

FoodLab Pre-Incubation Business Plan Prompts

The following include a list of questions to prompt what is expected within a basic business plan document. It's not important that you have a 'right' answer to the questions below, but, rather, that you have shown that you have taken the time to think about these very important questions, and that you have begun to think about how your business is going to grow and flourish.

These questions are born out of the biggest mistakes that we've seen businesses make, and honest answers are going to be the key to business readiness. So, here we go!

You Story and Your Why

Every business starts with a story. Please explain yours below. You could focus on you the business owner, your product range, your background, your passion, vision, values or more. Please do not write more than 700 words.

Your Business, Competition and Sydney

1. Can you identify your 3 major competitors? Tell us as much about them as you can. Who are they? Where are they? What kind of customers do they serve? Etc.
2. A competitive advantage is a business term that identifies difference between similar companies. That can be nearly anything, but it's important that you know what makes you different from someone else. What, if anything, do you think is your competitive advantage?

3. How many other businesses in Sydney sell what you sell? How did you find this out?
4. Please describe your customers (i.e. age, gender, location, education, hobbies, interests, problems, pain points, etc)

Sales Channels and Distribution

Sales channels, or distribution channels, are essentially the way that you will deliver your product to your customer. This is one of the most important things to think about, as it will shape everything about your price structure and business model. Please try and answer these questions critically.

Finally, it's important to understand that while you may, for instance, want to open a restaurant, you will need to begin with sales from FoodLab. This means that you will have to think about your business in stages (i.e. Stage 1 – tasting parties, Stage 2 – market stall, Stage 3 – catering and market stalls across Sydney, etc).

1. How you plan to make your first sale from FoodLab? Describe in detail. Who are you going to sell this to? Where are you going to sell it? How much are you going to sell it for?
2. What stages have you got in mind for your business growth? Do you have a time frame for each stage?
3. Will you need to deliver your product to your customers? If so, how are you going to be able to deliver your products?

4. Can you define wholesale and food service? Which route will you choose to take, if any?
5. How often (on a weekly basis) do you imagine that you will be delivering your product your first year, if applicable?

Finance and Costing

We know that this may be the hardest part. And, often, good cooks want nothing to do with money. Unfortunately, the measure of business in our society is the money that you make, and we would like you very much to think about that before you begin to spend money on this business. Please try and be honest with us, we'd all like to make millions of dollars, but we are looking for realistic visions in the early stages of business.

1. In an ideal world, how much would you like to *earn* per year through your business?
2. How much do you think this means that you will need to sell per year? Per month?
3. If you have additional income, how long do you plan to continue to do that, or at what point (sales, or income earned) would you imagine leaving your other work and focusing entirely on this business?
4. What price point will your products sell at? You can provide a rough price range if you don't know. Please provide a description of the product / quantities to give us an idea.
5. How much capital do you think that you will need to start this business? Please provide a detailed list of your start-up costs for year 1.

6. Please list your indirect costs (i.e. business fees, rent, utilities, etc) and list when do think you will reach your break-even point? How long do you think it will take to reach your sales goal from question #2?

Food Safety and Company Details

The below details on food safety will not affect your application outcome. Rather, it is simply a way for us to determine how we can support you in the early stages of your business.

1. Do you have an ABN yet? If so, please write it below.
2. What legal structure is your business? I.e., Sole trader, partnership, private company?
3. Do you have a Food Safety Supervisor Certificate? Or is there someone in your business that has one?
4. Do you have a food safety program on paper for your business?
5. Do you work out of a registered kitchen, or one with council approval? If so, where?
6. Which insurance policies have you taken out on behalf of your business?

Long-Term Vision

One of the hardest things to do in Sydney is to start a business. We understand that. But importantly, once you do start your business, you will also need to grow. In this section, we ask you to imagine yourself beyond the start-up phase and to think intensely about how you will grow your business.

1. What are your 3 business priorities in Year 1?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

2. What are your 3 business priorities in Year 2?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

3. How will you measure success for your business? Please explain both personally and financially.

4. When would you anticipate hiring your first employee? What will they do? Importantly, how much do you think they will cost you monthly (please keep in mind both hourly wages and workers' comp/benefits).

Exit Strategy

FoodLab is a business incubator. This means that it is a place to begin and grow your business but also that at some point soon (within 1-5 years to be precise) you will need to fly out on your own. The following questions are intended to examine how, exactly, you imagine that

flight might go. We understand that it may not happen exactly like this, but it's instructive to think about these things ahead of time.

1. What does 'graduation from FoodLab' mean to you? Please be as detailed as possible.
2. Do you imagine being a local business, a regional business or a national business?
3. How do you imagine transitioning out of a shared kitchen? What will you need? (Money? Real estate? Etc.). How long do you think it will take?
4. What would you guess that the graduation process will cost you and how will you find that money?
5. Do you envision continuing to support FoodLab once you graduate? How?