

Here's a typical scenario: You are deciding to start a home business and suddenly everyone you know has his nose in your business, literally. What do you tell them? And how do you answer your own questions? What should you expect from the company in terms of stability, longevity, vitality, trust, income, and so forth?

First the bad news: there are no guarantees. Then the good news: there is plenty of information from which to draw your own conclusions. The internet is huge, and any good company will offer free marketing tools and training.

But back to the WHY of that business plan. You're going to be starting small, slow and boy! is there a lot to learn. What's the point of actually sitting down and writing a business plan? You're not Bill Gates, this isn't Microsoft, just you in your home office a few hours a week, slowly building an online business presence, not really understanding what the heck you'll be doing.

Relax and breathe. Unlike Mt. Rushmore, your plan won't be designed to withstand the weathering of the ages. You can expect it will change and bend with the flow of your real experiences, which will be totally yours, not identical to anyone else's.

What writing your plan will do is cause you to pause, think, dream, study and focus. The written document, whether it is one page or twelve, will give your business a framework to work within. The internet is vast and seemingly endless. It is easy to lose focus and drift away on a different whim or idea every day.

Understanding where you are today, what tools you have to work with, what your goals are, and how you can best achieve them and measure your success, will help you stay on target and not waste what few hours you may be investing in your business at start-up.

Whenever you feel lost or confused, you can return to what you have written. When you analyze your situation and decide to make a change, rewrite that part of the plan. Understand that it's a living document, intended to grow with you and your business. Your business plan is your friend.

### Getting Started with the Business Plan

First you need to study the company and its management. You need to read and learn about the products, the compensation plan and the network structure. See you next month. Just kidding.

Plan on doing SOME reading each and every work day for the next few months, if not indefinitely. Keep up with the company forum entries every day; read something in the training reports every day. Your education will continue. Plan for it.

When you are ready, open up a Notepad window and answer these questions:

What service/products does your business provide and what needs does it fill?

Who are the potential customers for your product or service and why will they purchase it from you?

How will you reach your potential customers?

Where will you get the financial resources to start your business?

Ok. Maybe your company offers many products and services. What do you want to focus on? I suggest that, at first, you focus on one or two products and/or the affiliate opportunity. In other words, keep it simple. Once you get the hang of what you're doing, you will KNOW when it's time to expand. Do only what you are comfortable with, every step of the way. This is YOUR business, it's your right and privilege to decide on your approach.

Internet marketing hinges on building trust. How will you do this?

Reaching customers means marketing. Your decision, once again. And again, the options should be in your company's training materials.

So we're talking developing a reading/study schedule. Here's a possible list, once you've read enough to make your own decisions to answer the above questions, start writing. Your writing can be lists of words and phrases, free-form brainstorming, outlines, mind maps, whatever works for you. Just write it down, and don't forget to save often. If your home office is inhabited by cats or small children, they have the tendency to press on random keyboard keys. Documents do occasionally just disappear. Saving avoids total disaster.

1. Study the products.
2. Read the training materials.
3. Read about commissions, bonuses, etc.
4. Study the marketing aids and strategies
5. Find out what free tools are available.
6. Visit the forums on a regular basis. Read everything about getting started.
7. Ask questions.

Your final written business plan will have at least four parts:

Introduction/background: history of the company and its founder, internet marketing trends, why THIS company and why NOW, and so on.

Goals: I suggest you think of what you would like to be earning in two years, but mainly focus on goals for your first year. Realistic goals can be projected based on info on the company website, in newsletters, searches on the forums, and focused questions to other affiliates.

Marketing plan: based on your answers to the first 3 questions above and your study of marketing aids and tools.

Action plans: the specifics of what you will do on a monthly, weekly, and/or daily basis for the next year.

I can't tell you what your answers should be, because you have to decide how much money you have to invest. Only you can decide how many hours per day, week or month you can invest in your business. What products you feel most comfortable marketing, and who you decide to target as your customer base, are all decisions only you can make. If you get stuck and don't understand a question, don't know where to find

information, or don't know how to ASK a question, contact your sponsor or someone in your upline. If they can't help you, they should be able to send you to someone who can.

You should NEVER feel alone. Work should be FUN!...

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