

8th Annual Business Plan Competition

Reviewers' "Frame of Reference" – Nonprofits

We offer the following to provide a common frame of reference for evaluating the non-profit plans as you read them. They are in priority order.

1. **Undergraduate frame of reference**
Hold the students to a high standard but do not compare them to MBAs or experienced business professionals.
2. **Quality, professionalism, accuracy, and completeness of the written plan**
Does the document reveal a thoughtful, researched idea, granted with some shortcomings?
3. **Clarity of the business concept**
Is what they want to do clear, understandable? Are their vision and mission clear?
4. **Market to be served/client**
Do they have one and how well do they know them?
Do they know what the service does for the client; what other alternatives they have?
5. **Lifestyle versus business potential or scalability**
Eventually we want plans that may expand beyond a single site or organization, but at this point do not count it against the plan if it lacks scalability or expansion potential.
6. **Reality of implementation**
Could this plan be implemented given some degree of refinement? Do they have a realistic strategy for finding the additional expertise they need to implement?
7. **Their management team**
Granted they are undergraduates, but have they sold you on them as the managers?
8. **Probability of implementation**
Does their plan persuade you they sincerely would like to do this?
9. **Viability of the service concept**
If the "bugs" were to be worked out, have they shown they are meeting a real need in a unique way, a better way, or that the need is currently unmet?
10. **Understanding of their financials**
Do they understand what they need to operate and why?
Is their funding plan clear and viable?