



# MAINE SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTERS

## Starting a Business? So, What's the Plan?

Presented by: Ali Lane

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Funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration:



Meet the Advisor

# Alison Lane



UNIVERSITY OF  
SOUTHERN MAINE



Certified Business Advisor since 2019

Territory: Bangor, Ellsworth, Belfast

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207-780-4982



# What is the Maine SBDC?

# 12 Business Advisors

# No-cost, confidential business advising for new and existing small business owners

## Locations throughout Maine

# Meetings virtually & in-person



*We help small businesses start, grow, & succeed*



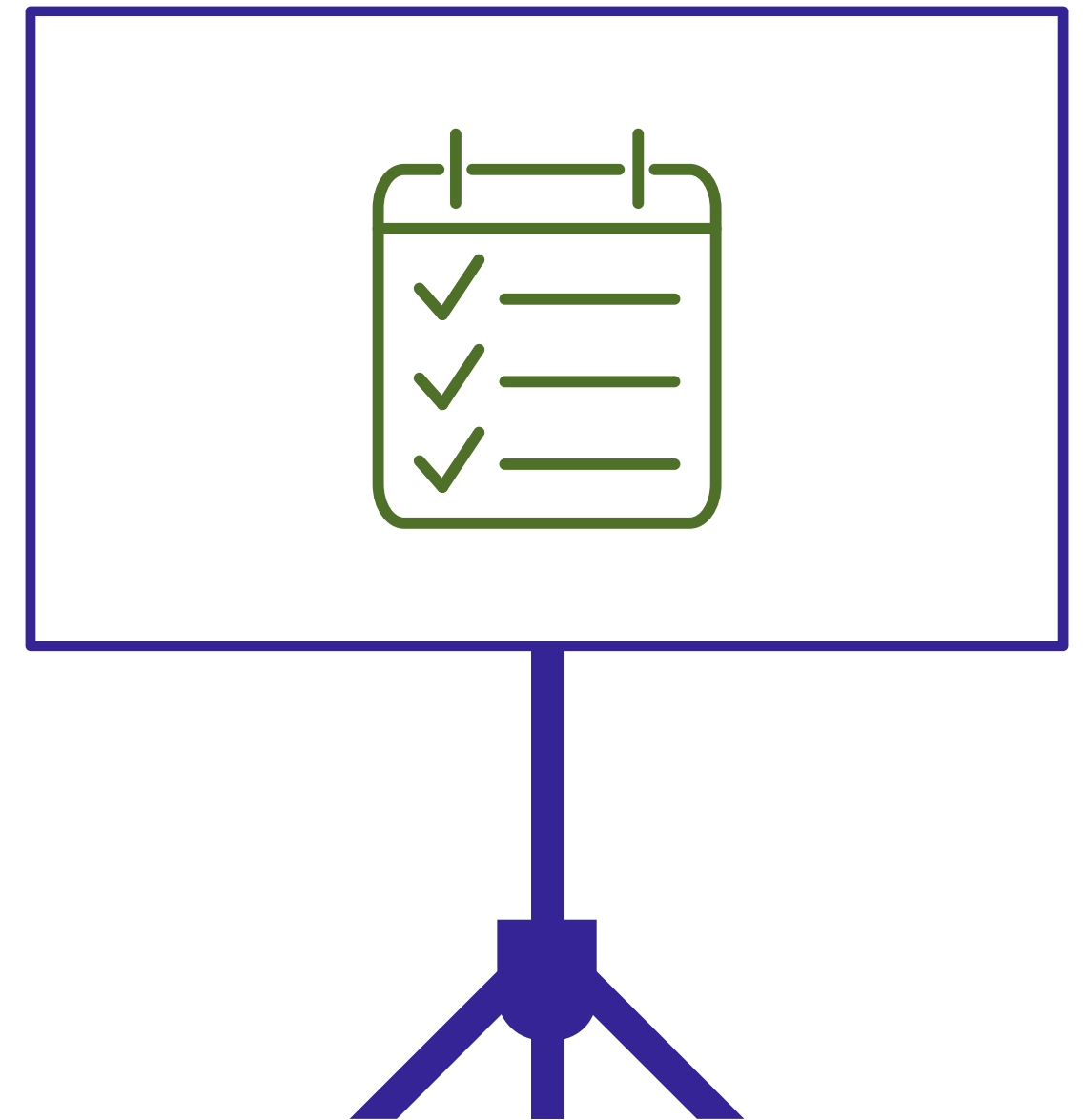
# Getting Started – [www.mainesbdc.org](http://www.mainesbdc.org)





