

Customizing Business Feasibility

Ciara Ladroma & Molly Sullivan
Griffin-Hammis Associates



Listening to the Webinar

The audio for today's meeting can be accessed using Computer Audio or by calling in by phone. If you select Computer Audio, please make sure your speakers are turned on or your headphones are plugged in.

If you do not have sound capabilities on your computer or prefer to listen by phone, dial:



1-301-715-8592

Meeting Code:

896 3079 8262

Captioning

- Real-time captioning is provided during this webinar.
- The captions can be found by clicking on the “cc” button in your Zoom controls at the bottom of the screen.
- If you do not see the captions after clicking the button, please alert the host via the chat box.



Submitting Questions

- Please use the chat box to submit any questions you have during the webinar and we will direct them accordingly.
- If your question is not answered during the webinar, or you are listening by phone and not logged in, you may email hprice@ndi-inc.org.



Technical Assistance

- If you experience any technical difficulties during the webinar, please use the chat box to send a message to the NDI Host or email hprice@ndi-inc.org.
- Please note: This webinar is being recorded and the materials will be placed on the National Disability Institute website in the [Webinar Archives](#) within 1-2 weeks.





Community Navigator Pilot Program



U.S. Small Business
Administration



Creating
Communities
of Economic
Cooperation

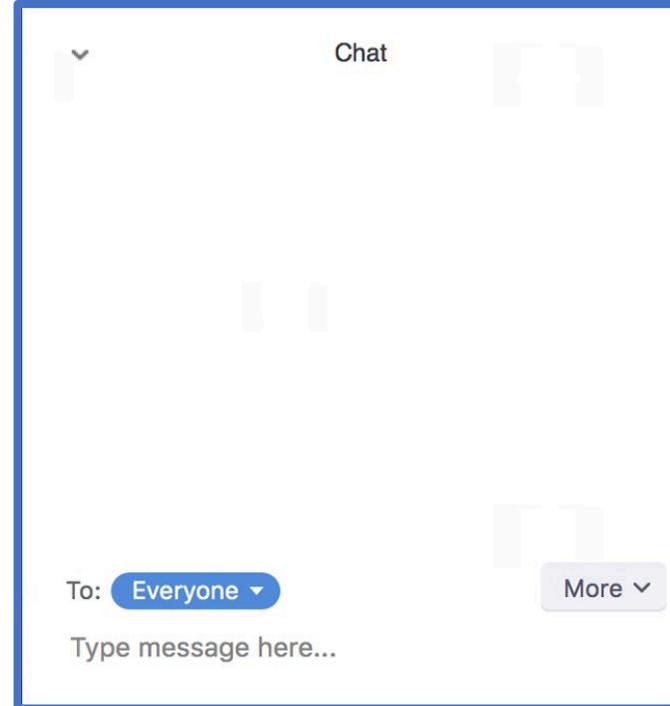
Griffin-Hammis Associates



Funded through a grant with the U.S. Small Business Administration. All opinions, conclusions, and/or recommendations expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the SBA.

Welcome!

- Introductions
- Join us in conversation!
 - Zoom chat
 - Q&A
 - Cameras & Microphones



What is Business Feasibility?

Market Research and Feasibility Testing encourages the business owner and their team to think beyond: "Is there a need for this?" To the even more critical question: "Is someone willing to pay for it?"

Feasibility studies are used to determine if the self-employment business proposal is likely to succeed through assessments, research tools, and statistical analysis regarding the likelihood of a business succeeding.



Customizing Business Feasibility

Desiring to be self-employed or having a business idea is not enough to make it successful. A well-defined business concept that is a good *fit* for the person, is critical.

People who are very skilled at creating their product or service may still need assistance with other aspects of their business. Learning more about the wide variety of tasks required to run the business helps the person evaluate the necessary supports available and identify potential gaps.



When to Assess Business Feasibility?

Once a concept is identified as having potential and being a good fit for the prospective business owner, the next step is to conduct market research and assess its feasibility.

Market Research and Feasibility Testing not only demonstrates that a particular business appears viable, but also helps to guide the person through business implementation and launch.



