



Who should write your business plan?

Description

A Complete Guide to Roles, Input, and Responsibilities

A business plan is rarely one person's job. Here is exactly who needs to be involved and what each person brings to the table.

Wondering who writes a business plan? Discover every role involved, from founders to advisors, and use our RACI matrix to assign responsibilities clearly.

Introduction

Most founders assume the business plan is their job alone. They sit down, stare at a blank document, and try to write everything themselves. The financials. The market research. The operations plan. The marketing strategy. All of it.

The result is usually a plan that is strong in the areas the founder knows well and dangerously weak everywhere else. The financial projections are rough guesses. The market analysis is thin. The operations section is skipped entirely.

A business plan is not a solo project. It is a team effort. And knowing who should contribute, what they should write, and how to coordinate all of that input is what separates a plan that sits in a drawer from one that actually gets funded, approved, or used to guide a growing business.

This guide breaks down exactly who writes a business plan, what each person contributes, and how to organize the entire process using a simple responsibility framework.

Business Facts

1. Entrepreneurs who write formal business plans are 16% more likely to achieve viability than otherwise identical founders who do not plan, according to research by Professor Francis J. Greene and Professor Christian Hopp, published in the [Harvard Business Review](#).
 2. Businesses that write detailed business plans grow 30% faster than those that do not, according to research referenced by [Entrepreneur's 2024 Startup Statistics Report](#) and supported by [Excellent Business Plans's own research](#).
 3. Writing a business plan alongside real startup activities such as talking to customers and preparing a product for market increases a startup's chance of viability by 27%, according to follow-up research by [Professor Francis Greene at the University of Edinburgh Business School](#).
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Why It Matters: The Real Cost of Writing It Alone

When a founder writes the entire business plan alone, three things tend to go wrong.

First, critical sections get written with blind spots. A founder who loves product development will write ten pages on the product and two paragraphs on finances. That imbalance raises red flags for any investor or bank manager reviewing the plan.

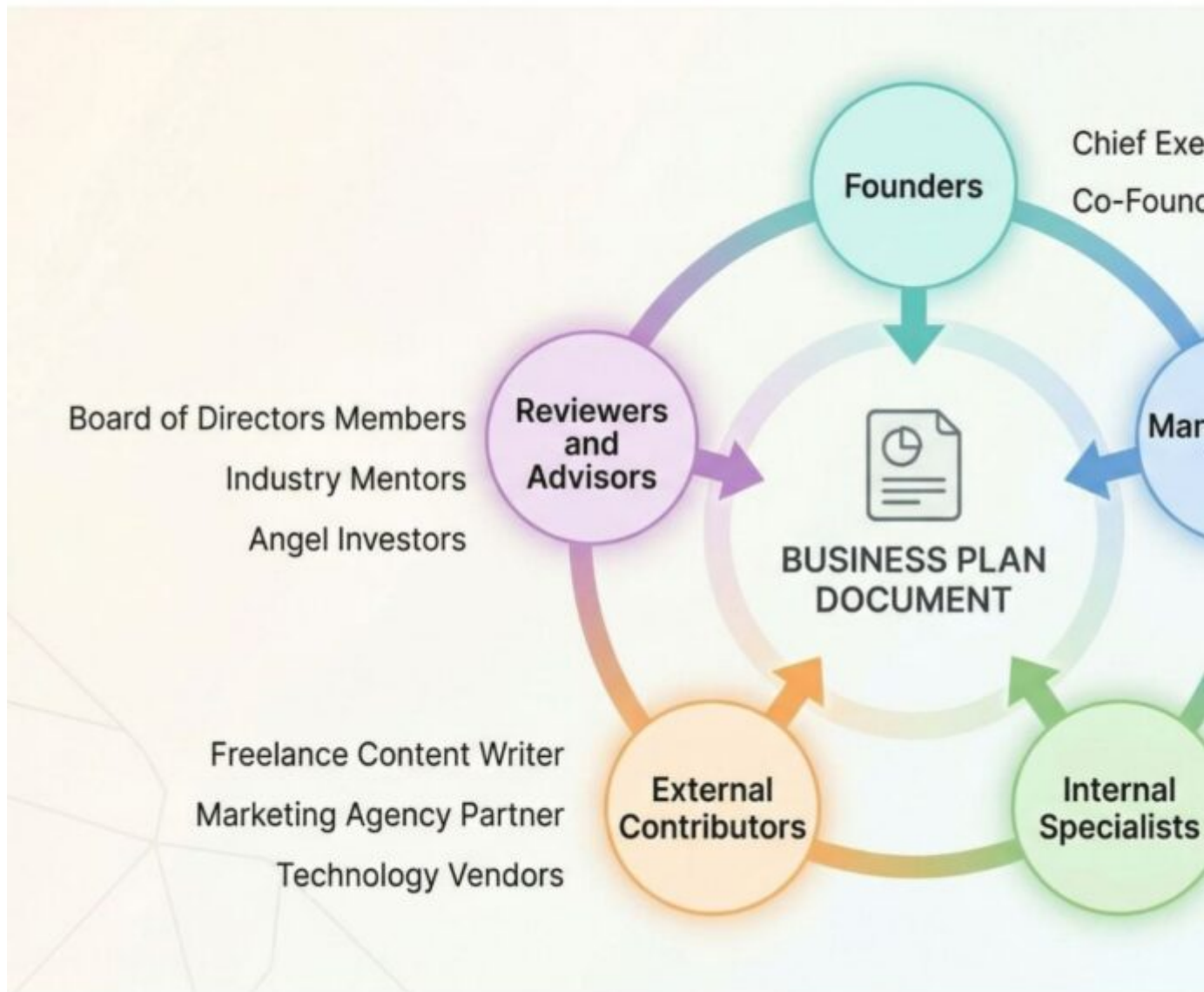
Second, the numbers lack credibility. Financial projections written without input from an accountant or CFO are easy to spot. Investors see hundreds of plans. They know the difference between a founder guessing and a finance professional building a real model.

