HILO VIVO
CONSULTING



WORKBOOK

Business Made Simple, Wherever You Are

How to structure your company's growth

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Introduction

A recipe for success

Welcome to Your Business Plan Workbook!

This workbook is designed to guide you through the process of planning **your business**, with clear steps and practical tools to support you along the way.

But here's something important to remember:
The goal is not to fill out every single section just for the sake of it. In fact — less is often more. Use this workbook as a framework to help you focus on what **really** matters for your business over the next few months.

The real value comes not from completing the template, but from the thoughtful reflection, honest conversations, and smart analysis you bring to the process.

Wishing you the best of luck on your journey!



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1. Where Are We Today?

This section is about setting the stage for your business plan.

It provides a quick overview of where your business stands today and helps create the right context for the planning process ahead.



Describe Your Market

Begin this section by giving a short, clear description of your business story and how it fits into the market.

Write as if you were explaining it to someone who knows nothing about your industry — avoid jargon and keep it simple.

Relevant Events

Identify Key Factors That Could Impact Your Business

Use this section to point out one or more critical events or factors — either inside or outside your business — that could significantly influence your success over the next 3 to 5 years.

Some examples might include:

- The opening of a new market or expansion into a new region
- A major competitor launching a new product or location
- Changes in infrastructure that affect your operations
- New legal regulations or tax policies impacting your industry

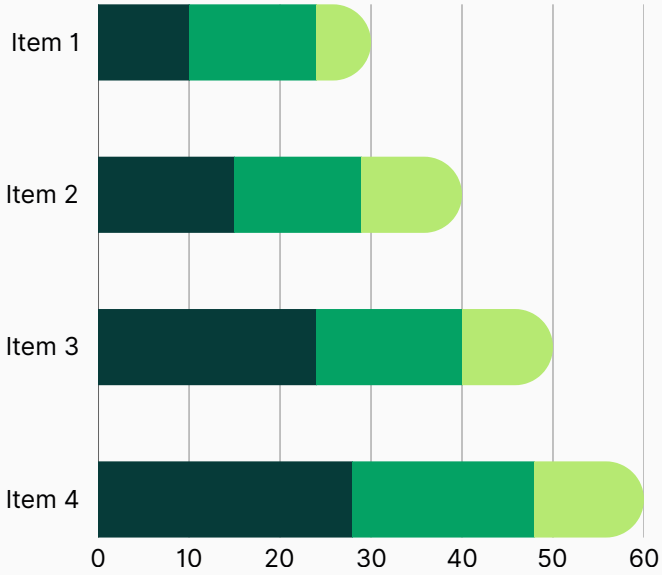
Remember: keep your answers sharp and focused on what truly matters for your business context.

Where are we today?

Background

Describe Your Business Performance

In this section, provide a brief overview of your business performance over the last 3 to 5 years. This historical view will help you identify trends, patterns, or anomalies that may need to be addressed as part of your planning process.



Focus on key business indicators such as:

- Sales growth or decline
- Average transaction value or basket size
- Conversion rates
- Customer traffic or visitor numbers
- Profitability and margin trends

Once you've presented the data, take a moment to reflect on what these numbers are really telling you. Go beyond simply reporting the figures — look for meaningful insights.

Ask yourself:

- Are there any noticeable gaps or unexpected deviations?
- Are there clear areas of strength or weakness?
- What questions arise that you will need to explore further in the next sections of your business plan?

Finally, summarize your conclusions clearly and concisely. Focus on what these insights imply for your business today and how they might influence your strategy going forward.

Where are we today?

Review of the Previous Year



This is the moment to look back, track your progress, and evaluate **what you achieved** over the past year.

Reflect on these *key questions*:

- How did the year go?
- Did you achieve your goals?
- What worked well?
- What could have been done better?

Successes
What were your main achievements?
Which actions or strategies delivered the best results?

Disappointments
Where did things fall short?
What goals were not met, and why?

Lessons Learned
If you could go back and revise last year's business plan, what would you change?
What lessons will you carry forward into this new planning cycle?

Be honest and reflective — this review is not about blaming, but about learning and improving for the future.

Where are we now?

Analyze Your Macroeconomic Environment

Take a step back and examine the broader environment in which your business operates. Use the STEEP framework to identify key external factors that could influence your market and business decisions:

Social:

- What demographic or cultural shifts are shaping your market? (e.g., aging population, urbanization, lifestyle changes, consumer behavior trends)

Technological:

- Are there emerging technologies that could disrupt or enhance your business? (e.g., automation, AI, digital platforms, new production methods)

Economic:

- What are the current economic conditions that may impact your business (e.g., inflation, unemployment, exchange rates, consumer spending patterns)?

