

2026 PANASCI BUSINESS PLAN

STEP BY STEP **TEMPLATE GUIDE**

Prepared by Indaria Jones, Couri Hatchery Business Incubator

For more detailed information on each section of the Nuts and Bolts of a Business Plan by Whitman Dean Alexander McKelvie visit: https://whitman.syracuse.edu/docs/default-source/default-document-library/nuts-and-bolts-revised-fall2019.pdf?sfvrsn=13e64202_1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tagline: Four to six words that should describe what the company is about

Summary: This is the why of your business. Make it simple and understandable. Be precise and clear. Do not use jargon or try to be clever here. [Company Name], is tackling [state the problem] with [product/service]. It [explain how it works in simple terms] and stands out because [key differentiator].

Problem Statement: Every strong pitch begins by defining the problem and highlighting a specific gap in the market that your venture is uniquely positioned to fill. This includes:

- Clearly stating the central pain point that customers face
- Explaining why current solutions are flawed or inadequate
- Describing the urgency of addressing this issue right now

Solution: This should explain: Key differentiator (why you're better), The product (your solution in action), and How it works (show core functionality simply).

Market Opportunity: Demonstrate the size and potential of your market. Outline the momentum driving expansion in your industry, define the total addressable market size, and describe your monetization plan—how your company will make money. Provide validation with supporting data or traction that shows customers are already interested and engaged.

Competitive Advantage: Don't pretend you're alone in the market. Show you've mapped the battlefield by identifying key players and explaining your unique advantage. Discuss the factors that make your solution hard to copy and where your company fits in the market compared to others.

Business Model: Explain how the company makes money through its revenue streams, the pricing strategy you've chosen, and your go-to-market approach for reaching and acquiring customers. This section makes the financial pathway of your business clear and credible.

COMPANY OVERVIEW

- When did you start?
- What stage are you in (idea, prototype, revenue)?
- What proof do you have that this is moving forward?
- Why are you uniquely positioned to build this?
- What is your long-term vision (5–10 years)?

PROBLEM STATEMENT

- Who specifically has this problem? (Name the segment.)
- Describe the last time this customer experienced the problem.
- What does it cost them (money, time, stress, risk)?
- What are they currently doing instead?
- Why are current solutions inadequate?
- How many customer discovery interviews have you conducted?
- What exact phrases did customers use to describe their pain?

MARKET OPPORTUNITY

- How many customers experience this problem today?
- What assumptions are you making in your TAM calculation?
- Show your math.
- What early adopter segment will you enter first?
- What triggers someone to buy?
- What trend makes this opportunity grow over time?

If you captured 1% of your SOM, what revenue does that generate?

SOLUTION

- What exactly does your product/service do?
- Walk through the customer journey from problem to resolution.
- How quickly does value appear?
- What measurable outcome improves?
- What makes your solution meaningfully better (10x, not 10%)?
- What proof do you have that it works?

If hardware or tech:

- What is your current technical readiness level?
- What are the regulatory risks?
- What dependencies could delay launch?

COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE

- Who else is solving this?
- Why do customers choose them?

- What is your wedge into the market?
- What would stop a competitor from copying you?
- What is your unfair advantage? (Network? IP? Brand? Access?)

Draw a positioning chart. Where do you sit?

BUSINESS MODEL

- Who pays you?
- When do they pay you?
- How much do they pay you?
- What is your gross margin?
- What is your cost to acquire a customer?
- How long until you recover CAC?
- What is customer lifetime value?
- What happens if pricing drops 20%?

If this is a nonprofit:

- Who funds you?
- Why would they continue funding you?

GO-TO-MARKET STRATEGY

- What is your first beachhead market?
- Who is the decision maker?
- What does your sales cycle look like?
- What is your conversion rate assumption?
- What partnerships accelerate adoption?
- What measurable milestone defines product-market fit?

If you had to acquire 100 customers in 6 months, how would you do it?

TRACTION & VALIDATION

- Revenue to date?
- Signed LOIs?
- Pilots?
- Repeat customers?
- Usage data?
- Testimonials?
- Engagement metrics?
- What metric matters most right now?

OPERATIONS

- Who builds the product?
- Who delivers the service?

- Where are your bottlenecks?
- What happens if demand doubles?
- What risks could shut you down?
- What compliance requirements exist?

DEVELOPMENT ROADMAP (3 YEARS)

- What must be true in 12 months?
- What milestone proves viability?
- What milestone proves scalability?
- What must happen before you raise the next round?
- What hires are critical?

Tie roadmap to revenue growth.

FINANCIAL PLAN

- What assumptions drive your revenue projections?
- What are your fixed costs?
- What are your variable costs?
- When do you break even?
- What is your monthly burn?
- What scenario would cause cash shortfall?
- What contingency plans exist?

TEAM

- Why is this team credible?
- What skills are missing?
- Who advises you?
- What is each founder responsible for?
- If one founder left tomorrow, what breaks?

Execution risk is real. Address it.

FUNDING & ASK

- How much are you requesting?
- What exact milestone does this unlock?
- How long does it extend runway?
- What happens if you only raise half?
- What is your exit pathway?

Money should accelerate milestones.

RISKS & MITIGATION

- What is the biggest reason this could fail?
- What assumption is most fragile?
- What external factors could disrupt growth?
- What are you doing now to reduce risk?

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SUBMISSION RULES

Plans may not exceed 25 pages in length based on a document that is double-spaced, 12-point font with a one-inch margin (including cover and text), and the appendices may not exceed 10 pages in length. All Panasci business plans must be saved and submitted as your venture name and year (ex: startupname2026).

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