THE GUIDE TO WRITING AN L1 VISA BUSINESS PLAN
CREATED BY JOORNEY IMMIGRATION BUSINESS PLANNING

FEATURING:
- Step by Step Guidance
- Advice from Expert Writers
- Tips On Describing a Parent Company
- How To Present A Qualified Applicant
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 1: From Dreams to Reality</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 2: Collect Your Documents</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 3: Present Your Best</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 4: Learn About The L-1 Visa Application</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 5: Summarize Your US Business.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 6: Summarize Your Foreign Business</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 7: Illustrate Your Location</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 8: Explain the Ownership Structure</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 9: Depict Your Business Activity and Offering</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 10: Pitch Your Industry</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 11: Present Your Market</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 12: Analyze Your Competition</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 13: Explain your Growth Ideas</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 14: Summarize Your Marketing Plans</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 15: Depict the Company’s Personnel</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 16: Lay Out Your Financial Projections</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 17: Conclusion</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Writing</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

Many of the most prominent businesses in the United States were founded by immigrants. High-tech firms like Google, Yahoo, YouTube, eBay, and Sun Microsystems are just some examples of companies born out of the dreams of immigrant investors. In fact, in the global economy that sets the trends for today’s businesses, immigration by investment is one of the most sought after ways to settle in the country of your choice.

We know that writing a business plan can be an arduous task. It requires a high level of concentration and a capacity to compile information. We know that! We are professionally trained to do it, and we will do our best to communicate all of our know-how to simplify that task for you.

An immigration business plan looks and feels like a regular business plan but do not be fooled by its name—it is not a regular business plan! It is a document that aims at fulfilling the main visa requirements set by United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). You are not writing your business plan for an angel investor who may or may not invest in your business or for a bank that may or may not loan you money or open a credit line. You are writing your business plan for an immigration officer whose job is to address a few key points that will provide him with sufficient information on whether your application should be approved or not. We have summarized these key points in this Guide and organized them in a way that you can make sure to give yourself the best chances to secure your visa.

The most important question that every visa applicant has to ask himself when completing a business plan is the following: What will my business bring to the United States? In essence, the USCIS wants to know the ways in which your business can be valuable for the country and the number of benefits it can create.

This can be seen through a lot of different ways, such as the number of jobs created, the added value your services or products will bring to customers, the investment that is put at risk while setting up your business, etc. However, most importantly, it can be seen through the sustainability of your business.

This Guide will walk you through every step of writing an L-1 immigration business plan. It has detailed examples and instructions that will enable you to generate an impressive overview of your business that will facilitate your entry into the United States.
Chapter 1: From Dreams to Reality

One of the reasons we are able to provide a useful guide to preparing your immigration business plan is that we have walked in your shoes.

The story behind our company, Joorney Immigration Business Planning, is the same one you are going through right now.

Benjamin Jarmon was working as a business development consultant for a large commodities trading company when he decided to open his own company and use his consulting skills to help entrepreneurs and companies with their start-up needs.

To accomplish his goal, Benjamin had to first obtain an E-2 visa.

He went to accountants and lawyers seeking help in drafting his business plan. But none of them seemed to understand the subtleties of the business model and strategy behind the company he wanted to create. Feeling frustrated, Benjamin decided to create his business plan on his own, since he had done dozens of them for clients in his previous firm.

But the plan's creation took much longer than he expected and required more technical knowledge than he had on his own.

That arduous process made him realize there was a genuine need for someone to help other immigrant investors create their business plans for the E-2 visa. His company also helps clients create L-1 visa business plans, EB-5 visa business plans, investor business plans, market studies, feasibility studies, and management support.

Benjamin and his staff know that writing a business plan is an daunting task. It requires a high level of concentration and a capacity to compile essential information.

Since 2009:
The number of L1 VISAS issued rose by 3.7%.
The number of E2 VISAS issued rose by 46.8%.

Since 1997, the number of L1 Visas issued has risen by a total of 82%, while E2 visas have seen an overall increase of 74%.
Chapter 2: Collect Your Documents

Supporting documentation is vital to this writing process. It is much better for you to gather all the documents prior to writing, rather than running after information while you are writing. If you do decide to gather information while writing, the process of obtaining information will continuously interrupt your writing and make it a much more painful process.

To write a detailed L-1 business plan, you will need to gather the following documentation:

- Lease or deed agreement for the premises if you are renting business space or buy-sell agreement of the premises if you are using company-owned business space (optional)
- Foreign company’s financial statements for each of the past three years
- Current organizational chart of the foreign company and expected organizational chart of the US company in year 5
- Business buy-sell agreement if you are purchasing an existing business or franchise agreement if you are purchasing a franchise
- Articles of incorporation or articles of organization depending on whether your firm is a corporation or a limited liability company.
- Resume of the applicant and resume of employees already hired and occupying managerial positions
- List of capital invested by the applicant including expenses already incurred and the working capital remaining (optional)
- Moreover, you need to determine if the foreign company is a parent company or an affiliated company.
  - The foreign company can be called parent company if the foreign company has at least partially invested in the US company.
  - The foreign company can be called affiliated company if the foreign company has not at all invested in the US company but the applicant has.
Chapter 3: Present Your Best

What you say in your L-1 business plan is important. Keep in mind that how you say it is equally important. We advise you to follow our writing tips listed below to bring the quality of your immigration business plan to the optimal level.

