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Mechanical Engineering



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Business Plan for an Organic Fertilizer Company

A company in this day and age should be environmentally aware and take steps to protect the planet. One of the best ways to do this is to engage in local business practices that follow organic principles. At the same time, the business needs to make a profit in order to keep these principles active in the local community, which will hopefully lead to more businesses around the world adopting these practices. The local company, Organic Fertilizer Specialists, aims to accomplish all of these things by dominating the local, and currently wide open, organic fertilizer niche. The company will target local agricultural and gardening stores, organic farmers, and hobby gardeners. Its needs will be small but important, as will its number of employees. By keeping things small and sticking to what is necessary to run the business according to green, earth-friendly principles while making a profit, Organic Fertilizer Specialists can achieve its company goals in the local area.

ORGANIC FERTILIZER SPECIALISTS:

Organic Fertilizer Specialists is a "green" business model, focusing on sustainable manufacturing processes that are environmentally friendly and socially aware. The business seeks to produce high quality organic fertilizer which is produced without chemicals, and market it to organic produce farmers and hobbyist gardeners who want to grow their own organic produce or to have a naturally landscaped lawn. The fertilizer will be mainly produced by free-range goats and horses who have been fed on organic grass and other natural, chemical-free foods. The fertilizer is then collected and stored in hemp sacks made from organically grown hemp fibers. The sacks themselves are imprinted with low-impact dyes made from organic inks, and show the company's logo and contact information. The contact information is there so customers can get in touch with the company quickly if necessary, and also so that their colleagues may see it and be inspired to become customers of Organic Fertilizer Specialists, as well. All shipping of product is

thus far done in the local area only, in order to cut down on greenhouse gas emissions from the small (and efficiently maintained) trucks that do the deliveries. Delivery truck drivers are the only personnel who wear uniforms, and their uniforms are made from organic cotton.

Organic Fertilizer Specialists is a business based on the entrepreneurial model, and as such, it is small, locally owned and operated, and works with local businesses. However, it is looking at expansion opportunities in the areas of mail order, drop shipping, internet sales, and wholesaling to businesses outside of the local area. The business will consist of the owner/CEO, three managers (one for the office, one for the fields, and one for the shipping department), two assistant managers (one for the office and one for the fields), an office assistant, a bookkeeper, two customer service representatives, four animal handlers, four packagers, and two truck drivers for shipping. The number of efficient staff is present in order to make sure the business runs smoothly and without complications on the long run.

OVERVIEW AND OVERALL STRUCTURE OF THE BUSINESS:

High Level Management

The highest levels of management at Organic Fertilizer Specialists are in charge of all business decisions within the company, talking to the media, and making sure the company is following organic and green business practices. These are the people upon whom the vision of the company, as well as the other employees of the company, depend to make sure the business stays true to its sustainable and environmentally friendly goals.



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The president/CEO is the public face of the organization, and as such, speaks on its behalf to the media and other groups. He also makes sure Organic Fertilizer Specialists is always on point when following its mission of sustainability, green business practices, and support of organic farming techniques. He is also the one who is ultimately in charge of all final business decisions made by the company. In addition, he seeks out new customers and outsources the advertising to an outside company of advertising specialists and oversees their work. All final advertising decisions are made by the CEO, and cultivating new customers is his area of expertise. The managers take orders from the CEO and make sure the people in their departments are on task and doing their jobs correctly. The assistant managers take their orders from the managers and oversee their areas of responsibility when the managers are not able (for example, if the field manager is in the stables with the horses and the animal handlers there, the assistant field manager would be with the goats or any other animals being used by the agricultural business).

The Office Workers and Field Personnel

Organic Fertilizer Specialists depends on its office workers to keep things organized and running smoothly. This ranges from filing to bookkeeping to taking and keeping track of orders from customers. Office workers are also invaluable assistants to management in a variety of ways, and are in charge of communication with the shipping department. Field personnel handle the animals and are in charge of collecting the manure to be used for fertilizer.

The office assistant takes care of clerical matters, including organization and handling incoming non-customer phone calls. This position also acts as a de facto assistant to the CEO. The bookkeeper handles the financials of the business. The customer service representatives take orders and send them to the shipping department, and also handle customer questions and complaints (if any). The office manager and assistant manager are in charge of the office assistant, bookkeeper, and customer service representatives, and these people take their orders from those managers.

