

# How to Start an Landscaping Business

By the [BizMove.com](http://BizMove.com) Team

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## 1. Determining the Feasibility of Your New Business

### A. Preliminary Analysis

This guide is a checklist for the owner/manager of a business enterprise or for one contemplating going into business for the first time. The questions concentrate on areas you must consider seriously to determine if your idea represents a real business opportunity and if you can really know what you are getting into. You can use it to evaluate a completely new venture proposal or an apparent opportunity in your existing business.

Perhaps the most crucial problem you will face after expressing an interest in starting a new business or capitalizing on an apparent opportunity in your existing business will be determining the feasibility of your idea. Getting into the right business at the right time is simple advice, but advice that is extremely difficult to implement. The high failure rate of new businesses and products indicates that very few ideas result in successful business ventures, even when introduced by well established firm. Too many entrepreneurs strike out on a business venture so convinced of its merits that they fail to thoroughly evaluate its potential.

This checklist should be useful to you in evaluating a business idea. It is designed to help you screen out ideas that are likely to fail before you invest extensive time, money, and effort in them.

### **Preliminary Analysis**

A feasibility study involves gathering, analyzing and evaluating information with the purpose of answering the question: "Should I go into this business?" Answering this question involves first a preliminary assessment of both personal and project considerations.

### **General Personal Considerations**

The first seven questions ask you to do a little introspection. Are your personality characteristics such that you can both adapt to and enjoy business ownership/management?

1. Do you like to make your own decisions?
2. Do you enjoy competition?
3. Do you have will power and self-discipline?
4. Do you plan ahead?
5. Do you get things done on time?
6. Can you take advice from others?
7. Are you adaptable to changing conditions?

The next series of questions stress the physical, emotional, and financial strains of a new business.

8. Do you understand that owning your own business may entail working 12 to 16 hours a day, probably six days a week, and maybe on holidays?
9. Do you have the physical stamina to handle a business?
10. Do you have the emotional strength to withstand the strain?
11. Are you prepared to lower your standard of living for several months or years?
12. Are you prepared to lose your savings?

### **Specific Personal Considerations**

1. Do you know which skills and areas of expertise are critical to the success of your project?
2. Do you have these skills?
3. Does your idea effectively utilize your own skills and abilities?
4. Can you find personnel that have the expertise you lack?
5. Do you know why you are considering this project?
6. Will your project effectively meet your career aspirations

The next three questions emphasize the point that very few people can claim expertise in all phases of a feasibility study. You should realize your personal limitations and seek appropriate assistance where necessary (i.e. marketing, legal, financial).

7. Do you have the ability to perform the feasibility study?
8. Do you have the time to perform the feasibility study?
9. Do you have the money to pay for the feasibility study done?

#### General Project Description

1. Briefly describe the business you want to enter.

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2. List the products and/or services you want to sell

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3. Describe who will use your products/services

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4. Why would someone buy your product/service?

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5. What kind of location do you need in terms of type of neighborhood, traffic count, nearby firms, etc.?

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6. List your product/services suppliers.

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7. List your major competitors - those who sell or provide like products/services.

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8. List the labor and staff you require to provide your products/services. \_\_\_\_\_

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## **B. Requirements For Success**

To determine whether your idea meets the basic requirements for a successful new project, you must be able to answer at least one of the following questions with a "yes."

1. Does the product/service/business serve a presently unserved need?
2. Does the product/service/business serve an existing market in which demand exceeds supply?
3. Can the product/service/business successfully compete with an existing competition because of an "advantageous situation," such as better price, location, etc.?

### **Major Flaws**

A "Yes" response to questions such as the following would indicate that the idea has little chance for success.

1. Are there any causes (i.e., restrictions, monopolies, shortages) that make any of the required factors of production unavailable (i.e., unreasonable cost, scarce skills, energy, material, equipment, processes, technology, or personnel)?
2. Are capital requirements for entry or continuing operations excessive?
3. Is adequate financing hard to obtain?
4. Are there potential detrimental environmental effects?
5. Are there factors that prevent effective marketing?

## **C. Desired Income**

The following questions should remind you that you must seek both a return on your investment in your own business as well as a reasonable salary for the time you spend in operating that business.

1. How much income do you desire?

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2. Are you prepared to earn less income in the first 1-3 years?

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3. What minimum income do you require?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What financial investment will be required for your business?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. How much could you earn by investing this money?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. How much could you earn by working for someone else?

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Add the amounts in 5 and 6. If this income is greater than what you can realistically expect from your business, are you prepared to forego this additional income just to be your own boss with the only prospects of more substantial profit/income in future years?

\_\_\_\_\_

8. What is the average return on investment for a business of your type? \_\_\_\_\_

#### **D. Preliminary Income Statement**

Besides return on investment, you need to know the income and expenses for your business. You show profit or loss and derive operating ratios on the income statement. Dollars are the (actual, estimated, or industry average) amounts for income and expense categories. Operating ratios are expressed as percentages of net sales and show relationships of expenses and net sales.

For instance 50,000 in net sales equals 100% of sales income (revenue). Net profit after taxes equals 3.14% of net sales. The hypothetical "X" industry average after tax net profit might be 5% in a given year for firms with 50,000 in net sales. First you estimate or forecast income (revenue) and expense dollars and ratios for your business. Then compare your estimated or actual performance with your industry average. Analyze differences to see why you are doing better or worse than the competition or why your venture does or doesn't look like it will float.

These basic financial statistics are generally available for most businesses from trade and industry associations, government agencies, universities and private companies and banks

Forecast your own income statement. Do not be influenced by industry figures. Your estimates must be as accurate as possible or else you will have a false impression.

1. What is the normal markup in this line of business. i.e., the dollar difference between the cost of goods sold and sales, expressed as a percentage of sales?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What is the average cost of goods sold percentage of sales?

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3. What is the average inventory turnover, i.e., the number of times the average inventory is sold each year?

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4. What is the average gross profit as a percentage of sales?

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5. What are the average expenses as a percentage of sales?

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6. What is the average net profit as a percent of sales?

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7. Take the preceding figures and work backwards using a standard income statement format and determine the level of sales necessary to support your desired income level.

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8. From an objective, practical standpoint, is this level of sales, expenses and profit attainable?

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**ANY BUSINESS, INC.**  
Condensed Hypothetical Income Statement  
For year ending December 31

Item	Amount	Percent
Gross sales	773,888	
Less returns, allowances, and cash discounts	14,872	
Net sales	<hr/> 759,016	100.00
Cost of goods sold	589,392	77.65
Gross profit on sales	<hr/> 169,624	<hr/> 22.35
Selling expenses	41,916	5.52
Administrative expenses	28,010	3.69
General expenses	50,030	6.59
Financial expenses	5,248	0.69
Total expenses	<hr/> 125,204	<hr/> 16.50
Operating profit	44,220	5.85
Extraordinary expenses	1,200	0.16
Net profit before taxes	<hr/> 43,220	<hr/> 5.69
taxes	19,542	2.57
Net profit after taxes	<hr/> 23,678	<hr/> 3.12

### E. Market Analysis

The primary objective of a market analysis is to arrive at a realistic projection of sales. after answering the following questions you will be in a better positions to answer question eight immediately above.

#### Population

1. Define the geographical areas from which you can realistically expect to draw customers.

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What is the population of these areas?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What do you know about the population growth trend in these areas? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What is the average family size?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. What is the age distribution?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. What is the per capita income?

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7. What are the consumers' attitudes toward business like yours?

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8. What do you know about consumer shopping and spending patterns relative to your type of business?

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9. Is the price of your product/service especially important to your target market?

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10. Can you appeal to the entire market?

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11. If you appeal to only a market segment, is it large enough to be profitable?

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## **F. Competition**

1. Who are your major competitors?

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2. What are the major strengths of each?

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3. What are the major weaknesses of each?

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4. Are you familiar with the following factors concerning your competitors:

Price structure?

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Product lines (quality, breadth, width)?

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Location?

---



Promotional activities?

---

Sources of supply?

---

Image from a consumer's viewpoint?

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5. Do you know of any new competitors?

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6. Do you know of any competitor's plans for expansion?

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7. Have any firms of your type gone out of business lately?

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8. If so, why?

---

9. Do you know the sales and market share of each competitor?

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10. Do you know whether the sales and market share of each competitor are increasing, decreasing, or stable?

---

11. Do you know the profit levels of each competitor?

---

12. Are your competitors' profits increasing, decreasing, or stable?

---

13. Can you compete with your competition?

---

## **G. Sales**

1. Determine the total sales volume in your market area.

\_\_\_\_\_

2. How accurate do you think your forecast of total sales is?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Did you base your forecast on concrete data?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Is the estimated sales figure "normal" for your market area?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Is the sales per square foot for your competitors above the normal average?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Are there conditions, or trends, that could change your forecast of total sales?

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Do you expect to carry items in inventory from season to season, or do you plan to mark down products occasionally to eliminate inventories? If you do not carry over inventory, have you adequately considered the effect of mark-down in your pricing? (Your gross profits margin may be too low.)

\_\_\_\_\_

8. How do you plan to advertise and promote your product/service/business?

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Forecast the share of the total market that you can realistically expect - as a dollar amount and as a percentage of your market.

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Are you sure that you can create enough competitive advantages to achieve the market share in your forecast of the previous question?

\_\_\_\_\_

11. Is your forecast of dollar sales greater than the sales amount needed to guarantee your desired or minimum income?

\_\_\_\_\_

12. Have you been optimistic or pessimistic in your forecast of sales? \_\_\_\_\_

13. Do you need to hire an expert to refine the sales forecast?

\_\_\_\_\_

14. Are you willing to hire an expert to refine the sales forecast?

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## **H. Supply**

1. Can you make a list of every item of inventory and operating supplies needed?
2. Do you know the quantity, quality, technical specifications, and price ranges desired?
3. Do you know the name and location of each potential source of supply?
4. Do you know the price ranges available for each product from each supplier?
5. Do you know about the delivery schedules for each supplier?
6. Do you know the sales terms of each supplier?
7. Do you know the credit terms of each supplier?
8. Do you know the financial condition of each supplier?
9. Is there a risk of shortage for any critical materials or merchandise?
10. Are you aware of which supplies have an advantage relative to transportation costs?
11. Will the price available allow you to achieve an adequate markup?

## **I. Expenses**

1. Do you know what your expenses will be for: rent, wages, insurance, utilities, advertising, interest, etc?
2. Do you need to know which expenses are Direct, Indirect, or Fixed?
3. Do you know how much your overhead will be?
4. Do you know how much your selling expenses will be?

### **Miscellaneous**

1. Are you aware of the major risks associated with your product? Service Business?
2. Can you minimize any of these major risks?
3. Are there major risks beyond your control?
4. Can these risks bankrupt you? (fatal flaws)

## **J. Venture Feasibility**

1. Are there any major questions remaining about your proposed venture?
2. Do the above questions arise because of a lack of data?
3. Do the above questions arise because of a lack of management skills?
4. Do the above questions arise because of a "fatal flaw" in your idea?
5. Can you obtain the additional data needed?

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## **2. Starting Your Business Step by Step**

### **A. Things to Consider Before You Start**

This guide will walk you step by step through all the essential phases of starting a successful service business. To profit in a service based business, you need to consider the following questions: What business am I in? What services do I provide? Where is my market? Who will buy? Who is my competition? What is my sales strategy? What merchandising methods will I use? How much money is needed to operate my firm? How will I get the work done? What management controls are needed? How can they be carried out? When should I revise my plan? And many more.

No one can answer such questions for you. As the owner-manager you have to answer them and draw up your business plan. The pages of this guide are a combination of text and workspaces so you can write in the information you gather in developing your business plan - a logical progression from a commonsense starting point to a commonsense ending point.