Three-Legged Stool

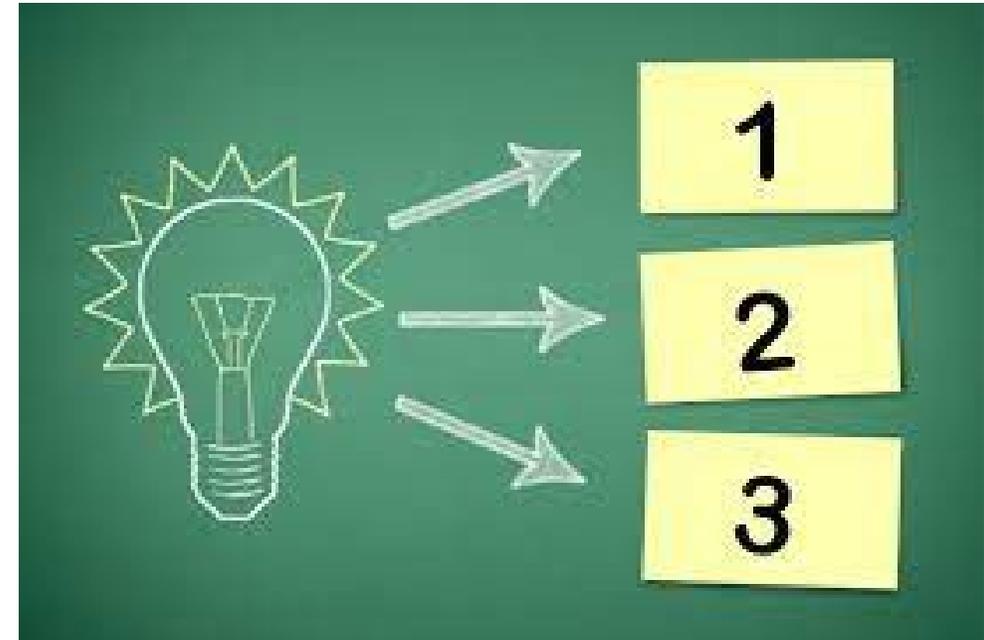
Market Research and Feasibility Testing becomes the blueprint for building the three-legged stool.

1. Is the business concept a good "fit" for the person
2. Will the person have the supports they need to run the business
3. Will the business succeed and make money. Is the business feasible?



Three Steps for Assessing Business Feasibility

1. Market Research
2. Testing
3. Evaluation



Step 1: Market Research

The goal of market research is to gather all the information necessary to fully assess the concept before moving forward with business development.

Market Research and Feasibility testing is used to demonstrate that a particular business idea is viable.



Market Research: Why & Who?

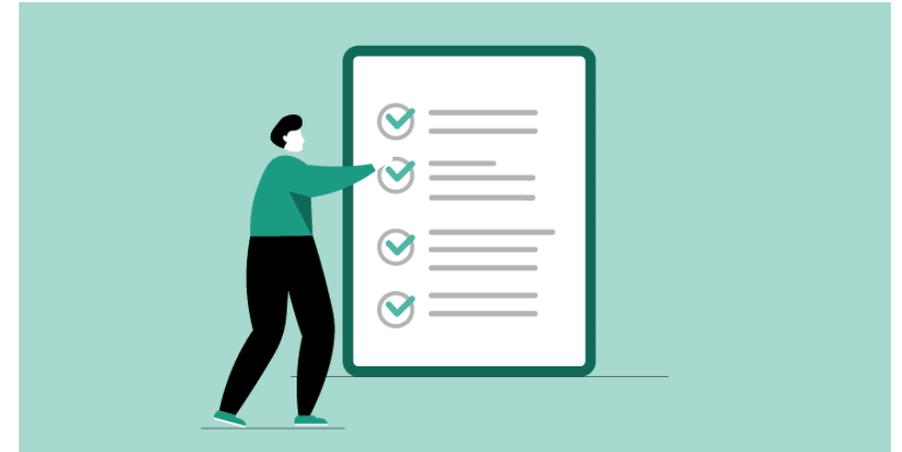
Market Research links directly to feasibility study. The information learned about the market provides a foundation for determining if the business concept is feasible and likely to succeed.

- Connect with owners of similar businesses
- Mine the team members' networks for possible connections



Direct & Indirect Market Research

- **Surveys** elicit necessary information that can reveal gaps and highlight potential opportunities.
- **Observations** of local shops with similar products and services is an effective strategy for learning more about the business or industry.
- **Direct Sales** can often be costly but is a great method for learning what happens when the product is available for purchase.



Market Research: How?

The five critical categories of market research:

1. Product or Service
2. Likely Customers
3. Potential Competitors
4. Basic Financial Projections
5. Capabilities



Product or Service

Market research begins by gathering data and answering questions related to the specific product or service:

- What specific product(s) or service(s) will be offered?
- How will they be produced?
- Who are the suppliers?
- What licenses, certifications, permits, etc. are required?

