



[Your Company Name]

[Your Tagline]

Three Year Business Plan

[Year]

Eleven chapters, with a horizon you can actually defend

Prepared by

Date

How to use this template

1. Decide first whether three years is the right horizon for you. If a lender or a programme has asked for five, give them five. If the choice is yours, three is usually the stronger document because you can defend every line of it.
2. Fill in the milestone roadmap before the financials. The milestones are what the numbers are supposed to pay for, and building the forecast first tends to produce a curve with no events behind it.
3. Build year one monthly and years two and three annually. Monthly detail three years out is false precision and invites questions you cannot answer.
4. Write down every assumption as you make it, in the register at the back. A reader who can see your assumptions argues with those rather than dismissing the whole forecast.
5. Write the executive summary last, once the other ten chapters give you something to summarise.

This is the full template. Eleven chapters, a prompt under every heading saying what belongs there, and the milestone, funding, year-one and three-year tables already laid out so you fill in numbers rather than formatting.

Before you start

This template is an informational document, not financial or legal advice. A plan is a set of arguments about an uncertain future, and the quality of it rests on the assumptions you put in rather than on the format it arrives in.

Three years is a choice, not a standard. Some lenders, grant programmes and investors specify a horizon, and where they do, theirs wins. Check before you write rather than after.

Have an accountant review the financial chapter before you send the plan to anyone who will lend against it. The prompts here tell you what a chapter is for; they cannot tell you whether your numbers are right.

Contents

- 1 Executive Summary
- 2 Company Overview
- 3 Products and Services
- 4 Market Analysis
- 5 Competition
- 6 Marketing and Sales
- 7 Operations
- 8 Team
- 9 Three Year Milestones
- 10 Financial Plan
- 11 Assumptions and Appendix

Rather not build the projections by hand?

Upmetrics asks you questions and drafts each section, then builds the profit and loss, cash flow and balance sheet so year one stays monthly, years two and three stay annual, and every figure moves together when an assumption changes.

Try Upmetrics

4.9 Capterra 4.9 G2 110K+ entrepreneurs plan with Upmetrics

Executive Summary

Write this chapter last. Most readers decide here whether to read on, so it has to carry the business, the ask and the trajectory in about a page.

What a reader checks here

Whether the figures in this summary match the financial chapter. They disagree more often than you would expect, and a mismatch on page one costs you the reader's trust for everything that follows.

What the business does

One or two plain sentences. If a reader cannot repeat it back after one pass, it is not plain enough yet.

The opportunity

The problem you solve and who has it. Resist describing the market as large; describe the customer as specific.

Where you are now

Trading or pre-revenue, how long, and the one or two numbers that show it. Honesty here buys credibility for everything after.

The three-year trajectory

Revenue in years one and three, the month you reach break-even, and headcount at the end. Four figures, not a paragraph.

The ask

What you want from the reader: a loan and its size, an investment, a decision, or nothing at all if this is an internal plan. Say which; a plan with no ask reads as unfinished.

Company Overview

The factual chapter. Short, and nothing here should be arguable.

Legal structure and ownership

Entity type, where and when registered, and who owns what. A cap table if there is more than one owner.

History so far

When you started, what you have built, and any funding raised. If the business is new, say so plainly rather than padding.

Location and facilities

Where you operate from and why there, plus lease terms if they are material to the forecast.

Mission and what you will not do

What the business is for, and the adjacent things you are deliberately not doing. The second half is more informative than the first and almost nobody writes it.

Products and Services

What you sell. Keep it concrete: this chapter is where vagueness is easiest to spot and hardest to recover from.

What you sell

Each product or service line, what it does, and who it is for. If you have more than four lines, say which one pays the bills.

Pricing

What each costs and the thinking behind it. Cost-plus, value-based, or matched to a competitor. Say which.

What it costs you to deliver

Unit cost and the gross margin it leaves. These two numbers drive the whole financial chapter.

What is coming

Anything launching inside the three years, with the quarter it lands. Each one should appear in the milestone table too.

Market Analysis

Your market, sized honestly. A reader has seen enough plans claiming a small share of an enormous number to discount it automatically.

Who your customer is

Specific enough that a reader could recognise one. Demographics or firmographics, the problem they have, and what they do about it today.

Market size

The market you can actually reach, not the global category. Give the source and the date, and show how you got from the big number to yours.

Why now

What changed in the technology, the regulation, the cost base or the customer that makes this work now when it did not before.

Trends over the next three years

Two or three that genuinely affect you, and what each does to your plan. Tie them to the forecast rather than leaving them as background.

Competition

Who else solves this problem, including the option of doing nothing. A plan with no named competitors reads as under-researched.

What a reader checks here

Whether you have looked properly. An absent or strawmanned competitor section undermines the market chapter that came before it.

Direct competitors

Name them. What they charge, who they serve, and where they are strong. Being specific about a competitor's strength makes your own claim believable.

Substitutes and doing nothing

What customers use instead, including spreadsheets, in-house effort, or simply living with the problem. Often the real competitor.

Where you win and where you do not

Two or three dimensions on which you beat the named alternatives, and at least one where you do not. A comparison table with ticks in all of your own rows is not believed.

What stops someone copying you

Cost, relationships, data, expertise, switching costs, brand. If the honest answer is nothing yet, say what gives you a head start instead.

Marketing and Sales

How customers find you and how they buy. Specific activities with costs, not channels listed as nouns.

How you reach them

The two or three channels you will actually use, and why those for this customer. A list of every channel reads as no decision made.

