



10 Questions to Ask Before Hiring a Business Plan Writer

Working with a business plan writer can be a great way to get your business plan done. A good business plan writer has written potentially hundreds of business plans and knows what works and what doesn't. They know how to do good market research and the ins and outs of putting together a solid financial forecast.

With a good writer, you gain access to expertise that you may not have and potentially save time. Time you can spend focusing on getting your business up and running.

But, how do you know if you're hiring a good business plan writer? Here are 10 critical questions that you should ask when you're interviewing a business plan writer or a business plan writing company.

1. Who is going to write your plan?

When you are shopping for someone to write your business plan, you'll mostly end up talking to business plan writing companies, not individuals. If that's the case, you'll likely talk to a salesperson or project manager who will manage your business plan writing process. Not the person who will write your business plan.

It's important to ask and get the details about the person or team of people who will write your business plan. You should be able to get details on their experience, the types of plans they've written, and their business background.

2. Is your plan writer based in your region?

Time zones and language barriers can cause communication breakdowns when working with people remotely. You'll want to be sensitive to that and find someone whose schedule and communication style is compatible with your own.

3. How will my writer and I share information?

There is a lot of information that you will share during the plan writing process. Will you be submitting forms, making phone calls, sending emails, etc? You'll want to know so you can be

prepared. This will help keep the plan writing process moving forward by submitting information to your writer in the proper format, as it is requested.

4. Will your plan include market research for your specific industry and location?

Market research is an important part of any business plan. This research will show how large your market is — ie. how many potential customers will your business have. Investors will look for this section of your business plan and expect to find solid data here.

5. How many rounds of revisions will your plan writer do for you?

The first pass of any document is rarely perfect — find out if your plan writer will offer revisions, and what type of edits will be covered when they do. You'll want to know how many revisions are provided and what the process is like.

6. What format will your plan be delivered in?

Will your plan be delivered in an editable, formatted text document? A flattened pdf? Can it be easily shared with other business partners and lenders? Do you have a say in the format you get?

If your plan is delivered as a PDF that you can't easily edit, you'll want to know what the process will be like to request any changes from your business plan writer. Or if it's possible to have access to multiple document formats.

7. Can you make your own edits to the plan after it is delivered to you?

Things can change quickly as your business moves forward. You'll want to be certain that your plan is delivered in a format that can be adapted over time.

8. How much will future changes to your plan or financial model cost?

You might need to update your lease location or the bank may approve you for a different loan amount than you asked for, resulting in a request for an updated copy of your plan. If you can't make edits to your financial model yourself, you'll want to know the cost of any changes and if there will be a way for you to make your own changes.

9. Is business planning software included?

Business plans are living, breathing documents, and should be able to help you start, run, and expand your business. Some plan writing services provide you with a finalized business plan document — but not the next steps or the tools to update it as your business changes and grows. Other plan writers will provide you with software or other tools to make it easy to update your own plan and track your progress as your business grows.

10. Will you be provided with tools to track your progress against your plan?

Keeping your plan up to date and adjusting your goals is an important part of running a successful business. Are you staying on budget and meeting your sales goals?

Once you're up and running and are tracking your sales and expenses in your accounting software, you should regularly compare your progress to your business plan. Having access to the tools to do that upfront is invaluable. You'll want to know if that's included with your plan or if you'll need to purchase it yourself.

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