

Writing an executive summary

What is an executive summary? :

An executive summary provides a concise and structured overview of a more comprehensive document, such as a business plan, report, or proposal. It represents the most critical component of a business plan, as it is often the only section reviewed by investors or lenders before deciding whether to examine the full document. The executive summary should effectively convey the significance of the business concept and capture the reader's interest. Its primary objective is to give busy stakeholders a clear understanding of the key objectives, findings, and recommendations without requiring a full review of the entire document.

Key features of an executive summary:

- **Concise:** Usually 1–2 pages long.
- **Highlights main points:** Summarizes the purpose, goals, and key information of the document.
- **Persuasive:** Shows why the project, idea, or plan is important and worth attention.
- **Self-contained:** Readers should understand the main message without reading the full document.
- **Focuses on results and recommendations:** Includes outcomes, benefits, or conclusions.

Core Elements to Cover in an Executive Summary:

- **Overview of the Business Concept** – Provide a brief, one- or two-sentence description of your business idea.

- **Description of Products or Services** – Explain what you offer and the specific problems your product or service addresses for your target customers.
- **Business Goals and Milestones** – Outline the objectives of your business and where you aim to be in one, three, and five years.
- **Target Market Identification** – Define your ideal customers and the specific market segment your business intends to serve.
- **Competitive Landscape and Differentiation** – Identify key competitors and highlight what sets your business apart, including your unique selling proposition.
- **Management Team and Expertise** – Present the experience and qualifications of your team members that provide a competitive advantage.
- **Financial Outlook and Funding Requirements** – Summarize your financial projections, funding needs, and how the capital will be used to enhance profitability.

Example:

Apple Inc. is a leading global technology company that designs, manufactures, and markets a wide range of hardware, software, and digital services, creating a seamless and integrated user experience. Its product portfolio includes iconic devices such as the iPhone, iPad, Mac, Apple Watch, and Apple TV, complemented by services like the App Store, iCloud, Apple Music, Apple Pay, and Apple TV+, which together form a unique ecosystem that enhances customer loyalty. Apple targets a broad international market of consumers and professionals who value high-quality, reliable, and user-friendly technology. The company maintains a strong competitive position through its vertically integrated business model, brand reputation, and commitment to privacy and security, which differentiate it from competitors. Under the leadership of CEO Tim Cook, the management team brings extensive expertise in

design, technology, operations, and marketing, driving innovation and global growth. Apple's diversified revenue streams, combining high-volume hardware sales with high-margin services, provide financial stability and support ongoing investment in research, development, and market expansion, ensuring long-term profitability and sustained market leadership.

Tips for Writing an Effective Executive Summary

- **Keep it concise:** Limit your summary to 1–2 pages, focusing on the most important information.
- **Use clear and simple language:** Avoid jargon and overly technical terms so any reader can understand it.
- **Be persuasive:** Highlight why the project, idea, or business is valuable and worth attention.
- **Make it self-contained:** Readers should grasp the main message without needing to read the full document.
- **Focus on results and recommendations:** Include key outcomes, benefits, or conclusions.
- **End with a call to action:** Clearly state what you want the reader to do next, such as reviewing the full business plan, approving the project, or discussing investment opportunities.