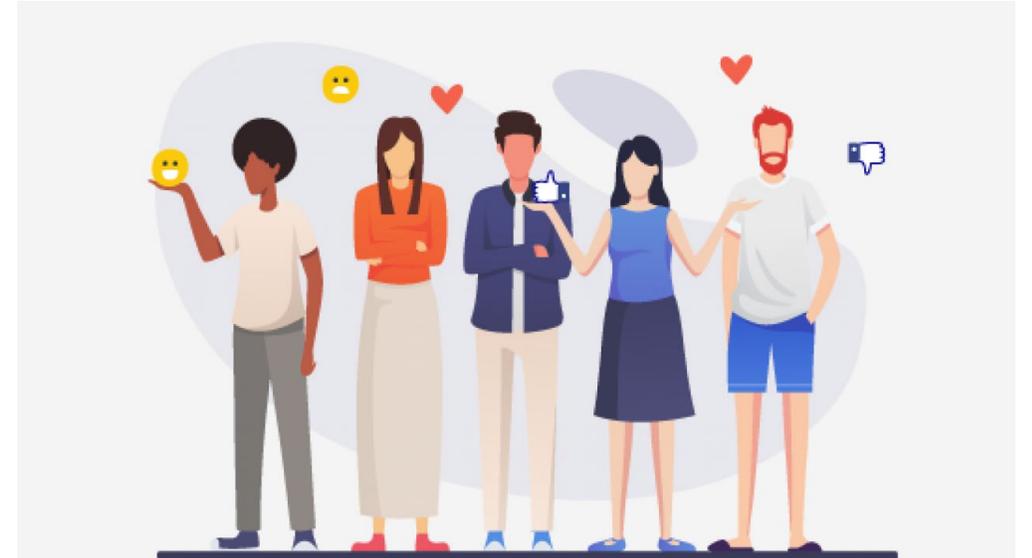


Likely Customers

Teams need to gather data on potential customers, including who they are, what needs the product/service meets, how many potential customers are in the service area, and whether they are currently using competitors for the product/service.

Keeping the customer in mind becomes increasingly important as the business concept is refined.

Lean into the customers' perspective.



Potential Competitors

Another key component when assessing feasibility is the evaluation of potential competitors. This is the most effective and efficient way to gather information.

It's important to get out and talk to owners of similar businesses!

Competitors could potentially be collaborators. Think creatively as you explore options with other business owners.



Basic Financial Projections

It's important for prospective business owners and their support teams to evaluate financial projections.

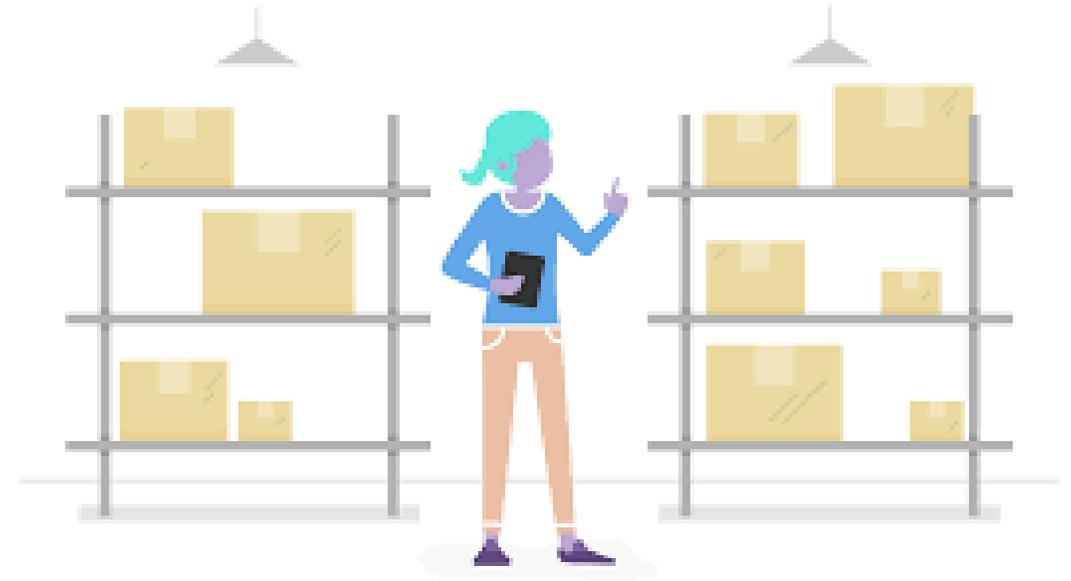
These projections will be less detailed than the statements that will accompany the actual business plan, but they are critical! If the ballpark projections reveal an ongoing loss, teams must refine and address this before moving forward.



Capabilities

How much the business can reasonably expect to produce in a given period of time.