# Agenda

- Introduction activities
- What is a business plan?
- Do you need a business plan?
- Tips & Tricks
- *Does it belong?* game
- BREAK
- Elements of a business plan
- Resource links
- Questions



# Housekeeping

Questions/Interruptions

Break

Side Conversations

Timing

What if we run out of time?





# Who are you?

1. Your name
2. If you had 25 hours in a day, how would you spend your extra hour  
*(if you didn't need more sleep...)?*
3. What is your business or the business you hope to start?

**What is a word that comes to mind when you hear**  
**“business plan”?**



# What is a business plan?

A **business plan** is a written document that outlines the goals of a business, the strategy for achieving them, and the resources required. It acts like a roadmap for how the business will operate and grow. Business plans are used both internally (to guide the team) and externally (to attract investors, secure loans, or form partnerships).

*Thanks, ChatGPT...*

# What is a business plan?

*Well, it depends*

- Written
- Roadmap
- *A communication tool*
- A sales pitch
- Organized thoughts, analysis, plans
- Not set in stone/requires updates





**What** is a business plan  
(logistically)?

N\_\_\_\_\_

&

N\_\_\_\_\_

**What** is a business plan  
(logistically)?

Narrative  
&  
Numbers



# Do you need a business plan?

*Well, it depends*

Securing outside funding?

Have partners?

Squirrel-brained?

Why else?

# Simple but Critical **Tips & Tricks**

- Tailor to your **audience**
- Say it with me: *Readability*
- Organize w/ **headings**
- Relevance and Appendices
- Remain **objective**
- Don't forget the *basics*

- ☐ *Accurate Table of contents*
- ☐ *Page numbers*
- ☐ *Headings/subheadings*
- ☐ *"Ask"*
- ☐ *Your contact information*
- ☐ *Each relevant "element"*
- ☐ *Spelling & Grammar Proofed*
- ☐ *Sources cited*
- ☐ *Working hyperlinks*
- ☐ *References for more info accurate*

# Does it belong?

“XYZ, LLC will be located at 109 Main Road in Ellsworth.”



“XYZ, LLC will sell the best burgers, fries, and milkshakes in town.”



“Ali Lane will be the sole member of XYZ, LLC”



“Ali’s resume is in Appendix C..”



“The industry in which XYZ, LLC operates has grown significantly since the COVID-19 pandemic.”



In a recent survey of 37 of Ali’s friends and family, 92.5% said they’d purchase from XYZ, LLC weekly.



“If XYZ, LLC fails to pay their loan back, Ali will use her degree and skills to obtain W2 work in the industry.”



“It has always been Ali’s dream to own this type of business.”