The sales process

From first contact to payment, with the typical length. If it takes ninety days, the cash flow has to show it.

Cost to acquire a customer

What it costs to win one and how long until they repay it. Say where the figure came from, including if it is an estimate.

Retention

What keeps them, and what you expect to lose each year. Churn quietly decides three-year revenue more than new sales do.

What you will measure

The two or three numbers you will watch monthly. Tie them to the revenue assumptions in chapter 10.

Operations

How the business runs day to day. Keep it to what matters to an outsider: the things that could stop you delivering.

How you deliver

The steps from order to delivery, and who does each. Where the bottleneck is today and what happens when volume doubles.

Suppliers and dependencies

Key suppliers, lead times, and what you would do if one failed. A single-source dependency is worth naming before a reader finds it.

Systems and tools

What you run the business on, and anything you will need to replace as you grow. Put the cost in the forecast.

Quality and compliance

Standards you hold to, licences or certifications required, and where you are with each.

Team

Who runs this and who you will hire. Readers back people at least as much as plans.

Who is here now

Each person, their role, and the part of their background that bears on this business. Not a full CV.

Gaps and how you fill them

The roles you do not have and when you will hire them. Carry every hire into the three-year table so payroll and the plan agree.

Advisors and support

Board, advisors, accountant, mentors. Name them if they have agreed to be named.

How decisions get made

Who decides what, especially if ownership is split. Worth a paragraph now rather than an argument later.

Three Year Milestones

The chapter a generic template does not have, and the reason a three-year plan beats a five-year one. The forecast is supposed to be the financial consequence of these events.

What a reader checks here

Whether the milestones and the financial projection describe the same business. A revenue curve with no events behind it is the single most common weakness in a three-year plan.

Year one, by quarter

Fill in the milestone table for the next four quarters. Specific and checkable: a launch date, a customer number, a hire, a certification. Not 'grow revenue'.

Years two and three

Fewer and larger. Three or four per year is plenty, and vaguer is acceptable this far out as long as it is still checkable.

What each milestone needs

The cash, the people and the time each one requires. This is where a plan usually discovers it is asking for too little money.

How you will know you are off track

The leading indicator for each major milestone, and what you would do. A plan that cannot be wrong cannot be managed.

Milestone roadmap

When	Milestone	What it needs	Cost	How you will know

Four quarters for year one, then three or four milestones each for years two and three. Every one should be checkable by someone else.

DOING THIS BY HAND?

Milestones are only as good as the money behind them. Upmetrics links the plan to the forecast, so when a hire or a launch moves a quarter, the cash position moves with it instead of being re-typed.

Try Upmetrics

Financial Plan

Year one monthly, years two and three annual. That shape is deliberate: monthly detail three years out is false precision, and annual-only detail in year one hides the month you run out of cash.

What a reader checks here

The payroll line against chapter 8, the unit costs against chapter 3, and whether the revenue build is arithmetic or assertion. These three checks account for most of the questions you will be asked.

Revenue build

Build revenue from units: customers, price, frequency, churn. Show the arithmetic. A revenue figure with no build behind it is the first thing a reader challenges.

Cost of sales and gross margin

Direct costs by line and the margin left. Cross-check against the unit costs in chapter 3; they should be the same numbers.

Operating costs and payroll

Payroll from the hiring plan in chapter 8, plus premises, software, marketing and the rest. Payroll is usually the largest line and must match.

Year one, month by month

Fill in the twelve-month table. The lowest cash point matters more than the year-end figure, and only a monthly view shows it.

Years two and three

Fill in the three-year summary. State the growth assumption behind each year rather than letting a percentage imply it.

Funding and use of funds

Fill in the funding table. What you need, from where, and what it buys, tied to the milestones in chapter 9.

Break-even and downside

The month you cover costs, and what happens if revenue arrives half as fast. Two cases, briefly. A plan that only works in the good case is not a plan.

Year one, month by month

	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10	M11	M12
Revenue												
Cost of sales												
Gross profit												
Payroll												
Other operating costs												
Net profit												
Closing cash												

The lowest closing cash figure in this row is the number that decides whether the plan is fundable. Find it before a reader does.

Three year summary

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Revenue			

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Cost of sales			
Gross profit			
Payroll			
Other operating costs			
Net profit			
Closing cash			
Headcount			

Year one totals should equal the monthly table above. State the growth assumption behind years two and three in the text.

Funding and use of funds

Source	Committed or sought	Amount	What it funds	When

Tie each line to a milestone in chapter 9. Money with no milestone attached invites the question of what it is actually for.

DOING THIS BY HAND?

This is the chapter people rebuild from scratch whenever an assumption changes. Upmetrics builds the profit and loss, the cash flow and the balance sheet from your assumptions, keeps year one monthly and years two and three annual, and finds the lowest cash point for you.

Try Upmetrics

Assumptions and Appendix

The register that makes the rest defensible. Most plans leave their assumptions implicit, which forces a sceptical reader to reject the whole forecast rather than argue with one number.

What a reader checks here

Whether you know which numbers your plan depends on. A reader who can see the assumptions argues with one of them; a reader who cannot dismisses the forecast.

Assumption register

Every material assumption, what you based it on, and how confident you are. Conversion rates, pricing, churn, hiring costs, payment terms, seasonality.

What would change the plan most

The two or three assumptions the outcome is most sensitive to. Naming them is a sign of judgement, not weakness.

Supporting documents

Accounts, contracts, letters of intent, CVs, research, quotes. List what is attached and reference it from the chapters that rely on it.