Environmental:

- Are there environmental factors or sustainability trends that you should consider? (e.g., climate change regulations, resource availability, eco-friendly preferences)

Political:

- What political factors or legal changes could affect your business? (e.g., tax laws, trade agreements, stability of the region, government policies)

<u>What Does This Mean for Your Business?</u>

Take the time to reflect on these trends and developments:

- What are the *risks*, *challenges*, or *limitations* these factors create?
- What new *opportunities* could they unlock?
- How might these external forces *shape your strategies* for growth?

The goal of this analysis is not just to list external conditions, but to understand their real implications for your business — and to use these insights to make smarter, more informed decisions.

Where are we now?

Analyze Your Microeconomic Environment



Look closely at your immediate business environment — the market dynamics, sales performance, and customer behavior within your specific sector.

Start by reviewing:

- Sales and Volume Trends:
- How have your sales and volumes evolved over time?
- Are there any clear patterns or seasonal fluctuations?

Buying Behavior and Purchase Patterns:

- How do your customers typically make their buying decisions?
- What influences their choices (price, quality, convenience, brand reputation)?

E-commerce and Digital Trends:

- How important are online sales in your sector?
- Are customers shifting toward digital channels?
- What role do social media, online reviews, and digital advertising play in their decision-making?

Infrastructure and Accessibility:

- Are there developments in logistics, technology, or distribution that are shaping how products and services are delivered? (e.g., faster shipping, local suppliers, new platforms)

Understand Consumer Trends in Your Market

Describe the latest trends affecting customer behavior in your sector:

- What are their key needs and expectations?
- How do these needs change depending on the product or service they are buying?
- How do customers behave at each stage of the buying process — from awareness to consideration to purchase and post-sale?

The goal here is to better understand how your customers think, decide, and buy — so you can align your offer with their true expectations and improve your chances of success.

Where are we now?

Analyze Your Competitive Landscape
In this section, identify and describe your key competitors — those who are most relevant to your business today and those who could impact you in the future.

Key Questions to Answer:

- Who are your main competitors? List them in order of importance.
- What do they offer?
- Where do they excel? (pricing, innovation, customer experience, brand strength, distribution, etc.)
- What are their weaknesses or areas where they fall short?
- Which competitors have the greatest influence on your customers' choices?

Consider These Elements in Your Analysis:

Your Sector and Market Scope:

- Define clearly the segment or category where you compete.

Consumer Trends:

- Are customers showing new preferences (e.g., digital-first buying, focus on sustainability, personalization)?
- How are these trends being addressed by your competitors?

Competitive Landscape:

- Who dominates the market?
- Are there new entrants?
- Are there disruptors bringing innovation or alternative solutions?

Tip
Don't limit your view to direct competitors in your exact niche. Consider indirect competition as well — businesses in other sectors that also compete for your customers' time, attention, or disposable income.

What Does This Mean for Your Business?
Once you've mapped out your competitive environment:

- What risks or challenges do these competitors create for you?
- Where could you find opportunities to differentiate yourself?
- Are there gaps in the market that no one is addressing well?
- How can you position your offer more effectively based on these insights?

Reflect deeply. Understanding your competition is not just about defending your position — it's also about identifying opportunities to innovate, add value, and grow smarter.

Where are we now?

Analyze Your Internal Environment

This section focuses on understanding the reality inside your business — your capabilities, your team's dynamics, and the relationship you have with both your customers and your key partners. The goal is to assess whether your internal resources and performance are aligned with the expectations of your market.

Customer Relationship and Experience

- How do your customers experience your company — whether online, in-store, or through your service channels?
- Do you truly understand your customers' dreams, needs, frustrations, and challenges when they interact with your business?
- Are your internal processes and team capabilities strong enough to meet (or exceed) those expectations consistently?

Take a moment to assess the quality of these relationships:

- Where are you succeeding in delighting your customers?
- Where are the pain points that might cause dissatisfaction or lost opportunities?

Team Dynamics and Internal Strengths

- How effective is the collaboration within your team?
- Where are your team's strengths? In which areas do you face weaknesses or capability gaps?
- Are there shared insights between your team members and your customers — areas where perceptions align?
- Do you notice any disconnects — where your team believes one thing, but customers experience something different?
- Are there vulnerabilities in your processes, communication, or skills that could limit your ability to deliver?