It takes time and energy and patience to draw up a satisfactory business plan. Use this Guide to get your ideas and the supporting facts down on paper. And, above all, make changes in your plan on these pages as that plan unfolds and you see the need for changes.

Bear in mind that anything you leave out of the picture will create an additional cost, or drain on your money, when it crops up later on. If you leave out or ignore enough items, your business is headed for disaster.

Keep in mind too, that your final goal is to put your plan into action. More will be said about this near the end of this Guide.

### **What's in this for Me?**

You may be thinking: Why should I spend my time drawing up a business plan? What's in it for me? If you've never drawn up a plan, you are right in wanting to hear about the possible benefits before you do your work.

A business plan offers at least four benefits. You may find others as you make and use such a plan. The four are:

(1) The first, and most important, benefit is that a plan gives you a path to follow. A plan makes the future what you want it to be. A plan with goals and action steps allows you to guide your business through turbulent economic seas and into harbors of your choice. The alternative is drifting into "any old port in a storm."

(2) A plan makes it easy to let your banker in on the action. By reading, or hearing, the details of your plan he will have real insight into your situation if he is to lend you money.

(3) A plan can be a communications tool when you need to orient sales personnel, suppliers, and others about your operations and goals.

(4) A plan can help you develop as a manager. It can give you practice in thinking about competitive conditions, promotional opportunities, and situation that seem to be advantageous to your business. Such practice over a period of time can help increase an owner-manager's ability to make judgments.

### **Why am I in Business?**

Many enterprising people are drawn into starting their own business by the possibilities of making money and being their own boss. But the long hours, hard work, and responsibilities of being the boss quickly dispel and preconceived glamour.

Profit is the reward for satisfying consumer needs. But it must be worked for. Sometimes a new business might need two years before it shows a profit. So where, then, are reasons for having your own business?

Every business owner-manager will have his or her own individual reasons for being in business. For some, satisfaction come from serving their community. They take pride in serving their neighbors and giving them quality work which they stand behind. For others, their business offers them a chance to contribute to their employees' financial security.

There are as many rewards and reasons for being in business as there are business owners. Why are you in business?

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### **What business am I in?**

In making your business plan, the first question to consider is: What business am I really in. At the first reading this question may seem silly. "If there is one thing I know," you say to yourself, "it is what business I'm in." But hold on. Some owner-managers go broke and others waste their saving because they are confused about the business they are in.

The changeover of barbershops from cutting hair to styling hair is one example of thinking about what business you're really in.

Consider this example, also. Joe Riley had a small radio and TV store. He thought of his business as a retail store though he also serviced and repaired anything he sold. As his suburb

grew, appliance stores emerged and cut heavily into his sales. However, there was an increased call for quality repair work.

When Mr. Riley considered his situation, he decided that he was in the repair business. As a result of thinking about what business he was really in, he profitably built up his repair business and has a contract to take care of the servicing and repair business for one of the appliance stores.

Decide what business you are in and write your answer in the following spaces. To help you decide, think of the answers to questions such as: What inventory of parts and materials must you keep on hand? What services do you offer? What services do people ask for that you do not offer? What is it you are trying to do better, more of, or differently from your competitors?

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## **How to Plan Your Marketing**

When you have decided what business you're in, you have made your first marketing decision. Now you are ready for other important considerations.

Successful marketing starts with the owner-manager. You have to know your service and the needs of your customers.

The narrative and work blocks that follow are designed to help you work out a marketing plan for your firm. The blocks are divided into three sections:

Section One - Determining the Sales Potential

Section Two - Attracting Customers

Section Three - Selling to Customers

### **Section One - Determining the Sales Potential**

In the service business, your sales potential will depend on the area you serve. That is, how many customers in this area will need your services? Will your customers be industrial, commercial, consumer, or all of these?

When picking a site to locate your business, consider the nature of your service. If you pick up and deliver, you will want a site where the travel time will be low and you may later install a radio dispatch system. Or, if the customer must come to your place of business, the site must be conveniently located and easy to find.

You must pick the site that offers the best possibilities of being profitable. The following questions will help you think through this problem.

In selecting an area to serve, consider the following:

Population and its growth potential

Income, age, occupation of population

Number of competitive services in and around your proposed location

Local ordinances and zoning regulations

Type of trading area (commercial, industrial, residential, seasonal)

For additional help in choosing an area, you might try the local chamber of commerce and the manufacturer and distributor of any equipment and supplies you will be using.

You will want to consider the next list of questions in picking the specific site for your business:

Will the customer come to your place of business?

How much space do you need?

Will you want to expand later on?

Do you need any special features required in lighting, heating, ventilation?

Is parking available?

Is public transportation available?

Is the location conducive to drop-in customers?

Will you pick up and deliver?

Will travel time be excessive?

Will you prorate travel time to service call?

Would a location close to an expressway or main artery cut down on travel time?

If you choose a remote location, will savings in rent off-set the inconvenience?

If you choose a remote location, will you have to pay as much as you save in rent for advertising to make your service known?

If you choose a remote location, will the customer be able to readily locate your business?

Will the supply of labor be adequate and the necessary skills available?

What are the zoning regulations of the area?

Will there be adequate fire and police protection?

Will crime insurance be needed and be available at a reasonable rate?

I plan to locate in \_\_\_\_\_ because:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Is the area in which you plan to locate supported by a strong economic base? For example, are nearby industries working full time? Only part time? Did any industries go out of business in the past several months? Are new industries scheduled to open in the next several months?

Write your opinion of the area's economic base and your reason for that opinion here.:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Will you build? \_\_\_\_\_ What are the terms of the loan or mortgage?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Will you rent? \_\_\_\_\_ What are the terms of the lease?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Is the building attractive? \_\_\_\_\_ In good repair? \_\_\_\_\_

Will it need remodeling? \_\_\_\_\_ Cost of remodeling? \_\_\_\_\_

What services does the landlord provide?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What is the competition in the area you have picked?

The number of firms that handle my service \_\_\_\_\_

Does the area appear to be saturated? \_\_\_\_\_

How many of these firms look prosperous? \_\_\_\_\_

Do they have any apparent advantages over you? \_\_\_\_\_

How many look as though they're barely getting by? \_\_\_\_\_

How many similar services went out of business in the area last year? \_\_\_\_\_

Can you find out why they failed? \_\_\_\_\_

How many new services opened up in the last year? \_\_\_\_\_

How much do your competitors charge for your service? \_\_\_\_\_

Which firm or firms in the area will be your biggest competition? \_\_\_\_\_

List the reasons for your opinion here:



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## **Section Two - Attracting Customers**

When you have a location in mind, you should work through another aspect of marketing. How will you attract customers to your business? How will you pull customers away from your competition?

It is working with this aspect of marketing that many service firms find competitive advantages. The ideas which they develop are as good and often better, than those which large companies develop with hired brains. The workblocks that follow are designed to help you think about image, pricing, customer service policies, and advertising.

### **Image**

Whether you like it or not, your service business is going to have an image. The way people think of your firm will be influenced by the way you conduct your business. If people come to your place of business for your service, the cleanliness of the floors, the manner in which they are treated, and the quality of your work will help form your image. If you take your service to the customer, the conduct of your employees will influence your image. Pleasant, prompt, courteous service before and after the sale will help make satisfied customers your best form of advertising.

Thus, you can control your image, Whatever image you seek to develop. It should be concrete enough to promote in your advertising. For example, "service with a smile" is an often used image.

Write out what image you want customers to have of your business.

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### **Pricing**

In setting prices for your service, there are four main elements you must consider:

- (1) Materials and supplies
- (2) Labor and operating expenses
- (3) Planned profit
- (4) Competition

Further along in this Guide you will have the opportunity to figure out the specifics of materials, supplies, labor, and operating expenses. From there you may want the assistance of your accountant in developing a price structure that will not only be fair to the customer, but also fair to yourself. This means that not only must you cover all expenses but also allow enough margin to pay yourself a salary.

One other thing to consider. Will you offer credit? \_\_\_\_\_ Most businesses use a credit card system. These credit costs have to come from somewhere. Plan for them. If you use a credit card system, what will it cost you? \_\_\_\_\_

Can you add to your prices to absorb this cost?

Some trade association have a schedule for service charges. It would be a good idea to check with the trade association for your line of business. Their figures will make a good yardstick to make sure your prices are competitive.

And, of course, your prices must be competitive. You've already found out your competitors' prices. Keep these in mind when you are working with your accountant. If you will not be able to make an adequate return, now is the time to find out.

### **Customer Service Policies**

Customers expect certain services or conveniences, for example, parking. These services may be free to the customer, but not to you. If you do provide parking, you either pay for your own lot or pick up your part of the cost of a lot which you share with other businesses. Since these conveniences will be an expense, plan for them.

List the services that your competitors provide to customers:

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Now list the services that you will provide your customers:

### **Service / Estimated Cost**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

### **Planning Your Advertising Activities**

In this section on attracting customers, advertising was saved until last because you have to have something to say before advertising can be effective. When you have an image, price range, and customers services, you are ready to tell prospective customers why they should use your services.

When the money you can spend on advertising is limited it is vital that your advertising be on target. Before you can think about how much money you can afford for advertising, take time to determine what jobs you want advertising to do for your business. The work blanks that follow should be helpful to your thinking.

The strong points about my service business are:

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My service business is different from my competition in the following ways:

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My advertising should tell customers and prospective customers the following facts about my business and services:

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When you have these facts in mind, you now need to determine who you are going to tell it to. Your advertising needs to be aimed at a target audience - those people who are most likely to use your services. In the space below, describe your customers in terms of age, sex, occupation, and whatever else is necessary depending on the nature of your business. This is your customer profile of "male and female automobile owners, 18 years old and above." Thus, for this repair business, anyone over 18 who owns a car is likely to need its service.

The customer profile for my business is

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Now you are ready to think about the form your advertising should take and its cost. You are looking for the most effective means to tell your story to those most likely to use your service. Ask the local media (newspapers, radio and television, and the printers of direct mail pieces) for information about the services and the results they offer for your money.

How you spend advertising money is your decision, but don't fall into the trap that snares many advertisers. As one consultant describes this pitfall: It is amazing the way many managers consider themselves experts on advertising copy and media selection without any experience in these areas.

The following blanks should be useful in determining what advertising is needed to sell your strong points to prospective customers.

Form of Advertising	Size of Audience	Frequency of Use	Cost of A Single Ad	Estimated Cost
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
			Total	<hr/>

When you have a figure on what your advertising for the next 12 months will cost, check it against one of the operating ratios (expenses as a percentage of sales) which trade associations and other organizations gather. If your estimated cost for advertising is

substantially higher than this average for your line of service, take a second look. No single expense item should be allowed to get way out of line if you want to make a profit. Your task in determining comes down to: How much can I afford to spend and still do the job that needs to be done?

### **Section Three - Selling to Customers**

To complete your work on marketing, you need to think about what you want to happen after you get a customer. Your goal is to provide your service, satisfy customers, and put money into the cash register.

One-time customers can't do the job. You need repeat customers to build a profitable annual sales volume. When someone returns for your service, it is probably because he was satisfied by his previous experience. Satisfied customers are the best form of advertising.

If you previously decided to work only for cash, take a hard look at your decision. Americans like to buy on credit. Often a credit card, or other system of credit and collections, is needed to attract and hold customers.

Based on this description and the dollar amount of business you indicated that you intend to do this year, fill in the following workblocks.

### **Fixtures and Equipment**

No matter whether or not customers will come to your place of business, there will be certain equipment and furniture you will need in your place of business which will allow you to perform your service.

### **Parts and Material**

You will probably need some kind of parts or material to provide your service.

I plan to buy parts and material from:

---

Before you make any supply arrangements, examine the supplier's obsolescence policy. This can be a vital factor in service parts purchasing. You also look at the supplier's warranty policy.