The animal handlers take their orders from the field manager and assistant manager, and are in charge of taking care of the goats and horses in an organic, sustainable, and environmentally friendly manner. These are animal experts and have extensive experience with horses and goats in a natural setting. They exercise the animals, groom them, and make sure they are given a healthy, natural lifestyle in accordance with the company's mission statement. They are also in charge of collecting and storing the manure produced by the horses and goats and making sure it is not adulterated or contaminated in any way prior to being picked up by shipping.

The Shipping Department

The shipping manager is in charge of the packagers and the truck drivers, and makes sure they are doing their jobs correctly. There is no need of an assistant manager here, as the shipping



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The shipping manager is in charge of the packagers and the truck drivers, and makes sure they are doing their jobs correctly. There is no need of an assistant manager here, as the shipping manager can easily oversee everyone in his department adequately on his own. The packagers pick up the manure and transport it to the on-site warehouse, where they package it in environmentally friendly, organic hemp fiber bags that are imprinted with the company logo in organic, low impact inks. The packagers also load the bags of manure onto the trucks for shipping. The truck drivers transport the manure to customers.

Company Infrastructure and Information System Needs

Office it Needs

The it needs of Organic Fertilizer Specialists are mainly in the office. While the office is small enough that most inter-office communication occurs face-to-face, computers are necessary for the bookkeeper to keep track of financials and to save records. The office assistant has a computer for saving and storing documents that need to be electronically filed, as well as for communicating with other members of the company when face-to-face communication is not possible. The customer service representatives must also have computers to keep records of customers and orders.

CEO it Needs

The CEO has a computer for general business needs and for communicating with the press and other outside organizations via email, and for storing and saving documents. The CEO also uses the computer to communicate with the outsourced advertising company, and to cultivate relationships with new and existing clients. If need be, the computer the CEO uses can also be used to communicate with other members of the company via email or instant messaging, as necessary.

Other it Needs in the Company

One computer is present in the shipping department, and it is connected to the customer service computers, so the customer service representatives can send new orders to shipping as they come in. The managers and assistant managers carry tablet computers, as they are always moving from place to place, and they can use these computers to communicate with their staff as necessary, as well as send memos without having to use paper (which the CEO considers a waste of natural resources in most cases).

Company Management of Data and Knowledge

Inventory Management

Inventory is managed in the shipping department. Orders are sent to the shipping department from the customer service representatives via a secure, intra-office internet connection. Once the



orders are received, shipping personnel use recycled sticky labels to hand-write the customer and order information with sustainable ink pens, and then affix those labels to the bags of fertilizer. If a customer is ordering more than one bag of fertilizer, as many of them do, the number of bags are stacked in groups of four and tied with twine, and a label affixed to the top back in each bundle, even if there are several bundles for the same customer. Orders are stored near the trucks, in the order in which they were received. In this way, each customer is sure to get his or her order in a timely manner. The date of order is also placed on each label, with the goal being twice-weekly shipments of product, so each order that comes in is delivered within two to three business days. If a customer wants to come pick up their order at the warehouse, those orders are labeled thusly and set aside in a safe, secure customer pick-up area, with names arranged alphabetically, for easy retrieval when the customer comes to get his or her order.

Knowledge Management

Knowledge management is handled in the office. The main people responsible for this are the office assistant, bookkeeper, and customer service representatives. The CEO also plays a role in knowledge management. In Organic Fertilizer Specialists, knowledge management means proper record keeping regarding financials and orders, as well as media relations, market research, regulatory agency research to make sure local and national regulations regarding the practices of the business are being complied with at all times, community relations activities, company development, and grant writing to obtain grants for small businesses and "green" businesses that could help the company expand and improve its practices.

Marketing Management

Marketing is largely handled by the CEO and office manager (who serves double-duty in this small company as the assistant to the CEO). In this company, marketing involves customer relations, cultivating new customers, advertising the company to local agricultural businesses and hobby gardeners, and branding the company as the best source of quality organic fertilizer in the area. The CEO and the office assistant work together to market the company in as green and environmentally friendly a way as possible, while also keeping costs down to improve profit margins on the main product. This will allow the company to expand into new markets and maybe even offer additional products at some point, such as organic fertilizers produces from other varieties of animals than just horses and goats. These could be branded as specialty fertilizers and sold to a more niche-based consumer audience. The company could also use increased profits to develop its mail order and wholesale departments, which the CEO would like to do at some point in the company's growth.

The aforementioned segments of the business plan would certify the success, longevity, and competitive prowess of Organic Fertilizer in the agricultural market in the long run.

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