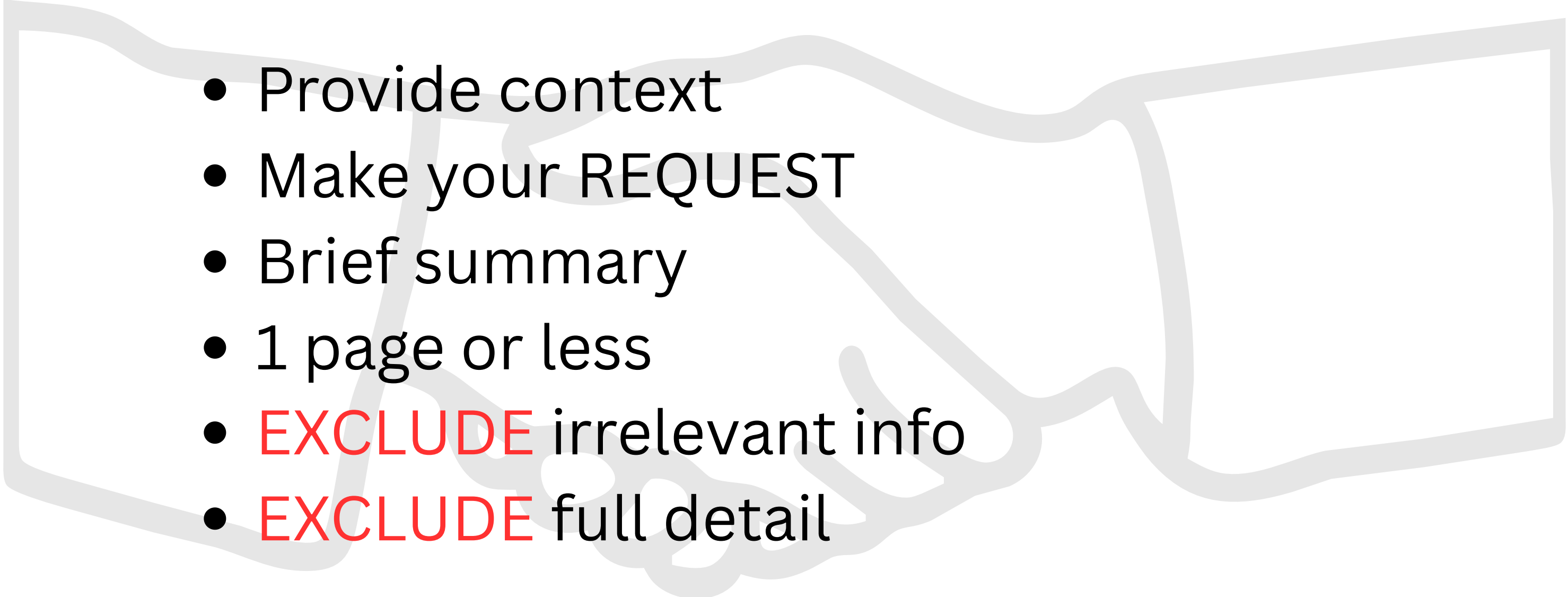


# Elements of a [generic] business plan

*Guess what? They depend...*

# Cover Letter/Executive Summary

*First impressions*

- 
- Provide context
  - Make your REQUEST
  - Brief summary
  - 1 page or less
  - **EXCLUDE** irrelevant info
  - **EXCLUDE** full detail



# Business Description

*The overview*

- What is the business?
- Brief “story”/history (aka the **WHY**)
- Mission if applicable
- Legal & Ownership info
- Licensing & Permits
- Timeline

# Offerings

## *Products and Services*

- What are you selling?
- “Revenue streams”
- Customers (“Target Market”)
- Pricing
- “Variable Costs”/ “COGS”
- **VALUE**

# Operations & Location

*How does a customer **access** your business?*

- Location-Details & Why
- Staffing
- Labor Cost
- Hours/Schedule







# Marketing *Communication*

- “Target Market” (*Who are you talking to?*)
- Online
- Offline
- Retention
- Budget
- Competition: Direct & Indirect (Think, *alternatives*)