Now that you have determined the parts and materials you'll need, you should think about the type of stock control system you'll use. A stock control system should enable you to determine what needs to be ordered on the basis of: (1) what is on hand, (2) what is on order, (3) what has been used. (Some trade associations and suppliers provide systems to members and customers.)

When you have decided on a system for stock control, estimate its cost. My system for stock control will cost me \_\_\_\_\_ for the first year.

### **Overhead**

List the overhead items which will be needed. Examples are: rent, utilities, office help, insurance, interest, telephone, postage, accountant, payroll taxes, and licenses or other local

taxes. If you plan to hire others to help you manage, their salaries should be listed as overhead.

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## **Getting the Work Done**

An important step in setting up your business is to find and hire capable employees. Then you must train them to work together to get the job done. Obviously, organization is needed if your business is to produce what you expect it to produce, namely profits.

Organization is essential because you as the owner-manager cannot do all the work. As your organization grows, you have to delegate work, responsibility and authority. A helpful tool in getting this done is the organization chart. It shows at a glance who is responsible for the major activities of a business.

As an additional aid in determining both what needs to be done and who will do it, list each activity that is involved in your business. Next to the activity indicate who will do it. You may do this by name or some other designation such as "worker #1", Remember that a name may appear more than once.

### **Activity / Name**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

## **How Much Money Will You Need**

At this point, take some time to think about what your business plan means in terms of dollars. This section is designed to help you put your plan into dollars.

The first question concerns the source of dollars. After your initial capital investment, the major source of money is the sale of your services. What dollar volume of business do you expect to do in the next 12 months? \_\_\_\_\_

### **Expenses**

In connection with your annual dollar volume of business, you need to think about expenses. If, for example you plan to do 100,000 in business, what will it cost you to do this amount of servicing? And even more important, what will be left over as profit at the end of the year? Never lose sight of the fact that profit is your pay. Even if you pay yourself a salary for living expenses, your business must make a profit if it is to continue year after year and pay back the money you invested in it.

The following workblock is designed to help you make a quick estimate of your expenses. To use this formula, you need to get only one figure - the cost of sales figure for your line of business. If you don't have this operating ratio, check with your trade association.

	Expressed in percentage	Expressed in dollars	your percentage	your dollars
1. Sales	100	100,000	100	\$ _____
2. Cost of sales	-61.7	-61,700	_____	-\$ _____
3. Gross margin	38.3	38,300	_____	\$ _____

### Start-Up Costs

If you are starting a new business, list the following estimated start-up costs:

Fixtures and equipment	_____
Starting inventory	_____
Office supplies	_____
Decorating and remodeling	_____
Installation of equipment	_____
Deposits for utilities	_____
Legal and professional fees	_____
Licenses and permits	_____
Advertising for the opening	_____
Operating cash	_____
Owner's withdraw during prep-start-up time	_____
<b>Total</b>	_____

Whether you have the funds (savings) or borrow them, your new business will have to pay back these start-up costs. Keep this fact in mind as you work on the "Expenses" section, and on other financial aspects of your plan.

### Break Down Your Expenses

Your quick estimate of expenses provides a starting point. The next step is to break down your expenses so they can be handled over the 12 months. Use an "Expenses Worksheet" form to make up an expense budget.

### Matching Money and Expenses

A budget helps you to see the dollar amount of your expenses each month. Then from month to month the question is: Will sales bring in enough money to pay the firm's bills on time? The answer is "maybe not" or "I hope so" unless the owner-manager prepares for the "peaks and valleys" that are in many service operations.

A cash forecast is a management tool which can eliminate much of the anxiety that can plague you if your business goes through lean months. Use a worksheet, "Estimated Cash Forecast",

or ask your accountant to use it to estimate the amounts of cash you expect to flow through your business during the next 12 months.

### **Is Additional Money needed?**

Suppose at this point you have determined that your business plan needs more money than can be generated by sales. What do you do?

What you do depends on the situation. For example, the need may be for bank credit to tide your business over during the lean months. This loan can be repaid during the fat sales months when expenses are far less than sales. Adequate working capital is necessary for success and survival.

Whether an owner-manager seeks to borrow money for only a month or so or on a long-term basis, the lender needs to know whether the store's financial position is strong or weak. Your lender will ask to see a current balance sheet.

Even if you don't need to borrow, use it, to draw the "picture" of your firm's financial condition. Moreover, if you don't need to borrow money, you may want to show your plan to the bank that handles your store's checking account. It is never too early to build good relations with your banker, to show that you are a manager who knows where you want to go rather than a store owner who hopes to make a success.

### **Control and Feedback**

To make your plan work you will need feedback. For example, the year-end profit and loss statement shows whether your business made a profit or loss for the past 12 months.

But you can't wait 12 months for the score. To keep your plan on target you need readings at frequent intervals. A profit and loss statement at the end of each month or at the end of each quarter is one type of frequent feedback. However, the income statement or profit and loss statement (P and L) may be more of a loss than a profit statement if you rely only on it. You must set up management controls which will help you to insure that the right things are being done from day to day and from week to week. In a new business, the record-keeping system should be set up before your business opens. After you're in business is too late. For one thing, you may be too busy to give a record-keeping system the proper attention.

The control system which you set up should give you information about: stock, sales, and disbursement. The simpler the system, the better. Its purpose is to give you current information. You are after facts with emphasis on trouble spots. Outside advisers, such as an accountant, can be helpful.

### **Stock Control**

The purpose of controlling parts and materials inventory is to provide maximum service to your customers and to see that parts and materials are not lost through pilferage, shrinkage, errors, or waste. Your aim should be to achieve a high turnover on your inventory. The fewer dollars you tie up in inventory, the better.

In a business, inventory control helps the owner-manager to offer customers efficient service. The control system should enable you to determine what needs to be ordered on the basis of: (1) what is on hand, (2) what is on order, and (3) what has been used.

In setting up inventory controls, keep in mind that the cost of the inventory is not your only cost. You will also have costs such as the cost of purchasing, the cost of keeping control records, and the cost of receiving and storing your inventory.

## **Sales**

In a small business, sales slips and cash register tapes give the owner-manager feedback at the end of each day. To keep on top of sales, you will need answers to questions such as: How many sales were made? What was the dollar amount? What credit terms were given to customers?

## **Disbursements**

Your manager controls should also give you information about the dollars your company pays out. In checking on your bills, you do not want to know what major items, such as paying bills on time to get the supplier's discount, are being handled according to your policies. Your review system will also give you the opportunity to make judgments on the use of funds. In this manner, you can be on top of emergencies as well as routine situations. Your system should also keep you aware that tax moneys such as payroll income tax deductions, are set aside and paid out at the proper time.

## **Break-Even Analysis**

Break-even analysis is a management control device because the break-even point shows how much you must sell under given conditions in order to just cover your costs with No profit and No loss.

Profit depends on sales volume, selling price, and costs. Break-even analysis helps you to estimate what a change in one or more of these factors will do to your profits. To figure a break-even point, fixed costs, such as rent, must be separated from variable costs, such as the cost of sales and the other items listed under "controllable expenses" on the expense worksheet, of this Guide.

The formula is:

Break-even point (in sales dollars) =

$$\frac{\text{Total fixed costs}}{1 - \frac{\text{.....Total variable costs}}{\text{.....Corresponding sales volume}}}$$

An example of the formula is: Bill Jackson plans to open a laundry. He estimates his fixed expenses at about \$9,000, the first year. He estimates his variable expenses at about \$700 for every \$1,000 of sales.



$$\text{BE point} = \frac{\$9,000}{1 - \frac{700}{1,000}} = \frac{\$9,000}{1 - .70} = \frac{\$9,000}{.30} = \$30,000$$

### Is Your Plan Workable?

Stop when you have worked out your break-even point. Whether the break-even point looks realistic or way off base, it is time to make sure that your plan is workable.

Take time to re-examine your plan before you back it with money. If the plan is not workable better to learn it now than to realize 6 months down the road that you are pouring money into a losing venture.

In reviewing your plan, look at the cost figures you drew up when you broke down your expenses for one year. If any of your cost items are too high or too low, change them. You can write your changes in the white spaces above or below your original entries on that worksheet. When you finish making your adjustments, you will have a Revised projected statement of sales and expenses for 12 months.

With your revised figures work out a revised break-even point. Whether the new break-even point looks good or bad, take one or more precaution. Show your plan to someone who has not been involved in working out the details.

Your banker, or other advisor outside of your business may see weaknesses that failed to appear as you pored over the details of your plan. They may put a finger on strong points which your plan should emphasize.

### Put Your Plan into Action

When your plan is as near on target as possible, you are ready to put it into action. Keep in mind that action is the difference between a plan and a dream. If a plan is not acted upon, it is of no more value than a pleasant dream that evaporates over the breakfast coffee.

A successful owner-manager does not stop after he has gathered information and drawn up a plan, as you have done in working through this Guide. He begins to use his plan.

At this point, look back over your plan. Look for things that must be done to put your plan into action.

What needs to be done will depend on your situation. For example, if your business plan calls for an increase in sales, one action to be done will be providing funds for this expansion.

Have you more money to put into this business?

Do you borrow from friends and relatives? From your bank? From your suppliers by arranging liberal commercial credit terms.

If you are starting a new business, one action step may be to get a loan for fixtures, employee salaries, and other expenses. Another action step will be to find and hire capable employees.

In the spaces that follow, list things that must be done to put your plan into action. Give each item a date so that it can be done at the appropriate time. To put my plan into action, I must do the following:

**Action / Completion Date**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**Keeping Your Plan Up To Date**

Once you put your plan into action, look out for changes. They can cripple the best made business plan if the owner-manager lets them.

Stay on top of changing conditions and adjust your business plan accordingly.

Sometimes the change is made within your company. For example, several of your employees quit their jobs. Sometimes the change is with customers: for example, their desires and tastes shift. Sometimes the change is technological as when raw materials are put on the market introducing the need for new processes and procedures.

In order to adjust your plan to account for such changes, an owner-manager must:

- (1) Be alert to the changes that come in your company, line of business, market, and customers.
- (2) Check your plan against these changes.
- (3) Determine what revisions, if any, are needed in your plan.

The method you use to keep your plan current so that your business can weather the forces of the market place is up to you. Read the trade papers and magazines for your line of business. Another suggestion concerns your time. Set some time - two hours, three hours, whatever is necessary-to review your plan periodically. Once each month, or every other month, go over your plan to see whether it needs adjusting. If revisions are needed, make them and put them into action.

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**3. Complete Landscaping Business Plan Template**

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Table: Balance Sheet..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

## 1.0 Executive Summary

[Business Name]

Contact: [Owner Name]

xxx xxxx xxxxx SW

xxxxxx, MN xxxx

Phone: xxx-xxx xxxx

Fax: xxx-xxx xxxx

[xxxxxxx@yahoo.com](mailto:xxxxxxx@yahoo.com)

[Business Name] will sell landscape supply products to both residential and commercial customers. Additionally, the Company will also provide installation, maintenance and warranty services. The owner of [Business Name] is [Owner Name], who has extensive experience in the landscape supply and service industry.