**GRAMMAR**

**TONE, STRUCTURE & TENSE**
- If the company is already in operation, use present tense; if not, use future tense.
- Stay away from passive language and use active verbs instead, as it creates a more authoritative tone.
- Use concise and efficient sentences.
- Verify that sentences make sense; if they do not, delete them and reformulate until you have a clear and a simple statement.
- Do not use contractions such as “isn’t,” “don’t,” and “aren’t”; instead, use “is not,” “do not,” and “are not,” etc.

**CONTENT**

**WORD CHOICE, VERB USAGE & OTHER TIPS**
- Do not use familiar or slang words such as “neat,” “cheap,” etc. Instead, use words that are more professional sounding such as “unique,” “affordable,” etc.
- Be careful when using the word/verb “offer,” as it might be perceived as the company is giving a product away for free.
- Applicant should be addressed as “Mr./Ms. Firstname Lastname.”
- Never use the words “we” and “I” when referring to the applicant; always use “he” or “she” instead.
- Company should be addressed as “Company, LLC” or “Company, Inc.” Always use the company’s full name.
- The square footage of an office cannot be less than 500 square feet.
- Expenses already incurred prior to the visa interview should account for more than 60% of the total intended investment, and they should be approved by your lawyer.
- Try to include photos of the company’s location, website, social media sites, flyers, etc.
- The company should hire at least five employees by the end of its fifth year of operation. Keep in mind that the applicant counts as an employee.
- Be careful when hiring more than 10 employees; confirm with your lawyer if that is feasible and realistic.
- Each employee’s job responsibilities should reflect a real impact on the company.
- We recommend that somebody else proofread your business plan for you. This way, you can be sure that the business plan does not have any errors or discrepancies. You can always contact us and obtain the proofreading services of one of our Immigration Business Plan Specialists.
Chapter 4: Learn about the L-1 visa application

MANAGING THE MANAGERS
For your L-1 visa application to be successful, the applicant has to occupy an executive position, meaning that the applicant has to manage employees who will in turn manage other employees. To put it in a simple way, the applicant should be at the top of a three-level pyramid. Optimally, the L-1 visa applicant should have a minimum of three managers below him in the pyramid by the end of the first year of operations.

THE MIDDLEMAN
Whether or not the applicant invests in the US company, to be eligible for the L-1 visa the applicant needs to show proof of one year of working experience at the foreign company in a managerial position.

Since the US company will be a subsidiary or affiliate of the foreign company, and since the applicant is bringing his experience to the US company, the applicant should be considered a middleman.

THE FOREIGN COMPANY
It is recommended for the foreign company to have been established for at least three years. Indeed, showing the financial status of the foreign company over the past three years will enable the USCIS to determine if the foreign company can support the development of the US company.
Chapter 5: Summarize Your US Business

Typical Length: 1 Page

The executive summary is the first thing that your application reviewer will read, so it has to be concise and well prepared. It is a summary of the entire immigration business plan, as well as the part that explains the essentials of your business. Typical executive summaries are about one page long and convey the main features of your business: the nature of the company, expansion strategy, target market, marketing strategy, and number of employees.

Here, at Joorney Immigration Business Planning, we have created a simple process to prepare a distinct executive summary that answers the following questions about your business:

• When was it created?
• What does it do?
• Where is it located?
• What is its mission?
• What is its expansion strategy?
• Who is its target market?
• What is its marketing strategy?
• Who are its owners?
• What does its foreign parent or affiliate company do?
• How many employees are there?

If you want to improve your executive summary, answer the following questions as well:

• What will be the applicant’s position?
• How many employees will the company hire in year 1 and in year 5?
• What is the revenue forecast for year 1 and for year 5?

You may think one page is too short to talk about all the features of your business, but remember, the main word in this section is concise, which is why we recommend writing one to two sentences per question.
Chapter 6: Summarize Your Foreign Business

Typical Length: 2 Pages

This part relates to the foreign company’s business model, history, and market position. The purpose of this section is to give the USCIS an idea of the parent company’s activities, as well as to prove its financial stability and its ability to help grow and sustain a business in the United States.

It is especially important to describe the foreign company’s business activity if the US affiliate’s or subsidiary’s business activity is similar. The questions remain the same as for the US company’s executive summary, but you are encouraged to add information or photos regarding the products or services offered by the foreign company.

Since the foreign company is established, you can describe its position in the marketplace, as well as its competitors and its expansion strategy for the next five years.

Additionally, quoting information such as the parent company’s revenue growth over the last five years, the evolution of its net worth, and its employee count, and any kind of award or national certificate is a good way of improving the chances of having your L-1 application approved.

