
Guide for Students and Doctoral Candidates to Describe Their Business Idea

This guide supports you step by step in describing your business idea. You require this description for the application of § 21 para. 6 AufenthG (German Residence Act) at the immigration office. Even if you do not have to write a complete business plan, you must provide a clear and understandable description of your business idea to the immigration office, demonstrating that it is successful and that your planned self-employment will not jeopardise your studies or your doctoral studies.

So that the immigration office recognises that you are not jeopardising your studies or your doctoral studies, you may not work independently for more than 15 hours a week, and you may not work during your lectures and your seminars. Tip: state that you will work a maximum of 15 hours a week independently and that it will be outside your study hours. This can be in the evenings after lectures and seminars or over the weekend. It is best to describe this in an extra chapter.

Attention: This also applies to doctoral candidates. Clarify that you will not work for your self-employment during your working hours at the university or during your courses if you are doing any.

We have divided the guide for describing your business idea into different chapters. If you follow the chapters step by step, you will have described your business idea. At the beginning of each chapter, we have provided a short summary of what you should describe or explain. After that, we pose questions about you as a person or your business idea. You will have set out your business idea sufficiently if you answer these.

You do not have to answer all the questions, as some questions might not apply to your business idea. Questions which could be helpful to you but do not necessarily need to be answered, are shown in grey font.

Important: Even when you have answered all the questions and are sure that you have described your business idea well, the immigration office may reject your application. We cannot give you a guarantee. Should the immigration office reject your application, please mail us, and we will try to help you further.

Summary

The summary is provided at the beginning of your description. In the summary, you describe yourself and the most important points of your business idea briefly and precisely. The short description should awaken interest in both you and your idea. Write the summary after you have completed all the other chapters. The summary should not exceed one page.

- ➔ Who am I, and what do I want to do?
- ➔ The summary should be read and understood in no more than five minutes.

Your name, date of birth, marital status, country of origin, qualifications

Give a brief description of your start-up idea and the benefit to customers.

- What is my business idea/my product/my service?
- What is the benefit of my product/my service for my customers?
- What is special about my idea/my product/my service (e.g. gap in the market, new trend, time-saving for the customer)?

Target group/market

- Who are my customers (e.g. age, gender)?
- How big is my market potential? Are there actual trends?

Type of self-employment

- Commercial or freelance self-employment
- Alone or in a team

Location

- Where is my business located?

Working hours

- How many hours a week do I want to work independently?
- On which days do I want to work and at which times?

Chapter 1: My Profile

Describe what motivated you and what characteristics and skills you have. Refer to your CV for further details. Should you be supported by your family, you should also mention this. If you need formal qualifications for your self-employment (e.g. master craftsman's diploma, completed studies), you must prove that the qualifications acquired outside Germany are equivalent to those in Germany.

- ➔ What is my motivation?
- ➔ What skills/qualifications do I have?

What motivates me to work independently while studying (e.g. I want to use my knowledge, I want to earn money while studying, I have an idea that I would like to implement)?

What skills and qualifications do I have (e.g. my knowledge from my studies, school experience, hobby, language skills, self-employment in my country of origin)?

What business skills do I have (e.g. PC skills)? What is my experience with self-employment (e.g. previous experience from my country of origin, role models in the family or acquaintances)?

Chapter 2: My Product/Service

Describe your business idea and your planned business activities. Describe what you are offering, how your business idea differentiates itself from others and whether yours is a new business idea.

- ➔ What does my idea cover?
- ➔ What is special about my idea?

Which product/service do I offer? Where did my idea originate?

What is special about my product/my service - what are the benefits to my clients?

How did I get this idea?

Are there similar products/services? If yes, in which way does my product/service differentiate itself (e.g. price, quality, modernity, trending, etc.)?

How do I get my product to my customers (distribution channel)?

Chapter 3: My Customers

Describe your customers and how you would like to attract them.

→ Who will buy my product/my service?

Who are my customers (e.g. age, income, country of origin, gender, lifestyle)?

Why do my customers want to buy my product/my service?

What do I know about my customers (e.g. how often do they shop)?

Chapter 4: My Location

Describe where you want to practise your self-employment and what advantages the place has for you.

→ Where do I work and why there?

Do I need offices or can I work from home?

Do I need my own offices? If yes, where is my business located (e.g. central, urban fringe, residential area, industrial area, business area, restaurant)?

If I have business premises, what advantages does the location of the business premises have for me?

Do I need my own storage facilities? If yes, where are the storage facilities?

Chapter 5: My Advertising

Describe how you want to approach your customers.

→ How do I promote and distribute my products/services?

How do my customers get to know my product/my service (e.g. newspaper, poster, flyer, Internet, Facebook, Instagram)?

Chapter 6: My Type of Business and Working Hours

Describe whether you are pursuing self-employment on a commercial or freelance basis and whether you want to set up on your own or as part of a team. If you have not mentioned your working hours before, describe them in this chapter.

- ➔ What type of self-employment have I got in mind?
- ➔ Do I want to start on my own or as part of a team?

Commercially or as a freelancer?

Alone or in a team?

Which legal entity do I have in mind (e.g. sole proprietorship, GbR (German civil law partnership), UG (German private limited company), GmbH (German company with limited liability))?

When do I want to work, and for how many hours a week?

Chapter 7: My Price/Profit

Describe what price your product or your service should have, what costs are associated with your product/service and what profit you expect.

- ➔ What should my product/service cost?
- ➔ How high are the expenses for my product/service?

What should my product/my service cost?

What expenses are required?

- Which investments are absolutely necessary?
- What costs are incurred during preparation (e.g. for consultancy, fees, charges, administration, marketing)?
- What costs are incurred for possible investments (e.g. rental, machinery, furnishings, PC, tools)?

What costs will be incurred for the manufacture of my product/purchase of my product?

What expenses will be incurred monthly for my office/commercial space/workshop?

What profit do I expect?