**Business Report Guidance & Structure**

For your coursework, you are tasked with writing a 2,000 word **report** on a business idea of your choice. Your business idea can be anything you like, big or small as long as it is both feasible, sustainable and legal. The business must also be financially viable (needs to make money!), and the report must convince the reader it will succeed. As writing a business report is a new task for most of you, a template has been provided below for which you all **must** follow.

You must use material from the lectures, tutorials and your own research to **justify** your choices. The report must include the following sections:

* Executive Summary
* Company Overview
* Product and/or service, What are you trying to sell?
* Market and Industry Analysis
* Marketing
* Operations
* Organisational Structure and HR
* Corporate Social Responsibility
* Financial Reflection
* List of References
* List of Appendices

The template will give more detail on each of these sections.

**Further Information:**

**Do not** write in the first person e.g. My business… I will… I have… This is sloppy academic practice.

**You must use the course materials and theory.** Throughout the course, you will be introduced to various different materials that will help you both develop and express your business idea. USE THEM!

**Remember this is an academic course.** This means that each section should have an introductory paragraph complete with references, on what each function entails and its importance (this does not have to be too long). E.g. in the marketing section, you should introduce what marketing is, and its importance to business.

**You must reference**. Referencing is crucial as it provides the evidence for the claims and statements you make. Within a Business Plan - or any of your future essays - you are essentially forming an argument to convince the reader/marker of your argument. These references must also be credible (meaning no Wikipedia, Mindtools etc…), in academic work, we use Journal Articles as they are the most credible sources of research. Within the report you must have **at least 10 individual references** stemming from **academic Journal Articles**. Any fewer than this, you will be penalised!

Think of it as your were in a court case, and the references were your witnesses for your version of events. The references give backing to what you say, and the more credible they are (Journal Articles), the more weight is added to your argument.

# Business Report Template Structure – Please Follow!

**Cover Sheet**

Include your HW ID number, Word Count, Business Name and maybe even a company logo (not strictly necessary).

**Table of Contents**

[EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 3](#_Toc505585685)

[COMPANY OVERVIEW 3](#_Toc505585686)

[PRODUCT AND/OR SERVICE 3](#_Toc505585687)

[MARKET AND INDUSTRY ANALYSIS 3](#_Toc505585688)

[MARKETING 3](#_Toc505585689)

[OPERATIONS 3](#_Toc505585690)

[ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE & HR 4](#_Toc505585691)

[CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY 4](#_Toc505585692)

[FINANCIAL REFLECTION 4](#_Toc505585693)

[LIST OF REFERENCES 5](#_Toc505585694)

[LIST OF APPENDICES 5](#_Toc505585695)

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A 300 word brief of what is contained in the business report – this is not included in the word count.

# COMPANY OVERVIEW

Introduce what a company is (look back at lecture 2), and then give an overview of what your business is. Academically reference this section. You may also include.

**Mission & Vision Statement**

**Objectives**

**Legal Structure**

# PRODUCT AND/OR SERVICE

Explain what the product/service is. Your report should also include:

**Features (the augmented product/service)**

**Benefits (value proposition)**

# MARKET AND INDUSTRY ANALYSIS

An academically referenced introduction paragraph to the importance of market and industry analysis. Your report should include:

**Industry Analysis – Porters 5 forces (explain what it is and why is it useful – use academic references)**

**Market size and Trends - Secondary Research, how big is the market/industry, is it growing or retrenching?**

**Competition + analysis – Secondary Research**

**Segmentation – Explain what segmentation is and how you decided on the chosen segment – this should be in the form of primary research, of which you can house the questions used and results yielded in the appendix**

# MARKETING

Introduce the importance of marketing, remember to use academic references. Your report should then include:

**4 Ps (make sure you link this directly to your chosen segment)**

**Competitive Strategy (think Porter)**

**SWOT Analysis**

**Positioning**

# OPERATIONS

Introduction what operations is using references. You may then include:

**Scope of operations**

**Product Life Cycle**

**Ongoing operations**

**Product/Service processes**

**Supply chain – Lean or agile?**

# ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE & HR

Introduction paragraph must be an academically referenced rationale, you may include:

**Organisational Chart**

**Recruitment Strategy**

**Management Team**

**Main job roles**

# CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

An academically referenced paragraph on what CSR is, its importance and how it is used in your business.

# FINANCIAL REFLECTION

A brief consideration of how much capital you expect is needed to start up the business and where you will get it from. This course does not teach anything financial and so this section holds little weight in the marking. It does however have to be feasible.

# LIST OF REFERENCES

* **Use at least 10 academic journal articles: no MINDTOOLS, Wiki, Business Balls, Answers.com allowed.**
* **Follow the Harvard Referencing style**
* **LoR is not part of word count**
* **Citations MUST CORRELATE with LoR**

# LIST OF APPENDICES

You can put all of you models such as Porter’s 5 forces, or SWOT analysis here in the Appendix. It does not count towards the word count, and you can refer to them in your main body.