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Service Business Plan Template

For a service business that bills by the hour, by the job, or on a recurring plan

Business name: [ ]

Owner(s): [ ]

Service area: [ ]

Contact: [ ]

Plan date: [ ]

Prepared for: [ ]

Template version 1.0, October 2026, by Let's Talk Business Plans.

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How to use this template

- Replace every [bracketed field]. Delete the grey guidance and every shaded box before you send the plan.
- Work through the worksheets in section 5 first (pricing, capacity, contracts). They give you the numbers the other sections ask for.
- Build the full projections in our free Excel workbook, then copy the summary figures into section 8: letstalkbusinessplans.com/posts/excel-business-plan-templates-free-download. Enter your billable hours, jobs or retainer clients as its units.
- The SBA says you don't have to stick to the exact outline: use the sections that make the most sense for your business (SBA: Write your business plan).

Known limitations of this template

- No built-in calculations: Word has none. The arithmetic is laid out for you; the Excel workbook does the full model.
- No market rates, prices or utilization benchmarks. Every number shown is a labelled example.
- No rules for any specific trade, profession or state. Check with your state, county or city and your licensing board.
- The SBA asks for five years of projections with balance sheets, cash flow statements and capital expenditure budgets (SBA). This file holds summary tables only. The 5-year P&L, cash flow and balance sheet are built in the Excel workbook, which has no capital expenditure budget and no historical financials. This file does not cover everything the SBA lists.
- One general file for many kinds of service business.
- Checked in LibreOffice only. It has not been opened in Microsoft Word or Google Docs.
- Not legal, tax, insurance or lending advice.

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One-page summary

Fill this in last, from the sections that follow. Keep it to one page.

Item	Your answer
What we do (services)	[ ]
Who we serve (households / businesses; type)	[ ]
Service area	[ ]
How we charge (pricing model, section 5.2)	[ ]
Revenue at full capacity (section 5.3, line j)	[$]
Month we plan to hire (section 5.3)	[month]
Monthly recurring revenue and largest client's share (section 5.4)	[$] / [%]
Funding request, if any (section 7)	[$] for [uses]
Year 1 sales and net income (section 8.2)	[$] / [$]

1. Executive summary

How to fill this in (delete before sending)
Write this section last, in one page. Say what you do, for whom, how you charge and why it will work.
The SBA describes it as: “Briefly tell your reader what your company is and why it will be successful.” (SBA)
Questions to answer in this section:
- What is the business, in two sentences?
- How do you charge, and what does full capacity earn?
- When will you need to hire?
- How much funding do you need, for what, and how will it be repaid?

- What we do: [services] for [type of client] in [service area].
- How we charge: [hourly / per job / package / retainer / membership], see section 5.2.
- Capacity: [billable hours per week] billable hours a week; revenue at full capacity [$] a year (section 5.3).
- Hiring: we expect booked hours to pass one person's billable hours in [month] (section 5.3).
- Recurring work: [number] signed contracts, [$] a month (section 5.4).
- Funding request: [$] for [uses] (section 7), or: no funding requested.
- Year 1: sales [$], net income [$] (section 8.2).

2. Company description

How to fill this in (delete before sending)
Give the facts a reader checks first: who owns the business, its legal form, where it works and since when.
List the licenses you hold or have applied for here, and keep the detail in section 5.5.
Questions to answer in this section:
- What problem do you solve, and for whom?
- Where do you work: on site, remote or in a shop?

Legal name and structure: [sole proprietor / LLC / corporation / partnership]. Owners: [name, % owned].

Start date: [month, year]. Location or service area: [towns, ZIP codes or radius].

Problem we solve and for whom: [ ].

Licenses and registrations held or applied for: [list] (details in section 5.5).

3. Market analysis

How to fill this in (delete before sending)
Describe your clients and your service area from your own research: calls, quotes, local listings, client conversations. Say where each number comes from.
Do not use market-size or growth figures unless you can link a primary source for each one.
Questions to answer in this section:
- Who buys this service, and how many of them are in your area?
- What do competitors charge, and how do you know?

Target clients: [households / businesses; which kind; how many in the area; how you counted them].

Demand evidence: [waiting lists, quotes requested, letters of intent, repeat clients].

Competitor	Services	Price you found, and where	How you differ
[ ]	[ ]	[$ per ..., source and date]	[ ]
[ ]	[ ]	[$ per ..., source and date]	[ ]
[ ]	[ ]	[$ per ..., source and date]	[ ]

4. Organization and management

How to fill this in (delete before sending)
Show who delivers the work, who sells it and who does the admin. In a small service business that is often one person; say so.

