Clarion Review

Business & Economics

Business Plan or Bust! A Comprehensive Tutorial for Starting and Growing Your Business
Dan Boudreau
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Five Stars (out of Five)

> *Our goals can only be reached through a vehicle of a plan in which we must fervently believe upon which we must vigorously act. There is no other route to success.*

—Stephen A. Brennan

Business Plan or Bust! is a terrific tool for would-be entrepreneurs considering starting their first small business. It addresses the needs of intelligent diligent people who have specialized expertise but little systematic planning experience. The author red-flags other programs which characterize entrepreneurship as a get-rich-quick endeavor. Self-employment is instead touted as a realistic opportunity to make a living on one's own terms predicated on stacks of old-fashioned homework involving always a risk of failure. "An entrepreneur is a twisted individual who will work 15-hour days at minimum wage to avoid taking a real job at 20 per hour."

Dan Boudreau is a two-time Entrepreneur of the Year nominee with twenty-five years in business planning as a sole proprietor employer trainer and gatekeeper of development funds for agencies in British Columbia. The book's examples aren't hypothetical they're steps Boudreau took creating the book sales-centered plan for his company Macrolink Action Plans Inc. He educates others based on previous ventures which included impressive profitability in tree-planting and training and one painful bankruptcy which led to views of government regulators as "parasites" and legally sanctioned "gangsters." He learned the hard way—regulators and lending institutions are least troublesome to those who learn the rules and don't attract attention through noncompliance. One person can't beat the combine or as the man colorfully puts it "If you get into a pissing match with a bank you had best have a change of clothes."

The book is divided into seven chapters the meatiest of which is a ninety-nine step process of plan-building called the RoadMap. Each step is rated "Must Have" "Recommended" or

"Nice to Have." A briefer Fast Track plan is included for the impatient. Narrative text and charts are appropriately balanced throughout. Proprietary software known as Biz4Caster(TM) is available at riskbuster.com to simplify the financials.

Those lacking experience are typically confused about how market research and accurate forecasting are done—vital topics addressed here with specifics. As thorough professional and approachable as this guide is it doesn't eliminate the maddening sinkhole which threatens the universe of business planning: behavior of human customers resists conforming to forecasts. That morass can easily swallow up a collateralized home if one ignores early warnings. Kudos to the author for encouraging reality checks. He says "It's important to know when to throw in the towel."

This book and its ancillary tools primarily target Canadians and Americans who are considering launching small service-industry businesses. Focused but lively complete but comprehensible *Business Plan or Bust!* is exactly the right prescription for people with a great concept and little idea of how to proceed. An excellent value.