

**Business Plan Development Café Overview**

The Business Plan Development Café is a short blended learning experience oriented around the concepts and skills found in the Harvard ManageMentor Business Plan Development topic. The Business Plan Development topic will help managers:

* *Prepare to create a business plan*
* *Introduce their organization, its people, and its objectives within a business plan*
* *Indicate the opportunity and competitive differentiators within a business plan*
* *Define their approach to marketing and operations within a business plan*
* *Show their current financial status and projected results within a business plan*

The learning experience has three components:

*60 to 90 minutes 60 minutes Ongoing*

Part 1: Pre-work (self-paced, individual)

Before the live Café session, participants are expected to complete the following assignments:

* Review the following online lessons from the Harvard ManageMentor Business Plan Development topic:
  + Why You Need a Business Plan
  + Get Started on Your Plan
  + Tell Your Organization’s Story
  + Describe the Opportunity
  + Document Your Marketing and Operations Plans
  + Present Your Financial Analysis
* Complete the online assessment from the Harvard ManageMentor Business Plan Development topic
* Complete the practice activity “Propose a Project” in the “Get Started on Your Plan” lesson of the Harvard ManageMentor Business Plan Development topic
* Use the “Worksheet for Describing an Opportunity” in the “Describe the Opportunity” lesson of the Harvard ManageMentor Business Plan Development topic to identify and begin to describe a promising opportunity that solves a real customer problem in their business. They should take no more than 30 minutes to fill in as much information as they can, based on what they know about their industry, competition, and market.

Part 2: Café session (live, group)

The Café session represents the core element of the learning experience. The session provides an opportunity for managers to:

* Exchange ideas and questions with others
* Discuss the context of how concepts and skills apply in the workplace
* Practice and begin application of those concepts and skills
* Build momentum and support for applying the concepts and skills in the workplace

The Café session focuses specifically on the following concepts and tasks from the Business Plan Development topic:

* Understand how to develop a business plan
* Propose a project
* Sell an opportunity

Facilitating the Café session as outlined should take approximately 60 minutes. If the facilitator prefers a shorter session or wishes to spend more time on a specific concept or activity, he or she may want to cover only those concepts and activities that are most relevant to the group.

| SECTION | ACTIVITY | TIME |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Introduction** | Show icebreaker question while participants are arriving to the session.  **(QUESTION: IN AN ESTABLISHED BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION, WHAT’S THE MOST CRITICAL FUNCTION OF A BUSINESS PLAN? Please chat in your response.)**   * Introduce facilitators. * Review tips for using technology during the session. * Debrief icebreaker question. * Set context: *For managers in established businesses and organizations today, knowing how to create a business plan is essential. The term “business plan” may sound intimidating, but it shouldn’t. At a basic level, a business plan is simply a document that describes what an organization or group plans to do and how it plans to do it. It’s simply not enough to have a great idea. By creating a business plan, you can pinpoint your market’s unmet customer needs, offer a strategic plan for answering those needs, and sell investors on your team's capabilities. Every new venture involves risk. A business plan shows that you are keenly aware of the competition and challenges ahead. Think of it as a blueprint for success.* * Review session objectives. | 10 minutes |
| **Skill focus: Understand how to develop a business plan** | * Facilitate discussion activity to understand how to develop a business plan. Participants:   + Focus on the four key factors: people, opportunity, context, and risk and reward.   + Consider factors, events, or conditions that may require adapting or overhauling an existing business plan. | 10 minutes |
| **Skill focus: Propose a project** | * Debrief the practice activity “Propose a Project.” Participants:   + Review the key questions addressed in the practice activity as a group:     - What are you trying to accomplish through your business plan?     - Who is your audience, and how will you sell your plan to them?     - What information will you need?     - How should you present your plan? | 12 minutes |
| **Skill focus: Sell an opportunity** | * Facilitate discussion to debrief the “Worksheet for Describing an Opportunity.” Participants:   + Share key facets of their work to describe the industry, competition, and market.   + Brainstorm ways to specifically show what differentiates a product or service from other competitive offerings. * Facilitate discussion activity on a business plan development scenario. Participants:   + Review a short "What would you do?" scenario to help an organization determine and effectively articulate its value proposition in a single sentence.   + Discuss strategies for ensuring the value proposition is customer-focused and clearly articulates how the offer will deliver value that the competition cannot match.   + Apply insights to their own business and roles. | 23 minutes |
| **Applying what you’ve learned** | * Review session objectives and skill areas discussed. * Review directions for completing the On-the-Job section of the online Harvard ManageMentor topic, including the action plan. * Close the session. | 5 minutes |

Part 3: Application (self-paced, individual)

After the live Café session, participants are expected to complete the following assignments:

* Complete the online On-the-Job section in the Harvard ManageMentor Business Plan Development topic. The section provides learners with an opportunity to choose a skill to focus on and create an action plan for applying and developing the skill. *Note:* If your organization does not include the On-the-Job section in your configuration of Harvard ManageMentor, ask participants to think of two things they can do over the next 90 days to further apply and develop their skills in this area.
* Execute their action plan over a specified time frame (e.g., 60 or 90 days).
* After the specified time frame (e.g., 60 or 90 days), access the online On-the-Job section in the Harvard ManageMentor Business Plan Development topic to update the action plan and reflect on the experience.