UNDERSTANDING WHERE YOU STAND

A SIMPLE GUIDE TO YOUR COMPANY’S
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Tennessee Small Business Development Center Network Lead Center
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Greetings:

Middle Tennessee State University’s Tennessee Small Business Development Center (TSBDC) program is the premier provider in Tennessee of business technical assistance and training. Our business development services are provided through a network of 20 locations across the state all in an effort to enhance economic development for our state while growing our small businesses.

This publication is provided by the TSBDC for your use to enhance your understanding of the subject matter and thereby increasing your business development opportunities. For further information regarding additional resources, our training calendar or to schedule an appointment with a business counselor, go to www.tsbdc.org

Regards,

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State Executive Director
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INTRODUCTION

One statement cannot diagnose your company’s financial health. Put several statements together and you can make smart financial, investment and management decisions.

Many business owners don’t know how to read their statements and rely on advisors (such as accountants) to tell them the results. Their input is valuable but you need to educate yourself. You must be able to understand your statements so you can:

- realize the vital role money plays in every business decision
- determine if you are making a profit or losing money
- calculate your current and future financial needs:
  - make sure you have positive cash flow for short-term needs
  - make sure your business is growing and will continue to grow

For lending purposes, statements will help you determine:

- if you can afford to pay a loan
- the loan amount
- the loan term (number of years)
- which assets you should buy vs. which assets should be financed
- what collateral is available to secure a loan

WHAT ARE THESE STATEMENTS?

Financial statements are meaningful, written records which allow you to diagnose your financial strengths and weaknesses and increase the life and profitability of your company. Statements are usually prepared annually although the income statement should be developed on a monthly or, at least, a quarterly basis.

WHAT DO THESE STATEMENTS SHOW?

Balance Sheet
What a company owns, what it owes, and what is left over.

Income Statement
A firm’s sales and expenses plus its profit (or loss).

Ratios
Analyze a company’s financial condition. Ratio answers can be compared to others in the same industry.

Cash Flow Statement
The sources, uses, and balance of cash, shown on a monthly basis.
Balance Sheet

The Balance Sheet is a picture of your business, frozen for a second in time.

**WHAT DOES A BALANCE SHEET TELL YOU?**

This statement shows what you own (assets), what you owe (liabilities), and what’s left over (net value or equity in the business). The numbers change every time you receive money or give credit to a client as well as when you pay for or charge an expense.

**Liabilities + Net Worth = Assets**

Think of the Balance Sheet like a scale. Assets and liabilities alone are out of balance until you add capital, the last weight put on the scale, to make it balance.

**Assets**

Assets are divided into two categories: current and non-current. They are listed according to how liquid they are (how quickly they can be turned into cash).

Examples of current assets are cash and inventory. Examples of non-current assets are furniture, fixtures, property and equipment. Money owed to your company (accounts receivable) is considered an asset.

**Liabilities**

Liabilities (debts you owe) are divided into two categories: current and non-current (or long-term). They are listed in the order they need to be repaid.

**Capital or Net Worth**

The business’ equity includes money the owners have invested and income kept in the business from the company’s profits.

**WHAT IT SHOWS YOU**

- The net value of the business
- How much of your loan debt is current, and how much is long-term
- Percentages and ratios (which are extracted from the numbers) necessary to analyze your business (see Ratios section)
- Compare two of the same time periods to see changes in:
  - cash
  - accounts payable
  - accounts receivable
  - equity
  - inventory
  - retained earnings

**WHAT IT WON’T SHOW YOU:**

- Income or expenses over a period of time. Remember, the Balance Sheet reflects one moment in time.
- Market value of assets, although it will reflect purchase costs and depreciation according to industry standards
- Quality of assets
- Contingent Liabilities (money you agreed to repay by signing notes, or by being a co-maker or guarantor of loans).
- Operating Lease obligations (which allow you to buy the item at the end of the lease, for a set price, do not appear on the Balance Sheet). However, Capital Leases (with buyout price of $1) are shown on the Balance Sheet.
### Max Computer Company, Balance Sheet

