

I remember sitting in the audience of a student business competition. I was in awe of the student entrepreneurs participating: they were bold, confident, and charismatic. The session in question was one in which the would-be entrepreneurs presented business plans for their ideas. They knew where they were starting, where they wanted to go, and how to get there quickly and efficiently.

I was awestruck. Could I ever have what it takes to develop a business plan? It seemed that there were so many aspects to think through, especially on such a grand scale as these entrepreneurs were shooting for. The thing is, as I considered the reasons behind each aspect of a business plan and paired it with an idea I'm passionate about, the planning becomes easy.

Different websites focus on different aspects of a business plan and each one offers something slightly different. For example, David McMurrey of Open Technical Communication approaches a business plan much like a business proposal: by detailing what the company is trying to accomplish and spelling out every single detail of how exactly the company is going to make that happen and what the results—both ideal and devastating—could be. He mentions possibly detailing the process by which the service (or product) will be produced, where, and by whom, and to include projected revenues and expenses, predictions on when the company will break even, and who will fund the company and how. Upwork.com takes these ideas and tailors it for freelancers, recommending that freelancers consider their target market, who their competition is and how their services are different, and how to find and keep clients, as well as setting goals and growth milestones.

While these websites are useful, I appreciated the approach that Harvard Business Review took, because they took these specific categories and broke them into four simple, principle-based categories: the people involved in the business, a detailed profile of the business itself, how the business fits into the real world, and the risks and rewards associated with the business. Looking at a business plan with a principle-based lens gives the entrepreneur the freedom to adapt the business plan for their needs.

How can writing a business plan benefit freelancers? It might seem obvious why larger businesses need to write business plans; a study that Harvard Business Review (HBR) conducted showed that writing a plan is especially beneficial for companies who are either seeking investors or pushing the status quo of innovation. But what about freelancers? In that same study by HBR, they found that companies who wrote business plans were 17% more likely to “reach viability”—that is, to be productive, profitable, and successful. I can't think of anyone who doesn't want that for their business. Because I want to know how to start my business, where I want to go with my business, and plan how to get there, a business plan will help me reach my freelance career goals.

In spite of the intimidation that I feel when considering starting a business, a bigger part of me is excited and determined because I want to expand my business past freelance editing. I want to grow my freelance business so that it meets a variety of publishing needs and has the potential to take other employees on. Because I'm looking to eventually become more than just a one-person company, a business plan is especially useful. For this paper, I'll identify the goals of my company, compare my services with that of similar companies, and identify milestones I can mark along the way to my end goal.

One of the things that I value most is the pursuit of dreams. In my freelance business, I want to help authors make their publishing dreams a reality. Whether that means developmental editing as they write, proofreading before they send their manuscript to a

**Commented [KW1]:** You could probably combine these paragraphs for your introduction. Also, the thesis statement of your paper is buried much further down. You might want to move it up so that your argument is clearer right off the bat.

**Commented [KW2]:** Also, consider using headings throughout your paper to offer signposts for your readers. Headings can also indicate that you are shifting gears.

**Commented [KW3]:** Most of the paper you use the first person tense. It may be a good idea to change the tense here for consistency. You can make it neutral by using “the company” or make it personal by using first-person pronouns.

**Commented [KW4]:** What is “these” referring to in this case?

**Commented [KW5]:** These would be good headings for your later sections that explain your own business plan and your take on these categories.

**Commented [KW6]:** This is a case of singular “they” here. While singular they isn't wrong, I'd recommend rephrasing to “entrepreneurs” or “business owners” which you've already introduced to be consistent and to avoid using singular they.

**Commented [KW7]:** This paragraph is only 2 sentences. You may want to expound upon it or combine it with the previous paragraph.

**Commented [KW9]:** This is another instance of singular they. Consider rephrasing to “I can't think of any business who wouldn't want these qualities.”

**Commented [KW10]:** I like the specific thesis that outlines what your paper is going to be about, but it is buried pretty far into your paper. You could include a bit about the companies you'll review and then stick it up near the beginning, which would work as a good transition into your review section and outline your entire paper.