Third, the plan lacks buy-in. When team members have no input in the plan, they feel no ownership of it. A business plan that the team helped shape is one they will actually work toward. One handed down from above is one they will quietly ignore.

What a Business Plan Actually Requires

A complete business plan covers many different areas of expertise. The executive summary requires strong storytelling. The market analysis requires research skills and data. The financial projections require accounting knowledge. The operations plan requires an understanding of real processes. The marketing strategy requires customer insight and channel knowledge.

No single person is an expert in all of these areas. That is not a weakness. It is simply the reality of building a business. The solution is not to fake expertise you do not have. The solution is to involve the right people at the right stage.



Who Writes a Business Plan? The 5 Groups You Need

1. Founders and Entrepreneurs

The founder drives the entire business plan. They provide the vision, the mission, the core idea, and the story of why this business exists. No one else can write this part. It has to come from the person who built the idea from scratch.

The founder also drives the overall structure and narrative of the plan. They decide what story the plan is telling and make sure every section connects back to the central vision. But their role is to lead and coordinate, not to write every word alone.

2. The Management Team

In startups and growing businesses, the management team each owns a specific section of the plan based on their expertise.

The CEO oversees and approves the full document, ensuring every section tells a consistent and coherent story. The CFO or finance lead builds the financial projections, budgets, and funding requirements. This is one of the most scrutinized sections of any business plan and must be built by someone who understands the numbers deeply. The CMO or marketing lead defines customer segments, positioning, pricing strategy, and go-to-market approach. The COO describes how the business actually runs, covering production, logistics, supply chain, and day-to-day operations. The CTO explains the technology, the product development roadmap, and any technical competitive advantages.

3. Internal Specialists and Staff

Beyond the C-suite, several other internal team members contribute valuable input that often gets overlooked.

The sales team provides real customer data, pipeline insights, and firsthand knowledge of what buyers actually care about. The product developer explains features, the development roadmap, and what makes the product genuinely different from competitors. The HR or people manager contributes the team structure, the hiring plan, and information about culture and retention, all of which matter greatly to investors evaluating long-term viability.

4. External Contributors

Some of the most important input into a business plan comes from outside the company entirely.

An accountant or financial advisor validates the financials, reviews cash flow assumptions, and ensures tax and compliance considerations are accounted for. A lawyer advises on legal structure, intellectual property, contracts, and any regulatory requirements relevant to the industry. A market researcher or business consultant supplies industry benchmarks, competitor analysis, and market sizing data that the founding team often lacks access to independently. A professional business plan writer or agency can take all the raw input from the team and turn it into a polished, investor-ready document that reads clearly and professionally.

5. Reviewers and Advisors

The final group does not write the plan but plays a critical role in making it stronger before it reaches its intended audience.