**ASSETS (WHAT YOU OWN)**

**Current Assets** (converts to cash in one year)
- Cash: $10,000
- Accounts Receivable: $75,000
- Inventory: $85,000
- Total Current Assets: $170,000

**Non-Current Assets** (more than one year to convert to cash)
- Fixed Assets (furniture, fixtures, property, equipment): $140,000
- Less Accumulated Depreciation: ($25,000)
- Fixed Assets (net): $115,000
- Advances to Owners: $6,000
- Total Non-Current Assets: $121,000

**Total Assets**: $291,000

**LIABILITIES (WHAT YOU OWE)**

**Current Liabilities** (due within one year)
- Accounts Payable: $41,000
- Accrued Taxes: $3,000
- Current Portion of Long-Term Debt: $6,000
- Note Payable (due within one year): $100,000
- Total Current Liabilities: $150,000

**Long-Term Liabilities** (due for more than one year)
- Loan Payable: $54,000
- Total Long Term Liabilities: $54,000

**Total Liabilities**: $204,000

**CAPITAL OR NET WORTH (THE COMPANY’S EQUITY)**
- Owners Investment: $20,000
- Retained Earnings (income kept in the business): $67,000
- Total Capital or Net Worth: $87,000

**Total Liabilities & Capital**: $291,000

### WHICH ACCOUNTING METHOD IS RIGHT FOR YOU

**THE CASH METHOD**
- Records a sale when money is collected
- Records an expense when it is paid

**THE ACCRUAL METHOD**
- Sales are made on credit, and not immediately paid for.
- The amount customers owe is called Accounts Receivable
- Buy items or incur expenses for the business, but pay later.
- The amount owed is called Accounts Payable.
- Net worth does not always translate to cash, since money can be tied up in Accounts Receivable, expenses and inventory. To get a better idea of how much cash there is at the end of the month, learn about the Cash Flow Statement.
- Lenders prefer the accrual method.
Think of the Income Statement as a report card for your business. It is issued from time to time and gives an overview of how you are doing.

WHAT DOES AN INCOME STATEMENT TELL YOU?
In the day-to-day running of your business, numbers fly around at a dizzying pace. Bills are paid, money is taken in, and sometimes, in this whirlwind of activity, it’s hard to know how much you’re actually making. The Income Statement answers that question.

Think of the Income Statement as a kind of report card for your business. Like a report card, it is issued from time to time and gives an overview of how you are doing (for that period of time).

Since this statement reflects your business activity over time (not like the Balance Sheet which is a snapshot of your business for one moment in time), it is usually developed monthly, quarterly and annually. Creating a projected statement for the next 12 months, based on your predictions, is also a good idea.

WHAT IT SHOWS YOU
- If sales are going up or down
- Your gross profit — how much money is left for the rest of the business after deducting what it costs to produce or purchase the product
- All expenses for the time period it covers
- Increases and decreases in net income
- How much money is left to grow the business
- How much money is left for the owner(s)
- How much money is left to pay debt (principal only)

WHAT IT WON’T SHOW YOU
- If your overall financial condition is weak or strong (see the Balance Sheet).
- What’s tied up in Accounts Receivable (money owed to you) and Accounts Payable (money you owe).
- What you own (assets) and what you owe (liabilities)

OTHER NAMES FOR THIS STATEMENT
- Operating Statement
- Earnings Statement
- Profit & Loss Statement (P&L)
To get a more accurate picture of your financial performance, compare percentages instead of numbers.

- First, convert numbers from the Income Statement into percentages
- Next, compare these percentages from this period to those from the previous period
- Are the percentages increasing or decreasing?

**FOR EXAMPLE**

\[
\frac{\text{Gross Profit of $360,000}}{\text{Total Sales of $900,000}} = 40\%
\]

If gross profit was 35% last year, it has increased by 5%
WHAT DOES A CASH FLOW STATEMENT TELL YOU?
Cash is the fuel that runs your business. Running out of it would be disastrous, so you must have a “cash flow” or money on hand to pay bills and meet day-to-day expenses. Keep in mind that companies can produce a profit, but still not have a positive cash flow.

