



Executive Summary

Executive summaries provide a brief summary of a larger document and are meant to persuade decision makers to read the larger work. The executive summary is typically the first document of the body of a report or proposal, and it should function independently of the larger document. The importance of the executive summary cannot be overstressed.

1. Goals:

- A. To balance the purpose with the customer's needs and to demonstrate that you understand his or her needs.
- B. To recommend the solution and explain its value.
- C. To address the reasons why your company is the best for the job.

2. Formatting:

Divide the summary into two main sections: "Background" and "Findings and Implications." The executive summary will follow the organization of the proposal, report, or plan and you are providing the scope, in summary, of the larger document.

- A. Background: This section can contain one or more paragraphs.
 - I. Include a very precise statement of purpose (the point of the proposal or report).
 - II. Include the bottom line (cost and time frame, recommendations, etc.).
 - III. Provide a brief explanation of the problem or need.
 - IV. Provide a summary of the methodology or strategies in a new paragraph. If you are proposing or recommending a new product, you would use this opportunity to explain what was wrong with the old product or process.
 - V. Provide the scope of the proposal, report, or plan.
 - VI. Provide a statement of your company's or your qualifications.
- B. Findings and Implications: In this section, you will include any information in order of importance.
 - I. Include a brief description of costs and benefits and add the expected dates of completion.
 - II. Write a full paragraph that summarizes the conclusions, any recommendations, and any deliverables associated with your conclusions. Divide the conclusion and recommendations into two separate paragraphs.

3. Language and Length:

- A. Use formal language—avoid technical or figurative language.
- B. The length of the executive summary should be ten percent of the total pages of the proposal, report, or plan.
- C. Create the summary as a document that can stand alone.

4. Additional Information:

- A. Avoid jargon-filled language.
- B. Use typography to organize and highlight your information. Divide the sections of the summary into main headings.
- C. Place the executive summary at the beginning of the body of the document.
- D. Spell out acronyms and any unusual symbols—again, consider your readers.



- E. Write a clear and concise summary, but do not create a shorthand document. Use a variety of sentence structures and implement the use of transitions.

Note: If you are writing an executive summary for a business plan, make certain that you have included the elements listed below.

- 5. Business Plan Specifics:** If you do not write a good executive summary, the likelihood of your business plan being successful is slim. The specific elements of an executive summary for a business plan are listed below:
- A. First paragraph provides the reader with the purpose statement. Immediately following the purpose statement, provide an overview of your company. Think who, what, where, and why? Who is the company, what is it, where is it, and why is it worthy of this attention?
 - B. What market opportunities will this business have that makes this a worthy business opportunity? Briefly describe the competition, how you will fit in, and what sets you apart.
 - C. Money issues: How much money the business needs, what the money will be used for, and how the money will be repaid.
 - D. Mission and Vision Statement: A mission statement summarizes the purpose of the business, and the vision statement broadly describes the future of the company.
 - E. Management: Who are they, what are their strengths, their experiences, and their education?
 - F. Competition: Provide a list of those businesses that will indirectly and directly compete with your company. List their strengths and their weaknesses.
 - G. Your company's advantages. Be specific.
 - H. Financial Projections: Provide a summary of the income statement projections for three years, and if this has been an ongoing business, provide the past three years.