**Business Case Worksheet**

“Just the Fundamentals” Version

Multiple Alternatives Version

*(See website for single alternative versions and more comprehensive versions)*

Business Case Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***READ THIS IMPORTANT APPLICATION NOTE TO MAKE SURE YOU ARE USING THE RIGHT WORKSHEET - This worksheet is for*** *a business case that involves solving a problem or making an improvement where multiple alternative solutions exist. This worksheet also covers business cases for major decisions where multiple alternatives exist. Several examples of many major decisions having multiple alternatives would include selecting one of multiple new systems to be acquired, forming a partnership with one of several potential partners, building one of multiple possible new facilities or determining which of a number of potential new products or services would be developed. If your business case involves a single alternative decision such as a decision to acquire a specific new system or not, form a partnership with another specific organization or not, build a specific new facility or not or a decision to develop a specific new product or service or not,* ***then this is NOT the right worksheet*** *and you should use one of the “Single Alternatives” worksheet versions available at* [*www.ManageProjectsBetter.com*](http://www.ManageProjectsBetter.com)*. See the “Site Map” at this site for other business case worksheets. Note also that multiple worksheets of varying complexities are available.*

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**Instructions**

* Review the business case steps in this worksheet
* Define the timeframe for business case completion, milestones related to the business case steps are recommended
* Define the team that will work on the business case and who will work on what steps
* Go through the steps in the worksheet in the order listed
* Expect that iteration and overlap amongst steps will happen as your work progresses
* Expect that you might adjust the set of individuals working on the business case as you learn more of what analysis work and what information is needed
* At appropriate places in the process, review the current information with appropriate stakeholders for purposes of awareness, comment, guidance and ownership
* At appropriate places in the process, ask the business case team if the analysis is heading in the right direction to support an eventual solid decision, make course corrections in your work as needed to support a sound eventual decision

[**The Worksheet**](#worksheet)

1. **For a Problem or Improvement, State the Need, the Problem or the Needed Improvement Related to this Business Case Analysis. For other Important Decisions, State the Pending Decision Related to this Business Case Analysis**

[your notes here]

1. **Define the Environment -** Background, Organization Strategic Interests, Urgency, Impacts of No Action and Other Conditions that Support Understanding the Current Situation to Support a Sound Business Decision

[your notes here]

1. **Define “Needed Outcomes” –** What exactly are the desired end conditions, results or outcomes that are intended when this problem or improvement have been fully resolved or when the important decision is implemented.

[your notes here]

1. **Identify Root Causes of the Problem or the Root Drivers of the Needed Improvement**

[your notes here]

1. **Select Root Causes You Can Affect and Select the Most Important Root Causes that Drive the Needed Outcomes**

[your notes here]

1. **For Problems or Improvements, Identify Alternative Solutions that Address the Important Root Causes and Attain the Needed Outcomes. For Important Decisions, Identify the Decision Alternatives that Exist.**

[your notes here]

1. **Reduce the Set of Alternatives – Optional**

***Instructions –*** *If many alternatives exist (such as more than 4 or 5) it is generally productive to reduce the alternatives set to be compared. Review alternatives using a basic comparison scheme such as “easy or hard to do” and “inexpensive or expensive to implement” and “effective and less effective” to support eliminating some alternatives that are less desirable than others.*

[your notes here]

1. **Define Alternative Comparison Criteria and Capture Comparison Information In a Table**

***Instructions***

*Review the following generic criteria, sections 8.1 to 8.3 below, and “add, delete or modify this list of comparison criteria that best supports your comparison of the alternative solutions defined in step 6.*

**Generic Comparison Criteria** – Modify to Meet Needs of This Analysis

* 1. **Investment, Resources and Negative Impacts**
     1. Financial Analysis - Investment and Resource Needs
     2. The “Most Likely” Negative Impacts on Stakeholders, Internal and External to the Organization
  2. **Payback and Positive Impacts**
     1. Financial Analysis – Payback
     2. The “Most Likely” Positive Impacts on Stakeholders, Internal and External to the Organization
  3. **Additional Alternative Comparison Criteria**
     1. The Alignment with the Organization’s Strategic Information
     2. The Alignment with Needed Outcomes (Step 3)
     3. The Feasibility in terms of Technology, Resources, Politics, Funding, Support, Organization Priorities, etc.
     4. Other Significant Comparison Criteria that might include external economic or political factors, peer projects, legal or regulatory factors or other important considerations

1. **Build Comparison Table and Enter Comparison Information**

***Instructions -*** *Modify the generic table below to align with your set of criteria defined in step 8. Also modify this table to include a column for each alternative solution identified by steps 6 & 7. Then enter information for each criteria for each alternative. If some information is not known, state that. This generation of comparison information is best done in a team environment.*