The Cash Flow Statement shows money that comes into the business, money that goes out and money that is kept on hand to meet daily expenses and emergencies.

WHAT IT SHOWS YOU
- If the business has enough money to:
  - cover day-to-day activities
  - pay debts on time
  - maintain and grow the business without a negative cash flow
- The need for additional working capital (cash) when sales increase since increased sales mean increased purchases of material or labor. You should know how much you need. Show where the additional working capital will come from.
- The maximum loan payment the business can afford
- The breakdown of principal and interest on your loan payments.
  Note that the Income Statement only shows interest - not principal.
- Your weaknesses (an inability to keep and generate cash). For lending purposes, explain how you’ll handle these weaknesses (via increased sales, cost reductions, or owner’s investments).

WHAT IT WON’T SHOW YOU
- How much you have in Accounts Receivable and Accounts Payable (shown in the Balance Sheet)
- Your balances in assets, liabilities and net worth
- Depreciation of equipment, which is a non-cash expense.
  This is dealt with in the Balance Sheet.

Of Special Interest to New Companies
Losses - also called “pull down balances” - are common in the first year of a start-up. Lenders want to see the business break-even during the year. To produce positive balances, you’ll have to cover months (that show negative balances) with loans, increased revenue, additional owner’s investments, or by reducing expenses.
Understanding Where You Stand

Loan Principal
Loan principal appears here but not in the Income Statement. If the loan was used for real estate, furniture, fixtures and equipment or machinery, that portion will be depreciated over time (as allowed by the IRS) on the Income Statement.

Loan Payment
Loan received a month before these projections. Purchases are paid, up to date. They are now taking advantage of 30-day payment terms. The Income Statement will record the purchases as an Accounts Payable but it won’t be recorded here until paid.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Feb</th>
<th>Mar</th>
<th>Apr</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>June</th>
<th>July</th>
<th>Aug</th>
<th>Sept</th>
<th>Oct</th>
<th>Nov</th>
<th>Dec</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>5,627</td>
<td>13,741</td>
<td>10,470</td>
<td>13,830</td>
<td>15,190</td>
<td>11,498</td>
<td>15,202</td>
<td>22,157</td>
<td>30,997</td>
<td>39,372</td>
<td>48,601</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A. Cash On Hand (Beginning of month)

B. Collections from Credit Accounts

C. Loan or Other Cash injection (specify)

D. Total Cash Receipts (B1+B2+B3)

E. Total Cash Available (A+C, before cash paid)

F. Cash Paid Out:

1. Purchases (Merchandise)

2. Gross Wages (excludes withdrawals)

3. Payroll Expenses (Taxes, etc.)

4. Outside Services

5. Supplies (Office and operating)

6. Repairs and maintenance

7. Advertising

8. Car, Delivery and Travel

9. Professional Services (Accounting, legal, etc.)

10. Rent

11. Telephone

12. Utilities

13. Insurance

14. Taxes (real estate, etc.)

15. Interest (on loans)

16. Other/Miscellaneous Expenses (specify)

17. Subtotal

F. Other Operating Costs:

1. Loan Principal Payment

2. Capital Purchases (ex., Buy a computer)

3. Other Start-up Costs

4. Reserve and/or Escrow (ex., Pay $100K loan)

5. Owner’s Withdrawal

G. Total Cash Paid Out (E17 + F1 through F5)

H. Cash Position (End of month, D minus G)

I. Essential Operating Data (Non-cash flow info)

Cash Position
This company has a positive cash flow.

Summary
Good information to calculate.
WHAT RATIOS SHOW YOU?
Ratios help you identify your strengths and weaknesses. Use them to compare your business to standards in your industry. Lenders look very carefully at ratios.

The numbers for ratios are taken from the Income Statement and the Balance Sheet, but not the Cash Flow Statement.