People will need to consider the time it takes to produce their product or service, the number of hours they are willing to work, seasonal swings, and other business tasks involved.



Market Research Example: Kylie's Cookies



Kylie's Cookies: Product & Customer

Product: a big part of the research process entailed learning more about the regulations surrounding commercial kitchens. This included learning about associated costs, hours of operation, and any food safety training.

Customers: Kylie surveyed local restaurants and shops within a 15-mile radius of the commercial kitchen, and tested the products by bringing samples to the ones who showed initial interest.



Kylie's Cookies: Competitors & Financials

Competitors: Kylie and her team identified potential competitors that brought Kylie to a small, locally owned hotel. The owners identified that they would love to offer fresh baked cookies, but did not have the resources to provide that service. A collaboration was born. Kylie began providing cookies to the hotel in exchange for letting her use their commercial kitchen for baking. A win-win situation.

Financials: Kylie and her team estimated the cost of the ingredients for her top selling cookies. They used market research to identify the price she could expect to charge customers and how many cookies Kylie could expect to sell per day.

Kylie's Cookies: Capabilities

Kylie needed to take a realistic look at her own production capability. She needed to figure out how many cookies she could actually bake considering her time, availability of the kitchen, and the shelf-life of the cookies.

Could she keep up with the demand from the hotel and potential other customers?

Could she make enough cookie to provide the income she needed?



Step 2: Testing

Testing helps the prospective business owner:

- Estimate the market potential
- Prove the feasibility of the concept
- Identify features that customers like/dislike
- Gather initial pricing data
- Develop and further test



Customer Perspective is Key

Customers can help shape and grow the business.

Four ways to learn from customers:

1. Direct Sales
2. Surveys
3. Advertise
4. Limitless



Testing is Complete

Once the testing is complete, the person and their team members use what they learned to refine the concept.

This may include modifying the product or service to better meet customer needs or to strengthen the competitive edge, or it may reveal the need for additional research to answer questions related to pricing, production, or the financials.



Step 3: Evaluate

You're encouraged to evaluate the results and assess whether or not the proposed concept is both viable AND meets the person's ideal conditions.



Stop & Assess

If concepts prove feasible, it can be easy for teams to get carried away with the excitement over a financially viable business option but lose sight of the fact that the business must also “fit” the person.

- Does it meet the person's goals and time requirements?
- Do majority of the tasks (or at least the primary task) match the person's skills and interests?
- What re the potential support needs?
- Are supports available to meet these support needs, either through natural or paid supports?
- Are the initial financial projections sufficient to meet the person's needs and goals?

GO or NO GO!

The last thing to do is determine if the business concept is a GO or NO GO!

If the research indicates that the business is:

1. Financially viable with a solid potential market; AND
 2. Fits the person
- = GO!

If the concept falls short on either front, it is a NO GO!



Business Feasibility Research Ideas

- Trade Associations
- Small Business Development Center
- U.S. Economic Consensus
- U.S. Census
- Local Chamber of Commerce
- Economic Development Center
- SCORE
- Yellow Pages
- Trade Journals
- Library Reference Desk
- Secretary of State
- U.S. County of Business Patterns



Summary

Feasibility studies are used to determine if the proposed self-employment business concept is likely to succeed.

There are three core steps to assessing feasibility:

1. Market Research
2. Testing
3. Evaluation

It is critical to stop and assess after conducting market research and feasibility testing to ensure that the business concept continues to FIT the person's skills, interests, support needs, and conditions of employment.

Community Navigator Pilot Program Goals

Support Entrepreneurs and Small Business owners with disabilities at any point of the Business Life-Cycle.

Reduce barriers accessing needed programs to recover, grow, or start a business.

Increase coordination of the DMV area ecosystem of entrepreneurial support organizations to be responsive and accessible to the needs of entrepreneurs and small business owners with disabilities.

The ecosystem includes; financial assistance, access to capital, contracting and procurement assistance, marketing and communications, operations, management and business development, legal assistance preferred contracting status

For more information contact our Community Navigator:

Ruth Chavez at rchavez@ndi-inc.org



Upcoming Webinars

Business Structures and Benefits– June 22nd from 2:30 to 4:00 pm EST

Ideas for Funding Your Start Up – July 13th from 2:30 to 4:00 pm EST

Understanding PASS Plans – August 10th from 2:30 to 4:00 pm EST

Click [HERE](#) to Register

We look forward to seeing you at a future webinar!



Let's Chat!

Thank you for attending today's webinar! Questions?
Ciara Ladroma, Cladroma@griffinhammisassociates.com
Molly Sullivan, msullivan@griffinhammis.com
Griffin-Hammis Associates