If you want to improve your foreign company’s summary further: Include information about the foreign company’s industry and market in its country, especially if the predicted future industry and market conditions are favorable! Although this part is optional, it will show that the foreign company is in a growing industry and has a strong and sustainable potential for future growth.

Do not forget to convert the amounts obtained from the foreign company’s financial statements from a foreign currency to USD and to include the exchange rate, the source you obtained it from, and the date you obtained the rate you used.

For this part you will need the following documents:

- Three years of financials from the foreign company
- An up-to-date list of personnel currently working in the foreign company

Here is an example of the beginning of a foreign company’s summary:

Igracke, d.o.o. is a Serbian company specializing in the retail sale of toy action figures. The company was founded in 2010 and is based in Belgrade, Serbia. Since its creation, Igracke, d.o.o. has become an established retailer of products such as traditional action figures licensed as tie-ins to blockbuster movies and television shows, and action figures based on comic book characters and public figures.
Some of the established sources we recommend for this follow:

- Bloomberg Exchange Rate Quotes
- Yahoo! Finance Exchange Rate Quotes
- XE Exchange Rate Quotes

Here is an example of how you should list the foreign company’s financial data:

According to Bloomberg, the achieved total revenue of RSD 36,098,100 is equivalent to achieved total revenue of $360,981 for the same period.

FOREIGN COMPANY’S TEAM

This part of the business plan should, as well, be concise. It includes an organizational chart of the foreign company and a description of its leading team. This section aims to provide the USCIS with a more precise and clear understanding of the foreign company’s organizational structure.

If you are using Microsoft Word to create your business plan, you can use the SmartArt hierarchy chart shown below or create your own chart from scratch using Microsoft Word’s text boxes and lines. You can also insert your own chart in a picture format.

Keep in mind that the applicant is not necessarily on top of the organizational structure in the foreign company. Make sure to enter the applicant’s name and position where it belongs in this organizational chart.

If you want to improve the section about the foreign company's team further, give the organizational chart a more professional appearance by inserting the foreign company's logo.

Here is an example of the beginning of a foreign company’s summary:

Unless indicated otherwise, the business plan regards the US company in all of the following sections.
Chapter 7: Illustrate Your Location

Sample Location Beginning

Toys, Inc. entered into a one-year lease agreement with Condos, LLC on October 7, 2009 to rent the premises located at 7247 Business Avenue, Suite 613, Orlando, FL 32835 at a monthly rate of $1,135. The contract offered the option to renew the lease for an additional one-year period. The initial term of the lease started on November 16, 2009. Following the end of the initial lease term, Toys, Inc. exercised its option to renew the lease with a 3% increase in the rental rate.

Typical Length: 1 Page

You may have heard the expression “location, location, location” in one of your marketing classes or from anyone engaged in business activities. Choice of location is sometimes a life-and-death decision for a business. A good location, although expensive, may bring an enormous number of additional customers; whereas, an inexpensive bad location may have to be offset by additional marketing dollars. Of course, it depends on the industry, but, nevertheless, location is an extremely important part of an immigration business plan. Indicating that you have already signed or entered a lease gives credit to your business, which is of paramount importance to the immigration officer reviewing your application.

Use the information obtained from your lease agreement, deed agreement or buy-sell agreement to indicate the address from where the business will operate, the premises, the square footage, and if it is an office with storage space. Do not forget that the square footage of an office cannot be less than 500 square feet. If it is, do not mention the square footage. If you have a decent photo of the place or if you have renovated, you can place the photos here as well. You may also add the information indicating the date the lease was signed, the length of the lease, with which company the leased was signed, the yearly base rate, and the yearly increase rate. It is also useful to state if there is a lease extension option.

If you want to improve your location section further, you can display a map with the location of your business on it. You can obtain the map from various online sources, such as www.google.com/maps. Finally, you can indicate the business days and hours of operation, as well as an email address or phone number where customers will be able to reach you.
Chapter 8: Explain The Ownership Structure

Typical length: one paragraph

The structure of the company is essential to the business plan because it quickly tells the reader the number of people they have to deal with and the decision-making power they have within the company.

Use the information in the articles of incorporation (if your company is a corporation) or the articles of organization (if your company is a limited liability entity) to complete this section.

From an immigration standpoint, it is vital for the applicant to prove major ownership of the company. This rule is not without exception, but typically the USCIS requires the applicant to be both the majority owner and the executive manager.

This section should indicate the company’s ownership structure (limited liability company, corporation, partnership, sole proprietorship, etc.), the date of incorporation, and most importantly, it should provide details about the owner.

A picture is worth a thousand words: A good way to show the structure of the newly founded company, especially when the applicant is not the only owner, is to create a graphic showing the investment of each shareholder, as well as their ownership.

Likewise, if the applicant invests in the company via other entities, a graphic would be a simple way to show the structure of the investment.

Here is an example of the beginning of the ownership section:

On January 1, 2013, Mr. Boulanger founded Super Crepe, LLC in the state of Florida. Mr. Boulanger is the sole owner of the company and will occupy the position of General Manager within Super Crepe, LLC.