LIQUIDITY RATIOS
How “cash rich” is a company?
Liquidity ratios show a company’s ability to turn an asset into cash.

WORKING CAPITAL
Number Source: Balance Sheet

ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE TURNOVER
Number Source: Balance Sheet & Income Statement

Formula:
\[
\frac{Net\ Sales\ Figure}{\text{Accounts\ Receivable}} = \text{Days\ to\ collect\ bills}
\]

\[
\frac{\$27,375,000}{\$900,000} = 30.4
\]

NOTE: This shows how many days it takes to collect money owed to you.
Lower answer is better.

INVENTORY TURNOVER
Number Source: Balance Sheet & Income Statement

Formula:
\[
\frac{\text{Inventory\ Figure}}{\text{Cost\ of\ Goods\ Sold}} = \text{Days\ to\ turnover\ inventory}
\]

\[
\frac{\$31,025,000}{\$540,000} = 57.4
\]

NOTE: This formula shows how many days it takes you to turnover (or sell) your inventory.
Lower answer is better.

CURRENT RATIO
Number Source: Balance Sheet

Formula:
\[
\frac{\text{Total\ Current\ Assets}}{\text{Total\ Current\ Liabilities}} = \text{Ratio}
\]

\[
\frac{\$170,000}{\$150,000} = 1.13
\]

NOTE: Tests a company’s short-term debt paying ability. This means there is $1.13 in cash and current assets available to pay every $1 of current liabilities.
The higher the number, the better.
Answer should be 2 or more
DEBT MANAGEMENT RATIOS
Shows how much money owners have invested in the business versus lenders.

LEVERAGE (OR DEBT TO WORTH) RATIO
Number Source: Balance Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FORMULA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Liabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$204,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$2.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Determines if a company has enough equity. Lower answers are better. Answer of 3 or lower is preferred.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE TURNOVER
Number Source: Balance Sheet & Income Statement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FORMULA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accounts Payable at $41,000 x 365 days</td>
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NOTE: Shows how quickly a company pays its suppliers. Lower numbers (30 days or less) are better.

PROFITABILITY RATIOS
Shows company’s ability to make a profit

PROFIT MARGIN ON SALES
Number Source: Income Statement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FORMULA</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Net Profit</td>
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<tr>
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NOTE: Shows the percentage of net profit for every dollar of sales. The higher the number, the better. If the profit margin is too low:
1. the prices are too low
2. the cost of goods is too high
3. expenses are too high

CASH FLOW TO CURRENT MATURITIES (DEBT SERVICE) RATIO
Number Source: Balance Sheet & Income Statement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FORMULA</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Net Profit of $53,000 + Depreciation of $13,000 (amount created for this example)</td>
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Note: Shows your ability to pay term debts after owner(s) withdrawals. New businesses, use one year’s worth of loan payments. Answer of 2 or more is preferred.

RATIOS AT A GLANCE
GET NUMBERS FROM:

ASSET MANAGEMENT
- Accounts Receivable Turnover . . . . . . . .Balance Sheet & Income Statement
- Inventory Turnover . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .Balance Sheet & Income Statement

LIQUIDITY RATIOS
- Working Capital . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .Balance Sheet
- Quick or Acid Test . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .Balance Sheet
- Current . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .Balance Sheet

DEBT MANAGEMENT RATIOS
- Leverage (or Debt to Worth) . . . . . . . . .Balance Sheet
- Accounts Payable Turnover . . . . . . . . .Balance Sheet & Income Statement

PROFITABILITY
- Profit Margin on Sales . . . . . . . . . . . . . .Income Statement
- Cash Flow to Current Maturities (Debt Service) . . . . . . .Balance Sheet

Ratio Comparisons
Ratios should be compared to prior years, acceptable lending ranges, and industry averages.

- Industry ratios are averages. Some firms are above and some firms are below these numbers. Differences are due to the age of the company, locations, managers, and operations, to name a few.
- A ratio of 38% compared to an industry average of 39% seems like a small 1% difference. If sales are $4 million, 1% is $40,000. If net profits are $100,000, then the $40,000 is very important.