Advisors and mentors review the plan with fresh eyes, identifying gaps, weak arguments, and untested assumptions. Board members provide strategic feedback and approve the final version before it is shared externally. Investors and bankers do not contribute to writing. Still, their expectations shape what must be included, how detailed the financials need to be, and how the executive summary should be framed.



The RACI Responsibility Matrix

Use this framework to assign clear ownership of every section of your business plan. According to the [Project Management Institute \(PMI\)](https://www.pmi.org/), the globally recognized authority on project management standards, RACI stands for four distinct roles.

1. **Responsible** means the person who actively does the work, drafts the content, and completes the task.
2. **Accountable** means the person who owns the outcome, approves the final result, and is responsible for it if something goes wrong. There can be only one Accountable person per task.
3. **Consulted** means those whose expertise and input are sought before the work is finalized.
4. **Informed** means those who are kept up to date on progress but do not contribute directly.

Use this rule:

- Founder / CEO (A (owns outcome))
- Functional roles (R (do the work))
- Experts (C)
- Stakeholders (I)

Section	A	R	C	I
Vision and Mission	Founder/CEO	Founder/CEO	Consultant	Team
Company Description	Founder/CEO	Founder/CEO	Consultant	Team
Market Research	Founder/CEO	Founder/CEO + CMO + Consultant	CMO	Team
Customer Segments	Founder/CEO	CMO	Consultant	CFO
Competitor Analysis	Founder/CEO	CMO + Consultant	Consultant	Team
Product Description	Founder/CEO	CMO	CTO	Team
Marketing Strategy	Founder/CEO	CMO	Consultant	CFO
Operations Plan	Founder/CEO	COO	Consultant	Team
Team and Structure	Founder/CEO	Founder/CEO	Consultant	Team
Financial Projections	Founder/CEO	CFO	Accountant	Team
Legal Structure	Founder/CEO	Lawyer	Consultant	Team
Executive Summary	Founder/CEO	Founder/CEO	All Dept. Heads	Team

Quote

“By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.” • **Benjamin Franklin**

Final Thoughts

A business plan written by one person reflects one perspective. A business plan written with the right team reflects the full reality of the business, and that is exactly what investors, banks, and partners want to see.

You do not need everyone involved from day one. Start with the founder's vision. Bring in the finance lead early for projections. Add external reviewers before the final draft goes out. Build the plan in layers, with each contributor adding depth to the sections they know best.

The goal is not a perfect document. The goal is an honest, complete, and credible plan that gives your business the best possible foundation for what comes next.

Ready to start? Download the [Business Plan Template](#) from Excellent Business Plans and give your team a professional framework to build from.

Next Steps: Start Building Your Business Plan as a Team

You do not need to organize everything at once. Start with these five steps:

1. Write your one-paragraph vision and mission statement as the founder
 2. Identify which management team members or advisors own each section
 3. Share the RACI matrix above with your team and assign names to each role
 4. Set a realistic three-month timeline to complete the full plan
 5. Bring in an accountant or advisor to review the financial section before finalizing
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FAQs

1. Can a founder write the entire business plan alone? Technically yes, but it is rarely a good idea. Sections like financial projections and legal structure require specific expertise that most founders do not have. A plan written entirely alone tends to have obvious gaps that experienced investors and bank managers will spot immediately.

2. When should I bring in an external consultant or business plan writer? If you are writing a plan for a significant funding application, a bank loan, or a formal investor pitch, bringing in a professional consultant or writer is worth the investment. They bring structure, objectivity, and polish that is difficult to achieve when you are too close to the business.

3. How long does it take to write a business plan as a team? Research by Professor Francis Greene suggests the optimal time to spend on a business plan is around three months. Any less and the plan lacks depth. Any more and the information starts to lose its currency as the market and business conditions change.

4. Does every business need a business plan? Not every business needs a formal, lengthy plan. However, any business seeking external funding, entering a new market, or scaling operations benefits significantly from having one. Even a lean one-page plan is better than no plan at all.

5. What is the most important section of a business plan? The financial projections and the executive summary are typically the most scrutinized sections. Investors often read the executive summary first and skip to the financials second. Both sections require the most care, the most input from specialists, and the most revision before the plan is finalized.

6. Should investors be involved in writing the plan? No. Investors and bankers do not contribute to writing the plan. Their role is to review and evaluate it. However, knowing your audience matters greatly. Understanding what a specific investor cares about should shape how you frame the executive summary and which sections you expand.

References

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Author

moezhassan88