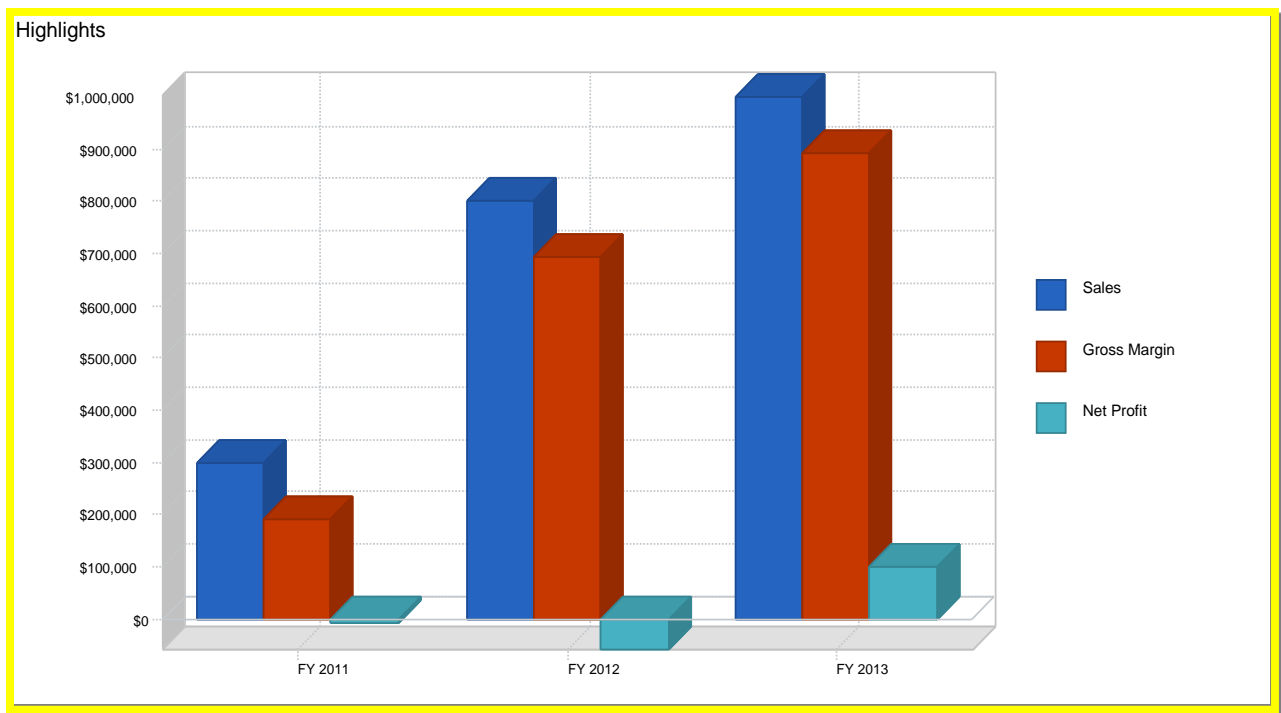
[Business Name] is to be headquartered in the rural area of Pine River, Minnesota just outside city limits with the nearest town approximately 6 miles away and its closest competition located 40 to 50 miles away. The Company prides itself on the quality of service, knowledge and expertise in this Business.

[Business Name] is seeking \$1,500,000 in grant funding for the startup of this Business. [Business Name] will be a boulder cutting operation and landscape supply Company in which it will manufacture and sell large boulders. The Company will sell to the entire State of Minnesota with potential customers to include new and existing homeowners, landscapers, commercial and residential excavators, and commercial clients. With the management team already running an excavating business, an overflow of customers for the Company is expected. Boulder cutting is in very high demand and currently the only other business that supplies these boulders are delayed with their orders at least 4 weeks. Boulders, which can be described as large rocks sometimes as big as a small car, are cut with a rock saw and used to landscape in a variety of ways.

[Business Name]'s competitive edge is a combination of the unique product, interaction with clients and experience in the field. The cut boulders are not only a rare or unique but it is a "Green" product that provides options for many potential customers in the community. By providing clients an education on the services the Company provides, this builds relationships of trust and satisfaction. Clients will come to depend on the unique product and services.

Based on the detailed financial projections, [Business Name]'s future sales for 2010, 2011 and 2012 are expected to be \$300,000, \$800,000 and \$1,000,000, respectively.

## Chart: Highlights



### 1.1 Objectives

[Business Name] has four main objectives:

1. Become the top landscape supply company in the area with regard to Sales, Quality of Service, and Customer Service
2. Maintain 85% positive feedback on Customer Service
3. By fiscal year end 2012 employ 15 to 20 Full-time Employees
4. Create a carried on family business for 50 years or more

### 1.2 Mission

[Business Name]'s mission is to provide the Minnesota community with unparalleled customer service, reliable and quality product, and to stimulate the local economy by bringing employment opportunities to a rural area.

### *1.3 Keys to Success*

The keys to success in this business are:

Reliability: of the products and services the Company offers.

Customer Satisfaction: superior customer service.

Quality of Experience: knowledge and reputation in this Business.

Location: the Company is located in a Central area which is not only convenient for customers but also handicap accessible.

### *2.0 Company Summary*

[Business Name]

Contact: [Owner Name]

xxxxxxxxxxxx

xxxxxx, MN xxxxx

Phone: xxx-xxx xxx

Fax: xxx-xxx xxx

[xxxxxxxxx@yahoo.com](mailto:xxxxxxxxx@yahoo.com)

[Business Name] will sell landscape supply products to both residential and commercial customers. Additionally, the Company will also provide installation, maintenance and warranty services. The owner of [Business Name] is [Owner Name], who has extensive experience in the landscape supply and service industry.

[Business Name] is to be headquartered in the rural area of Pine River, Minnesota just outside city limits with the nearest town approximately 6 miles away and its closest competition located 40 to 50 miles away. The Company prides itself on the quality of service, knowledge and expertise in this Business.

### *2.1 Company Ownership*

[Business Name] is a Limited Liability Company 100% owned by [Owner Name], the Manager and Operator of the Business.

### *2.2 Start-up Summary*

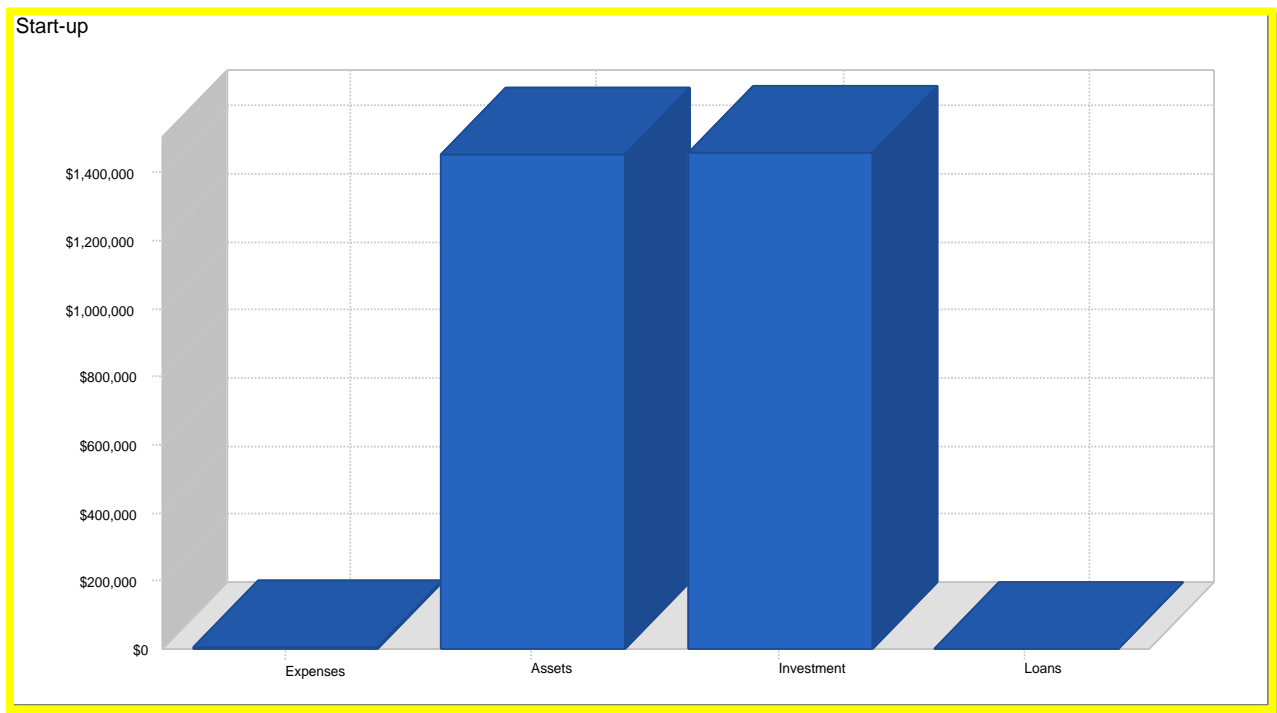
Start-up costs total \$1,457,117, which is primarily building and equipment costs. The assumptions are shown in the following table and chart.



Table: Start-up

<b>Start-up</b>	
<b>Requirements</b>	
<b>Start-up Expenses</b>	
Legal	\$1,200
Stationery etc.	\$200
Insurance	\$350
Rent	\$0
Office Equipment	\$1,200
Other	\$0
<b>Total Start-up Expenses</b>	<b>\$2,950</b>
<b>Start-up Assets</b>	
Cash Required	\$2,500
Start-up Inventory	\$16,667
Other Current Assets	\$0
Long-term Assets	\$1,435,000
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$1,454,167</b>
<b>Total Requirements</b>	<b>\$1,457,117</b>

Chart: Start-up



### 3.0 Products and Services

[Business Name] will be a boulder cutting operation and landscape supply Company in which it will manufacture and sell large boulders. The Company will sell to the entire State of Minnesota with potential customers to include new and existing homeowners, landscapers, commercial and residential excavators, and commercial clients. With the management team already running an excavating business, an overflow of customers for the Company is expected. Boulder cutting is in very high demand and currently the only other business that supplies these boulders are delayed with their orders at least 4 weeks. Boulders, which can be described as large rocks sometimes as big as a small car, are cut with a rock saw and used to landscape in a variety of ways.

### 4.0 Market Analysis Summary

US landscaping product demand is forecast to grow 6.1 percent annually through 2013 based on a recovery in the housing market. Decorative products will benefit from the relatively low market penetration of water features. Hardscapes will see favorable growth as consumers value pavers, stones and boulders for patios, walkways and surrounds.

The Company will sell its products and services by advertising in phone books, news papers, mail out flyers, word of mouth, web site and make on-site visits. [Business Name] plans to supply its customers on the first visit or first call and be open seven days a week.

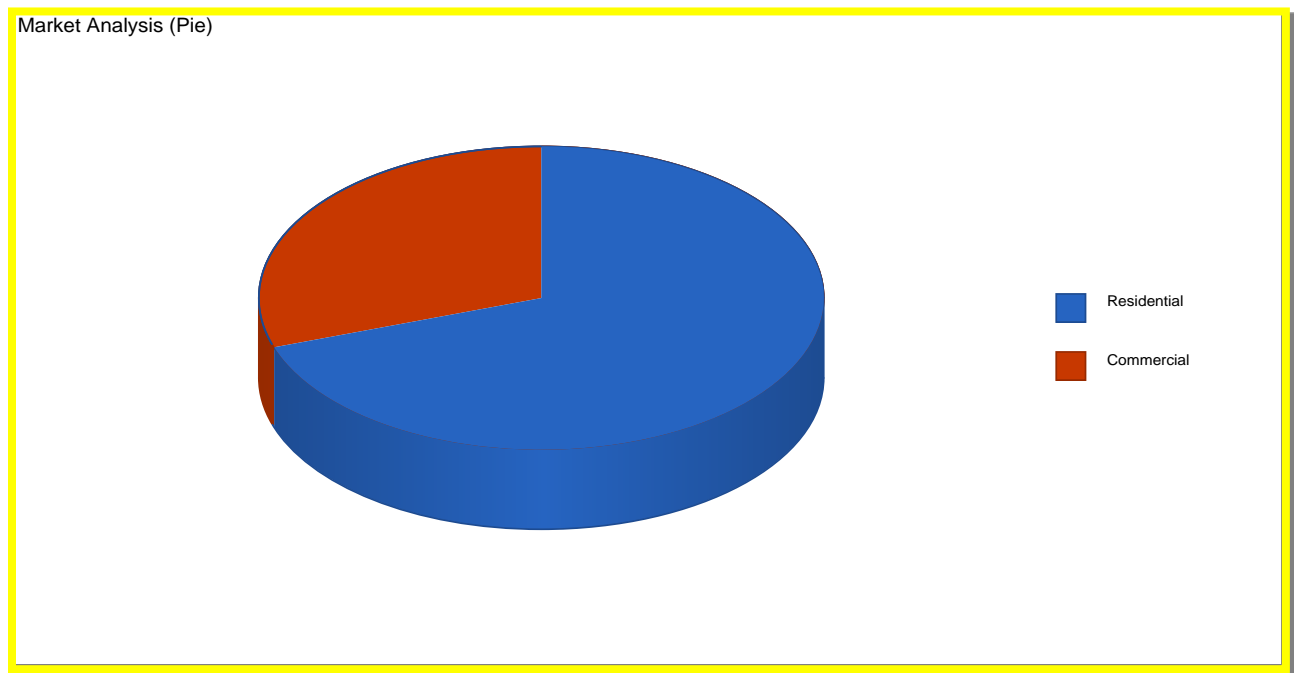
#### 4.1 Market Segmentation

The market segmentation scheme is fairly straightforward, and focuses on Residential and Commercial customers. The information contained in the customer analysis table is taken directly from the 2007 US Census and clearly shows that the largest market potential is the Residential segment. The Company will focus on new and existing homeowners, landscapers, commercial & residential excavators, and commercial customers.