The hours each person can give feed the capacity worksheet in section 5.3.

Questions to answer in this section:

- Who runs the business, and what have they done before?
- How many hours a week can each person work?

Person or role	Delivers / sells / admin	Hours available per week	Experience
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

Advisers: [accountant], [insurance agent], [attorney], [mentor].

5. Service line

How to fill this in (delete before sending)
Describe what you sell, how it is delivered and how long it really takes, including travel and admin.

Then fill in the four worksheets: pricing (5.2), capacity and hiring (5.3), contracts (5.4) and licenses and insurance (5.5).

Questions to answer in this section:

- What exactly does a client get?
- How many hours does each job really take you?

Service types by how they earn (pick the one closest to yours)

- Time-based (consulting, coaching, bookkeeping, marketing or IT services, tutoring): you bill hours, so watch utilization (section 5.3).
- Job- or visit-based (cleaning, lawn care, handyman, mobile services): you price per job, so watch travel time (section 5.2).
- Recurring (retainers, maintenance plans, memberships): watch renewals and your largest client's share (section 5.4).
- Licensed trades and health, legal or financial services: check with your licensing board before you write this section.

5.1 Service menu

Service	What's included	Delivery (on site / remote / in shop)	Time per job (delivery + travel + admin)	Who does it	Pricing model (5.2)
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

5.2 Pricing models and your effective hourly rate

Set prices from your own costs and your own market research; this template gives no market rates. Then check what each price really pays per hour once travel and admin are counted: effective hourly rate = price per unit ÷ total hours per unit. For a retainer or membership, the unit is one client for one month, so use the monthly price and all the hours that client takes in a month.

Model	When it fits	Unit you enter	Price per unit	Total hours per unit (delivery + travel + admin)	Effective hourly rate (price ÷ total hours)
Hourly	Work you can time; advice; open-ended tasks	[ ]	[$]	[ ]	[$]
Per job or visit	Repeatable jobs of a known size	[ ]	[$]	[ ]	[$]
Flat package	A defined result with a set scope	[ ]	[$]	[ ]	[$]
Monthly retainer or maintenance plan	Ongoing work for the same client	[1 client, 1 month]	[$]	[ ]	[$]
Tiered membership	Many clients on a standard plan	[1 member, 1 month]	[$]	[ ]	[$]

Example — replace with your numbers. A hypothetical business

Model	Example unit	Price	Delivery hours	Travel hours	Admin hours	Total hours	Effective hourly rate
Hourly	1 billed hour of consulting	$150	1	0	0.25	1.25	$120
Per job or visit	1 home cleaning job	$130	2.5	0.5	0.25	3.25	$40
Flat package	1 bookkeeping clean-up package	$1,200	12	0	3	15	$80
Monthly retainer or maintenance plan	1 coaching client for 1 month	$1,500	8	0	2	10	$150
Tiered membership	1 member for 1 month	$97	0.4	0	0.1	0.5	$194

Example — replace with your numbers. Revenue in three service patterns

Pattern	Example inputs	Result
Time-based (consulting)	10 billed hours × $150	$1,500 a week
Job-based (cleaning)	6 jobs × $130	$780 a week
Recurring (coaching)	3 retainer clients × $1,500 + 10 members × $97	$5,470 a month

Weeks and months: a year has 52 weeks, so a month averages 52 ÷ 12 weeks. Example — replace with your numbers: $1,500 a week is $6,500 a month ($1,500 × 52 ÷ 12), not $6,000. Use the same basis everywhere in your plan.

5.3 Capacity, utilization and the hire trigger

Fill this in per person, or for the whole business. Utilization depends on your work: enter your own number. This template gives no default.

Line	Worksheet	Yours	Example — replace with your numbers
a	Hours available per week	[ ]	40
b	Admin hours per week	[ ]	4
c	Travel hours per week	[ ]	4
d	Sales and quoting hours per week	[ ]	2
e	Billable hours per week = a − b − c − d	[ ]	30
f	Utilization = e ÷ a	[%]	75%
g	Weeks worked per year	[ ]	48
h	Billable hours per year = e × g	[ ]	1,440
i	Price per billable hour (from 5.2)	[$]	$50
j	Revenue at full capacity = h × i	[$]	$72,000
k	One person's billable hours per month = h ÷ 12	[ ]	120

Share of capacity you expect to fill in Year 1, by month: enter it as booked hours in the table below.