Where are we now?

Expansion Plans

- What are your key expansion activities or initiatives planned for the next 1 to 3 years?
- Are these plans realistic based on your current capabilities?
- What support or adjustments might be needed to ensure success?

Relationship with External Partners

- Which external partners are most critical to your success (e.g., suppliers, distributors, service providers)?
- How well are these partners performing, and how does their performance impact your business?
- What are the key areas to manage in these partnerships to ensure they support your growth strategy effectively?

Final Reflection

Step back and reflect on what all these insights mean for your business:

Where should you invest to strengthen internal capabilities?

- Where can you improve alignment between your team, your customers, and your partners?
- What risks need to be addressed?
- What opportunities could you unlock with better internal and external alignment?

Where do you want to go?

Impact of Strategies and Directions on Your Business Objectives and Market Strategies

If your company has specific strategic documents in different areas, make sure your business plan is aligned with the overall direction and objectives. If it is not, this is a good moment to review the general direction and business strategies — or even to develop new ones.

What impact do these strategies and directions have on your current business objectives and market strategies? What opportunities do you identify in your market?

- Product or Service Range Strategy
- Pricing Strategy
- Supply Strategy
- People Strategy
- Sustainability Strategy
- Communication Strategy
- Media Strategy
- Accessibility Strategy (Sales Channels and Expansion)



Where do you want to go?

Tip
Resources are limited. Be strategic: rank each point by its level of importance — this will guide your next steps and ensure your energy is spent where it matters most.

SWOT Analysis

Finally, you've reached the famous SWOT analysis! This is where you will analyze your strengths and weaknesses, as well as the opportunities and threats you've been identifying and exploring so far throughout the business planning process.



What Does This Mean for Your Business?

Now is the time to reflect on what really matters. This is not yet your full SWOT analysis — instead, here you will focus on identifying the key strengths and weaknesses that have emerged from your work so far.

Think of it as understanding your:
Advantages, Defenses, Vulnerabilities, and Temptations.

This step is about digging deeper. It helps you clearly define:

- What makes you **strong**
- Where you are most **exposed**
- The **opportunities** that are truly worth pursuing

The risks or distractions that could steer you off course

The goal is to give you clarity on your real priorities, both in the short term and the long run. It will also help you avoid setting objectives that might compete with or contradict each other.

Important:
You don't need to fill every box or force-fit answers. Focus only on what feels clear, relevant, and significant.

Where do you want to go?

SWOT Analysis

Our Advantages
What are your key advantages?
Are there strong links between your strengths and opportunities?
If so, what are they?
Our Defenses
What are your main defenses?
Are there strong connections between your strengths and the threats you face?
If so, which ones?
Our Vulnerabilities
Where are you most vulnerable?
Are there clear links between your weaknesses and external threats?
If so, what are they?
Our Temptations
What are your temptations — the risky opportunities that could distract or weaken you?
Are there strong connections between your weaknesses and potential opportunities?
If so, what are they?

Business Opportunities

This is where you summarize your current position.
What are your top three or four key business opportunities — the ones you believe will have the greatest impact on your success?

Based on your SWOT analysis, identify the priority opportunities that you need to focus on in order to position your business for growth and long-term success.

Long-Term Goals

Your Vision

Define and Describe Your Vision:

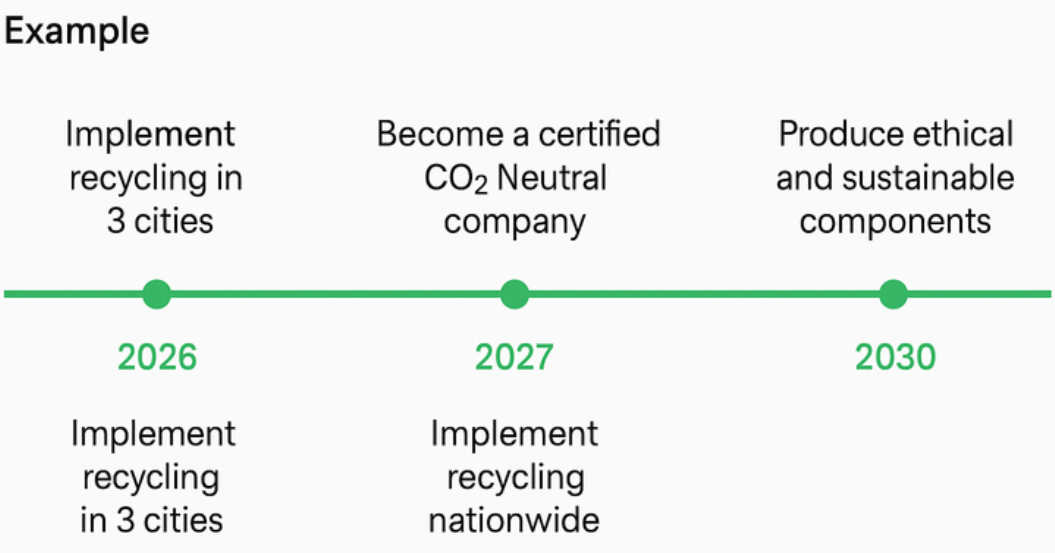
Where do you want your business to be in 5 years?

Your long-term objectives should clearly describe where you see your business five years from now.
Keep it focused: aim for no more than 5–6 key statements.

Turning Your Vision into Actionable Goals:

For each statement, break it down into SMART objectives:

- Specific – Clear and well-defined
- Measurable – Quantifiable, so you can track progress
- Agreed – Shared and accepted by the key people involved
- Realistic – Ambitious but achievable
- Time-bound – With a clear deadline or timeframe



How do we get there?

Your 3-year plan

Your Three-Year Strategy

You have already defined your long-term vision and set your SMART objectives. Now it's time to identify the direction you need to take over the next three years to move steadily toward those goals.

In business, strategy is all about making clear decisions. It's about setting priorities and focusing your resources on what truly matters. A good strategy not only defines what you will focus on, but also what you will consciously decide not to pursue.

Key Question
What are the most important and relevant actions you need to consistently focus on over the next three years?

Make sure you consider everything you've analyzed so far:

- The internal and external factors you identified before your SWOT analysis
- Your SWOT conclusions, especially the key business opportunities you've outlined

How will you achieve your overall objectives in the next three years?

Think about:

- What initiatives will bring the greatest impact?
- Where will you allocate your time, money, and energy?
- What activities or distractions will you avoid to stay focused?

A well-defined three-year strategy provides clarity, focus, and alignment — helping you stay on track toward your long-term vision while adapting to real-world challenges.

How do we get there?

Define your strategies

Developing Strategies Based on SWOT Analysis
Simply listing your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats separately is only half of the SWOT analysis. The real value comes when you connect internal factors with external factors — this is where true strategic insight begins.

The key is to combine your strengths with opportunities to maximize your advantage. At the same time, you should work to eliminate or mitigate your weaknesses and protect against or minimize your threats.

Strategic Guidelines for Each Area:

Strengths
Internal positive factors.
These should be maintained, developed, and fully leveraged.
How can we best use each strength?

Weaknesses
Internal negative factors.
These should be addressed, improved, or redirected.
How can we reduce or overcome each weakness?

Opportunities
External positive factors — things your business cannot directly control.
These should be prioritized, captured, developed, and optimized.
How can we take full advantage of each opportunity?

Threats
External negative factors — also beyond your direct control.
These should be countered, avoided, minimized, or actively managed.
How can we defend against each threat?

Final Thoughts
The power of SWOT analysis lies in these combinations — not just understanding your internal and external factors separately, but using them together to create focused, actionable strategies that drive your business forward.

How do we get there?

Define your strategies

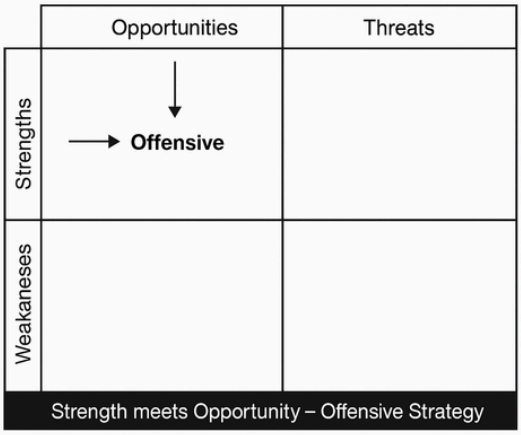
When Strength Meets Opportunity

The first strategy that comes out of the SWOT analysis is known as the Offensive Strategy. This approach applies when a strength aligns with an opportunity — creating a highly favorable situation.