# Market Analysis

*If you build it, will they come?*

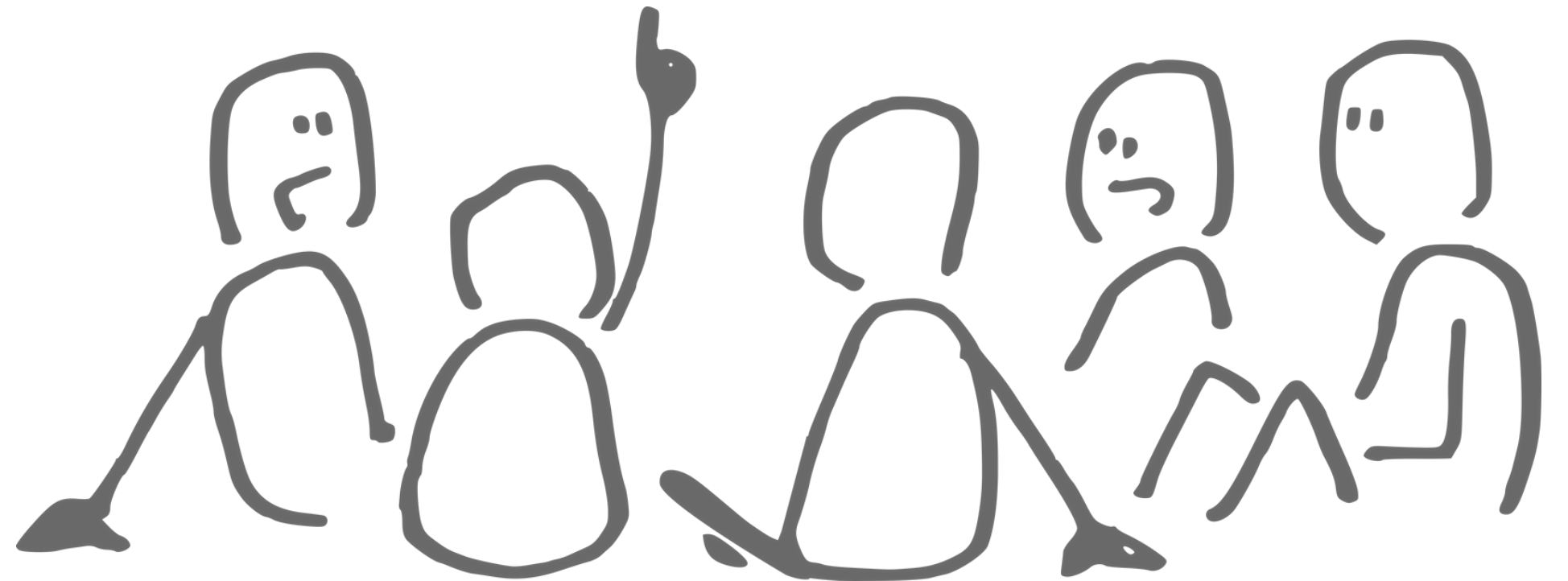
- ID where your customers will be coming from
- Market Research
  - Secondary
  - Primary
- This section's significance varies *greatly*



# Management & Resources

*The “Who”*

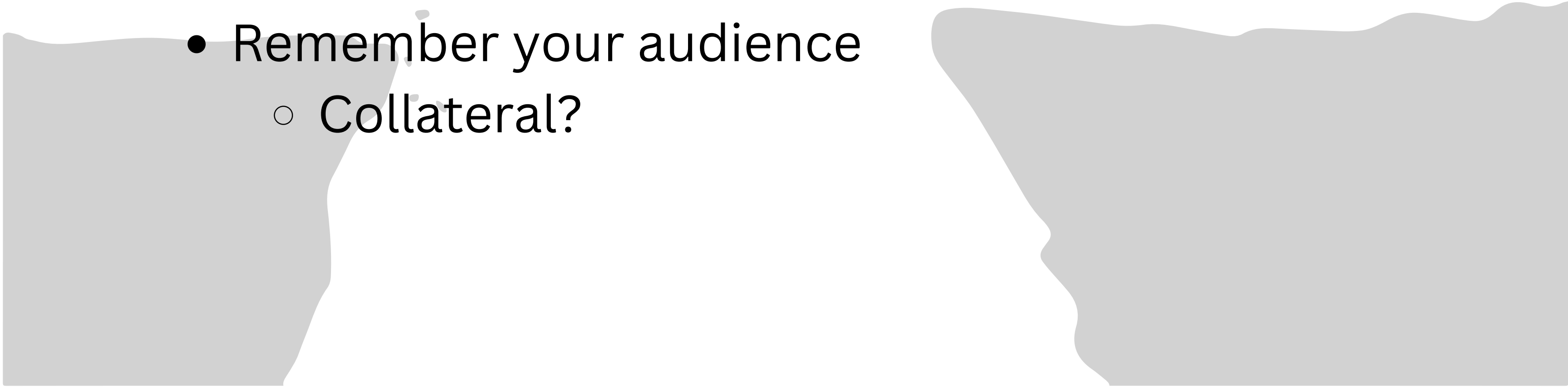
- Owners
- Creditials/qualifications
- Who else is helping?
  - Paid
  - Unpaid
  - Professional
  - Friends/Family





