



Economic Fuel April Highlights

**Finalists to be announced on
Monday, April 23rd before 5:00pm**

Meet the 2007 Economic Fuel Judges

Lori Breyer
Business Teacher
Humboldt ROP & Arcata High School

What I look for in a business plan:

Owner experience in the industry; short and long term goals; mentors; and financial information that is realistic, complete and woven through each of the business plan elements.

Jennifer Budwig
Redwood Capital bank
Commercial Relationship Manager

What I look for in a business plan:

When reviewing a business plan, I like to see that the information provided demonstrates that the borrower has done their due diligence in creating the plan and that the business venture make sense overall. It's also important they have a good understanding of the financial aspects of the business; that they know their working capital requirements, that they are coming in with some of their own funds and they'll have a good accounting / bookkeeping system in place once the business gets underway.

Every individual has areas they are stronger in than others. Some of the most successful business individuals seem to be the ones that recognize their weaknesses then surround themselves with knowledgeable people within those areas. Any noted weaknesses within

the plan should be mitigated, and an exit strategy should be provided in the event the plan doesn't come to fruition.

Generally we'll incorporate a bulk of the information in the business plan into the loan approval process, therefore the more comprehensive, thorough and well presented the plan, the quicker and easier the loan process will be.

Writing business plans can be a very time consuming, cumbersome process and most people don't enjoy preparing them, however many people who go through the process are grateful they did once the business is underway. Interestingly, some entrepreneurs who've been in business for many years continually recreate their business plan because of the benefits it can provide

Patrick Cleary
Lost Coast Communications
President

What I look for in a Business Plan:

- 1) Realism, especially financial realism.
- 2) A product that satisfies a real need.

Bruce Hamilton
Wing Inflatables
Semi-Retired - CEO and President

Tension Designs
Owner

What I look for in a Business Plan:

What I am looking for is a person who is real. I do not appreciate an excellent academic presentation with multi-charts, graphs and spreadsheets unless the business concept is real. What strikes me as real is an idea for a product or service that makes some common sense. That product or service has to have some sustainable competitive advantage-- for example, the creative genius of the principal(s).

I am looking for a business plan that shows potential to grow and to employ people, not one that will create a living for the principal only. And it has to work in Humboldt County with all of its challenges to business.

Kristin Johnson
Northern California SBDC Lead Center
Director

What I look for in a business plan:

Realistic financial plan... what are growth projections based upon? Is growth financing adequate? Are start-up costs realistic? Are capital infusions well-timed?

Adequate assessment of risks... is the entrepreneur being realistic?

Is the entrepreneur invested... either personal money, length of time working for very little money, willing to sign a personal guarantee? In my opinion, the entrepreneur HAS TO be personally invested.

Is there a realistic view of ownership as the company grows? In other words, is the entrepreneur willing to give up some of the ownership in exchange for capital? If not, don't waste investors' time.

Rick Roberts
The Jitter Bean Coffee Company
Owner

What I look for in a business plan:

When I look at a business plan I'm looking for viability. Will it fit this market? I also look to see if there is an understanding beyond just the technical functions of the business. What about managing? What about growth? The financials are also important. What's the plan and does it make sense?

Our Economic Fuel judges will be working diligently over the next three weeks reading every business plan turned in for the 2007 competition. For more information on their backgrounds and experience/expertise, please visit the Economic Fuel website at <http://www.economicfuel.org/judges.html>

April/May Events

Formal Presentations

Finalist Teams, 1-4

Date: Monday, April 30th

Time: 6:00 – 8:30pm

Location: The Kate Buchanan Room, HSU

Finalist Teams, 5-8

Date: Tuesday, May 1st

Time: 6:00 – 8:30pm

Location: The Kate Buchanan Room, HSU

The finalist teams will give 10 minute formal presentations before the judge's panel and will have 20 minutes of questions and answers with the judges. The formal presentations will be judged on both content and quality. The judges evaluate the teams based on:

- Speakers make a compelling presentation that sells the business idea.
- Speakers effectively answer questions to add credibility to the business venture.

Awards Ceremony

Date: Thursday, May 3rd

Time: 6:30 – 8:00pm

Location: The Wharfinger Building, 1 Marina Way, Eureka

The eight finalist teams will be awarded up to \$117,000 in cash awards to be used as seed capital to help them start their businesses.

Thanks to our Economic Fuel Participants

The work that our competitors have done to research the viability of starting their businesses in Humboldt County will provide many benefits. Most importantly, writing a business plan will increase the likelihood of their success when starting their businesses.

In a study of start up businesses:

Over 80% of businesses that failed in the first year did not have a written plan*

Over 80% of businesses still in business after four years started with a written plan*

Thank you for taking the first step towards making your business idea a reality. The Eureka Reporter wishes our competitors well in all their ventures and we appreciate the opportunity to fuel student-driven entrepreneurship on the Northcoast.

* based on work supported by the U.S. SBA, the NCSBRC and San Jose State University Foundation

Visit the Economic Fuel Website for more information about the competition!

www.economicfuel.org

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