Hire trigger: the first month in which booked hours are more than one person's billable hours (line k). Fill in your booked hours for each month of Year 1.

One person's billable hours per month (line k). Yours: [ ]. Example — replace with your numbers: 120.

Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Example — replace with your numbers: booked hours	60	70	80	90	95	100	105	110	115	120	125	130
Your booked hours	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Your booked hours above line k? (Y/N)	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

First month booked hours exceed one person's billable hours. Yours: [month]. Example — replace with your numbers: month 11 (125 hours booked against 120).

Who does the extra work: employee or contractor? This is a choice with tax and legal consequences. The IRS looks at the whole relationship and "the extent of the right to direct and control the worker" (IRS: Independent contractor or employee?). Either side can file Form SS-8 to ask the IRS to decide (IRS: About

Form SS-8). The SBA warns that a contractor found to meet the legal definition of an employee can mean back taxes and penalties (SBA: Manage your business). Check with the IRS and your state.

If you hire employees: the SBA says you will pay state employment taxes that vary by state and often include workers' compensation insurance and unemployment insurance taxes. The rules vary by state (SBA: Manage your business). Check with your state.

Our plan: [hire an employee / use a subcontractor / both] in [month], for [role and hours].

Scheduling and travel: [how you will group jobs by area, your booking system, travel time between jobs].

5.4 Contracts and recurring revenue

List every client with a contract or a regular plan, signed or still in the pipeline. Client type is enough; you don't need names. If you are asking for a loan, ask your lender what it requires.

Client type	Service	Price	Billing frequency	Start	Term	Renewal date	Notice period	Signed or pipeline
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

- Monthly recurring revenue = the monthly value of all signed recurring contracts: [$].
- Largest client's share of revenue = the largest client's yearly revenue ÷ total yearly revenue: [%].
- Signed versus pipeline: [%] of next year's revenue is signed, [%] is pipeline.

Seasonality: your expected sales in each calendar month, as a % of an average month (100% = average).

Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Sales, % of average	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

Enter the same pattern in the Excel workbook: Assumptions, section 4 (Seasonality).

5.5 Licenses, permits and insurance checklist

Fill in one row per item. This template states no rule for any trade, profession or state: the right answer depends on what you do and where. The SBA says license and permit "requirements and fees vary based on your business activities, location, and government rules" (SBA: licenses and permits).

Item	Applies to me?	Issued by	Status	Date	Cost	Where to check
Business registration (state)	[Y/N]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[$]	SBA: licenses and permits (Secretary of State)
Federal EIN	[Y/N]	IRS	[ ]	[ ]	free from the IRS	IRS: Get an EIN
State and local business license	[Y/N]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[$]	SBA: licenses and permits
Trade or professional license	[Y/N]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[$]	Your state licensing board
Home-occupation permit or zoning	[Y/N]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[$]	SBA: local zoning (city planning office)
Sales tax on services	[Y/N]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[$]	Your state tax agency
General liability insurance	[Y/N]	[insurer]	[ ]	[ ]	[$ a year]	SBA: business insurance
Professional liability insurance	[Y/N]	[insurer]	[ ]	[ ]	[$ a year]	SBA: business insurance
Commercial auto (if you drive to jobs)	[Y/N]	[insurer]	[ ]	[ ]	[$ a year]	Your insurer
Workers' compensation and unemployment insurance (if you hire)	[Y/N]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[$]	SBA: rules vary by state
Bonding (if clients ask for it)	[Y/N]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[$]	Your insurer or the client

What the SBA says about insurance: its table describes general liability insurance as for "Any business" and professional liability insurance as for "Businesses that provide services to customers". It also says "Laws requiring insurance vary by state. Visit your state's website to find out the requirements for your business." (SBA: Get business insurance)

Zoning: the SBA says "zoning ordinances can still apply even to home-based businesses" and to check with your city planning office (SBA: Launch your business).

6. Marketing and sales

How to fill this in (delete before sending)
Describe how clients find you, how a quote becomes a job, and how you keep clients coming back.
Put the marketing budget in the Excel workbook (OpEx tab) and copy the total here.
Questions to answer in this section:
- How will your first clients find you?
- How many quotes do you send for each job you win?

- How clients find us: [referrals / local search / directories / partners / signs on the van].
- Sales steps: [enquiry → visit or call → written quote → follow-up → booked job].
- Quotes sent per job won: [ ]. Time from first contact to first job: [ ].
- Repeat and referral work: [how you ask for it; what share you expect].
- Marketing budget: [$ a month] (Excel workbook: OpEx tab).

