



GUIDE TO WRITING AN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is Elevate Ventures' guide on writing an investor-ready Executive Summary for your startup. These best practices are based on years of experience vetting and investing in successful companies.

There are two main purposes for writing an Executive Summary. First, it serves as a means to quickly describe the most critical and compelling elements of your business to prospective investors. Second, it acts as a way to share the big picture of your business with others who need to buy into the vision of the company such as co-founders, partners, or key employees.

The Executive Summary should describe and quantify the opportunity and where your company fits. It should also explain why you're in business and why you'll be able to take advantage of this opportunity. Feel free to modify this template to meet your company's needs. While there is no firm rule for the length of executive summaries, 1-2 pages is desired for early stage companies, but 3 pages is acceptable if needed. Pictures and graphs are a great way to convey your message in a quick, easy to visualize manner. Additional tips are found on the following pages.

KEY ELEMENTS RECOMMENDED BY ELEVATE VENTURES

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GUIDE TO WRITING AN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY // DETAILED BREAKDOWN



HOOK OR GRAB (Introduction)

A compelling and attention-grabbing overview of your business idea (one or two sentences).

How can you hook the reader from the beginning? A hook can be an interesting fact or statistic, a short story or a question. It must be relevant and is really a sales tactic. We particularly like the three-pronged hook... "most companies we talk to have these three problems/challenges..., if you see any of these in your experience, say yes and read on."



PROBLEM

What's the specific problem faced by your buying audience and why? *Low sales/declining market share, low productivity, shrinking margins (pricing or cost), lack of compliance or staff turnover?* Illustrate the problem with a story, an example and/or data.



SOLUTION (Product + Business Model?)

What is the solution to the problem you just described? How will it help the customer base solve the problem? Support the solution with a story, an example and/or data. Explain your product and how it will help. Identify key benefits.

Include a story about a customer you have helped as well.

A story builds credibility and can inspire people to act.

If it helps make a compelling case for the solution, include a brief high-level overview of the business model and/or product or service.



OPPORTUNITY/MARKET/OBJECTIVE

What is the size and stage of the market (early-growth vs mature)? Include the key drivers, trends, and influences in the market. Be sure to reference credible sources and include the name of your source(s) of information along with the date.

Highlight the types of customers you will target in this market and describe how you will acquire and retain these customers.



PRODUCT

How would you describe your product and/or services? Include an overview and description in this section. Be brief and concise and use bullet points to make it easier to read.



ROADMAP (Milestones/Revenue Goals)

If you had to describe where you've been and where you're going, what would you include?

Prototype milestones, clinical trials, testing schedules, revenue goals, and other significant business milestones should be provided in this section.



WHY US? (Competitive Advantage; Team; Business Model)

How are you different from the competition? Is it the way you do business (service, speed, quality) or is it the team (special talent) and/or proprietary technology? Focus on 3 or fewer key differentiators.

Explain if your service is better, faster, cheaper. State if the advantage is a temporary "window" and if there are steps you can take to protect your position. What, if any, barriers to entry exist and explain if they support your financial projections.

A company's management team is one of the best predictors of success and investors look very closely at the individuals who will be managing the company. The ideal scenario is that senior managers have previously started and successfully managed companies in the same industry. Short of this, you want to emphasize the previous relevant experience of the management team. Mention the names of companies and positions held and milestones achieved. This is also the place to list advisory board members and their credentials.



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

How much and what type of funding are you looking for? Summary financials with some experiential metrics or KPIs would be worthwhile if you're past ideation. Keep in mind that one of the most common causes of new business failure is under-capitalization. You should have a very clear idea of how much money you will need to operate your business for at least a full year.

An investor will want to know how the funds will be used. While investors are interested primarily in the first three years of operation, you should also have projections for years 4 and 5. Note: investors are typically leery of using their funds to pay large salaries or previous obligations (debts, loans, or personal investments).

INCOME STATEMENT:			
Revenue	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Cost of Goods Sold			
Gross Profit			
GM % of Revenue			
SG&A Expenses			
Net Income			



CALL TO ACTION (The Ask/Opportunity for Investors)

What do you want the reader to do next?

Finish the Executive Summary with a call to action that aligns with the business need. Be clear on if you're looking for investors, advisors with certain expertise, a co-founder, etc.