# Risk Analysis & Response

*Get out **in front** of concerns*

- Identify several big risks
  - How would you navigate those risks?
  - Think outside the business
  - Remember your audience
    - Collateral?
- 



|    | A | B                                     | C | D                                     | E         | F         | G         | H         | I         | J         | K         | L         | M         | N         | O         | P          | Q  |
|----|---|---------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|--|
| 1  |   |                                       |   | Cash Flow from Operations Projections |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |            |  |
| 2  |   | Cash In                               |   | Jan-25                                | Feb-25    | Mar-25    | Apr-25    | May-25    | Jun-25    | Jul-25    | Aug-25    | Sep-25    | Oct-25    | Nov-25    | Dec-25    | Totals     | Assumptions  |
| 3  |   | Property Maintenance                  |   | \$ 7,564                              | \$ 8,345  | \$ 8,345  | \$ 8,345  | \$ 8,345  | \$ 8,222  | \$ 8,222  | \$ 8,222  | \$ 8,201  | \$ 8,201  | \$ 8,201  | \$ 8,201  | \$ 192,000 | Per approx. historic revenue since August (\$100k in about 5 months) |
| 4  |   | Contracts-Lawn care and Plowing       |   | \$ 1,002                              | \$ 1,002  | \$ 1,002  | \$ 1,002  | \$ 1,002  | \$ 1,009  | \$ 1,009  | \$ 1,009  | \$ 998    | \$ 998    | \$ 998    | \$ 998    | \$ 10,000  | See "Apartment Contracts" tab  |
| 5  |   |                                       |   |                                       |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |            |  |
| 6  |   | TOTAL CASH                            |   | \$ 1,566                              | \$ 2,354  | \$ 2,354  | \$ 2,354  | \$ 2,354  | \$ 2,701  | \$ 2,701  | \$ 2,701  | \$ 2,699  | \$ 2,699  | \$ 2,699  | \$ 2,699  | \$ 22,500  |  |
| 7  |   |                                       |   |                                       |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |            |  |
| 8  |   | Cash Out: Variable Costs              |   |                                       |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |            |  |
| 9  |   | COGS-Maintenance                      |   | \$ 3,601                              | \$ 3,927  | \$ 4,561  | \$ 5,343  | \$ 5,343  | \$ 5,343  | \$ 5,343  | \$ 5,343  | \$ 5,343  | \$ 5,343  | \$ 5,343  | \$ 5,343  | \$ 57,599  | None   |
| 10 |   | Credit Card Processing                |   | \$ 587                                | \$ 620    | \$ 706    | \$ 785    | \$ 785    | \$ 810    | \$ 810    | \$ 810    | \$ 804    | \$ 804    | \$ 804    | \$ 804    | \$ 8,810   | 3% on all revenue  |
| 11 |   |                                       |   |                                       |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |            |  |
| 12 |   | TOTAL COGS (Cost of Goods)            |   | \$ 4,188                              | \$ 4,547  | \$ 5,267  | \$ 6,127  | \$ 6,127  | \$ 6,154  | \$ 6,154  | \$ 6,514  | \$ 6,514  | \$ 6,514  | \$ 6,514  | \$ 6,514  | \$ 66,408  |  |
| 13 |   |                                       |   |                                       |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |            |  |
| 14 |   | Gross Profit: Cash minus COGS         |   | \$ 15,378                             | \$ 16,107 | \$ 18,280 | \$ 20,027 | \$ 20,027 | \$ 20,877 | \$ 20,877 | \$ 21,608 | \$ 21,608 | \$ 17,484 | \$ 17,484 | \$ 17,484 | \$ 227,242 |  |
| 15 |   |                                       |   |                                       |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |            |  |
| 16 |   | Cash Out: Fixed Expenses              |   |                                       |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |            |  |
