

## Registration & Round 1: Fleshing Out the Business Concept

Due: February 17

Maximum Length: 4 pages

1. What is your business idea? What makes **you** want to start this particular business?
2. What makes your idea unique or different?
  - To know what makes your business different, first you have to find out how it is the same. Look for companies with a service or product that is similar to what you want to sell. Learn as much as you can about their business. If they are local, visit their shop or talk to the owner. Find out:
    - What do they sell?
    - What they charge?
    - What features does their product have?
    - Who is their customer?
    - How are they advertising?
    - How do they treat their customers?
  - If you can't find a local business that's doing something similar, use the internet or phone book to collect information. Google, Yahoo, Amazon, Ebay, Yelp, and Facebook are great resources for finding companies or products that might be similar.
  - Once you know what's out there already, you can use this info to figure out how your business will be different.
3. Identify your potential customers (target market). Who do you think will buy your product/service?
  - A target market is a specific group of people who are most likely to buy your product or service. To answer this question, **be specific** about what kind of people your potential customers are. Here are some things to think about:
    - Where do they live?
    - How old are they?
    - How much money do they make?
    - How much school have they completed?
    - What do they do for a living?
    - What do they like to do with their free time?
    - Have they passed any major life milestones (gotten married/had kids/bought a home/retired/etc)?
    - What kind of lifestyle do they have - or want to have?
    - What do they like to spend their money on?
    - Plus any other identifying characteristics that are important about your potential customers
  - Note: If you sell more than one product/service, you may have more than one target market.

4. What makes your product/service valuable to your potential customers? Write a 2-3 sentence value statement about your business and your product/service.
- Why would someone pay for your product/service? Now that you know who your customers are, you have to tell them why they should buy your product or service. A value statement is a short memorable statement that tells potential customers why your business is unique and why customers should trust the business. The value statement specifically states the value of your products and services, for example: “We provide world-class accounting software with a guarantee it will pay for itself in 24 months.” About this question: You have spent a little time looking at who your customers are going to be, now explain why your customers are going to want what you have to offer.
  - Things to think about:
    - How can your product or service help your customers?
  - How will it make them feel? Is it going to provide them peace of mind? Savings? Happiness? What’s in it for your customers?
  - Definitions:
    - Before you write your value statement, it may help to try this exercise: make a list of all the features of your product or service. Now pick one or two that you think are the most important to your customers and experiment with different ways you can say what your best benefits are. Choose the statement that you come up with that is catchy, easy to remember and says everything you want to portray.
    - For example: Your business makes handbags for young women, age 18-25.
      - Feature: Your purses have multiple pockets on the outside
      - Benefit: Customers can easily and quickly find their keys, phone, money, etc.