

check the description that applies best to you

Business area	I'm ready to go!	I have some research to do!	Yikes! I don't know anything about this!
Forming the Business	I have selected the best form of business (sole proprietorship, partnership or corporation), ownership structure and fiscal year end for my needs.	I know how businesses are structured, but will need to fully understand the the legal and tax implications of each option before making a final decision on which one is best for me.	I don't understand the difference between a sole proprietorship, partnership and corporation or what fiscal year-end and ownership structure I should use. I will need to learn more about this.
Industry Knowledge	I have a lot of experience in my industry. I know the players, buying cycles, risks and opportunities. I could describe the industry in-depth in my sleep!	I am familiar with my industry, but only in terms of the tasks I handled in previous jobs. I will need to learn more about other areas of the industry.	I have an exciting idea but have never worked in this industry. I have a lot to learn!
Market Research	I am very familiar with market research about the industry and only need to do validating research about the need for my products and services.	I have some market research information on the industry, but need to do more in-depth research, for the industry as a whole as well as my own products and service offerings.	I have never done market research and don't know much about my industry yet. Looks like I will need to spend a fair amount of time online and at the research the library.
Products & Services	I know exactly what my products and services will be. I know why they are needed, the costs of creating them and how to price and position them in the market.	I have a pretty good idea of the benefits of my products and services, but will need to do more research to understand how they compare with competing products and services.	I can picture what my products and service will be, but I haven't researched my competition yet and have a lot of work to do around how to price them and present them to the market.
Customer Segments	I can precisely describe my customers. I can tell you how they are segmented and describe people in each segment in great detail.	I generally know who I am selling to (for example professional women), but need to do more work to understand how my customer groups are segmented and describe individual customers more specifically.	I know my customers are important, but don't even know what "customer channels" and "segmentation" means. I'll have to learn about this or get an expert to help.

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Marketing & Sales	I know how to market, where to reach people, how to generate leads and work them through a sales funnel to convert leads to paying customers.	I have some experience with marketing, but will need to invest time to select the best distribution channels and developing an effective sales plan.	I am new to marketing and sales so I will need to learn about what my options are. I am so new to this I will need to start with the basics and see some case studies to get ideas.
SWOT	I am able to see not only the strengths (S) and opportunities (O) of my business, but also my weaknesses (W) and things that could threaten (T) my success.	I've heard of a SWOT analysis, but could need help with brainstorming so I don't miss things because I want to see things positively.	What is a SWOT analysis, why should I do one for my business and where do I start?
Staffing & External Support	I have a clearly developed organization (org) chart that identifies the roles, responsibilities and timing for when I will need to hire over the next couple of years.	I know I will need to hire staff, but will need help understanding the true costs of hiring in my planning, so that I develop my budgets correctly.	In my previous jobs I have never hired someone or managed staff, so I need to understand how to properly account for employees in the financial and operational sections of my business plan. I'll need some help!
Key Metrics	I know how to measure the success of each area of my business and have a plan for how I will set-up metrics to track what is working and where improvements are needed.	I understand that I will need to measure how well things are going in my business but I'm not really sure how to do this, so I will need to learn the fundamentals and research tools.	I don't really know what "key metrics" are or how I can use them practically in my business. I have some learning to do.
Money & Finances	I have a strong background in business finances and will have no problem developing cashflow projects, budgets, a break-even analysis and balance sheet. My banker is going to love this!	I am pretty good with spreadsheets and have had to develop budgets in previous jobs. However, I will need to brush-up on what exactly is needed for a business plan.	I am very new to the finance side of business, so will need to learn the basics and also understand what income, expenses and other financial things I will need to put into my plan.