Table: Market Analysis

<b>Market Analysis</b>							
		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	
Potential Customers	Growth						CAGR
Residential	1%	2,380,000	2,403,800	2,427,838	2,452,116	2,476,637	1.00%
Commercial	1%	1,033,999	1,044,339	1,054,782	1,065,330	1,075,983	1.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.00%</b>	<b>3,413,999</b>	<b>3,448,139</b>	<b>3,482,620</b>	<b>3,517,446</b>	<b>3,552,620</b>	<b>1.00%</b>

Chart: Market Analysis (Pie)



#### *4.2 Target Market Segment Strategy*

[Business Name]'s mission is to provide the Minnesota community with unparalleled customer service, reliable and quality product, and to stimulate the local economy by bringing employment opportunities to a rural area.

#### *4.3 Service Business Analysis*

According to a report by Global Industry Analysts, Inc. (GIA), the landscaping services markets in the U.S. is expected to recover from recent economic downturns and reach \$80.06 billion by the year 2015. The report shows that post-recession economic recovery, resurgence in consumer spending, growing emphasis of homeowners on backyard beautification, and the imminent rise in remodeling activities will be the driving force which will trigger long-term growth in the U.S. landscaping services market.

In addition, current trends toward beautification of commercial and residential property as a place for relaxation, entertainment or work, has long been a source of revenue for the landscape industry. Keeping in view the growing popularity and importance of landscaping as an art, science, and commercial value proposition, it is of little surprise that landscaping services has now become one of the most important domains in the overall services industry. Residential and commercial customers are expected to revert back to landscaping for air purification, energy savings, enhancing property value, and ensuring privacy and security to homes, which in turn will drive the need for professional landscaping services, the report said.

One specific competitor is Northland Monument in Longville, Minnesota which is approximately 50 miles from [Business Name]'s location. Northland Monument is a

long-standing boulder cutting business, however Northland Monument does not offer landscape supply products and/or services. Since the boulder cutting is in high demand Northland Monument is extremely backed up and is unable to perform in customer service. Northland Monument now has a 3-4 week waiting period for their product and they do not return phone calls in a timely manner.

A second specific competitor is a Landscape Supply company located approximately 40 miles from [Business Name]'s location. This is a long-standing landscape supply business with excellent products, however it does not offer boulder cutting. This company, unlike [Business Name], offers more finished landscaping products like flowers and shrubs.

#### 4.3.1 Competition and Buying Patterns

A new market research study by the National Gardening Association, Residential Lawn and Landscape Services and the Value of Landscaping, found that homeowners spent a record \$44.7 billion to hire professional lawn and landscape services in 2006. These services include lawn care and landscape maintenance, landscape installation and construction, tree care services, and landscape design services. The survey also found that 30 percent of all households nationwide, or an estimated 34.5 million households, currently hire at least one type of lawn and landscape service. Over the past five years we have seen the number of households that hire professional lawn and landscape services increase from 22 percent of households, or 23.8 million households, in 2001 to 30 percent of households, or 34.5 million households, in 2006, says Bruce Butterfield, research director at the National Gardening Association (NGA). The amount of money spent on lawn and landscape services has increased from \$24.5 billion in 2001 to \$44.7 billion in 2006.

The Residential Lawn and Landscape Services and the Value of Landscaping survey was conducted in June 2007, for NGA by Harris Interactive Inc., with a representative sample of 2,663 households nationwide.

Types of residential lawn and landscape services hired:

- Lawn care and landscape maintenance services were hired by 27.8 million households
- Landscape installation and construction services were hired by 6.9 million households
- Tree care services were hired by 11.5 million households
- Landscape design services were hired by 2.3 million households

NGA President Mike Metallo says, "The increased use of lawn and landscape services over the past five years reflects the fact that homeowners appreciate the many benefits of a well-designed and maintained home lawn and landscape but may not have the time or inclination to do this work for themselves."

In addition to tracking trends in the market for residential lawn and landscape services, the study also researched how customers find lawn and landscape services to hire, what the most important factors are in hiring a lawn and landscape service, customer satisfaction with services hired, the benefits of a well-designed and maintained home landscape, and how much a well-designed and maintained landscape adds to home value.

[Business Name] plans on servicing its customers as a one-stop-shop. Customers will have the convenience of using the Company to complete a job from start to finish. This includes purchasing supplies, installation, warranty and maintenance. The management team's extensive experience in this field sets the Company apart from its competitors.

## 5.0 Strategy and Implementation Summary

[Business Name] has clearly defined the target market and has differentiated the Company by offering a solid solution to fulfilling its customers' needs. Reasonable sales targets have been established with an implementation plan designed to ensure the goals set forth below are achieved.

### 5.1 SWOT Analysis

[Business Name] has a valuable inventory of strengths that will help it succeed. These strengths include: a management team that has over 35 years experience in this business and the physical location of the Company. Strengths are valuable, but it is also important to realize the weaknesses the Company must address. These weaknesses include: the inability to manufacture the cut boulders themselves. The Company's strengths will help it capitalize on emerging opportunities. These opportunities include, but are not limited to, an influx of retirees into the community and eroding railroad ties on lake banks in need of replacement with cut boulders. Threats that the Company should be aware of include, the downturn in the economy.

#### 5.1.1 Strengths

[Business Name] has a management team with a combined 35 years of experience in this field that is knowledgeable and eager to please. Also, the physical location of the Company is in the heart of an area where the services and products are in high demand.

#### 5.1.2 Weaknesses

The Company has is lacking the ability to manufacture the cut boulders itself and currently orders products of this sort from another competitor who is 4 weeks delayed.

#### 5.1.3 Opportunities

The location of the Company is in an area where potential customers are moving from larger Metro areas for purposes of affordability or early retirement. This is a huge retirement community and there is a positive shift in life expectancy which creates an increased opportunity for the Company to provide products and services. Also, since

the cut boulders have no deterioration effects they are used to replace many of the railroad ties on the lake banks that are now illegal. The railroad ties have an erosion effect that when saturated a chemical runoff into the lake occurs. The new law that makes these illegal has been in effect for approximately 5 years. The Company expects to see cut boulders being used in place of these by either being mandated from an inspection or by choice of the property owner.

#### 5.1.4 Threats

The downturn in the economy is a potential threat that may impact sales. The Company is aware of this threat and will closely monitor pricing.

## 5.2 Competitive Edge

[Business Name]'s competitive edge is a combination of the unique product, interaction with clients and experience in the field. The cut boulders are not only a rare or unique but it is a "Green" product that provides options for many potential customers in the community. By providing clients an education on the services the Company provides, this builds relationships of trust and satisfaction. Clients will come to depend on the unique product and services.

## 5.3 Marketing Strategy

[Business Name]'s marketing strategy is a simple one: satisfied customers are the Company's best marketing tool. When a customer is satisfied with the Company's quality service and reliable products, our name and service will stand on its own. In addition, the Company will sell by advertising in phone books, news papers, mail out flyers, web site and make on site visits.

The Company has strategically aligned with a few of the area's largest home builders, Lands End Development and Northward Homes. Customers from both builders are expected to be referred to the Company for products and/or services.

## 5.4 Sales Strategy

[Business Name] will perform three onsite estimates/ bids for the project and/or products. The Company's showroom will illustrate examples of its work with pictures of previous projects. The Company's leading salesman has a reputation throughout the community for educating customers in detail about the project's process and timeline. This will be a huge selling tool for [Business Name].

### 5.4.1 Sales Forecast

The Monthly Sales Forecasted for the current year average \$8,333 in Landscape Supplies, Landscape Servicing and Boulder Cutting. Forecasted Sales in 2010 is a total of \$300,000 with a 267% growth rate for 2011 and a 25% growth rate for 2012.

Table: Sales Forecast

<b>Sales Forecast</b>			
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013
<b>Sales</b>			
<b>Landscape Supplies</b>	\$100,000	\$200,000	\$200,000
<b>Landscape Servicing</b>	\$100,000	\$300,000	\$400,000
<b>Boulder Cutting</b>	\$100,000	\$300,000	\$400,000



<b>Total Sales</b>	<b>\$300,000</b>	<b>\$800,000</b>	<b>\$1,000,000</b>
<b>Direct Cost of Sales</b>	<b>FY 2011</b>	<b>FY 2012</b>	<b>FY 2013</b>
<b>Landscape Servicing</b>	<b>\$72,000</b>	<b>\$72,000</b>	<b>\$72,000</b>
<b>Boulder Cutting</b>	<b>\$36,000</b>	<b>\$36,000</b>	<b>\$36,000</b>
<b>Subtotal Direct Cost of Sales</b>	<b>\$108,000</b>	<b>\$108,000</b>	<b>\$108,000</b>

