# Gale Small Business Builder | Reference eReviews
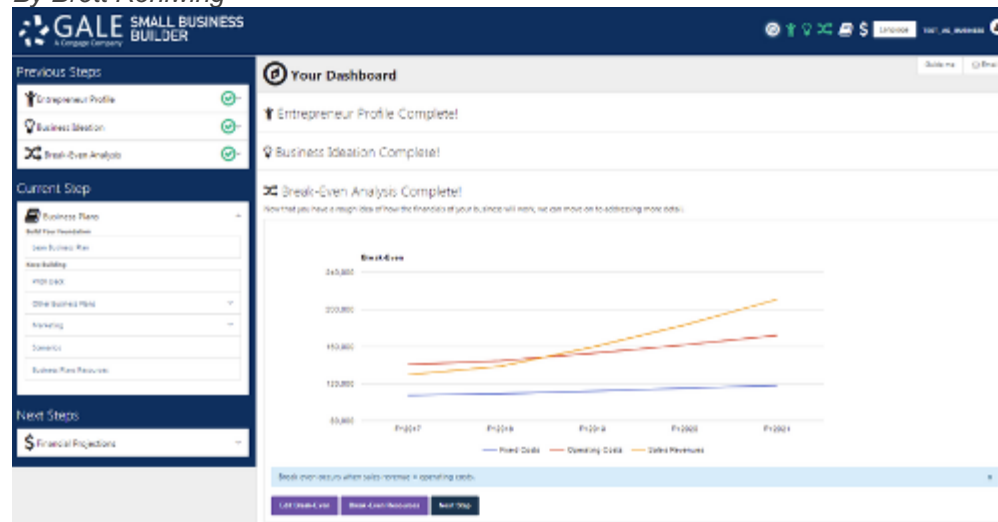
BY BRETT ROHLWING ON OCTOBER 25, 2017 1 COMMENT

**Gale Small Business Builder**

**Gale, Cengage**

**http://www.gale.com/c/gale-small-business-builder**

*By Brett Rohlwing*



**CONTENT** The Small Business Builder is an improvement over the myriad business plan wizards and templates available online. Users can easily turn small business ideas, plans, and finances into a coherent foundational document and continue to rely on the database as the business evolves.
Upon logging in, patrons are presented with several options, starting with "business type." They can select either "for profit" or "nonprofit" and from there are presented with five sections: Entrepreneur Profile, Business Ideation, Break-Even Analysis, Business Plans (for-profit) or Grant Proposals (nonprofit), and Financial Projections.
Within each heading, there are question prompts with fields to fill in with facts, ideas, and numbers. Under Entrepreneur Profile, for example, a self-assessment helps users identify and evaluate strengths and weaknesses as well as the relationships and resources crucial to the start-up environment. Within Business Ideation, users can fill in a "lean canvas," a problem-solution analysis template based on the lean business model, a customer service–oriented method of business development.
In Break-Even Analysis, users can project expenses over a period of years to estimate when revenues might begin to exceed costs, and find ways to increase profitability. Patrons can write in estimated percentage increases in these areas to create a robust outlook for the business. Financial Projections allows for a more granular analysis of these estimates, allowing opportunity to itemize specific costs and products, manage loans and other liabilities, and plan for potential cost increases and depreciation.
Business Plans and Grant Proposals assist with turning projections into a pitch. Users are encouraged to write out the mission of the business, list clients and investors, and even upload a logo. The pitch deck,

built on the lean business model, features the option to create a slide presentation as a downloadable Power Point or PDF.

The templates also contain question prompts that offer basic explanations and examples of information to place in the templates. Each section provides links to relevant PDFs (comprised of clearly written, brief excerpts from articles or textbooks). Citations for these resources are available. The links to article and book excerpts are valuable, but some users might wish for a richer bibliographic selection, perhaps even full-text articles and entire ebooks.

The Business Plans area supplies especially helpful, comprehensible prompts. Even more beneficial are the links to local and national organizations that provide help with writing business plans, such as SCORE, a national network of business mentors.

Unfortunately, there is a significant lack of information regarding the legal side of small businesses, which is essential for business owners who must navigate municipal, county, state, and federal regulations. Links to federal and state websites advising small business owners on legal questions, at the very least, would be of value to users.

**USABILITY** While numerous business plan creators and templates exist online and in print, it is refreshing to see a tool available for library and institutional use. Budding entrepreneurs will appreciate that many of the elements necessary for launching a business are all in one place.

Functional and pleasing, the interface is uncluttered and easy to navigate. Depending on the type of subscription access, users who cannot log on from home can download documents for offline use. Generally, the sections are intuitively organized, from brainstorming ideas to hard-core number crunching. However, the Break-Even Analysis and Financial Projections sections are closely related, and some users may think it odd that they are divided. Overall, patrons who come to their library to learn how to start their own business will find this database easy and accessible, requiring little training to use. It would also be a great catalyst for library programming.

**PRICING** Cost is based on population served. Contact your Gale representative for a quote.

**VERDICT** With applications that are varied and full of potential, Gale Small Business Builder will be a welcome resource for undergraduates, instructors, and, above all, entrepreneurs at any stage of establishing a business. Educational sessions introducing the tool may garner widespread interest. Academic libraries using this resource could reach more tech-savvy students who might be left behind by drier textbook analysis.

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