary/explanation of the financial documents mentioned above

- Existing firms that do not require additional financing should include an explanation of how the business will have sustainable cash flow for operations.

Note: To start a new company, to bring a new product to the market or to start a new division:

If a start-up, the business plan of the new firm needs to include:

- New loan - Completed loan application with (a) the purpose of the loan (b) how the funds will be used and (c) length of time needed to repay the loan
- Start Up Budget - Detail regarding specific assumptions and expenditures associated with start-up costs

Or

- Amount of venture capital invested (cash and/or equity)

**Note: Major components of the Balance Sheet and Income Statement should be presented and discussed. Cash flow and Break-even analysis should be referenced. Students must properly identify the financial documents being presented in their oral presentation.*

5. Question & Answer Session 25%

Category	Poor/Satisfactory	Commendable	Exemplary
Q & A <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accuracy and Quality of Answers Team Coordination* <i>(*Team members may NOT confer)</i>	0 1 2 3 4 5 -Responses not relevant to questions, indicate weak/fair understanding of the business; show some ability to defend plan or position -Somewhat prepared and knowledgeable -One or few members participated in Q&A but were dominated by one team member	6 7 8 9 10 -Responses relevant to questions, display understanding of the business; good ability to defend plan or position -Prepared and knowledgeable with very good answers demonstrating understanding of business & plan -Responses not dominated by one team member	11 12 13 14 15 -Mastery answers that are relevant to questions, accurate, breadth of understanding the business; and reflect a high level of ability to explain/defend plan or position -Extremely well prepared and knowledgeable -3 or more team members assigned to respond

Q & A: Each team is required to answer questions from a panel of judges

Accuracy of Answer

- Relevant to the questions asked
- Truthful and accurate

Quality of Response

- Well-fielded responses showing understanding of the company beyond the material presented
- Appropriately handled questions they were unable to answer

Team Coordination

- **Team members may NOT confer when answering questions. The CEO will assign a member to answer each specific question.**
- Various team members are assigned to respond to questions
- Responses were **NOT DOMINATED** by any single team member
- Presenters did not interrupt each other

6. Quality of Presentation 21%

Category	Poor/Satisfactory	Commendable	Exemplary
Quality of Presentation	0 1 2 3 4	5 6 7 8 9	10 11 12 13
Slides/Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarity/Accuracy Design/Color Logical Organization Special Effects/Sound Graphics, charts, diagrams, etc. Delivery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logical/coherent Persuasive & Engaging Participation Articulate Eye Contact Voice Projection Body Language Professional Attire Professional demeanor 	-Accurate content, spelling, etc. -Satisfactory use of technology with most visual and/or sound effects used appropriately -Charts and graphs not used and/or do not support presentation -NOT all team members present. <i>(Note: the technology person does not have to present)</i> -Weak demonstration of logical flow, organization and cohesiveness of presentation; content & presentation -Weak to fair demonstration of members speaking clearly, making eye contact, explaining charts and graphs, and/or use of jargon or fillers; <u>MOST Team Members:</u> -Inappropriate attire -Lack poise -Unprofessional demeanor	-Accurate content, spelling, etc. -Professional use of technology. Slide text supports content of oral presentation; visual and sound effects enhance and support oral presentation -Good execution of visual and/or sound effects used but not all applied appropriately -Charts and graphs used and most support presentation -ALL team members present an essential part of plan <i>(Note: the technology person does not have to present)</i> -Proficient execution: Logical flow, well organized; cohesive presentation; content & presentation convincing and engaging; each team member presents; effective overall impression <u>MOST Team Members</u> -Speak clearly, make eye contact, poised, use appropriate body language/poise -Professionally dressed & groomed; show confidence and composure; courteous to audience and each other	-Accurate content, spelling, etc. -Highly skilled, creative and unique use of appropriate & effective visual and sound effects. Slide text supports content of oral presentation; visual and sound effects enhance and support oral presentation -Charts and graphs extremely effective -ALL team members present an essential part of plan <i>(Note: the technology person does not have to present)</i> -Mastery/superior presentation: Logical flow, well organized; cohesive presentation; content & presentation convincing and engaging; each team member presents; effective overall impression <u>ALL Team Members:</u> -Speak clearly, make eye contact, explain charts and graphs, avoid use of jargon or fillers; use appropriate body language/poise -Professionally dressed & groomed; show confidence and composure; courteous to audience and each other

Slides/Technology: Text, content, and visual/sound effects support and enhance presentation.

Clarity

- Clear images
- Able to read text from anyplace within the room
- Use of keywords

Accuracy

- Content, spelling, etc. is accurate

Design/Color

- Design and color enhance presentation

Logical Organization

- Logical flow to presentation (beginning, middle, end)
- Well-organized material
- Understandable content

Special Effects/Sound

- Appropriate and effective use of special effects and sound

Graphics, Charts & Graphs

- Appropriate and effective use of charts and graphs
- Appropriate and effective use of graphics

Delivery: The components listed are to be used as a guideline to assess oral presentation skills:

Logical/Coherent

- Memorization of presentation evident
- Avoided use of jargon, slang, and “fillers” (i.e.: “You know”, “Umm”, “Whatnot”, “Uh”)

Persuasive and Engaging

- Content and presentation of the content was convincing and held audience attention
- Effective overall impression

Participation

- Each team member presents an integral part of the business plan
- Team members were courteous to each other

Articulate

- Used correct grammar and pronunciation
- Used good intonation, tone, pitch, pace, etc.

Eye Contact

- Used good eye contact with audience

Voice Projection

- Spoke loudly and clearly
- Spoke with confidence

Body Language

- Used effective body language
 - Composed
 - No hands in pocket

Attire (and grooming) – Professional Business Attire or Appropriate Theme-Based Attire

- Males
Dress shirt, Tie, Slacks, Dress shoes and socks, Belt, Jacket (optional), Appropriate jewelry
- Females
Skirt (knee length or mid-calf), Pantsuit, Stockings, Close-toed shoes, Appropriate jewelry, Conservative make-up

Professional Demeanor

- Respectful of audience and other team members
- Well mannered
- Courteous greeting and closure

7. Creativity (Bonus)

Category	Poor/Satisfactory	Commendable	Exemplary
Creativity	0	1 - Imaginative format or presentation that captivates the audience, and shows “out of the box” thinking that is purposeful to achieving an understanding of the business or some aspect of the business and adds value to generating interest in the business or a particular aspect of the business.	2 -Extremely creative presentation format that captivates the audience, shows “out-of-the-box” thinking & remains professional

Presentation clearly demonstrates:

Imaginative format or presentation that captivates the audience, and shows “out of the box” thinking that is purposeful to achieving an understanding of the business or some aspect of the business and adds value to generating interest in the business or a particular aspect of the business.

Scoring and Ranking

Sub-TOTAL: _____	Rank in Round: 1 st
	(circle one) 2 nd
LESS Team Penalty: _____ (2 points/minute for presentation under 8 minutes or over 12 minutes)	3 rd
	4 th
TOTAL: _____ / 61 (63 points possible including bonus for creativity)	5 th

Scoring: Circle your rating for each category and write the number of the score in the last column on the right. Please add the points earned by the team and record in the scoring box at the bottom of the page. If instructed, deduct 2 points for each minute the presentation is under 8 minutes or over 12 minutes.

Ranking: Please rank the teams presenting to you. The highest raw score should correlate to the best ranking in the round. In the event of a tie in the raw score, the judge must still rank the teams (teams cannot “tie” in ranking).

Rank in Round:	1 st	Best Team Presentation
	2 nd	
	3 rd	
	4 th	
	5 th	Worst Team Presentation