| 17 |   | Gross Wages (Employees)               |   | \$ 3,612                              | \$ 3,612  | \$ 3,612  | \$ 3,612  | \$ 3,612  | \$ 3,612  | \$ 3,612  | \$ 3,612  | \$ 3,612  | \$ 3,612  | \$ 3,612  | \$ 3,612  | \$ 43,344  | Worker: \$24/hr average 35 hours/week                                |
| 18 |   | Payroll Taxes (Employer Portion)      |   | \$ 361.20                             | \$ 361.20 | \$ 361.20 | \$ 361.20 | \$ 361.20 | \$ 361.20 | \$ 361.20 | \$ 361.20 | \$ 361.20 | \$ 361.20 | \$ 361.20 | \$ 361.20 | \$ 4,334   | 10% of Gross Wages   |
| 19 |   | Salaries of Owners                    |   | \$ 4,300                              | \$ 4,300  | \$ 4,300  | \$ 4,300  | \$ 4,300  | \$ 4,300  | \$ 4,300  | \$ 4,300  | \$ 4,300  | \$ 4,300  | \$ 4,300  | \$ 4,300  | \$ 51,600  | S-Corp; Approx. \$500/week   |
| 20 |   | Taxes -Income/Self-employment         |   | \$ 1,290                              | \$ 1,290  | \$ 1,290  | \$ 1,290  | \$ 1,290  | \$ 1,290  | \$ 1,290  | \$ 1,290  | \$ 1,290  | \$ 1,290  | \$ 1,290  | \$ 1,290  | \$ 15,480  | 30% of Salaries of Owners  |
| 21 |   | Business Liability Insurance          |   | \$ -                                  | \$ -      | \$ 1,650  | \$ -      | \$ 1,650  | \$ -      | \$ 1,650  | \$ -      | \$ 1,650  | \$ -      | \$ 1,650  | \$ 1,650  | \$ 6,600   | \$6600/year paid quarterly starting in March                         |
| 22 |   | Worker's compensation Ins.            |   | \$ 1,122                              | \$ 1,122  | \$ 1,122  | \$ 1,122  | \$ 1,122  | \$ 1,122  | \$ 1,122  | \$ 1,122  | \$ 1,122  | \$ 1,122  | \$ 1,122  | \$ 1,122  | \$ 1,464   | MEMIC, based on historic average                                     |
| 23 |   | Accounting/Legal Expenses/Bookkeeping |   | \$ 550                                | \$ 550    | \$ 550    | \$ 550    | \$ 550    | \$ 550    | \$ 550    | \$ 550    | \$ 550    | \$ 550    | \$ 550    | \$ 550    | \$ 1,270   | Quickbooks monthly payment and Accounting (\$550 for tax filing)     |
| 24 |   | Advertising and Promotion             |   | \$ 50                                 | \$ 50     | \$ 50     | \$ 50     | \$ 50     | \$ 50     | \$ 50     | \$ 50     | \$ 50     | \$ 50     | \$ 50     | \$ 50     | \$ 600     | See "Marketing" section of Business Plan                             |
| 25 |   | Licenses                              |   | \$ -                                  | \$ -      | \$ -      | \$ -      | \$ -      | \$ -      | \$ -      | \$ -      | \$ -      | \$ -      | \$ -      | \$ -      | \$ -       | None   |
| 26 |   | Office Supplies                       |   | \$ 600                                | \$ 600    | \$ 600    | \$ 600    | \$ 600    | \$ 600    | \$ 600    | \$ 600    | \$ 600    | \$ 600    | \$ 600    | \$ 600    | \$ 600     | Paper, etc.  |
| 27 |   | Rent/Lease                            |   | \$ 2,000                              | \$ 2,000  | \$ 2,000  | \$ 2,000  | \$ 2,000  | \$ 2,000  | \$ 2,000  | \$ 2,000  | \$ 2,000  | \$ 2,000  | \$ 2,000  | \$ 2,000  | \$ 24,000  | Per Lease Agreement  |
| 28 |   | Repairs/Maintenance                   |   | \$ -                                  | \$ -      | \$ -      | \$ -      | \$ -      | \$ -      | \$ -      | \$ -      | \$ -      | \$ -      | \$ -      | \$ -      | \$ 300     | Mower Maintenance  |
| 29 |   | Supplies                              |   | \$ 300                                | \$ 300    | \$ 125    | \$ -      | \$ -      | \$ -      | \$ -      | \$ -      | \$ -      | \$ -      | \$ 125    | \$ 125    | \$ 975     | Salt & Sand  |
| 30 |   | Telephone, Cell, Internet             |   | \$ 60                                 | \$ 60     | \$ 60     | \$ 60     | \$ 60     | \$ 60     | \$ 60     | \$ 60     | \$ 60     | \$ 60     | \$ 60     | \$ 60     | \$ 720     | Current cell phones  |
| 31 |   | Utilities                             |   | \$ -                                  | \$ -      | \$ -      | \$ -      | \$ -      | \$ -      | \$ -      | \$ -      | \$ -      | \$ -      | \$ -      | \$ -      | \$ -       | None   |
