

Editing Your Business Plan Document

Before you distribute your business plan to anyone, either inside or outside your organization, it is critical that you edit your document. Editing will allow you to make your document as accurate as possible and to eliminate mistakes before they are published.

Editing is best accomplished when it is read for both content and grammar. This may mean that multiple people will read the document, according to their abilities. Some people can read for content and see that things may not be worded in the best way, or there may be a more accurate way to state something.

Others have an “eye for detail” and can see items that are misspelled or are grammatically incorrect.

Remember that this document is going to be used by your internal team to drive your success and by external readers who may ultimately want to provide you with funding. The details of your plan include good editing.

This is one suggested process for editing your business plan.

Step 1: Once the plan is complete, provide the first draft to someone who can read it for content. It is best if it is someone who was NOT a part of the development process. They can provide a fresh perspective. Ask them to look at the following:

- ▶ Do the messages and statements make sense?
- ▶ Are the messages and statements accurate?
- ▶ Are the messages and statements consistent throughout the document?
- ▶ Are there thoughts and ideas missing that could make things more clear?
- ▶ Is there too much detail that will confuse the reader?

Step 2: Review with the content editor their suggestions and recommendations. Ask questions to clarify their perspective.

Step 3: Determine if you will accept or reject their suggestions and recommendations. For those you accept, make those changes in the document.

Step 4: Print a fresh copy of the document that includes the content changes, and ask someone else to read the document, this time from a detailed and grammar perspective. At this point your plan should be pretty “clean,” but there will probably be some additional edits.

Step 5: Review the additional comments with the second reviewer. Determine if you will accept or reject their suggestions and recommendations. For those you accept, make those changes in the document.

Step 6: Print a fresh copy of the document that includes the detail changes and read the document yourself, one more time, to make sure that all of the changes have made sense and are complete.

Step 7: If there any last changes, make them in the document.

Step 8: Discard all drafts of the document, both hard copies and files copies on your computer. This will ensure that your document is the most up-to-date and current plan and is the version you intend to publish.

Though it may sound like a long process, it will allow you to make your business plan the best it can be.