Chart: Sales Monthly

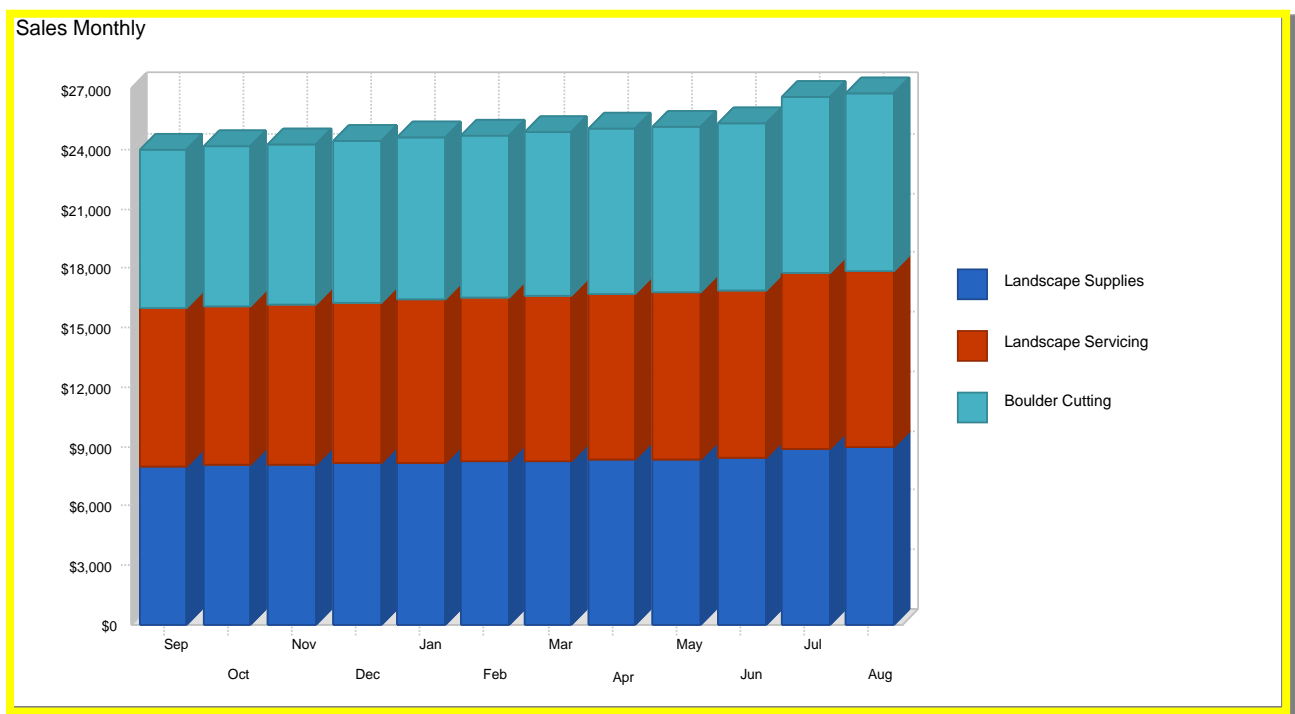
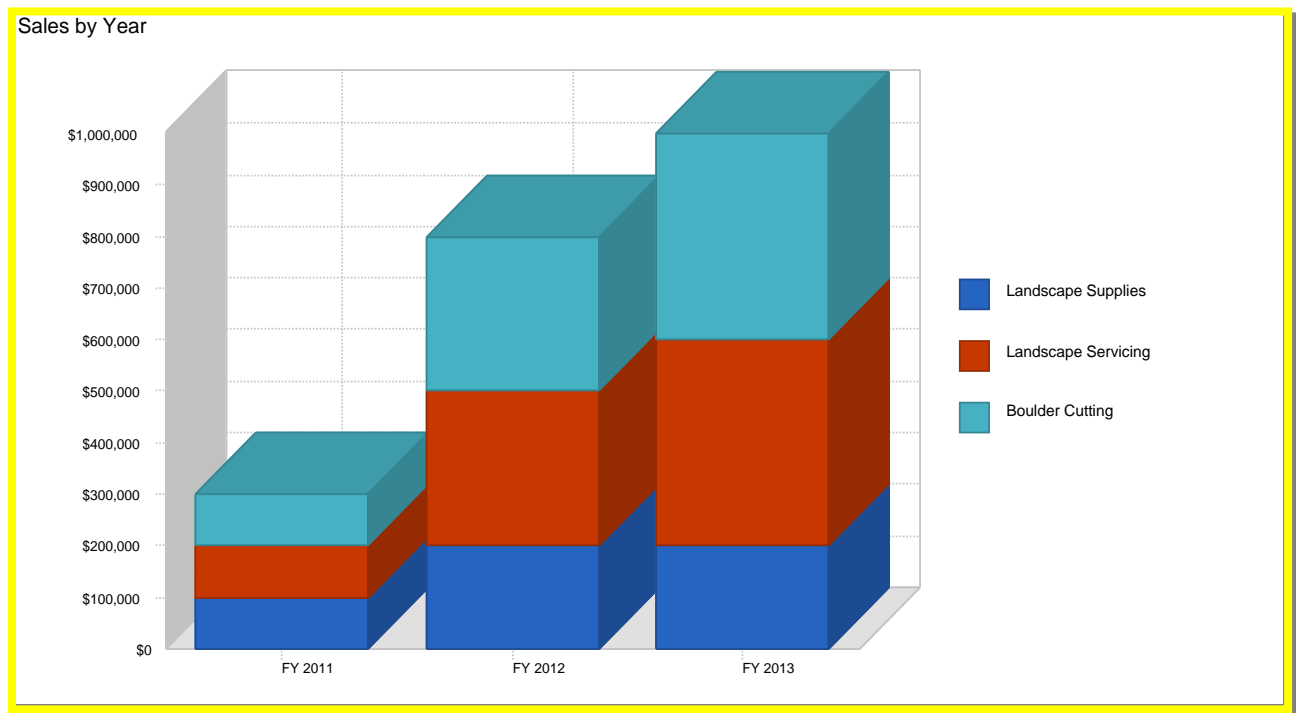


Chart: Sales by Year



### 5.5 Milestones

The following table lists important store milestones, with dates, implementation duty, and budgets for each. The milestone schedule emphasizes the timeliness for implementation per the sales and marketing targets listed in the detail in the previous topics.

Table: Milestones

Milestones					
Milestone	Start Date	End Date	Budget	Manager	Department
Grant Funding	9/30/2010	10/30/2010	\$6,400	Julie	Management
Acquire Land	9/30/2010	10/30/2010	\$150,000	Julie	Management
Build Office/ Shop	9/30/2010	12/30/2010	\$460,000	Julie	Management
Build Processing Shop	9/30/2010	12/30/2010	\$260,000	Julie	Management

<b>Purchase Equipment</b>	9/30/2010	12/30/2010	\$565,000	Julie	Management
<b>Totals</b>			\$1,441,400		

## 6.0 Management Summary

[Business Name]'s manager and operator [Owner Name], has been in the landscape supply business for over 10 years. Her husband Phil Swenson who is part of the management team operates a business under Northfork Boulders and Excavating and also has over 10 years experience in this field.

The Company will hire only those who demonstrate the qualities necessary for working in a customer service environment, and the willingness to move forward in continuing education and training. The Company hires the ultimate "people persons" to provide world class service.

### 6.1 Personnel Plan

[Business Name] intends to hire 15 to 20 employees by end of the third fiscal year. The growth of the company will be determined by how accurately and efficiently the company is able to implement the facets of this business plan.

Table: Personnel

<b>Personnel Plan</b>			
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013
<b>Office/ Clerical</b>	\$48,538	\$124,800	\$124,800
<b>Production</b>	\$48,538	\$332,800	\$332,800
<b>Sales/ Installation</b>	\$48,538	\$166,400	\$166,400
<b>Total People</b>	6	15	15
<b>Total Payroll</b>	\$145,614	\$624,000	\$624,000

## 7.0 Financial Plan

[Business Name] is expected to grow an average of 96% a year with the success of the \$1,500,000 Grant expected in 2010. The company plans to use the funds to cover a \$150,000 land acquisition, \$460,000 to build an office and shop, \$260,000 will be used to build a processing shop and \$565,000 will be used to purchase equipment.

### 7.1 Start-up Funding

Start-up costs total \$1,457,117, which is primarily construction and equipment. The assumptions are shown in the following table and chart.

Table: Start-up Funding

<b><i>Start-up Funding</i></b>	
<b>Start-up Expenses to Fund</b>	<b>\$2,950</b>
<b>Start-up Assets to Fund</b>	<b>\$1,454,167</b>
<b>Total Funding Required</b>	<b>\$1,457,117</b>
<b>Assets</b>	
<b>Non-cash Assets from Start-up</b>	<b>\$1,451,667</b>
<b>Cash Requirements from Start-up</b>	<b>\$2,500</b>
<b>Additional Cash Raised</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Cash Balance on Starting Date</b>	<b>\$2,500</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$1,454,167</b>
<b>Liabilities and Capital</b>	
<b>Liabilities</b>	
<b>Current Borrowing</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Long-term Liabilities</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Accounts Payable (Outstanding Bills)</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Other Current Liabilities (interest-free)</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Capital</b>	

<b>Planned Investment</b>	
<b>Owner</b>	\$0
<b>Investor</b>	\$0
<b>Additional Investment Requirement</b>	\$1,457,117
<b>Total Planned Investment</b>	\$1,457,117
<b>Loss at Start-up (Start-up Expenses)</b>	(\$2,950)
<b>Total Capital</b>	\$1,454,167
<b>Total Capital and Liabilities</b>	\$1,454,167
<b>Total Funding</b>	\$1,457,117

## 7.2 Important Assumptions

The assumptions used in [Business Name]'s plan are that the Average Percent Variable Cost is 36%. The Estimated Monthly Fixed Cost is expected to be \$16,613.

## 7.3 Break-even Analysis

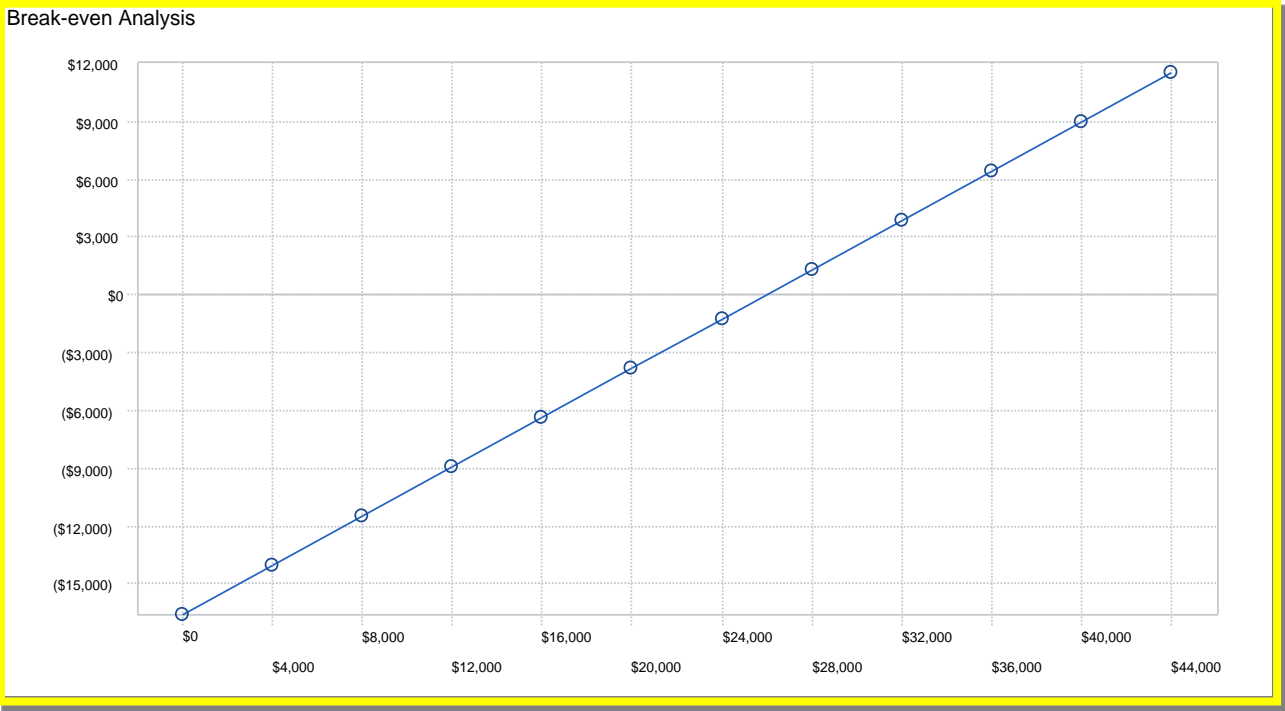
The Monthly Revenue needed to Break-even is \$25,958.

Table: Break-even Analysis

<b>Break-even Analysis</b>	
<b>Monthly Revenue Break-even</b>	\$25,958
<b>Assumptions:</b>	

Average Percent Variable Cost	36%
Estimated Monthly Fixed Cost	\$16,613

Chart: Break-even Analysis



#### 7.4 Projected Profit and Loss

[Business Name]'s expected net profit for 2010, 2011, and 2012 is (\$7,356), (\$58,543) and \$98,864, respectively. Sales are expected to be \$300,000, \$800,000 and \$1,000,000, for 2010, 2011, and 2012, respectively. The net profit as a percentage of sales is -2.45%, -7.32% and 9.89%, for 2010, 2011, and 2012, respectively. Items that fall under "Other" expenses are Phone/ Fax, Legal, Office Equipment & Supplies, Travel and Web Design.

