

## Credentials



### WHO WE ARE

Before creating dynamic **LIFTOFF Business Plans** I spent over 30 years in applications- and infrastructure project management in information technology, business, operations, and construction. I (co-)managed projects including a \$500million nuclear reactor rehabilitation, a \$160million data centre construction, a \$21million brand launch, Interac shared-cash, cheque image processing, online banking, legacy systems upgrading, PCI compliance upgrades, server infrastructure upgrades, and QA testing.

I worked on business cases, business planning, and budgeting initiatives, integrating contributor estimates and creating financial management reports and other key project artifacts like RFIs or RFPs in procurement management to buy the services and/or resources required to complete the project, and to manage their contribution for optimal results with regular review meetings. I have coaching and facilitating experience to collaborate with technical resources and deliver the project on time and within budget.

I facilitated and documented PMI-Toronto Professional Mentoring Program, with mentoring and coaching, for over 10 years, and QA-checked a PMBoK-4™ training program. I created customized PMBoK™-compliant project management tools for reporting required on major projects, including detailed costing, procurement, asset tracking, and Integrated Project Delivery. I have a BA in Economics (+ Finance) from York University. After retiring from IT, I became the lead instructor for a college-level business program that included:

- Accounting (an overview of bookkeeping and financial reporting)
- Business Essentials (an overview of how business is conducted in Canada)
- Communication (writing style, composition, grammar, and spelling)
- Economics (an overview of Macro- and Micro-Economics that affect business decisions)
- Finance (an overview of how financial analysis is performed in business planning)
- Law (legal concepts that are applicable to business)
- Marketing (an overview of how marketing planning can be employed)
- Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint)
- Resume writing and job search skills
- Writing a detailed business plan

Many students were in the program hoping to start their own business someday, and I became immersed in helping them write business plans and grant requests. Three statistics that I had to share with my students were:

- Over 80% of all financing applications to financiers or investors are rejected
- Over 50% of all new business ventures do not survive their first year of operation
- Over 90% of all new business ventures will have ceased operations within 5 years

That made it obvious something was fundamentally wrong with the generally accepted notion of what a business plan is for, and I emphasized the importance of all subjects taught in our business program as contributors to creating an effective business plan.

As a lead instructor I created supplemental reading materials to focus students on business cases, business planning, financial planning, and project planning, using custom Excel™ tools to process planning information. I also offered business plan writing support to students who asked for that, as well as offering similar services outside the college environment. Because of Covid lockdown, I revised my approach to business plan writing to make it more flexible and less expensive for entrepreneurs to apply due diligence in their business planning process.

I transformed my experience in creating business cases and plans for new projects into a service to help entrepreneurs with business planning by providing custom Excel(tm) tools that incorporate simulation to enable a review of many "what if" scenarios to find the best options. After all, "**change is the only constant in the marketplace,**" which seriously reduces the "best before" date of a traditional business plan while distorting the focus of what that business plan should contribute to the entrepreneur.

With traditional business plans, the costs of a business plan writer to reflect alternative input assumptions can quickly escalate, because the document is created as a static report. Changes in the input assumptions can cascade through different dependent values, and that makes it a major effort to ensure that changes propagated correctly throughout the document, something that I had already included in my course materials by using custom Excel™ tools. This makes it perfectly reliable for entrepreneurs to use their own "what if" assumptions to explore results from different assumptions, but that is not the complete picture.

Using custom Excel™ tools facilitates making copies of worksheets to create different versions for different scenarios based on locations (with different demographics and psychographics) or market trends or variations in component costs, and so on. We created two VBA programs for Excel™ workbooks:

- LIFTOFF\_LITE → based on a simpler structure that supports 3 input values for variables to reflect conservative, likely, and optimistic estimates. The VBA software automatically recalculates each scenario as required and creates 3 sets of results to reflect that data.
- LIFTOFF\_FULL → based on a more complex simulation engine that takes a value range and a step-value (increment) so that for each variable there can potentially be many values, and it then applies combination and permutation processes to make sure that all potential values for all variables are considered. It can save up to 600 of the best results in descending order by key value (typically ROI) and it can instantly recall any of those 600 results to show the corresponding business plan.

In either version you can employ Excel™ cell-formulas to fine-tune non-linear calculations that ensures the results will be realistic and reflect Standard Operating Procedures. While clients may want support to create the initial business plan worksheet, they can safely create copies that may reflect different assumptions without being concerned about corrupting the results. Because looking at different scenarios within a given business opportunity should be expected, dynamic **LIFTOFF Business Plans** are a game-changer in terms of due diligence. Many clients can consider alternative business versions with minor changes that they can implement.

Unlike a traditional business plan, dynamic **LIFTOFF Business Plans** are easy to keep current with changing market conditions, or even the physical leasehold adaptations based on a given location. That enables entrepreneurs to quickly evaluate (potential) changes in the marketplace and be proactive in their response, which can make a difference in a competitive environment to attain a market leader position based on that disruption. That is a real game changer, which adds significant value to using dynamic **LIFTOFF Business Plans**.