**Solution Alternatives Comparison Table**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Comparison Criteria** | **Alternative #1** | **Alternative #2** | **(Add Columns as Needed)** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| 8.1.1  A | Investment Needs  SUMMARY ONLY | * $xx for yy * $xx for yy * $xx for yy | * $xx for yy * $xx for yy * $xx for yy | * $xx for yy * $xx for yy * $xx for yy |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| 8.1.1  B | Resource Needs  SUMMARY ONLY | * Personnel - xx * Facilities - xx * Other - xx | * Personnel - xx * Facilities - xx * Other - xx | * Personnel - xx * Facilities - xx * Other - xx |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| 8.1.2A | State the “Most Likely” Negative Impacts on Customers | * xx * xx * xx | * xx * xx * xx | * xx * xx * xx |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| 8.1.2B | State the “Most Likely” Negative Impacts on the Organization | * xx * xx * xx | * xx * xx * xx | * xx * xx * xx |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| 8.1.2C | State the “Most Likely” Negative Impacts on Employees | * xx * xx * xx | * xx * xx * xx | * xx * xx * xx |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| 8.1.2D | State the “Most Likely” Negative Impacts on Other Stakeholders | * xx * xx * xx | * xx * xx * xx | * xx * xx * xx |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| 8.2.1 | Financial Analysis - Payback | * xx * xx * xx | * xx * xx * xx | * xx * xx * xx |
| 8.2.2A | State the “Most Likely” Negative Impacts on Customers | * xx * xx * xx | * xx * xx * xx | * xx * xx * xx |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| 8.2.2B | State the “Most Likely” Negative Impacts on the Organization | * xx * xx * xx | * xx * xx * xx | * xx * xx * xx |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| 8.2.2C | State the “Most Likely” Negative Impacts on Employees | * xx * xx * xx | * xx * xx * xx | * xx * xx * xx |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| 8.2.2D | State the “Most Likely” Negative Impacts on Other Stakeholders | * xx * xx * xx | * xx * xx * xx | * xx * xx * xx |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| 8.3.1 | State the Alignment with the Organization’s Strategic Information | * xx * xx * xx | * xx * xx * xx | * xx * xx * xx |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| 8.3.2  A | Alternative DOES Align with Noted Needed Outcomes | * xx * xx * xx | * xx * xx * xx | * xx * xx * xx |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| 8.3.2  B | Alternative DOES NOT Align with Noted Needed Outcomes | * xx * xx * xx | * xx * xx * xx | * xx * xx * xx |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| 8.3.3 | State the Feasibility in terms of Technology, Resources, Politics, etc. | * xx * xx * xx | * xx * xx * xx | * xx * xx * xx |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| 8.3.4 | State Significant Other Factors (See Section) | * xx * xx * xx | * xx * xx * xx | * xx * xx * xx |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

1. **Business Case Analysis, Alternative Selection, Plans Forward and Report**

***Instructions*** *– Complete the following actions to complete the business case.*

* 1. Validate that the contents of the alternatives comparison table is sufficiently complete and accurate to support a good decision. Enhance table contents as needed to ensure sufficient information exists.
  2. Analyze the contents of the alternatives comparison table to understand what is good and what is not. One approach can be to color table cells to denote good, neutral and undesired conditions. This is best done in a team environment.
  3. Form a Bottom Line Draft Recommendation and generate rationale for this recommendation.
  4. Identify a Backup Plan to the selected alternative (where this is possible and feasible).
  5. Define Needed Management, Customer or Third Party Involvement for implementation of the selected alternative.
  6. Define Needed Resources for the Implementation of the Selected Alternative and State Associated Assumptions.
  7. Develop the “Plan to Proceed” for Implementation of the Selected Alternative as Needed for the Business Case Report.
  8. Prepare the Draft Business Case Report and Distribute to Selected Stakeholders for Comment. Complete additional work as Needed Based on Comments or New Information Received from this Draft Review.
  9. Finalize the Business Case Report *(Consider using this worksheet as the format for a detailed report)*

**REFERENCES**

**What is a Business Case and Why is it Important?**

**What** - A business case is an analysis to determine if it is in the best interests of an organization to make a decision for some type of important change. The business case analysis looks at the advantages and disadvantages of a given decision and all factors and impacts related to that decision to ensure the right decision for customers, the organization and employees is made. Business cases are performed for many different decisions. A few examples include a decision to invest in a new system, build a new facility, develop a new product or service, develop and implement new organization processes, enter into a new or modified business partnership or making significant organization structural changes.

**Why** - Sound business decisions are needed for any organization to be successful. Organizations often make critical decisions that require significant time and resources to implement and these decisions can have substantial positive and negative impacts on the organization, the organization’s customers and employees. As such, these decisions must be carefully considered. To make sound business decisions for important topics, a decision making structure is needed to support both the collection and the review of all relevant information. A business case process and template, such as this worksheet, provides this necessary structure.

**What is This Worksheet and Why Use It?**

This worksheet is a generic business case information collection structure and process. This worksheet includes common components of a business case and is organized in a sequence consistent with developing and communicating the key information needed for a considered decision. An organization might use this worksheet “as is” or modify it for specific situations.

Worksheet Functions - This worksheet provides:

* A means to identify needed information to complete the business case
* A process to support an effective business case analysis
* A working document to both collect and disseminate information
* A format for the final business case report
* A means to set stakeholder expectations on what a business case involves
* Material to support for training on business case analysis content and methods

**Available Worksheet Variations** - Since many different situations exist, no single worksheet or template will meet all needs. Different levels of detail are provided along with worksheet variations for multiple decision alternatives and singular decisions situations. See “Instructions” in the next section for information about these different worksheet versions. See [www.ManageProjectsBetter.com](http://www.ManageProjectsBetter.com) for all worksheet versions.

**Multiple Alternative Worksheets**

* Comprehensive Detail Version, Multiple Alternatives
* Intermediate Detail Version, Multiple Alternatives
* Basic Detail Version, Multiple Alternatives
* **“Just the Fundamentals”, Multiple Alternatives🡨 This Worksheet Is This Version**

**Single Alternative Worksheets**

* Comprehensive Detail Version, Single Alternative
* Intermediate Detail Version, Single Alternative
* Basic Detail Version, Single Alternative
* “Just the Fundamentals”, Single Alternative

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END OF

**Business Case**

**WORKSHEET**

**Multiple Alternatives Version – “Just the Fundamentals” Version**

Latest Version of this Worksheet and Other Worksheet Versions Available at [www.manageprojectsbetter.com](http://www.manageprojectsbetter.com)

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