Table: Profit and Loss

<b>Pro Forma Profit and Loss</b>			
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013
<b>Sales</b>	\$300,000	\$800,000	\$1,000,000
<b>Direct Cost of Sales</b>	\$108,000	\$108,000	\$108,000
<b>Other Costs of Sales</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total Cost of Sales</b>	\$108,000	\$108,000	\$108,000
<b>Gross Margin</b>	\$192,000	\$692,000	\$892,000
<b>Gross Margin %</b>	64.00%	86.50%	89.20%
<b>Expenses</b>			
<b>Payroll</b>	\$145,614	\$624,000	\$624,000
<b>Marketing/Promotion</b>	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000
<b>Depreciation</b>	\$2,700	\$3,527	\$3,527
<b>Repair/ Maintenance</b>	\$3,600	\$3,600	\$3,600
<b>Utilities</b>	\$7,200	\$7,416	\$7,638
<b>Insurance</b>	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000
<b>Payroll Taxes</b>	\$21,842	\$93,600	\$93,600
<b>Other</b>	\$8,400	\$8,400	\$8,400

<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	\$199,356	\$750,543	\$750,765
<b>Profit Before Interest and Taxes</b>	(\$7,356)	(\$58,543)	\$141,235
<b>EBITDA</b>	(\$4,656)	(\$55,016)	\$144,762
<b>Interest Expense</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Taxes Incurred</b>	\$0	\$0	\$42,370
<b>Net Profit</b>	(\$7,356)	(\$58,543)	\$98,864
<b>Net Profit/Sales</b>	-2.45%	-7.32%	9.89%

Chart: Profit Monthly

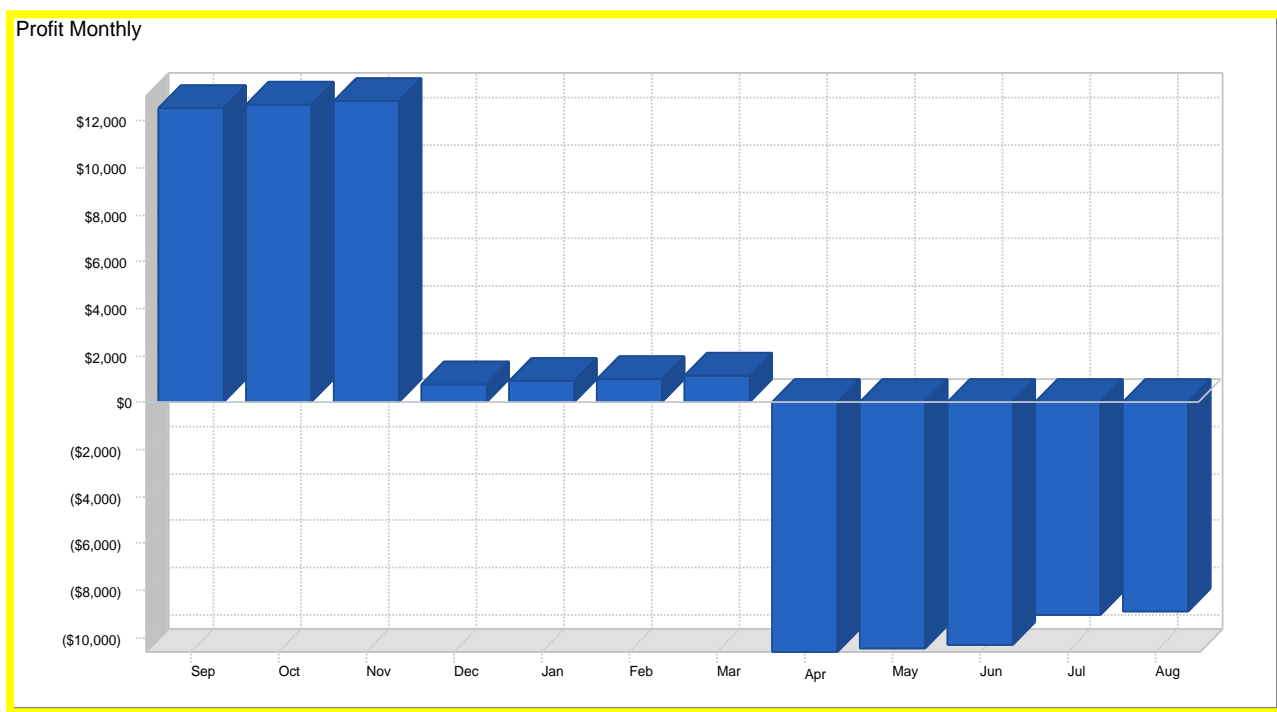




Chart: Profit Yearly

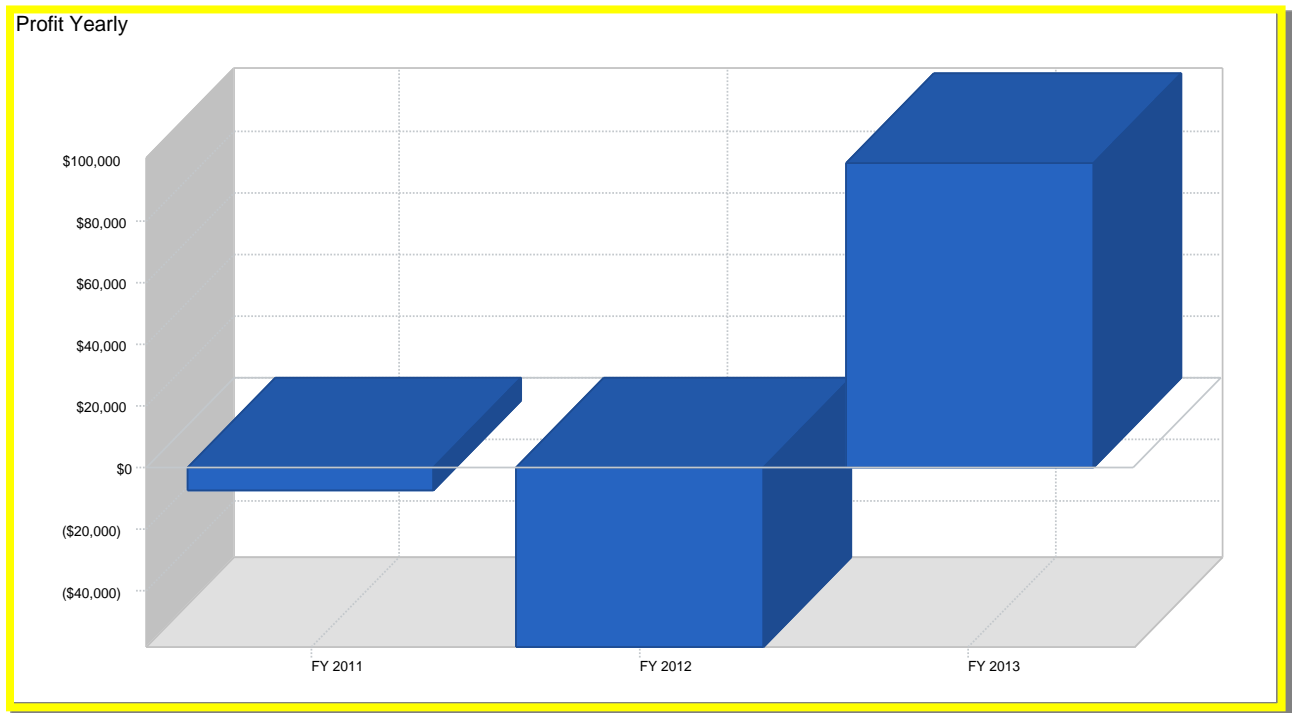


Chart: Gross Margin Monthly

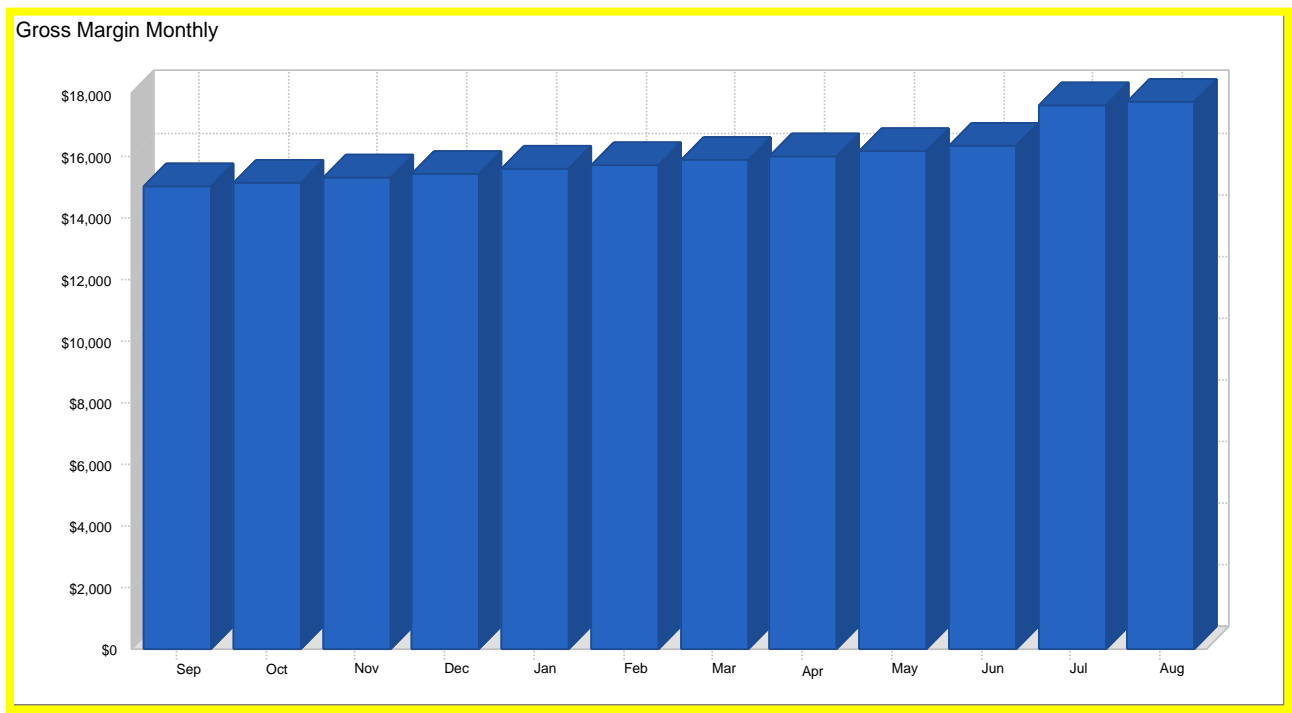
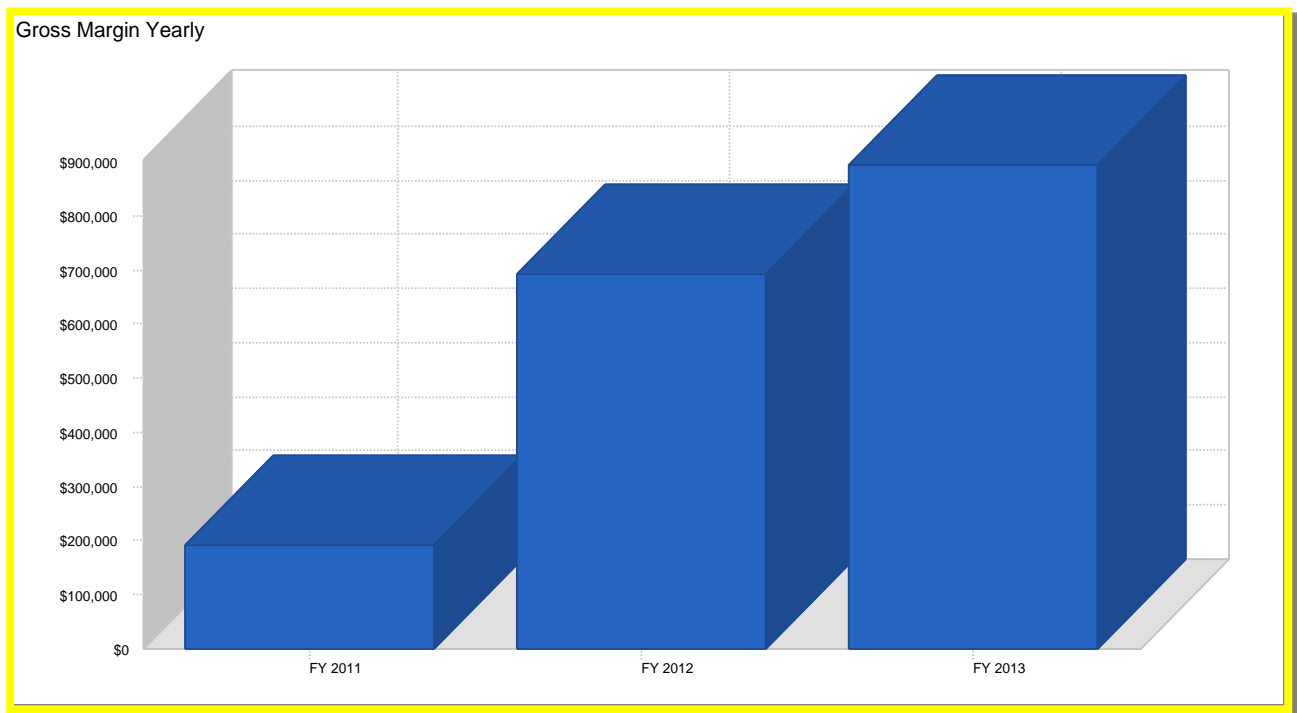