These reference books include industry information:

- RMA Annual Statement Studies
- Almanac of Business and Industrial Financial Ratios (gathered from U.S. Treasury and IRS information)
- Dunn and Bradstreet

Other good industry sources (especially when your company is smaller than those used in the reference books):

- Trade Associations
- Magazines and newspapers for your industry
- Small Business Administration/SBA
Ability to Pay. Ability to pay loans from future business’ profits.

Accounts Payable (A/P). Expenses incurred from purchases made on credit.

Accounts Receivable (A/R). Sales made but money not collected. Credit is granted.

Assets. What a company owns.

Asset-based Lending. Financing secured by pledging assets (inventory, receivables, or other collateral).

Available Credit. The unused portion of a line of credit.

Balloon. A stop point or early maturity of a loan.

Business Credit. Loans made to businesses in the form of a term loan or a line of credit.

Business Plan. An overview of a new or existing company which is used to obtain financing.

Capacity. Borrower’s ability to handle a certain level of debt.

Capital Leases. Leases with a buyout price of $1 which are shown on the Balance Sheet.

Commercial Mortgage. A loan on business’ real estate. Rates and terms are negotiated and the interest rate is usually related to the prime rate.

Cost of Goods Sold. Cost to make a product, including materials, labor, and related overhead.

Credit Rating. Credit rating as determined by a credit reporting agency.

Credit Scoring. A process used to approve or reject commercial loan applications, based on ratios and other factors.

Current Assets. Assets that can be converted into cash in one year.

Current Liabilities. Liabilities due within one year.

Depreciation. Except for land, assets wear out. They are devalued or depreciated every year.

Draw Down. Taking an advance on a line of credit.


Fair Market Value (FMV). The price of an asset, product or service in a current, competitive market.

Fixed Assets. Assets including furniture, fixtures, equipment, machinery, and real estate.

Gross Profit. Gross sales less cost of goods sold. Also called gross margin.

Gross Sales. Revenue or income from sales before returns and allowances.

Intangible Asset. Have no physical properties but represent something of value (for example, patents and trademarks).

Inventory. Assets held for resale. May be in the form of raw materials, work in progress, or finished goods.

Liquid Collateral. Collateral that can be converted to cash quickly.

Line of Credit (LOC). A short-term loan (usually used to finance accounts receivable and/or inventory)

Liquid Asset. Asset that can be turned into cash quickly, within one year

Long-Term Liabilities. Expenses, loans, and payables due after one year

Net Profit. Money left after all expenses have been paid. Used to pay loan principal and to grow the company.

Net Sales. Revenue or income from sales after returns and allowances are deducted.

Net Worth. Assets less liabilities. Show equity value.

Non-Current Assets. Assets that take one year or more to turn into cash.

Operating Lease. Leases which allow you to buy the item at the end of the lease, for a set price. These leases do not appear on the Balance Sheet.

 Owners’ Investment. The money owners have invested in a business.

Prime Rate. The rate of interest lenders give to its prime customers from time to time. Most business owners are charged the prime rate plus a percentage.

Pro Forma. Projecting or forecasting future income, expenses, and cash flow.

Retained Earnings. Net profits accumulated through the company’s life and reported in the net worth or equity section of the balance sheet. Note: Can be negative if losses occur.

Secured Loan. Loan secured by collateral (which will be liquidated if the borrower defaults on the loan).

Tangible Asset. Real property (machinery, equipment, furniture and fixtures).

Term. A loan’s maturity, stated in months or years.

Term Loan. Loan, usually given in one lump sum at the closing. Repayment is monthly over a stated term.

Trend Analysis. Analysis of financial statements and ratios to determine the financial strength over time.

Working Capital. Difference between current assets and current liabilities. An indication of liquidity and the ability to meet current obligations.
The TSBDC Network

Visit us at: www.tsbdc.org

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