| 32 |   | Vehicle expenses                      |   | \$ 400                                | \$ 400    | \$ 400    | \$ 400    | \$ 400    | \$ 400    | \$ 400    | \$ 400    | \$ 400    | \$ 400    | \$ 400    | \$ 400    | \$ 4,800   | Oil changes, registrations, insurance                                |
| 33 |   | Fuel                                  |   | \$ 1,200                              | \$ 1,200  | \$ 1,200  | \$ 1,200  | \$ 1,200  | \$ 1,200  | \$ 1,200  | \$ 1,200  | \$ 1,200  | \$ 1,200  | \$ 1,200  | \$ 1,200  | \$ 14,400  | \$1200/month   |
| 34 |   |                                       |   |                                       |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |            |  |
| 35 |   | SubTotal Expenses                     |   | \$ 13,555                             | \$ 14,355 | \$ 15,280 | \$ 16,505 | \$ 13,555 | \$ 15,235 | \$ 13,555 | \$ 13,555 | \$ 15,235 | \$ 13,555 | \$ 13,630 | \$ 15,280 | \$ 170,487 |  |
| 36 |   |                                       |   |                                       |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |            |  |
| 37 |   | Net Profit (EBITDA)                   |   | \$ 1,573                              | \$ 1,752  | \$ 3,000  | \$ 6,321  | \$ 6,471  | \$ 5,672  | \$ 7,322  | \$ 8,053  | \$ 6,403  | \$ 3,929  | \$ 3,854  | \$ 2,204  | \$ 56,754  |  |
| 38 |   |                                       |   |                                       |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |            |  |
| 39 |   | Finance and Misc. Expenses            |   |                                       |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |            |  |
| 40 |   | New Loan Bank Payment                 |   | \$ 811                                | \$ 811    | \$ 811    | \$ 811    | \$ 811    | \$ 811    | \$ 811    | \$ 811    | \$ 811    | \$ 811    | \$ 811    | \$ 811    | \$ 9,733   | \$40,000 borrowed at 8% on 5-year term                               |
| 41 |   | Truck                                 |   | \$ 800                                | \$ 800    | \$ 800    | \$ 800    | \$ 800    | \$ 800    | \$ 800    | \$ 800    | \$ 800    | \$ 800    | \$ 800    | \$ 800    | \$ 9,600   | Existing loan: \$800/month   |
| 42 |   |                                       |   |                                       |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           | \$ -       |  |
| 43 |   | Sub Total Fin. & Misc. Exp.           |   | \$ 1,611                              | \$ 1,611  | \$ 1,611  | \$ 1,611  | \$ 1,611  | \$ 1,611  | \$ 1,611  | \$ 1,611  | \$ 1,611  | \$ 1,611  | \$ 1,611  | \$ 1,611  | \$ 19,333  |  |
| 44 |   |                                       |   |                                       |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |            |  |
| 45 |   | TOTAL EXPENSES                        |   | \$ 15,416                             | \$ 15,966 | \$ 16,891 | \$ 15,116 | \$ 15,166 | \$ 16,816 | \$ 15,166 | \$ 15,166 | \$ 16,816 | \$ 15,166 | \$ 15,241 | \$ 16,891 | \$ 188,820 |  |
| 46 |   |                                       |   |                                       |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |            |  |
| 47 |   | Net Cash (monthly)                    |   | \$ (38)                               | \$ 141    | \$ 1,389  | \$ 4,910  | \$ 4,860  | \$ 4,061  | \$ 5,711  | \$ 6,442  | \$ 4,792  | \$ 2,317  | \$ 2,242  | \$ 592    |            |  |
| 48 |   |                                       |   |                                       |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |            |  |
| 49 |   | Cumulative Cash Flow (YTD)            |   | \$ (38)                               | \$ 103    | \$ 1,492  | \$ 6,402  | \$ 11,263 | \$ 15,324 | \$ 21,035 | \$ 27,477 | \$ 32,269 | \$ 34,587 | \$ 36,829 | \$ 37,422 |            |  |