Chart: Gross Margin Yearly



### 7.5 Projected Cash Flow

As portrayed in the Monthly Cash Flow chart, [Business Name]'s net cash flow for 2010, 2011, and 2012 is forecast to be \$1,408,716, -\$125,839 and \$13,892, respectively. The Cash Balance is projected at \$1,411,216, \$1,285,377 and \$1,299,269 for 2010, 2011, and 2012, respectively.

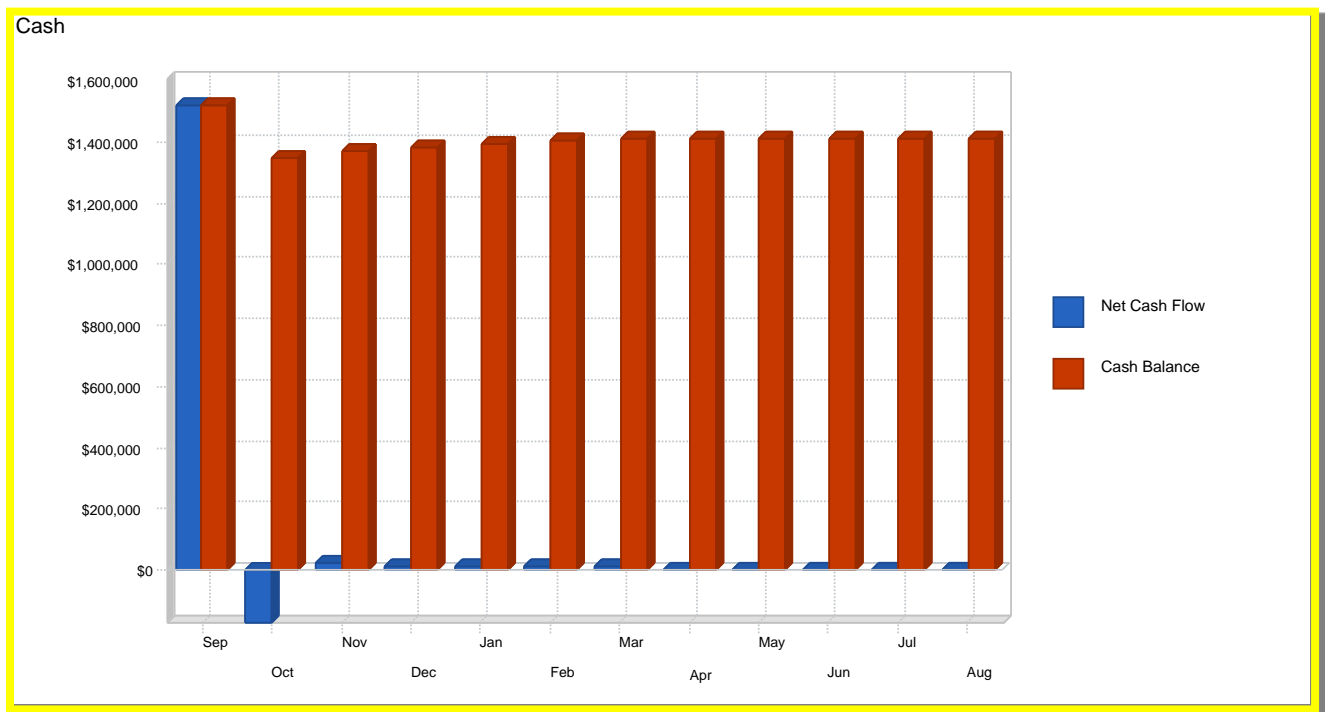
Table: Cash Flow

<b>Pro Forma Cash Flow</b>			
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013
<b>Cash Received</b>			
<b>Cash from Operations</b>			
<b>Cash Sales</b>	\$300,000	\$800,000	\$1,000,000
<b>Subtotal Cash from Operations</b>	\$300,000	\$800,000	\$1,000,000

<b>Additional Cash Received</b>			
<b>Sales Tax, VAT, HST/GST Received</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>New Current Borrowing</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>New Other Liabilities (interest-free)</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>New Long-term Liabilities</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Sales of Other Current Assets</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Sales of Long-term Assets</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>New Investment Received</b>	\$1,500,000	\$0	\$0
<b>Subtotal Cash Received</b>	\$1,800,000	\$800,000	\$1,000,000
<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>FY 2011</b>	<b>FY 2012</b>	<b>FY 2013</b>
<b>Expenditures from Operations</b>			
<b>Cash Spending</b>	\$145,614	\$624,000	\$624,000
<b>Bill Payments</b>	\$245,670	\$301,839	\$362,108
<b>Subtotal Spent on Operations</b>	\$391,284	\$925,839	\$986,108
<b>Additional Cash Spent</b>			
<b>Sales Tax, VAT, HST/GST Paid Out</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Principal Repayment of Current Borrowing</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Other Liabilities Principal Repayment</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Long-term Liabilities Principal Repayment</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Purchase Other Current Assets</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Purchase Long-term Assets</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Dividends</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0

<b>Subtotal Cash Spent</b>	<b>\$391,284</b>	<b>\$925,839</b>	<b>\$986,108</b>
<b>Net Cash Flow</b>	<b>\$1,408,716</b>	<b>(\$125,839)</b>	<b>\$13,892</b>
<b>Cash Balance</b>	<b>\$1,411,216</b>	<b>\$1,285,377</b>	<b>\$1,299,269</b>

Chart: Cash



### 7.6 Projected Balance Sheet

[Business Name]'s Net Worth for 2010, 2011, and 2012 is forecasted to be \$2,946,811, \$2,888,268 and \$2,987,132, respectively. The net worth results are based upon receipt of \$1,500,000 in grant funds.

Table: Balance Sheet

<b>Pro Forma Balance Sheet</b>			
	<b>FY 2011</b>	<b>FY 2012</b>	<b>FY 2013</b>
<b>Assets</b>			

<b>Current Assets</b>			
<b>Cash</b>	\$1,411,216	\$1,285,377	\$1,299,269
<b>Inventory</b>	\$108,667	\$200,667	\$292,667
<b>Other Current Assets</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	\$1,519,883	\$1,486,044	\$1,591,936
<b>Long-term Assets</b>			
<b>Long-term Assets</b>	\$1,435,000	\$1,435,000	\$1,435,000
<b>Accumulated Depreciation</b>	\$2,700	\$6,227	\$9,754
<b>Total Long-term Assets</b>	\$1,432,300	\$1,428,773	\$1,425,246
<b>Total Assets</b>	\$2,952,183	\$2,914,817	\$3,017,182

Table: Balance Sheet (continued)

<b><i>Liabilities and Capital</i></b>	<b><i>FY 2011</i></b>	<b><i>FY 2012</i></b>	<b><i>FY 2013</i></b>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Accounts Payable	\$5,372	\$26,549	\$30,050
Current Borrowing	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other Current Liabilities	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Subtotal Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$5,372</b>	<b>\$26,549</b>	<b>\$30,050</b>
<b>Long-term Liabilities</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$5,372</b>	<b>\$26,549</b>	<b>\$30,050</b>
<b>Paid-in Capital</b>	<b>\$2,957,117</b>	<b>\$2,957,117</b>	<b>\$2,957,117</b>
<b>Retained Earnings</b>	<b>(\$2,950)</b>	<b>(\$10,306)</b>	<b>(\$68,849)</b>
<b>Earnings</b>	<b>(\$7,356)</b>	<b>(\$58,543)</b>	<b>\$98,864</b>
<b>Total Capital</b>	<b>\$2,946,811</b>	<b>\$2,888,268</b>	<b>\$2,987,132</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Capital</b>	<b>\$2,952,183</b>	<b>\$2,914,817</b>	<b>\$3,017,182</b>
<b>Net Worth</b>	<b>\$2,946,811</b>	<b>\$2,888,268</b>	<b>\$2,987,132</b>

### 7.7 Business Ratios

The industry used for comparison to [Business Name] is "Landscape Services". The 167% sales growth in the second year from the first year shown is due to the high demand of the products and services. Third year growth is still expected to be high and is forecast at 25%.

Table: Ratios

<b>Ratio Analysis</b>				
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	Industry Profile
<b>Sales Growth</b>	n.a.	166.67%	25.00%	0.00%
<b>Percent of Total Assets</b>				
<b>Inventory</b>	3.68%	6.88%	9.70%	0.00%
<b>Other Current Assets</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	51.48%	50.98%	52.76%	100.00%
<b>Long-term Assets</b>	48.52%	49.02%	47.24%	0.00%
<b>Total Assets</b>	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
<b>Current Liabilities</b>	0.18%	0.91%	1.00%	0.00%
<b>Long-term Liabilities</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	0.18%	0.91%	1.00%	0.00%
<b>Net Worth</b>	99.82%	99.09%	99.00%	100.00%
<b>Percent of Sales</b>				
<b>Sales</b>	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
<b>Gross Margin</b>	64.00%	86.50%	89.20%	0.00%
<b>Selling, General &amp; Administrative Expenses</b>	66.45%	93.82%	79.31%	0.00%
<b>Advertising Expenses</b>	2.00%	0.75%	0.60%	0.00%
<b>Profit Before Interest and Taxes</b>	-2.45%	-7.32%	14.12%	0.00%

Main Ratios				
Current	282.92	55.97	52.98	0.00
Quick	262.70	48.41	43.24	0.00
Total Debt to Total Assets	0.18%	0.91%	1.00%	0.00%
Pre-tax Return on Net Worth	-0.25%	-2.03%	4.73%	0.00%
Pre-tax Return on Assets	-0.25%	-2.01%	4.68%	0.00%

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