In this case, a positive internal factor combines with a favorable external condition, revealing a clear path forward: go on the offensive. The company should actively leverage this advantage to maximize its potential.

Example:

If the company has low production costs (strength) and the market is demanding affordable products (opportunity), the right strategy is to capitalize on this situation — for instance, by aggressively entering or expanding within the market.



When Weakness Meets Opportunity

The second strategy derived from the SWOT analysis is known as the Defensive Strategy. This approach applies when a weakness aligns with an opportunity — a situation that, while promising, carries inherent risks due to internal limitations.

In these cases, careful consideration and protection are required. The opportunity exists, but the company's internal weakness may prevent it from fully taking advantage of the situation.

The defensive strategy means that the organization must remain alert and monitor competitors closely. By doing so, it can ensure that its weaknesses do not turn into obstacles that allow competitors to capture the opportunity instead.

Example:

If the company has high production costs (weakness) and therefore needs to maintain higher prices than its competitors, but the target market is wealthy with high disposable income (opportunity), the company must defend its position carefully.

Even if this is not a problem today, failing to address it could turn it into a major threat in the future.

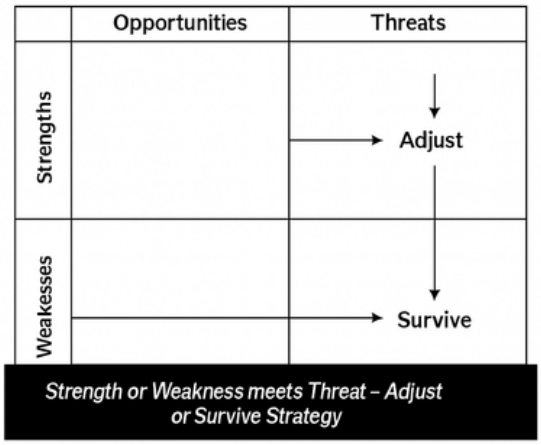


How do we get there?

Define your strategies

When Strength Meets Threat

At times, your SWOT analysis may reveal situations where “Adjust” or “Survive” strategies are needed.



Strength or Weakness meets Threat – Adjust or Survive Strategy

When a strength aligns with a threat, a positive internal factor is confronted by a negative external factor. The appropriate response is an Adjust Strategy — meaning the company must fully leverage its strengths to overcome or neutralize the threat.
Example:
A company may have strong pricing power, meaning customers continue to buy its products even if prices increase.
However, if market wealth is declining (threat), this creates risk for premium-priced products.
To counter this, the company needs to adjust its pricing strategy or product positioning to stay competitive and protect its market share.

When Weakness Meets Threat

When a weakness aligns with a threat, you are facing the worst-case scenario. This means that a negative internal factor meets a negative external factor, creating a highly risky situation.

The resulting approach is the Survival Strategy. In this case, the company must pay maximum attention and handle the situation with great care. It’s not enough to simply be aware of the threat — the company must be ready to pivot or adapt if necessary to prevent a potential disaster.
Example:
A company with high fixed costs and no pricing flexibility (weakness) may be operating in a market where customers only seek low-cost products (threat).
In this situation, survival might mean exiting the market altogether and focusing on other segments, or redesigning internal processes to reduce costs and become competitive.

What Does It Mean to Achieve Your Goals?

Follow-up as the foundation of

Reaching your objectives is not just about ticking boxes or completing tasks. It means that your business has successfully moved in the direction you planned — whether that's growth, market position, profitability, impact, or sustainability.



It means that:

- You have prioritized the right actions.
- You have mobilized your resources effectively.
- You have adapted to challenges along the way without losing focus on what truly matters.
- You have created measurable progress toward your vision.

It's not just about reaching the finish line — it's about making meaningful progress that brings your business closer to the future you imagined.

Sometimes, achieving your goals may also mean redefining them as circumstances change, staying flexible while staying true to your purpose.



Congratulations! You're Ready!

Finally, Keep Your Business Plan as a Living Document

Your business plan should not be something you write once and forget. Instead, treat it as a living document — review and update it as needed.

Some years, you may only need to make small adjustments. In other years, you might need to revisit your entire situation analysis and the following sections more thoroughly.

But even when a full review is required, having a solid foundation and clear structure makes the process easier, faster, and much more effective.

The key: Stay flexible, stay focused, and let your plan evolve as your business and the market evolve.

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