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Master of Business Administration

LCMB7037 Business Development Proposal

Business Development Proposal Outline Structure

Introduction

A Business Development Proposal (BDP) outline is a critical first step in the research process for your MBA BDP module. It serves as a blueprint for your proposal, outlining what you intend to examine and how you plan to carry it out. More than just a preliminary document, the proposal demonstrates your ability to define a clear approach to identify a business opportunity and develop a viable plan to capture it. Crafting a strong proposal is essential not only for gaining approval to proceed with your BDP but also for setting a solid foundation for the entire project. A well-developed proposal helps clarify your thinking, identify the tools early, and ensure your proposal remains focused and manageable. It also provides an opportunity to receive valuable feedback from your supervisor before committing to the full BDP.

To do it right, first, it is crucial that you select a set of tools that are relevant to the task, and ensure you can implement them appropriately. Be realistic about your scope, time, and resources, and maintain academic integrity throughout. A recommended BDP outline structure is provided below to help you organise and develop your BDP effectively.

Dissertation proposal structure

A dissertation proposal usually comprises the following sections:

AI use Acknowledgement

1. Introduction
2. Literature review
3. Methodology
4. Initial market opportunity analysis
5. Limitations
6. Timeframe
7. Conclusion
8. References

Dissertation proposal structure clarification

AI use Acknowledgement

This is a formal statement affirming that clarify how you used AI in your work. Please use the provided acknowledgement form.

1. Introduction

The introduction of the Business Development Proposal (BDP) sets the foundation for the entire report. It explains the business problem or opportunity being explored, provides the relevant market and industry context, and clarifies the purpose and scope of the analysis. It also introduces early signals of demand and defines the objective of the study. Overall, it helps the reader understand what the report is about, why it matters, and what it aims to achieve.

When writing the introduction, you should clearly define the problem or opportunity statement by explaining what is happening in the market and why it matters. Provide relevant background and context, including an overview of the industry, key trends such as technology, policy, or customer-behaviour shifts, and any external drivers like regulation, geopolitics, or economic changes. You should also identify initial observations of demand, including emerging or changing customer needs and early signals of opportunity. The introduction must define the scope of the analysis by specifying the market or segment being examined and clarifying what is included or excluded. Finally, state the objective of the study and of the document, explaining the decision, insight, or outcome the report is intended to support.

2. Literature Review

This section identifies and explains the theoretical frameworks used in the Business Development Proposal (BDP). It critically examines relevant models such as Jobs-to-

Be-Done (JTBD), PESTLE, Porter's Five Forces, Value Proposition Canvas, and the Business Model Canvas. The purpose of this section is to show which theories will be used to analyse the opportunity and to justify why they are appropriate for the specific business context.

It also ensures that all frameworks, theories, and concepts used in the proposal are clearly defined and grounded in academic or established business thinking.

When writing this section, you should identify all theories, models, and frameworks that will be used in the report—such as the JTBD framework, PESTLE, etc. Provide a brief explanation of each framework, outlining its core idea and purpose, and explain why it is relevant and suitable for analysing your specific business opportunity. This section should demonstrate critical understanding rather than simple description by discussing when and why each model is useful or limited. All analytical tools that will appear later in the report must be introduced here, and each framework should be clearly linked to how it will contribute to understanding or solving the business problem.

3. Methodology

The methodology section explains the structured and practical approach used to identify, validate, and develop the business opportunity. It describes how the investigation is conducted in a systematic and commercially grounded way, ensuring that the process is suitable for real-world business development rather than purely academic analysis.

Unlike the Literature Review, which defines and justifies the theoretical tools used, the methodology focuses on how the business proposal is actually developed and implemented in practice.

When writing this section, you should clearly describe the overall process used to identify, validate, and develop the business opportunity, including opportunity

identification, the collection of market insights through customer interviews, benchmarking, or expert input, the gathering of market data such as market size, industry reports, and pricing information, and also the data analysis approaches. You should also explain how your approach is structured, systematic, and commercially relevant, showing how both primary and secondary data will be collected and used. In addition, you should explain how the selected theories and frameworks are applied step-by-step rather than merely described, while also highlighting limitations and ethical considerations such as data reliability, bias, and privacy. Overall, the methodology should be realistic, actionable, and aligned with the proposed analysis.

4. Initial market opportunity analysis

This section provides an initial assessment of the market opportunity by applying relevant theories and frameworks to understand market size, structure, customer behaviour, and demand conditions. It combines both qualitative and quantitative insights to evaluate whether a viable opportunity exists and what factors are shaping it.

It also examines how external conditions—such as economic trends, geography, and customer preferences—influence demand, and includes early primary research findings if available.

When writing this section, you should clearly state which theories and frameworks are being used—such as JTBD, PESTLE, Five Forces, or segmentation models—and briefly explain how each one is applied in your analysis. You should analyse market size and growth trends using credible data where possible, identify key market segments, and explain the characteristics of different customer groups. This includes describing customer demographics and behaviours, particularly how and why they make purchasing decisions, and identifying consumer pain points or unmet needs that may signal potential opportunities. Your analysis should also include demand-related insights such as trading-down behaviour, price sensitivity, or substitution effects, and evaluate the impact of macroeconomic conditions like inflation, cost of living, or interest rates. Where relevant, consider geographical

factors, especially if the analysis focuses on a specific location such as Bristol or another region. If applicable, incorporate primary research findings from interviews, surveys, observations, or fieldwork. Throughout the section, ensure that all insights are logically connected and contribute directly to identifying a realistic and evidence-based market opportunity.

5. Limitation

This section presents the potential weaknesses or constraints that may affect the proposal. These may include time limitations, restricted access to data, small sample sizes, or methodological challenges. Rather than weakening the study, acknowledging limitations demonstrates academic integrity and shows that the researcher has carefully considered the scope and feasibility of the project. Transparently addressing limitations also helps to set realistic expectations and strengthens the overall credibility of the proposal.

When writing this section, be concise and specific. Begin by identifying any anticipated constraints, such as limited access to participants, restricted availability of financial or market data, or potential biases in the research design. Then explain how these factors may influence the results or interpretation of findings. It is important to maintain a balanced tone: clearly acknowledge limitations while also explaining any steps taken to mitigate their impact and preserve the validity and relevance of the study.

6. Timeframe

The timeframe section presents a realistic schedule for completing your dissertation. This is often displayed as a Gantt chart or a timeline, showing key milestones such as literature review completion, data collection, analysis, solution development, and writing.

Break down your project into manageable phases and allocate time for each task. This not only helps you stay organized but also demonstrates to your supervisor that you have a clear plan for managing your workload and meeting deadlines.

7. Conclusion

The Conclusion section summarises the key point, highlight how the outline has clarified the main theoretical foundations of the project, how they are to be implemented, and initial analysis result from the market opportunity analysis. It should show that the selected opportunity has been reliably identified, and there is a potential to capture that opportunities well within the limitation of the time and other factors.

8. References

The references section lists all the sources you cited in your proposal. It must follow the UWTSD Harvard style which can be found at [Cite Them Right](#).

Ensure that every source mentioned in the text, i.e., in-text citations, is included in the reference list and vice versa. Proper referencing not only gives credit to original authors but also strengthens the academic rigor of your proposal.