**Commented [KW11]:** Pursuit of dreams is a rather vague concept. I would suggest expounding on this concept so that it is clearer for your readers what you mean by pursuing dreams.

publisher, or discussing their self-publishing options, I want to help them. The end goal is to create a business that can provide a variety of services to help authors. This means, specifically, developmental editing, line editing, copyediting, proofreading, typesetting and copyfitting, marketing, cover design, copywriting, and consulting.

There are some businesses who offer similar services, but my business will utilize a slightly different approach. Sites like Upwork connect authors with editors. Similarly, Reedsy offers all of these services and more. The Manuscript Dr also offers a variety of editing and publishing services as well as writing mentoring. I would like to develop a business somewhere in between Reedsy and the Manuscript Dr because I want to create a company as diverse as Reedsy but as personally invested as the Manuscript Dr. I also want to offer project management services, where my company helps authors set goals, meet deadlines, and identify the steps they need to accomplish in order to get to where they want to go. I want to offer consulting and coaching, where authors can come whether they need help with one aspect of the publishing process or with the whole publishing process. I want to hire or contract other freelancers and provide training so that they can become more rounded and thus become better at meeting clients' needs. I want to be a bridge between these additional employees and the authors we work with. Offering so many services won't be easy, especially if I want my employees to maintain personal relationships with authors; however, identifying now that I want a company based on good interpersonal skills and genuine care for an author's goals can help me from the very beginning establish that culture in my interactions with clients and other freelancers.

Growing my freelance business has several milestones: creating a viable, positive cashflow business model; implementing the model to be profitable; scaling the business; and sustaining growth. Freelancing has already been proven by individuals to be profitable; the trick will be learning to scale it. I'll need to consider now what is needed to create a company culture of passion, curiosity, and authenticity and how to maintain that company culture as my company grows.

The idea of developing a company from the ground up that can offer services that are beneficial to both publishing professionals and authors excites me. The fact that I'm excited by this is inspiring to me. I'm finally catching an idea of how the student entrepreneurs could dive deep into their business plans—they had to be excited and passionate about their business ideas. As I channel that excitement and passion into deliberately developing a plan for the future of my editing, I know that the rewards can be more than just financial.

**Commented [KW13]:** It may be a good idea here to expound upon why you want to help authors by connecting it to the pursuit of dreams. If that's the topic sentence of this paragraph, then everything in the paragraph needs to connect to that topic. Then you can lead into how you plan on helping authors achieve their dreams.

**Commented [KW14]:** This topic sentence introduces how you'll talk about other businesses offer similar services, but doesn't mention how you'll be different. Here's one way you could fix this sentence so that it's clear what you're going to talk about.

**Commented [KW15]:** "These" is ambiguous here. Consider rephrasing so your readers understand what "these" is referring to.

**Commented [KW16]:** How do you propose you'll provide a bridge between freelancers and authors? Will you be specifically reaching out to authors, or will authors be reaching out to you? Consider expounding upon this to clarify your business plan.

**Commented [KW17]:** This paragraph is one sentence. I would recommend focusing it on one topic, such as interpersonal skills, and then expound on how you will manage the challenges between offering so many services and maintaining interpersonal skills.

**Commented [KW18]:** This half of the sentence might confuse your readers. Do you mean that others have already proven that freelancing is profitable? If so, who? It may be a good idea to be more specific here so your readers understand that you know that freelancing is profitable because of the research.

**Commented [KW19]:** Good job! I liked how your passion for your business plan came through in your exercise. A couple of final things:

- 1) As I mentioned earlier, headings would help give your readers guideposts so that they don't get lost throughout your essay.
- 2) Make sure that your topic sentences clearly introduce the topic of each paragraph and that it builds off of what came before. (The old-new principle)
- 3) Along with the topic sentences, make sure that each paragraph is focused on one topic and gives several sentences on that topic. There are several places where you have one sentence for a paragraph. These one sentence paragraphs need to be incorporated into the larger scope of your paper, either by being expounded or by combining with another paragraph.
- 4) Also, remember that you need citations for your sources at the end. It may also be a good idea to use direct quotations from your sources to further strengthen your argument.

Overall though, I think this is a great start to your writing exercise and I think you've got a solid plan for your business! I'm excited for you to get your business started.