7. Funding request

How to fill this in (delete before sending)
The SBA asks you to explain "how much funding you'll need over the next five years and what you'll use it for" (SBA).

Skip this section if you are not asking for money. Make the amount match section 8.1.

Questions to answer in this section:

- How much do you need, and is it debt or equity?
- What will each dollar buy?
- How will it be repaid from the business's cash flow?

- Amount requested: [$], as [a loan / a line of credit / equity], over [term].
- Use of funds: [equipment $, vehicle $, startup costs $, working capital $] (Excel: Startup & Funding tab).
- Owner equity: [$].
- Repayment: monthly payment [$]; debt service coverage [x] in Year 1 (Excel: Loan and Key Ratios tabs). Ask your lender what it requires.

8. Financial projections

How to fill this in (delete before sending)
The SBA asks for "a prospective financial outlook for the next five years", with income statements, balance sheets, cash flow statements and capital expenditure budgets, and quarterly or monthly projections for the first year (SBA).

Build the numbers in the free Excel workbook (60 months, rolled up to 5 years): letstalkbusinessplans.com/posts/excel-business-plan-templates-free-download. Copy the summary figures below and attach the printouts (section 10).

This file holds summary tables only. It has no capital expenditure budget or historical financials.

Questions to answer in this section:

- Do the projections match the funding request?
- What has to be true for these numbers to happen?

8.1 Startup costs and funding (sources and uses)

From the Excel workbook, Startup & Funding tab

Uses of funds	Amount	Sources of funds	Amount
Equipment and tools	[$]	Loan	[$]
Vehicle	[$]	Owner equity	[$]
Licenses, insurance deposits and fees	[$]	Investor equity	[$]
Marketing before opening	[$]		
Working-capital reserve	[$]		
Total uses	**[$]**	**Total sources**	**[$]**

8.2 Profit and loss summary, Years 1 to 5

From the Excel workbook, P&L tab (annual columns)

Line	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Sales	[$]	[$]	[$]	[$]	[$]
Direct costs	[$]	[$]	[$]	[$]	[$]
Gross profit	[$]	[$]	[$]	[$]	[$]
Payroll	[$]	[$]	[$]	[$]	[$]
Operating expenses	[$]	[$]	[$]	[$]	[$]
EBITDA	[$]	[$]	[$]	[$]	[$]
Net income	[$]	[$]	[$]	[$]	[$]

8.3 Cash, break-even and the loan

From the Excel workbook, Key Ratios and Cash Flow tabs

Line	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Ending cash	[$]	[$]	[$]	[$]	[$]
Lowest month-end cash (and month)	[$] ([month])	[$] ([month])	[$] ([month])	[$] ([month])	[$] ([month])
Annual debt service	[$]	[$]	[$]	[$]	[$]
Debt service coverage ratio	[x]	[x]	[x]	[x]	[x]

Break-even sales per month (Excel: Break-Even tab): [$] on a profit basis, [$] on a cash basis.

8.4 Balance sheet

The balance sheet at each year-end (total assets, liabilities and equity) is on the Excel workbook's Balance Sheet tab. Copy the five year-end columns here or attach the printout in section 10: [ ].

Main assumptions: [billable hours, prices, utilization, hiring month, wages, rent, insurance, loan terms].

9. Risks and what you'll do

How to fill this in (delete before sending)
For each risk, change the matching input in the Excel workbook and note what happens to cash. Then write what you would do. No probabilities needed.

Questions to answer in this section:

- What could stop the work, and how long could you cover the bills?

Risk	What to change in the workbook	Effect on cash	Your plan (reserve or action)
The owner can't work for a month	No sales for one month	[ ]	[ ]
The largest client leaves	Remove that client's revenue	[ ]	[ ]
A slow season	Lower the seasonality for those months	[ ]	[ ]
You must cut prices	Lower the price per unit	[ ]	[ ]
A license or insurance renewal costs more	Raise that operating expense	[ ]	[ ]

10. Appendix checklist

This appendix is our addition, not one of the SBA's sections. Attach what your reader asks for and tick it.

☐ License and permit copies; insurance certificates

☐ Sample client contract or service agreement

☐ Client letters of intent

☐ Price list

☐ Resumes of the owners and key staff

☐ Excel workbook printouts: P&L, Cash Flow, Balance Sheet, Key Ratios (monthly for Year 1)

☐ Quotes for equipment or vehicles you plan to buy

Sources for the rules quoted in this template: SBA (Plan your business; Launch your business; Manage your business) and IRS pages, opened October 16, 2026. The links are in each section.