BUSINESS PLAN FORMAT:

I. Executive Summary (not to exceed two pages)
   a. Company name, address, and phone numbers
   b. Name(s), addresses, and phone number(s) of all key people
   c. Brief description of the business, its products and services, and the customer problems
      they solve
   d. Brief overview of the market for your products and services
   e. Brief overview of the strategies that will make your firm a success
   f. Brief description of the managerial and technical experience of key people
   g. Brief statement of the financial request and how the money will be used
   h. Charts or tables showing highlights of financial forecast

II. Vision and Mission statement
   a. Entrepreneur’s vision for the company
   b. “What business are we in?”
   c. Values and principles on which the business stands
   d. What makes the business unique? What is the source of its competitive advantage?

III. Company History (for existing businesses only)
   a. Company founding
   b. Financial and operational highlights
   c. Significant achievements

IV. Business and Industry Profile
   a. Industry Analysis
      1. Industry background and overview
      2. Significant trends
      3. Growth rate
      4. Key success factors in the industry
   b. Outlook for the future
   c. Stage of growth (start-up, growth, maturity)
   d. Company goals and objectives
      1. Operational
      2. Financial
      3. Other

V. Business Strategy
   a. Desired image and position in market
   b. SWOT analysis
      1. Strengths
      2. Weaknesses
3. Opportunities
4. Threats

c. Competitive strategy
   1. Cost-leadership
   2. Differentiation
   3. Focus

VI. Company Products and Services
a. Description
   1. Product or service features
   2. Customer benefits
   3. Warranties and guarantees
   4. Unique Selling Proposition (USP)
b. Patent or trademark protection
c. Description of production process (if applicable)
   1. Raw materials
   2. Costs
   3. Key suppliers
d. Future product or service offerings

VII. Marketing Strategy
a. Target market
   1. Complete demographic profile
   2. Other significant customer characteristics
b. Customers’ motivation to buy
c. Market size and trends
   1. How large is the market?
   2. Is it growing or shrinking? How fast?
d. Advertising and promotion
   1. Media used- reader, viewer, listener profiles
   2. Media costs
   3. Frequency or usage
   4. Plans for generating publicity
e. Pricing
   1. Cost structure
      A. Fixed
      B. Variable
   2. Desired image in market
   3. Comparison against competitors’ prices
f. Distributions strategy
   1. Channels of distribution used
   2. Sales techniques and incentives
VIII. Location and Layout
   a. Location
      1. Demographic analysis of location vs. target customer profile
      2. Traffic count
      3. Lease/rental rates
      4. Labor needs and supply
      5. Wage rates
   b. Layout
      1. Size requirements
      2. Americans with Disabilities compliance
      3. Ergonomic issues
      4. Layout plan (suitable for an appendix)

IX. Competitor Analysis
   a. Existing competitors
      1. Who are they? Create a competitive profile matrix.
      2. Strengths
      3. Weaknesses
   b. Potential competitors: Companies that might enter the market
      1. Who are they?
      2. Impact on your business if they enter

X. Description of management team
   a. Key managers and employees
      1. Their backgrounds
      2. Experience, skills, and know-how they bring to the company
   b. Resumes of key managers and employees (suitable for an appendix)

XI. Plan of operation
   a. Form of ownership chosen and reasoning
   b. Company structure (organization chart)
   c. Decision making authority
   d. Compensation and benefits packages

XII. Financial Forecasts (suitable for an appendix)
   a. Financial statements
      1. Income statements
      2. Balance sheet
      3. Cash flow statement
   b. Break-even analysis
   c. Ratio analysis with comparison to industry standards (most applicable to existing businesses)
XIII. Loan or Investment Proposal
   a. Amount requested
   b. Purpose and uses of funds
   c. Repayment or “cash out” schedule (exit strategy)
   d. Timetable for implementing plan and launching the business

XIV. Appendices- Supporting documentation, including market research, financial statements, organizational charts, resumes, and other items.