



## Writing a Business Plan

By FIRST Team 2506



In order to write an effective business plan, you first need a solid mission statement. The mission statement should include your team's purpose, how it will achieve that purpose, and the values that the team embodies. The mission statement is the overall vision of the team, and so should have strong team buy-in and be written so that it will still be true for a minimum of five years.

FIRST robotics requires an Executive Summary, which is presented as part of the Judge's packets. FIRST prescribes what should be in the plan and posts it on the FIRST website ([www.usfirst.org](http://www.usfirst.org)). Be sure to check to make sure you are including the required elements.

Putting a team together to write the plan is beneficial because it gives you a variety of skills and perspectives. The core business plan team will also regularly obtain information from other team members.

The body of the business plan can include many things. Consider your target audience when writing the plan. In the business world, the business plan is generally written for potential investors and stakeholders in the business (employees, lenders, owners) to give a summary of where the business has been, where it is now, and where it wants to go. The FIRST robotics team business plan stakeholders will likely be sponsors, potential sponsors, team members, and potential team members and can include information similar to that included for businesses.

Items to consider including:

- Team history - include significant events in developing the team and its participation in competitions over the years
- Information regarding FIRST Robotics
- Team composition and team growth – male/female, students/mentors
- Things the team would like to work in to make it better and how it will address those perceived needs, possibly segregated by short-term, medium-term, and long-term
- What the team does within the school and community to fulfill the mission of FIRST
- Information on significant sponsors and sponsorship levels
- Organizational structure of the team – this may change based on pre-season, build season, and at competition
- Responsibilities of team members
- Requirements to become and remain a team member – application process, minimum GPA
- Achievements of team members related to STEM – high school graduation percentage, college acceptance and majors, scholarships

Various team members can take responsibility for writing different sections of the plan. So that it reads as though it was written by one person, someone should take responsibility for reviewing the entire plan and rewriting in a cohesive style.

In addition, it is a good idea to have others review the plan for accuracy, including other team members and mentors. Remember that the business plan should support the team mission statement, so also keep that in mind as you review.