# Financial Projections

Estimates!

- Monthly (12-36 months)
- Realistic sales goals
- Slightly pessimistic cost estimates
- Demonstrate cash flow
- Reasonable Assumptions

# Sources & Uses of Funds

## *The Ask & Your Skin in the Game*

- What \$ do you need?
- Where is coming from?
- What have you already spent?
- Uses = Sources
- Project Cost =  
Owner's Contribution + Loan Funds
- What other columns might apply?

|    | A   | B                   | C                           | D                 | E | F | G |
|----|---|---------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|---|---|---|
| 1  | <b>Sources &amp; Uses of Funds</b>        |                     |                             |                   |   |   |   |
| 2  |   |                     |                             |                   |   |   |   |
| 3  | <b>Use of Funds</b>                       | <b>Project Cost</b> | <b>Owner's Contribution</b> | <b>Loan Funds</b> |   |   |   |
| 4  |   |                     |                             |                   |   |   |   |
| 5  | Down Payment Requirement                  |                     | \$ 65,000                   | \$ (65,000)       |   |   |   |
| 6  |   |                     |                             | \$ -              |   |   |   |
| 7  | <b>Start-up Costs: Real Estate</b>        | \$ 225,000          |                             | \$ 225,000        |   |   |   |
| 8  |   |                     |                             | \$ -              |   |   |   |
| 9  | <b>Start-up Costs: Build Out</b>          |                     |                             | \$ -              |   |   |   |
| 10 | Electric                                  | \$ 3,495            |                             | \$ 3,495          |   |   |   |
| 11 | Plumbing                                  | \$ 9,800            |                             | \$ 9,800          |   |   |   |
| 12 | Painting                                  | \$ 2,000            |                             | \$ 2,000          |   |   |   |
| 13 |   |                     |                             | \$ -              |   |   |   |
| 14 | <b>Start-up Costs: Equipment</b>          |                     |                             | \$ -              |   |   |   |
| 15 | Oven                                      | \$ 7,900            |                             | \$ 7,900          |   |   |   |
| 16 | Furniture                                 | \$ 4,000            | \$ 2,000                    | \$ 2,000          |   |   |   |
| 17 |   |                     |                             | \$ -              |   |   |   |
| 18 | <b>Start-up Costs: Inventory</b>          |                     |                             | \$ -              |   |   |   |
| 19 | See breakdown in Appendix G               | \$ 10,940           |                             | \$ 10,940         |   |   |   |
| 20 |   |                     |                             | \$ -              |   |   |   |
| 21 | <b>Start-up Costs: Expenses</b>           |                     |                             | \$ -              |   |   |   |
| 22 | Insurance - liability Deposit             | \$ 2,300            |                             | \$ 2,300          |   |   |   |
| 23 | Licenses                                  | \$ 330              |                             | \$ 330            |   |   |   |
| 24 | Legal and other                           | \$ 1,350            | \$ 1,350                    | \$ -              |   |   |   |
| 25 |   |                     |                             | \$ -              |   |   |   |
| 26 | <b>Start-up Costs: Working Capital</b>    | \$ 8,700            |                             | \$ 8,700          |   |   |   |
| 27 |   |                     |                             | \$ -              |   |   |   |
| 28 | <b>Start-up Costs: Loan Closing Costs</b> | \$ 3,000            | \$ 3,000                    | \$ -              |   |   |   |
| 29 |   |                     |                             | \$ -              |   |   |   |
| 30 | <b>Start-up Costs: TOTAL</b>              | <b>\$ 278,815</b>   | <b>\$ 71,350</b>            | <b>\$ 207,465</b> |   |   |   |
| 31 |   | <b>100%</b>         | <b>26%</b>                  | <b>74%</b>        |   |   |   |

# Appendices

## *The Clutter*

- Supporting details
- May be lengthy
- Should be referenced

- OWNER RESUME
- LEASE AGREEMENT
- STAFFING/LABOR CHART
- MENU
- CONTRACTOR QUOTES
- IMAGES
- PHYSICAL SPACE LAYOUT/DIAGRAM
- LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION
- EQUIPMENT OWNED/NEEDED DETAIL
- MARKET RESEARCH REPORTS
- SURVEY RESULTS
- ETC.



# Resource Links

[Maine SBDC General Business Plan Guide](#)



[Request Maine SBDC Business Advising](#)

[Maine SBDC Youtube Channel](#)



